

**LETTERS**

ON THE

**EDUCATION OF CHILDREN,**

AND ON

**MARRIAGE.**

BY THE

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“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”  
SOLOMON.

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ANDOVER :

PRINTED BY FLAGG AND GOULD.

1817.

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*To Messrs. Flagg & Gould.*

GENTLEMEN,

*It gives us pleasure to learn, that you have proposed to publish an edition of Witherspoon's Letters on the Education of Children, and on Marriage. The reputation of such an author can receive no addition from a recommendation of ours. But if our recommendation would be of any consequence to the publishers, we can, with great satisfaction state, that in our judgment, these Letters, like many other of that author's writings, display a deep and exact discernment of human nature, and contain a fund of christian wisdom, suited to practical purposes. The general circulation of the Letters would, we are confident, produce a salutary influence upon the happiness of domestic life, and upon the character of the rising generation.*

LEONARD WOODS,  
MOSES STUART.

*Theological Seminary, Andover, Feb. 1, 1817.*

LETTERS  
ON  
EDUCATION.

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LETTER I.

AFTER so long a delay, I now set myself to fulfil my promise of writing to you a few thoughts on the education of children.—Though I cannot wholly acquit myself of the crimes of laziness and procrastination, yet I do assure you, what contributed not a little to its being hitherto not done, was, that I considered it not as an ordinary letter, but what deserved to be carefully meditated on, and thoroughly digested. The concern you show on this subject, is highly commendable: for there is no part of your duty, as a Christian, or a citizen, which will be of greater service to the public, or a source of greater comfort to yourself.

The consequence of my thinking so long upon it, before committing my thoughts to paper, will probably be the taking the thing in a greater compass than either of us at first intended, and writing a series of letters, instead of one. With this view I begin with a preliminary to the successful education of children, viz. that husband and wife ought to be entirely one upon this subject, not only agreed as to the end, but as to the means to be used, and the plan to be followed, in order to attain it. It ought to encourage you to proceed in your design, that I am persuaded you will not only meet with no opposition to a rational and serious education of your children, but great assistance from  
Mrs. S. \_\_\_\_\_ \* \* \* \* \*

The erased lines contained a compliment, written with great sincerity : but recollecting that there are no rules yet settled for distinguishing true compliment from flattery, I have blotted them out : on which, perhaps, you will say to yourself, " He is fulfilling the character which his enemies give him, who say, it is the nature of the man to deal much more in satire, than in panegyric." However, I content myself with repeating, that certainly husband and wife ought to conspire and co-operate in every thing relating to the education of their children ; and if their opinions happen, in any particular, to be different, they ought to examine and settle the matter privately by themselves, that not the least opposition may appear either to children or servants. When this is the case, every thing is enforced by a double authority, and recommended by a double example : but when it is otherwise, the pains taken are commonly more than lost, not being able to do any good, and certainly producing very much evil.

Be pleased to remember, that this is by no means intended against those unhappy couples, who, being essentially different in principles and character, live in a state of continual war. It is of little advantage to speak either to, or of such persons. But even differences incomparably smaller, are of very bad consequence : when one, for example, thinks a child may be carried out, and the other thinks it is wrong ; when one thinks a way of speaking is dangerous, and the other is positive there is nothing in it. The things themselves may indeed be of little moment ; but the want of concurrence in the parents, or the want of mutual esteem and deference, easily observed even by very young children, is of the greatest importance.

As you and I have chiefly in view the religious education of children, I take it to be an excellent preliminary that parental affection should be purified by the principles and controled or directed by the precepts of religion. A parent should rejoice in his children, as

they are the gift of a gracious God; should put his trust in the care of an indulgent Providence for the preservation of his offspring, as well as himself; should be supremely desirous that they may be, in due time, the heirs of eternal life; and, as he knows the absolute dependance of every creature upon the will of God, should be ready to resign them at what time his Creator shall see proper to demand them. This happy qualification of parental tenderness, will have a powerful influence in preventing mistakes in the conduct of education.—It will be the most powerful of all incitements to duty, and at the same time a restraint upon that natural fondness and indulgence, which, by a sort of fascination of fatality, make parents often do or permit what their judgment condemns, and then excuse themselves by saying that no doubt it is wrong, but truly they cannot help it.

Another preliminary to the proper education of children, is a firm persuasion of the benefit of it, and the probable, at least, if not certain success of it, when faithfully and prudently conducted. This puts an edge upon the spirit, and enables the christian not only to make some attempts, but to persevere with patience and diligence. I know not a common saying either more false or pernicious, than “that the children of good men are as bad as others.” This saying carries in it a supposition, that whereas the force of education is confessed with respect to every other human character and accomplishment, it is of no consequence at all as to religion. This, I think, is contrary to daily experience. Where do we expect to find young persons piously disposed but in pious families? The exceptions, or rather appearances to the contrary, are easily accounted for, in more ways than one. Many persons appear to be religious, while they are not so in reality, but are chiefly governed by the applause of men. Hence their visible conduct may be specious, or their public performances applauded, and yet their families be neglected.

It must also be acknowledged that some truly well disposed persons are extremely defective or imprudent in this part of their duty, and therefore it is no wonder that it should not succeed.\* This was plainly the case with Eli, whose sons we are told, made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. However, I must observe, if we allow such to be truly good men, we must at the same time confess that this was a great drawback upon their character; and that they differed very much from the father of the faithful, who had this honorable testimony given him by God, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they serve me." To this we may add, that the child of a good man, who is seen to follow dissolute courses, draws the attention of mankind more upon him, and is much more talked of, than any other person of the same character. Upon the whole, it is certainly of moment, that one who desires to educate his children in the fear of God, should do it in a humble persuasion, that if he is not defective in his own duty, he will not be denied the blessing of success. I could tell you some remarkable instances of parents who seemed to labor in vain for a long time, and yet were so happy as to see a change at last; and of some children in whom even after the death of the parents, the seed which was early sown, and seemed to have been entirely smothered, has at last produced fruit. And indeed no less seems to follow from the promise, annexed to the command, Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Having laid down these preliminaries, I shall say a few things upon the preservation of the health of children. Perhaps you will think this belongs only to the physician: but, though a physician ought to be employed to apply remedies in dangerous cases, any man, with a little reflection, may be allowed to form some judgment as to the ordinary means of their preservation.

\* See Note A.

The fundamental rules for preserving the health of children, are cleanliness, liberty, and free air. By cleanliness, I do not mean keeping the outside of their clothes in a proper condition to be seen before company, nor hindering them from fouling their hands and feet, when they are capable of going abroad ; but keeping them dry in the night time, when young, and frequently washing their bodies with cold water, and other things of the same nature and tendency. The second rule is liberty. All persons, young and old, love liberty : and as far as it does them no harm, it will certainly do them good. Many a free born subject is kept a slave for the first ten years of his life ; and is so much handled and carried about by women in his infancy, that the limbs and other parts of his body, are frequently misshapen, and the whole very much weakened ; besides, the spirits, when under confinement, are generally in a dull and languishing state. The best exercise in the world for children, is to let them romp and jump about as soon as they are able, according to their own fancy. This in the country is best done in the fields ; in the city a well aired room is better than being sent into the streets under the care of a servant, very few of whom are able so far to curb their own inclinations, as to let the children follow theirs, even where they may do it with safety. As to free air, there is nothing more essentially necessary to the strength and growth of animals and plants. If a few plants of any kind are sown in a close confined place, they commonly grow up tall, small, and very weak. I have seen a bed of beans in a garden, under the shade of a hedge or tree, very long and slender, which brought to my mind a young family of quality, trained up in a delicate manner, who if they grow at all, grow to length, but never to thickness.— So universal is this, that I believe a body of a sturdy or well built make, is reckoned among them a coarse and vulgar thing.

There is one thing with regard to servants, that I

would particularly recommend to your attention. All children are liable to accidents; these may happen unavoidably; but do generally arise from the carelessness of servants, and to this they are almost always attributed by parents. This disposes all servants, good or bad, to conceal them from the parents, when they can possibly do it. By this means children often receive hurts in falls or otherwise, which, if known in time, might be easily remedied, but not being known, either prove fatal, or make them lame or deformed. A near relation of mine has a high shoulder and a distorted waist, from this very cause. To prevent such accidents, it is necessary to take all pains possible to acquire the confidence of servants, to convince them of the necessity of concealing nothing. There are two dispositions in parents, which hinder the servants from making discoveries; the first is, when they are very passionate, and apt to storm and rage against their servants, for every real or supposed neglect. Such persons can never expect a confession, which must be followed by such terrible vengeance. The other is, when they are tender-hearted or timorous to excess, which makes them show themselves deeply affected or greatly terrified upon any little accident that befalls their children. In this case, the very best servants are unwilling to tell them through fear of making them miserable. In such cases, therefore, I would advise parents, whatever may be their real opinions, to discover them as little as possible to their servants. Let them still inculcate this maxim, that there should be no secrets concerning children, kept from those most nearly interested in them. And that there may be no temptation to such conduct, let them always appear as cool and composed as possible, when any discovery is made, and be ready to forgive a real fault, in return for a candid acknowledgment.

## LETTER II.

If I mistake not, my last letter was concluded by some remarks on the means of inducing servants to be careful of the safety of children, and ready to discover early and honestly any accidents that might happen to befall them. I must make some farther remarks upon servants. It is a subject of great importance, and inseparably connected with what I have undertaken.— You will find it extremely difficult to educate children properly, if the servants of the family do not conspire in it; and impossible, if they are inclined to hinder it. In such a case, the orders issued, or the method laid down, will be neglected, where that is possible and safe; where neglect is unsafe, they will be unsuccessfully or improperly executed, and many times, in the hearing of the children, they will be either laughed at, or complained of and disapproved. The certain consequence of this is, that children will insensibly come to look upon the directions and cautions of their parents, as unnecessary or unreasonable restraints. It is a known and very common way for servants, to insinuate themselves into the affections of children, by granting them such indulgences as would be refused them by their parents, as well as concealing the faults which ought to be punished by parents; and they are often very successful in training them up to a most dangerous fidelity in keeping the secret.

Such is the evil to be feared, which ought to have been more largely described: let us now come to the remedy. The foundation, to be sure, is, to be very nice and careful in the choice of servants. This is commonly thought to be an extremely difficult matter, and we read frequently in public papers the heaviest complaints of bad servants. I am, however, one of those who think the fault is at least as often in the masters. Good servants may certainly be had, and do generally incline of themselves to be in good families; and when

they find that they are so, do often continue very long in the same, without desiring to remove. You ought, therefore, to be exceedingly scrupulous, and not without an evident necessity, to hire any servant but who seems to be sober and pious. Indeed, I flatter myself, that a pious family is such, as none but one who is either a saint or a hypocrite will be supposed to continue in. If any symptoms of the last character appear, you need not be told what you ought to do.

The next thing, after the choice of servants, is, to make conscience of doing your duty to them, by example, instruction, admonition and prayer. Your fidelity to them will naturally produce in them fidelity to you and yours, and that upon the very best principles. It will excite in them a deep sense of gratitude, and at the same time fill them with sentiments of the highest and most unfeigned esteem. I could tell you of instances (you will however probably recollect some yourself) of servants, who from their living comfortably, and receiving benefits in pious families, have preserved such a regard and attachment to their masters, as have been little short of idolatry. I shall just mention one—A worthy woman in this place, formerly servant to one of my predecessors, and married many years since to a thriving tradesman, continues to have such an undiminished regard to her master's memory, that she cannot speak of him without delight; keeps by her until this hour the newspaper which gives an account of his death and character, and, I believe, would not exchange it for a bill or bond, for a very considerable sum.

But the third and finishing direction with regard to servants, is to convince them, in a cool and dispassionate manner, of the reasonableness of your method of proceeding, that as it is dictated by conscience, it is conducted with prudence. Thence it is easy to represent to them that it is their duty, instead of hindering its success by opposition or negligence, to co-operate with it to the utmost of their power. It is not below

any man to reason in some cases with his servants.— There is a way of speaking to them on such subjects, by which you will lose nothing of your dignity, but even corroborate your authority. While you manifest your firm resolution, never to depart from your right and title to command; you may, notwithstanding, at proper seasons, and by way of condescension, give such general reasons for your conduct, as to show that you are not acting by mere caprice or humor. Nay, even while you sometimes insist, that your command of itself shall be a law, and that you will not suffer it to be disputed, nor be obliged to give a reason for it, you may easily show them that this also is reasonable. They may be told that you have the greatest interest in the welfare of your children, the best opportunity of being apprised as to the means of prosecuting it, and that there may be many reasons for your orders, which it is unnecessary or improper for them to know.

Do not think that all this is excessive refinement, chimerical or impossible. Servants are reasonable creatures, and are best governed by a mixture of authority and reason. They are generally delighted to find themselves treated as reasonable, and will sometimes discover a pride in showing that they understand, as well as find a pleasure in entering into your views. When they find, as they will every day by experience, the success and benefit of a proper method of education, it will give them a high opinion of, and confidence in your judgment; they will frequently consult you in their own affairs, as well as implicitly follow your directions in the management of yours. After all, the very highest instance of true greatness of mind, and the best support of your authority, when you see necessary to interpose it, is not to be opinionative or obstinate, but willing to acknowledge or remit a real mistake, if it is discreetly pointed out, even by those in the lowest stations. The application of these reflections will occur in several of the following branches of this subject.

The next thing I shall mention as necessary, in order to the education of children, is, to establish as soon as possible, an entire and absolute authority over them. This is a part of the subject which requires to be treated with great judgment and delicacy. I wish I may be able to do so. Opinions, like modes and fashions, change continually upon every point; neither is it easy to keep the just middle, without verging to one or other of the extremes. On this, in particular, we have gone in this nation in general, from one extreme to the very utmost limits of the other. In the former age, both public and private, learned and religious education was carried on by mere dint of authority. This, to be sure, was a savage and barbarous method, and was in many instances terrible and disgusting to the youth. Now, on the other hand, not only severity, but authority, is often decried; persuasion, and every soft and gentle method, are recommended, on such terms as plainly lead to a relaxation. I hope you will be convinced that the middle way is best, when you find it recommended by the spirit of God in his word, Prov. xix. 18.—“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.” You will also find a caution against excess in this matter, Col. iii. 21. “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

I have said above, that you should “establish as soon as possible an entire and absolute authority.” I would have it early, that it may be absolute, and absolute that it may be severe. If parents are too long in beginning to exert their authority, they will find the task very difficult. Children, habituated to indulgence for a few of their first years, are exceedingly impatient of restraint, and if they happen to be of stiff or obstinate tempers, can hardly be brought to an entire, at least to a quiet and placid submission; whereas, if they are taken in time, there is hardly any temper but what may be made to yield, and by early habit the subjection becomes quite easy to themselves.

The authority ought also to be absolute, that it may not be severe. The more complete and uniform a parent's authority is, the offences will be more rare, punishment will be less needed, and the more gentle kind of correction will be abundantly sufficient. We see every where about us examples of this. A parent that has once obtained, and knows how to preserve authority, will do more by a look of displeasure, than another by the most passionate words and even blows. It holds universally in families and schools, and even the greater bodies of men, the army and navy, that those who keep the strictest discipline, give the fewest strokes. I have frequently remarked that parents, even of the softest tempers, and who are famed for the greatest indulgence to their children, do, notwithstanding, correct them more frequently, and even more severely, than those who keep up their authority. The reason is plain. Children, by foolish indulgence, become often so forward and petulant in their tempers, that they provoke their easy parents past endurance; so that they are obliged, if not to strike, at least to scold them, in a manner as little to their own credit, as their children's profit.

There is not a more disgusting sight than the impotent rage of a parent who has no authority. Among the lower ranks of people, who are under no restraint from decency, you may sometimes see a father or mother running out into the street after a child who is fled from them, with looks of fury and words of execration; and they are often stupid enough to imagine that neighbors or passengers will approve them in this conduct, though in fact it fills every beholder with horror. There is a degree of the same fault to be seen in persons of better rank, though expressing itself somewhat differently. Ill words and altercations will often fall out between parents and children before company; a sure sign that there is defect of government at home or in private. The parent stung with shame at the misbeha-

viour or indiscretion of the child, desires to persuade the observers that it is not his fault, and thereby effectually convinces every person of reflection that it is.

I would therefore recommend to every parent to begin the establishment of authority much more early than is commonly supposed to be possible: that is to say, from about the age of eight or nine months. You will perhaps smile at this: but I do assure you from experience, that by setting about it with prudence, deliberation, and attention, it may be in a manner completed by the age of twelve or fourteen months. Do not imagine I mean to bid you use the rod at that age; on the contrary, I mean to prevent the use of it in a great measure, and to point out a way by which children of sweet and easy tempers may be brought to such a habit of compliance, as never to need correction at all; and whatever their temper may be, to need much less than upon any other supposition. This is one of my favourite schemes; let me try to explain and recommend it.

Habits in general may be very early formed in children. An association of ideas is, as it were, the parent of habit.\* If then, you can accustom your children to perceive that your will must always prevail over theirs, when they are opposed, the thing is done, and they will submit to it without difficulty or regret. To bring this about, as soon as they begin to show their inclination by desire or aversion, let single instances be chosen now and then (not too frequently) to contradict them. For example, if a child shows a desire to have any thing in his hand that he sees, or has any thing in his hand with which he is delighted, let the parent take it from him, and when he does so, let no consideration whatever make him restore it at that time. Then at a considerable interval, perhaps a whole day is little enough, especially at first, let the same thing be repeated. In the mean time, it must be carefully observed,

\* See Note B.

that no attempt should be made to contradict the child in the intervals. Not the least appearance of opposition, if possible, should be found between the will of the parent and that of the child, except in those chosen cases when the parent must always prevail.

I think it necessary that those attempts should always be made and repeated at proper intervals by the same person. It is also better it should be by the father than the mother or any female attendant, because they will be necessarily obliged, in many cases, to do things displeasing to the child, as in dressing, washing, &c. which spoil the operation; neither is it necessary that they should interpose, for when once a full authority is established in one person, it can easily be communicated to others, as far as is proper. Remember, however, that mother or nurse should never presume to condescend with the child, or show any signs of displeasure at his being crossed; but on the contrary, give every mark of approbation, and of their own submission, to the same person.

This experiment frequently repeated will in a little time so perfectly habituate the child to yield to the parent whenever he interposes, that he will make no opposition. I can assure you from experience, having literally practised this method myself, that I never had a child of twelve months old, but who would suffer me to take any thing from him or her, without the least mark of anger or dissatisfaction; while they would not suffer any other to do so without the bitterest complaints.— You will easily perceive how this is to be extended gradually and universally, from one thing to another, from contradicting to commanding them. But this, and several other remarks upon establishing and preserving authority, must be referred to another letter.

## LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

THE theory laid down in my last letter, for establishing an early and absolute authority over children, is of much greater moment than, perhaps, you will immediately apprehend. There is a great diversity in the temper and disposition of children; and no less in the penetration, prudence and resolution of parents.—From all these circumstances, difficulties arise, which increase very fast as the work is delayed. Some children have naturally very stiff and obstinate tempers, and some have a certain pride, or if you please, greatness of mind, which makes them think it a mean thing to yield. This disposition is often greatly strengthened in those of high birth, by the ideas of their own dignity and importance, instilled into them from their mother's milk. I have known a boy not six years of age, who made it a point of honor not to cry when he was beat, even by his parents. Other children have so strong passions, or so great sensibility, that if they receive correction, they will cry immoderately, and either be, or seem to be, affected to such a degree, as to endanger their health or life. Neither is it uncommon for the parents in such a case to give up the point, and if they do not ask pardon, at least they give very genuine marks of repentance and sorrow for what they have done.

I have said this is not uncommon, but I may rather ask you whether you know any parents at all, who have so much prudence and firmness as not to be discouraged in the one case, or to relent in the other? At the same time it must always be remembered, that the correction is wholly lost which does not produce absolute submission. Perhaps I may say it is more than lost, because it will irritate instead of reforming them, and will instruct or perfect them in the art of overcoming their parents, which they will not fail to manifest on a future

opportunity. It is surprising to think how early children will discover the weak side of their parents, and what ingenuity they will show in obtaining their favor or avoiding their displeasure. I think I have observed a child in treaty or expostulation with a parent, discover more consummate policy at seven years of age, than the parent himself, even when attempting to cajole him with artful evasions and specious promises. On all these accounts, it must be a vast advantage that a habit of submission should be brought on so early, that even memory itself shall not be able to reach back to its beginning. Unless this is done, there are many cases in which, after the best management, the authority will be imperfect; and some in which any thing that deserves that name will be impossible. There are some families, not contemptible either in station or character, in which the parents are literally and properly obedient to their children, are forced to do things against their will, and chidden if they discover the least backwardness to comply. If you know none such, I am sure I do.

Let us now proceed to the best means of preserving authority, and the way in which it ought to be daily exercised. I will trace this to its very source. Whatever authority you exercise over either children or servants, or as a magistrate over other citizens, it ought to be dictated by conscience, and directed by a sense of duty. Passion or resentment ought to have as little place as possible; or rather, to speak properly, though few can boast of having arrived at full perfection, it ought to have no place at all. Reproof or correction given in a rage, is always considered by him to whom it is administered, as the effect of weakness in you, and therefore the demerit of the offence will be either wholly denied or soon forgotten. I have heard some parents often say, that they cannot correct their children unless they are angry; to whom I have usually answered, then you ought not to correct them at all. Every one would be sensible, that for a magistrate to discover

an intemperate rage in pronouncing sentence against a criminal, would be highly indecent. Ought not parents to punish their children in the same dispassionate manner? Ought they not to be at least equally concerned to discharge their duty in the best manner, in the one case as in the other?

He who would preserve his authority over his children, should be particularly watchful of his own conduct. You may as well pretend to force people to love what is not amiable, as to reverence what is not respectable. A decency of conduct, therefore, and dignity of deportment, are highly serviceable for the purpose we have now in view. Lest this, however, should be mistaken, I must put in a caution, that I do not mean to recommend keeping children at too great a distance by a uniform sternness and severity of carriage. This, I think, is not necessary, even when they are young; and it may, to children of some tempers, be very hurtful when they are old. By and by you shall receive from me a quite contrary direction. But by dignity of carriage, I mean parents showing themselves always cool and reasonable in their own conduct; prudent and cautious in their conversation with regard to the rest of mankind; not fretful or impatient, or passionately fond of their own peculiarities; and though gentle and affectionate to their children, yet avoiding levity in their presence. This probably is the meaning of the precept of the ancients, *maxima debetur pueris reverentia*.<sup>\*</sup> I would have them cheerful, yet serene. In short, I would have their familiarity to be evidently an act of condescension. Believe it, my dear sir, that which begets esteem, will not fail to produce subjection.

That this may not be carried too far, I would recommend every expression of affection and kindness to children when it is safe, that is to say, when their behaviour is such as to deserve it. There is no opposi-

<sup>\*</sup> We should be particularly careful of our conduct in the presence of children.

tion at all between parental tenderness and parental authority. They are the best supports to each other. It is not only lawful, but will be of service, that parents should discover the greatest fondness for children in infancy, and make them perceive distinctly with how much pleasure they gratify all their innocent inclinations. This, however, must always be done when they are quiet, gentle, and submissive in their carriage.— Some have found fault with giving them, for doing well, little rewards of sweet-meats and play-things, as tending to make them mercenary, and leading them to look upon the indulgence of appetite as the chief good.— This I apprehend, is rather refining too much: the great point is, that they be rewarded for doing good, and not for doing evil.\* When they are cross and forward, I would never buy peace, but force it. Nothing can be more weak and foolish, or more destructive of authority, than when children are noisy and in an ill humor, to give them or promise them something to appease them. When the Roman emperors began to give pensions and subsidies to the Northern nations to keep them quiet, a man might have foreseen without the spirit of prophecy, who would be master in a little time.— The case is exactly the same with children. They will soon avail themselves of this easiness in their parents, command favours instead of begging them, and be insolent when they should be grateful.

\* The same conduct ought to be uniformly preserved as children advance in years and understanding. Let parents try to convince them how much they have their real interest at heart. Sometimes children will make a request, and receive a hasty or forward denial: yet upon reflection the thing appears not to be unreason-able, and finally it is granted; and whether it be right or wrong, sometimes by the force of importunity, it is extorted. If parents expect either gratitude or submission for favours so ungraciously bestowed, they will

\* See Note C.

find themselves egregiously mistaken. It is their duty to prosecute, and it ought to be their comfort to see, the happiness of their children; and therefore they ought to lay it down as a rule, never to give a sudden or hasty refusal; but when any thing is proposed to them, consider deliberately and fully whether it is proper—and after that, either grant it cheerfully, or deny it firmly.

It is a noble support of authority, when it is really and visibly directed to the most important end. My meaning in this, I hope, is not obscure. The end I consider as most important is, the glory of God in the eternal happiness and salvation of children. Whoever believes in a future state, whoever has a just sense of the importance of eternity to himself, cannot fail to have a like concern for his offspring. This should be his end both in instruction and government; and when it visibly appears that he is under the constraint of conscience, and that either reproof or correction are the fruit of sanctified love, it will give them irresistible force. I will tell you here, with all the simplicity necessary in such a situation, what I have often said in my course of pastoral visitation in families, where there is in many cases, through want of judgment, as well as want of principle, a great neglect of authority. "Use your authority for God, and he will support it. Let it always be seen that you are more displeased at sin than at folly. What a shame is it, that if a child shall, through the inattention and levity of youth, break a dish or a pane of the window, by which you may lose the value of a few pence, you should storm and rage at him with the utmost fury, or perhaps beat him with unmerciful severity; but if he tells a lie, or takes the name of God in vain, or quarrels with his neighbors, he shall easily obtain pardon: or perhaps, if he is reprov'd by others, you will justify him, and take his part."

You cannot easily believe the weight that it gives to family authority, when it appears visibly to proceed

from a sense of duty, and to be itself an act of obedience to God. This will produce coolness and composure in the manner, it will direct and enable a parent to mix every expression of heart-felt tenderness, with the most severe and needful reproofs. It will make it quite consistent to affirm, that the rod itself is an evidence of love, and that it is true of every pious parent on earth, what is said of our Father in heaven:—“Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.” With this maxim in your eye, I would recommend, that solemnity take the place of, and be substituted for severity. When a child for example, discovers a very depraved disposition, instead of multiplying stripes in proportion to the reiterated provocations, every circumstance should be introduced, whether in reproof or punishment, that can either discover the seriousness of your mind, or make an impression of awe and reverence upon his. The time may be fixed before hand, at some distance—on the Lord’s day—his own birth day—with many other circumstances that may be so special that it is impossible to enumerate them. I shall just repeat what you have heard often from me in conversation, that several pious persons made it an invariable custom, as soon as their children could read, never to correct them, till after they had read over all the passages of scripture which command it, and generally accompanied it with prayer to God for his blessing. I know well with what ridicule this would be treated by many, if publicly mentioned; but that does not shake my judgment in the least, being fully convinced it is a most excellent method, and that it is impossible to blot from the minds of children, while they live upon earth, the impressions that are made by these means, or to abate the veneration they will retain for the parents who acted such a part.

Suffer me here to observe to you, that such a plan as the above requires judgment, reflection, and great attention in your whole conduct. Take heed that there be nothing admitted in the intervals that may contradict it. Nothing is more destructive of authority, than frequent disputes and chiding upon small matters. This is often more irksome to children than parents are aware of. It weakens their influence insensibly, and in time makes their opinion and judgment of little weight, if not wholly contemptible. As before I recommended dignity in your general conduct, so in a particular manner, let the utmost care be taken not to render authority cheap, by too often interposing it. There is really too great a risk to be run in every such instance. If parents will be deciding directly, and censuring every moment, it is to be supposed they will be sometimes wrong, and when this evidently appears, it will take away from the credit of their opinion, and weaken their influence, even where it ought to prevail.

Upon the whole, to encourage you to choose a wise plan, and to adhere to it with firmness, I can venture to assure you, that there is no doubt of your success. To subdue a youth after he has been long accustomed to indulgence, I take to be in all cases difficult, and in many impossible; but while the body is tender, to bring the mind to submission, to train up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I know is not impossible: and He who hath given the command, can scarcely fail to follow it with his blessing.

#### LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING now finished what I proposed to say on the means of establishing and preserving authority, I shall proceed to another very important branch of the

subject, and beg your very particular attention to it, viz. example. Do not, however, suppose that I mean to enter on that most beaten of all topics, the influence of example in general, or to write a dissertation on the common saying, that "example teaches better than precept." An able writer, doubtless, might set even this in some new lights, and make it a strong argument with every good man to pay the strictest attention to his visible conduct. What we see every day has a constant and powerful influence on our temper and carriage. Hence arise national characters, and national manners, and every characteristic distinction of age and place. But of this I have already said enough.

Neither is it my purpose to put you in mind of the importance of example to enforce instruction, or of the shamefulness of a man's pretending to teach others what he despises himself. This ought in the strongest manner to be laid before pastors and other public persons, who often defeat habitually by their lives, what they attempt to do occasionally in the execution of their office. If there remains the least suspicion of your being of that character, these letters would have been quite in another strain. I believe there are some persons of very irregular lives, who have so much natural light in their consciences, that they would be grieved or perhaps offended, if their children should tread exactly in their own steps: but even these, and much less others, who are more hardened; can never be expected to undertake or carry on the system of education, we are now endeavouring to illustrate. Suffer me, however, before I proceed, to make one remark; when I have heard of parents who have been watched by their own children, when drunk, and taken care of, lest they should meet with injury or hurtful accidents—or whose intemperate rage and horrid blasphemies, have, without scruple, been exposed both to children and servants—or who, as has been sometimes the case, were scarcely at the pains to conceal their criminal amours:

even from their own offspring—I have often reflected on the degree of impiety in principle, or seariness of conscience, or both united, necessary to support them in such circumstances. Let us leave all such with a mixture of pity and disdain.

By mentioning example, therefore, as an important and necessary branch of the education of children, I have chiefly in view a great number of particulars, which, separately taken, are, or at least are supposed to be, of little moment; yet by their union or frequent repetition, produce important and lasting effects. I have also in view to include all that class of actions, in which there is, or may be, a coincidence between the duties of piety and politeness, and by means of which, the one is incorporated with the other. These are to be introduced under the head of example, because they will appear there to best advantage, and because many of them can hardly be taught or understood in any other way.

This, I apprehend, you will readily approve of, because, though you justly consider religion as the most essential qualification, you mean at the same time that your children should be fitted for an appearance becoming their station in the world. It is also the more necessary, as many are apt to disjoin wholly the ideas of piety and politeness, and to suppose them not only distinct, but incompatible. This is a dangerous snare to many parents, who think there is no medium between the grossest rusticity, and giving away to all the vanity and extravagance of a dissipated life. Persons truly pious have often by their conduct given countenance to this mistake. By a certain narrowness of sentiment and behavior they have become themselves, and rendered their children, unfit for a general intercourse with mankind, or the public duties of an active life.

You know, sir, as much as any man, how contrary my opinion and conduct have been upon this subject.

I cannot help thinking that true religion is not only consistent with, but necessary to the perfection of true politeness. There is a noble sentiment to this purpose illustrated at considerable length in the Port-royal essays, viz. "That worldly politeness is no more than an imitation or imperfect copy of christian charity; being the pretence or outward appearance, of that deference to the judgment, and attention to the interest of others, which a true Christian has as the rule of his life, and the disposition of his heart." I have at present in my mind the idea of certain persons, whom you will easily guess at, of the first quality; one or two of the male, and twice that number, at least, of the female sex, in whom piety and high station are united. What a sweetness and complacency of countenance, what a condescension and gentleness of manners, arising from the humility of the gospel being joined to the refined elegance inseparable from their circumstances in life!

Be pleased to follow me to the other extreme of human society. Let us go to the remotest cottage of the wildest country, and visit the family that inhabits it. If they are pious, there is a certain humanity and good will attending their simplicity, which makes it highly agreeable. There is also a decency in their sentiments, which, flowing from the dictates of conscience, is as pleasing in all respects as the restraint imposed by the rules of good breeding, with which the persons here in view have little opportunity of being acquainted. On the contrary, unbred country people, when without principle, have generally a savageness and brutality in their carriage, as contrary to good manners as to piety itself. No one has a better opportunity of making observations of this kind, than I have from my office and situation; and I can assure you, that religion is the great polisher of the common people. It even enlarges their understanding as to other things. Having been accustomed to exercise their judgment and reflection on religious subjects, they are capable of

talking more sensibly on agriculture, politics, or any common topic of indifferent conversation.

Let me not forget to speak of the middle ranks of life. Here, also, I scruple not to affirm, that whatever sphere a man has been bred in, or attained to, religion is not an injury, but an addition to the politeness of his carriage. They seem indeed to confess their relation to one another, by their reciprocal influence. In promiscuous conversation, as true religion contributes to make men decent or courteous, so true politeness guards them effectually from any outrage against piety or purity. If I were unhappily thrown into mixed or dangerous company, I should not apprehend any thing improper for me to hear from the most wicked man, but from the greatest clown. I have known gentlemen who were infidels in principle, and whose lives, I had reason to believe, were privately very bad, yet in conversation they were guarded, decent and improving; whereas if there come into company a rough, unpolished country gentleman, no man can promise that he will not break out into some profane exclamation or obscene allusion, which it would be wrong to attribute to impiety, so much as to rudeness and want of reflection.

I have been already too long in the introduction, and in giving the reasons for what I propose shall make a part of this branch of the subject, and yet I must make another preliminary remark: there is the greater necessity for uniting piety and politeness in the system of family example, that as piety is by that means inculcated with the greatest advantage, so politeness can scarcely be attained in other way. It is very rare that persons reach a higher degree of politeness, than what they have been formed to in the families of their parents and other near relations. True politeness does not consist in dress, or a few motions of the body, but in a habit of sentiment and conversation: the first may be learned from a master, and in a little time; the last only by a long and constant intercourse with those who

possess, and are therefore able to surmount it? As the difficulty is certainly greater with the female sex, because they have fewer opportunities of being abroad in the world, I shall take an example from among them.

Suppose a man of low birth living in the country, by industry and parsimony has become wealthy, and has a daughter to whom he desires to give a genteel education. He sends her to your city to a boarding school, for the other which is nearer me, you are pleased not to think sufficient for that purpose. She will speedily learn to buy expensive and fashionable clothes, and most probably be in the very height and extravagance of fashion, one of the sure signs of a vulgar taste. She may also, if her capacity is tolerable, get rid of her rustic air and carriage, and if it be better than ordinary, learn to discourse upon whatever topic is then in vogue, and comes in immediately after the weather, which is the beginning of all conversation. But as her residence is only for a time, she returns home; where she can see or hear nothing but as before. Must she not relapse speedily in the same vulgarity of sentiment, and perhaps the same provincial dialect, to which she had been accustomed from her youth? Neither is it impossible that she may just retain as much of the city ceremonial, as by the incongruous mixture, will render her ridiculous. There is but one single way of escape, which we have seen some young women of merit and capacity take, which is to contract an intimacy with persons of liberal sentiments and higher breeding, and be as little among their relations as possible. I have given this description to convince you that it is in their father's house and by the conversation and manners, to which they are there accustomed, that children must be formed to politeness, as well as to virtue. I carry this matter so far, that I think it an disadvantage to be bred too high, as well as too low. I do not desire, and have always declined any opportunity given me of having my children reside long in

families of high rank. I was afraid they would contract an air and manner unsuitable to what was to be their condition the remainder of their lives. I would wish to give my children as just, as noble, and as elegant sentiments as possible, to fit them for rational conversation; but a dress and carriage suited to their station, and not inconsistent with the meekness of the gospel. Though the length of this digression, or explanatory introduction, has made it impossible to say much in this letter on forming children's character and manners by example, before I conclude I will give one direction which is pretty comprehensive. Give the utmost attention to the manner of receiving and entertaining strangers in your family, as well as to your sentiments and expressions with regard to them when they are gone. I am fully persuaded that the plainest and shortest road to real politeness of carriage, and the most amiable sort of hospitality, is to think of others just as a Christian ought, and to express these thoughts with modesty and candor. This will keep you at an equal distance from a surly and morose carriage on the one hand, and a fawning, cringing obsequiousness, or unnecessary compliment and ceremony on the other. As these are circumstances to which children in early life are very attentive, and which occur constantly in their presence, it is of much moment what sentiments they imbibe from the behaviour of their parents. I do not mean only their learning from them an ease and dignity of carriage, or the contrary; but also, some moral or immoral habits of the last consequence. If they perceive you happy and lifted up with the visit or countenance of persons of high rank, solicitous to entertain them properly, submissive and flattering in your manner of speaking to them, vain and apt to boast of your connexion with them: and if, on the contrary, they perceive you hardly civil to persons of inferior station, or narrow circumstances, impatient of their company, and immediately seizing the opportunity of their de-

parture to despise or expose them; will not this naturally lead the young mind to consider riches and high station as the great sources of earthly happiness? Will it not give a strong bias to their whole desires and studies, as well as visibly affect their behaviour to others in social life? Do not think that this is too nice and refined: the first impressions upon young persons, though inconsiderable in themselves, have often a great as well as lasting effect.

44 I remember to have read many years ago, in the archbishop of Cambray's education of a daughter, an advice to parents to let their children perceive that they esteem others, not according to their station or outward splendor, but their virtue and real worth. It must be acknowledged that there are some marks of respect due to men, according to their place in civil life, which a good man would not fail to give them, even for conscience sake. But it is an easy matter, in perfect consistency with this, by mere frequent voluntary intercourse, as well as by our usual manner of speaking, to pay that homage which is due to piety, to express our contempt or indignation at vice, or meanness of every kind. I think it no inconsiderable addition to this remark, that we should be as cautious of estimating happiness as virtue by outward station; and keep at the same distance from envying as from flattering the great.

But what I must particularly recommend to you, is, to avoid that common but detestable custom of receiving persons with courtesy, and all the marks of real friendship in your house; and the moment they are gone, falling upon their character and conduct with unmerciful severity. I am sensible there are some cases, though they are not numerous, in which it may be lawful to say of others behind their back, what it would be at least imprudent or unsafe to say in their own presence. Neither would I exclude parents from the advantage of pointing out to their children the mis-

takes and vices of others, as a warning or lesson of instruction to themselves. Yet as detraction in general is to be avoided at all times; so of all others the most improper season to speak to any man's prejudice, is, after you have just received and treated him in an hospitable manner, as a friend. There is something mean in it, and something so nearly allied to hypocrisy and disingenuousness, that I would not choose to act such a part, even to those whom I would take another opportunity of pointing out to my children, as persons whose conversation they should avoid, and whose conduct they should abhor.

In every station, and among all ranks, this rule is often transgressed; but there is one point in which it is more frequently and more universally transgressed than in any other, and that is by turning the absent into ridicule, for any thing odd or awkward in their behaviour. I am sorry to say that this is an indecousness that prevails in several families of high rank. A man of inferior station, for some particular reason is admitted to their company. He is perhaps not well acquainted with the rules of politeness, and the presence of his superiors, to which he is unaccustomed, increases his embarrassment. Immediately on his departure, a petulant boy or giddy girl will set about mimicking his motions and repeating his phrases, to the great entertainment of the company, who apparently derive much self-satisfaction from a circumstance, in which there is no merit at all. If any person renders himself justly ridiculous, by affecting a character which he is unable to sustain, let him be treated with the contempt he deserves. But there is something very ungenerous in people's treating their inferiors with disdain, merely because the same Providence that made their ancestors great, left the others in a lower sphere.

It has often given me great indignation to see a gentleman or his wife, of real worth, good understanding, but simple manners, despised and ridiculed for a

defect which they could not remedy, and that often by persons the most insignificant and frivolous, who never uttered a sentence in their lives that deserved to be remembered or repeated. But if this conduct is ungenerous in the great, how diverting is it to see the same disposition carried down through all the inferior ranks, and showing itself in a silly triumph of every class over those who are supposed to be below them. I have known many persons, whose station was not superior to mine, take great pleasure in expressing their contempt of *vulgar ideas* and *low life*; and even a tradesman's wife in a city, glorying over the unpolished manners of her country acquaintance.

Upon the whole, as there is no disposition to which young persons are more prone than derision, and few that parents are more apt to cherish—under the idea of its being a sign of sprightliness and vivacity—there is none which a pious and prudent parent should take greater care to restrain by admonition, and destroy by a contrary example.

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#### LETTER V.

LET us now proceed to consider more fully what it is to form children to piety by example. This is a subject of great extent, and, perhaps, of difficulty. The difficulty, however, does not consist either in the abstruseness of the arguments, or uncertainty of the facts upon which they are founded, but in the minuteness or trifling nature of the circumstances, taken separately, which makes them often either wholly unnoticed or greatly undervalued. It is a subject, which, if I mistake not, is much more easily conceived than explained. If you have it constantly in your mind, that your whole visible deportment will powerfully, though insensibly, influence the opinions and future conduct of your

children, it will give a form or color, if I may speak so, to every thing you say or do. There are numberless and nameless instances in which this reflection will make you speak, or refrain from speaking, add, or abstain from, some circumstances of action, in what you are engaged in; nor will this be accompanied with any reluctance in the one case, or constraint in the other.

But I must not content myself with this. My profession gives me many opportunities of observing, that the impression made by general truths, however justly stated or fully proved, is seldom strong or lasting. Let me, therefore descend to practice, and illustrate what I have said by examples. Here again a difficulty occurs. If I give a particular instance it will perhaps operate no farther than recommending a like conduct in circumstances the same, or perhaps perfectly similar. For example, I might say, in speaking to the disadvantage of absent persons, I beseech you never fail to add the reason why you take such liberty, and indeed never take that liberty at all, but when it can be justified upon the principles of prudence, candor and charity. A thing may be right in itself, but children should be made to see why it is right. This is one instance of exemplary caution, but if I were to add a dozen more to it, they would only be detached precepts; whereas I am anxious to take in the whole extent of edifying example. In order to this, let me range or divide what I have to say under distinct heads. A parent who wishes that his example should be a speaking lesson to his children, should order it so as to convince them, that he considers religion as *necessary, respectable, amiable, profitable, and delightful*. I am sensible that some of these characters may seem so nearly allied, as scarcely to admit of a distinction. Many parts of a virtuous conduct fall under more than one of these denominations. Some actions perhaps deserve all the epithets here mentioned, without excep-

tion and without prejudice one of another. But the distinctions seem to me very useful, for there is certainly a class of actions which may be said to belong peculiarly, or at least eminently to each of these different heads. Taking them separately, therefore, will serve to point out more fully the extent of your duty, and to suggest it when it would not otherwise occur, as well as to set the obligation to it in the stronger light.

1. You should in your general deportment, make your children perceive that you look upon religion as absolutely *necessary*. I place this first, because it appears to me first both in point of order and force. I am far from being against taking all pains to show that religion is rational and honorable in itself, and vice the contrary; but I despise the foolish refinement of those, who, through fear of making children mercenary, are for being very sparing of the mention of heaven or hell. Such conduct is apt to make them conceive, that a neglect of their duty is only falling short of a degree of honor and advantage, which, for the gratification of their passions, they are very willing to relinquish: Many parents are much more ready to tell their children such or such a thing is mean, and not like a gentleman, than to warn them that they will thereby incur the displeasure of their Maker. But when the practices are really and deeply oriminal, as in swearing and lying, it is quite improper to rest the matter there. I admit that they are both mean, and that justice ought to be done to them in this respect; but I contend that it should only be a secondary consideration.

Let not human reasonings be put in the balance with divine wisdom. The care of our souls is represented in scripture as the one thing needful. *He* makes a miserable bargain, who gains the whole world and loses his own soul. It is not the native beauty of virtue, or the outward credit of it, or the inward satisfaction arising from it, or even all these combined together, that will be sufficient to change our natures and

govern our conduct; but a deep conviction, that unless we are reconciled to God, we shall without doubt perish everlastingly.

You will say, this is very true and very fit for a pulpit—but what is that class of actions that should impress it habitually on the minds of children? perhaps you will even say, what one action will any good man be guilty of—much more habitual conduct—that can tend to weaken their belief of it! This is the very point which I mean to explain. It is certainly possible that a man may at stated times give out that he looks upon religion to be absolutely necessary, and yet his conduct in many particulars may have no tendency to impress this on the minds of his children. If he suffers particular religious duties to be easily displaced, to be shortened, postponed or omitted, upon the most trifling accounts, depend upon it, this will make religion in general seem less necessary, to those who observe it. If an unpleasant day will keep a man from public worship, when perhaps a hurricane will not keep him from an election meeting—if he chooses to take physic, or give it to his children on the Lord's day, when it could be done with equal ease on the day before or after—if he will more readily allow his servants to pay a visit to their friends on that day than any other, though he has reason to believe they will spend it in feasting and idleness—it will not be easy to avoid suspecting that worldly advantage is what determines his choice.

Take an example or two more on this head. Supposing a man usually to worship God in his family; if he sometimes omits it—if he allows every little business to interfere with it—if company will make him dispense with it, or shift it from its proper season—believe me, the idea of religion being every man's first and great concern is in a good measure weakened, if not wholly lost. It is a very nice thing in religion to know the real connexion between spirit and form; and how far the latter may be dispensed with without

losing the former. The form without the spirit is good for nothing; but on the other hand, the spirit without the form, never yet existed. I am of opinion, that punctual and even scrupulous regularity, in all those duties that occur periodically, is the way to make them easy and pleasant to those who attend them. They also become, like all other habits, in some degree necessary; so that those who have been long accustomed to them, feel an uneasiness in families where they are generally or frequently neglected. I cannot help also mentioning to you, the great danger of paying and receiving visits on the Lord's day, unless when it is absolutely necessary. It is a matter not merely difficult, but wholly impracticable, in such cases, to guard effectually against improper subjects of conversation. Nor is this all, for let the conversation be what it will, I contend that the duties of the family and the closet are fully sufficient to employ the whole time; which must therefore be wasted or misapplied by the intercourse of strangers.

I only further observe, that I know no circumstance from which your opinion of the necessity of religion will appear with greater clearness, or carry in it greater force, than your behavior toward your children, and your treatment of them, in time of dangerous sickness. Certainly there is no time in their whole lives when the necessity appears more urgent, or the opportunity more favorable, for impressing their minds with a sense of the things that belong to their peace. What shall we say then of those parents, who, through fear of alarming their minds, and augmenting their disorder, will not suffer any mention to be made to them of the approach of death, or the importance of eternity? I will relate to you an example of this. A young gentleman of estate in my parish, was taken ill of a dangerous fever in a friend's house at a distance. I went to see him in his illness, and his mother, a widow lady, intreated me not to say any thing alarming to him, and not to pray

with him, but go to prayer in another room, where, she wisely observed, it would have the same effect. The young man himself soon found that I did not act as he had expected, and was so impatient that it became necessary to give him the true reason. On this, he insisted, in the most positive manner, that all restriction should be taken off, which was done. What was the consequence? He was exceedingly pleased and composed; and if this circumstance did not hasten, it certainly neither hindered nor retarded his recovery.

Be pleased to remark, that the young gentleman here spoken of, neither was at that time, nor is yet, so far as I am able to judge, truly religious; and therefore I have formed a fixed opinion, that in this, as in many other instances, the wisdom of man disappoints itself. Pious advice and consolation, if but tolerably administered in sickness, are not only useful to the soul, but serve particularly to calm an agitated mind, to bring the animal spirits to an easy flow, and the whole frame into such a state as will best favor the operation of medicine, or the efforts of the constitution, to throw off or conquer the disease.

Suffer me to wander a little from my subject, by observing to you, that as I do not think the great are to be much envied for any thing, so they are truly and heartily to be pitied for the deception that is usually put upon them by flattery and false tenderness. Many of them are brought up with so much delicacy, that they are never suffered to see any miserable or afflicting object, nor, so far as can be hindered, to hear any affecting story of distress. If they themselves are sick, how many absurd and palpable lies are told them by their friends! and as for physicians, I may safely say, few of them are much conscience bound in this matter. Now, let the success of these measures be what it will, the only fruit to be reaped from them is, to make a poor dying sinner mistake his condition, and vainly dream of earthly happiness, while hastening to the pit of per-

dition. But, as I said before, men are often taken in their own craftiness. It oftentimes happens that such persons, by an ignorant servant, or officious neighbor, or some unlucky accident, suddenly discover their true situation, and the shock frequently proves fatal.—Oh! how much more desirable is it—how much more like the reason of men, as well as the faith of Christians—to consider and prepare for what must inevitably come to pass! I cannot easily conceive any thing more truly noble, than for a person in health and vigor, in honor and opulence, by voluntary reflection to sympathize with others in distress; and by a well founded confidence in divine mercy, to obtain the victory over the fear of death.

2. You ought to live so as to make religion appear *respectable*. Religion is a venerable thing in itself, and it spreads an air of dignity over a person's whole deportment. I have seen a common tradesman, merely because he was a man of true piety and undeniable worth, treated by his children, apprentices and servants, with a much greater degree of deference and submission, than is commonly given to men of superior station, without that character. Many of the same meannesses are avoided, by a gentleman from a principle of honor, and by a good man from a principle of conscience. The first keeps out of the company of common people, because they are below him—the last is cautious of mixing with them, because of that levity and profanity that is to be expected from them. If, then, religion is really venerable when sincere, a respectable conduct ought to be maintained, as a proof of your own integrity, as well as to recommend it to your children. To this add, if you please, that as reverence is the peculiar duty of children to their parents, any thing that tends to lessen it is more deeply felt by them than by others who observe it. When I have seen a parent, in the presence of his child, meanly wrangling with his servant, telling extravagant stories, or otherwise ex-

posing his vavity, credulity or folly, I have felt just the same proportion of sympathy and tenderness for the one, that I did of contempt or indignation at the other.

What has been said, will, in part, explain the errors which a parent ought to shun, and what circumstances he ought to attend to, that religion may appear respectable. All meannesses, whether of sentiment, conversation, dress, manners; or employment, are carefully to be avoided. You will apply this properly to yourself. I may, however, just mention, that there is a considerable difference in all these particulars, according to men's different stations. The same actions are mean in one station, that are not so in another. The thing itself, however, still remains; as there is an order and cleanliness at the table of tradesmen, that is different from the elegance of a gentleman's, or the sumptuousness of a prince's or nobleman's. But to make the matter still plainer by particular examples. I look upon talkativeness and vanity to be among the greatest enemies to dignity. It is needless to say how much vanity is contrary to true religion; and as to the other, which may seem rather an infirmity than a sin, we are expressly cautioned against it, and commanded to be swift to hear, and slow to speak. Sudden anger, too, and loud, clamorous scolding, are at once contrary to piety and dignity. Parents should, therefore, acquire as much as possible, a composure of spirit, and meekness of language; nor are there many circumstances that will more recommend religion to children, when they see that this self command is the effect of principle and a sense of duty.

There is a weakness I have observed in many parents, to show a partial fondness for some of their children, to the neglect, and in many cases approaching to a jealousy or hatred of others. Sometimes we see a mother discover an excessive partiality to a handsome daughter, in comparison of those that are more homely in their figure. This is a barbarity, which would be

truly incredible, did not experience prove that it really exists. One would think they should rather be excited by natural affection, to give all possible encouragement to those who labour under a disadvantage, and bestow every attainable accomplishment to balance the defects of outward form. At other times we see a partiality which cannot be accounted for at all, where the most ugly, peevish, froward child of the whole family, is the favourite of both parents. Reason ought to counteract these errors; but piety ought to extirpate them entirely. I do not stay to mention the bad effects that flow from them, my purpose being only to show the excellence of that character which is exempted from them.

The real dignity of religion will also appear in the conduct of a good man toward his servants. It will point out the true and proper distinction between condescension and meanness. Humility is the very spirit of the gospel. Therefore, hear your servants with patience, examine their conduct with candor, treat them with all the humanity and gentleness that is consistent with unremitted authority: when they are sick, visit them in person, provide remedies for them, sympathize with them, and show them that you do so; take care of their interests; assist them with your counsel and influence to obtain what is their right. But, on the other hand, never make yourself their proper companion: do not seem to taste their society; do not hear their jokes, or ask their news, or tell them yours. Believe me, this will never make you either beloved or esteemed by your servants themselves; and it will greatly derogate from the dignity of true religion in the eyes of your children. Suffer me also to caution you against that most unjust and illiberal practice, of exercising your wit in humorous strokes upon your servants, before company, or while they wait at table. I do not know any thing so evidently mean, that is at the same time so common. It is, I think, just such a cowardly thing as to beat a man who is bound; because the servant, however happy a

repartee might occur to him, is not at liberty to answer; but at the risk of having his bones broken. In this, as in many other particulars, reason, refinement, and liberal manners, teach exactly the same thing with religion, and I am happy in being able to add, that religion is generally the most powerful, as well as the most uniform principle of decent conduct.

I shall have done with this particular, when I have observed, that those who are engaged in public, or what I may call political life, have an excellent opportunity of making religion appear truly respectable. What I mean is, by showing themselves firm and incorruptible, in supporting those measures that appear best calculated for promoting the interest of religion, and the good of mankind. In all these cases, I admire that man who has principles, whose principles are known, and whom every body despairs of being able to seduce, or bring over to the opposite interest. I do not commend furious and intemperate zeal. Steadiness is a much better, and quite a different thing. I would contend with any man who should speak most calmly, but I would also contend with him who should act most firmly. As for your placebo's, your prudent, courtly, compliant gentlemen, whose vote in assembly will tell you where they dined the day before, I hold them very cheap indeed, as you very well know. I do not enter further into this argument, but conclude at this time, by observing, that public measures are always embraced under pretence of principle; and therefore a uniform uncorrupted public character is one of the best evidences of real principle. The free thinking gentry tell us, upon this subject, that "every man has his price." It lies out of my way to attempt refuting them at present, but it is to be hoped there are many whose price is far above their reach. If some of my near relations; who took so much pains to attach me to the interest of evangelical truth, had been governed by court influence in their political conduct, it had not been in

my power to have esteemed their character, or perhaps to have adhered to their instructions. But as things now stand, I have done both from the beginning, and I hope God will enable me by his grace, to continue to do so to the end of life.

## LETTERS

ON

## MARRIAGE.

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### LETTER I.

I OFFER, with some hesitation, a few reflections upon the married state. I express myself thus, because the subject has been so often and so fully treated, and by writers of the first class, that it may be thought nothing now remains to be said, that can merit attention. My only apology is, that what I offer is the fruit of real observation and personal reflection. It is not a copy of any man's writings, but of my own thoughts; and therefore if the sentiments should not be in themselves wholly new, they may possibly appear in a light not altogether common. I shall give you them in the way of aphorisms or observations; and subjoin to each a few thoughts by way of proof or illustration.

1. Nothing can be more contrary to reason or public utility, than the conversation and writings of those who turn matrimony into ridicule; yet it is in many cases, as weakly defended, as it is unjustly attacked.

Those who treat marriage with ridicule, act in direct and deliberate opposition to the order of Providence, and to the constitution of the society of which they are members. The true reason why they are borne with so patiently, is, that the Author of our nature has implanted in us instinctive propensities, which are by much too strong for their feeble attacks. But if we are to estimate the malignity of a man's conduct or sentiments, not from their effect, but from their native ten-

dency, and his inward disposition, it is not easy to imagine any thing more criminal, than an attempt to bring marriage into disesteem. It is plainly an effort not only to destroy the happiness, but to prevent the existence of human nature. A man who continues through life in a single state, ought, in justice, to endeavor to satisfy the public that his case is singular, and that he has some insuperable obstacle to plead in his excuse. If, instead of this, he reasons in defence of his own conduct, and takes upon him to condemn that of others, it is at once incredible and absurd: That is to say, he can scarcely be believed to be sincere. And whether he be sincere or not, he deserves to be detested.

In support of the last part of my remark, let it be observed, that those who write in defence of marriage, usually give such sublime and exalted descriptions, as are not realized in one case of a thousand; and therefore cannot be a just motive to a considerate man. Instead of insisting on the absolute necessity of marriage for the service of the state, and the solid advantages that arise from it, in ordinary cases; they give us a certain refined idea of felicity, which hardly exists any where but in the writer's imagination. Even the Spectator, than whom there is hardly in our language a more just and rational writer, after saying many excellent things in defence of marriage, scarcely ever fails to draw the character of a lady in such terms, that I may safely say not above one that answers the description, is to be found in a parish, or perhaps a country. Now, is it not much better to leave the matter to the force of nature, than to urge it by such arguments as these? Is the manner of thinking induced by such writings, likely to hasten or postpone a man's entering into the marriage state?

There is also a fault I think to be found in almost every writer who speaks in favor of the female sex, that they over-rate the charms of the outward form. This is the case in all romances--a class of writings to which

the world is very little indebted.\*—The same thing may be said of plays, where the heroine for certain, and ten all the ladies that are introduced, are represented as inimitably beautiful. Even Mr. Addison himself has his admirable description of *Martia*, which he put into the mouth of *Juba*, though it begins with,

“’Tis not a set of features or complexion,” &c.

yet could not help inserting

“True she is fair; Oh, how divinely fair!”

Now I apprehend this is directly contrary to what should be the design of every moral writer. Men are naturally too apt to be carried away with the admiration of a beautiful face. Must it not, therefore, contribute to them in this error, when beauty is made an essential part of every amiable character? The preference of writers pretend to give to the mental qualities, but but a little way to remedy the evil. If they are not separated in the description, wherever men find one, they will presume upon the other. But is this according to truth, or agreeable to experience? What vast numbers of the most valuable women are to be found, who are by no means “divinely fair?” Are they all to be neglected then? Or is it not certain, from experience, that there is not a single quality, on which matrimonial happiness depends so little, as outward form? Every other quality that is good, will go a certain length to atone for what is bad; as, for example, if a woman is active and industrious in her family, will make a husband bear with more patience a languor of countenance, or fretfulness of temper, than in themselves disagreeable. But (always supposing the honey-moon to be over) I do not think that beauty atones in the least degree for any bad quality whatever; it is, on the contrary, an aggravation of them, being considered as a breach of faith, or deception, holding out a false signal.

\* See Note A.

2. In the married state in general, there is not so much happiness as young lovers dream of; nor is there by far so much unhappiness, as loose authors universally suppose.

The first part of this aphorism will probably be easily admitted. Before mentioning, however, the little I mean to say upon it, I beg leave to observe, that it would be quite wrong to blame the tenderness and fervency of affection, by which the sexes are drawn to one another, and that generous devotedness of hearts which is often to be seen on one, and sometimes on both sides. This is nature itself; and when under the restraint of reason, and government of prudence, may be greatly subservient to the future happiness of life. But there is certainly an extravagance of sentiment and language on this subject, that is at once ridiculous in itself, and the proper cause, in due time, of wretchedness and disappointment.

Let any man, who has outlived these sensations himself, and has leisure to be amused, dip a little into the love songs that have been composed and published from Anacreon to the present day, and what a fund of entertainment will he find provided for him! The heathen gods and goddesses are the standing and lawful means of celebrating the praises of a mistress before whom, no doubt, Venus for beauty, and Minerva for wisdom, must go for nothing. Every image in nature has been called up to heighten our idea of female charms—the paleness of the lily, the freshness of the rose, the blush of the violet, and the vermilion of the peach. This is even still nothing. One of the most approved topics of a love-sick writer is, that all nature fades and mourns at the absence of his fair, and puts on a new bloom at her approach. All this, we know well, has place only in his imagination; for nature proceeds quietly in her course, without minding him and his charmer in the least. But we are not yet done.—The glory of the heavenly orbs, the lustre of the sun

himself, and even the joys of heaven, are frequently and familiarly introduced, to express a lover's happiness or hopes. Flames, darts, arrows, and lightning from a female eye, have been expressions as old at least as the art of writing, and are still in full vogue. Some of these we can find no other fault with than that they are a little extravagant; but, I confess I have sometimes been surpris'd at the choice of lightning, because it is capable of a double application, and may put us in mind that some wives have lightning in their eyes sufficient to terrify a husband, as well as the maids have to consume a lover.

Does not all this plainly show, that young persons are apt to indulge themselves with romantic expectations of a delight, both extatic and permanent, such as never did and never can exist? And does it not at the same time expose matrimony to the scoffs of libertines, who, knowing that these raptures must soon come to an end, think it sufficient to disparage the state itself, that some inconsiderate persons have not met with in it, what it was never intended to bestow?

I proceed, therefore, to observe that there is not, by far, so much unhappiness in the married state in general, as loose authors universally suppose. I choose to state the argument in this manner, because it is much more satisfying, than drawing pictures of the extremes on either hand. It signifies very little, on the one hand, to describe the state of a few persons distinguished for understanding, successful in life, respected by the public, and dear to one another; or on the other, those hateful brawls which, by and by, produce an advertisement in the news-papers, "Whereas Sarah, the wife of the subscriber, has eloped from his bed and board," &c. If we would treat of this matter with propriety, we must consider how it stands among the bulk of mankind. The proposition, then, I mean to establish, is, that there is much less unhappiness in the matrimonial state than is often apprehended, and indeed as much real comfort as there is any ground to expect.

To support this truth, I observe, that taking mankind throughout, we find much more satisfaction and cheerfulness in the married than in the single state. In proportion to their numbers, I think of those that are grown up to maturer years, or past the meridian of life, there is a much greater degree of peevishness and discontent, whimsicalness and peculiarity, in the last than in the first. The prospect of continuing single to the end of life, narrows the mind and closes the heart. I knew an instance of a gentleman of good estate, who lived single till he was past forty, and he was esteemed by all his neighbors not only frugal, but mean, in some parts of his conduct. This same person afterwards marrying and having children, every body observed that he became liberal and open-hearted on the change, when one would have thought he had a stronger motive than before, to save and hoard up. On this a neighbor of his made a remark, as a philosopher, that every ultimate passion is stronger than an intermediate one; that a single person loves wealth immediately, and on its own account; whereas a parent can scarcely help preferring his children before it, and valuing it only for their sake.

This leads me to observe, that marriage must be the source of happiness, as being the immediate cause of many other relations, the most interesting and delightful. I cannot easily figure to myself any man who does not look upon it as the first of earthly blessings, to have children, to be the objects of attachment and care when they are young, and to inherit his name and substance, when he himself must, in the course of nature, go off the stage. Does not this very circumstance give unspeakable dignity to each parent in the other's eye, and serve to increase and confirm that union, which youthful passion, and less durable motives, first occasioned to take place? I rather choose to mention this argument, because neither exalted understandings, nor ele-

gance of manners, are necessary to give it force. It is felt by the peasant as well as by the prince; and, if we believe some observers on human life, its influence is not less, but greater in the lower than in the higher ranks.

Before I proceed to any further remarks, I must say a few words, to prevent or remove a deception, which very probably leads many into error on this subject.—It is no other than a man's supposing that what would not give him happiness, cannot give it to another. Because, perhaps, there are few married women, whose persons, conversation, manners, and conduct, are altogether to his taste, he takes upon him to conclude, that the husbands, in these numerous instances, must lead a miserable life. Is it needful to say any thing to show the fallacy of this? The tastes and dispositions of men are as various as their faces; and therefore what is displeasing to one, may be, not barely tolerable, but agreeable to another. I have known a husband delighted with his wife's fluency and poignancy of speech in scolding her servants, and another who was not able to bear the least noise of the kind with patience.

Having obviated this mistake, it will be proper to observe, that through all the lower and middle ranks of life, there is generally a good measure of matrimonial or domestic comfort, when their circumstances are easy, or their estate growing. This is easily accounted for, not only from their being free from one of the most usual causes of peevishness and discontent, but because the affairs of a family are very seldom in a thriving state, unless both contribute their share of diligence; so that they have not only a common happiness to share, but a joint merit in procuring it. Men may talk in raptures of youth and beauty, wit and sprightliness, and a hundred other shining qualities; but after seven years of habitation, not one of them is to be compared to good family management, which is seen at every meal, and felt every hour in the husband's purse. To this, however, I must apply the caution given above. Such a wife

may not appear quite killing to a stranger on a visit. There are a few distinguished examples of women of the first rate understandings, who have all the elegance of court breeding in the parlour, and all the frugality and activity of a farmer's wife in the kitchen; but I have not found this to be the case in general. I learned from a certain author many years ago, that "a great care of household affairs, generally spoils the free, careless air of a fine lady;" and I have seen no reason to disbelieve it since.

Once more, so far as I have been able to form a judgment, wherever there is a great and confessed superiority of understanding on one side, with some good nature on the other, there is domestic peace. It is of little consequence whether the superiority be on the side of the man or woman, provided the ground of it be manifest. The fiercest contentions are generally where the just title to command is not quite clear. I am sensible I may bring a little ridicule upon myself here. It will be alledged that I have clearly established the right of female authority over that species of husbands, known by the name of hen-peckt. But I beg that the nature of my position may be attentively considered. I have said, "Wherever there is a great and confessed superiority of understanding." Should not a man comply with reason, when offered by his wife, as well as any body else? Or ought he to be against reason, because his wife is for it? I therefore take the liberty of rescuing from the number of hen-peckt, those who ask the advice, and follow the direction of their wives in most cases, because they are really better than any they could give themselves—reserving those only under the old denomination, who, through fear, are subject, not to reason, but to passion and ill-humor. I shall conclude this observation with saying, for the honor of the female sex, that I have known a greater number of instances of just and amiable conduct, in case of a great inequality of judgment, when the advantage was on the side of the

woman, than when it was on the side of the man. I have known many women of judgment and prudence, who conducted with the highest respect and decency, towards weak and capricious husbands : But not many men of distinguished abilities, who did not betray, if not contempt, at least great indifference, towards weak or trifling wives.

Some other things I had intended to offer upon this subject, but as the letter has been drawn out to a greater length than I expected, and they will come in with at least equal propriety under other maxims, I conclude at present.

## LETTER II.

3. It is by far the safest and most promising way to marry with a person nearly equal in rank, and perhaps in age ; but if there is to be a difference, the risk is much greater when a man marries below his rank; than when a woman descends from hers.

The first part of this maxim has been in substance advanced by many writers, and therefore little will need to be said upon it. I must, however, explain its meaning, which is not always clearly comprehended. By equality in rank, must be understood equality not in fortune, but in education, taste and habits of life.\* I do not call it inequality, when a gentleman of estate marries a lady who has been from the beginning brought up in the same class of society with himself, and is, in every respect, as elegant in her sentiments and manners; but by some incidents, that perhaps have lately happened, is unequal to him in point of fortune. I know that from the corrupt and selfish views which prevail so generally in the world, a marriage of this kind is often considered as unequal, and an act of great condescen-

\* See Note R.

sion on the part of the man ; but the sentiment is illiberal and unjust. In the same manner, when a lady marries a gentleman of character and capacity, and who is in every respect suitable to her, except that his estate is not equal to what she might expect, I do not call it unequal. It is true, parents too frequently prefer circumstances to character, and the female friends of a lady at her own disposal, may say in such a case, that she has made a poor bargain. But taking it still for granted that the fortune only is unequal, I affirm there is nothing in this circumstance that forebodes future dissension, but rather the contrary. An act of generosity never produced a fretful disposition in the person who did it, nor is it reasonable to suppose it will often have that effect on the one who receives it.

The importance, therefore, of equality, arises singly from this circumstance—that there is a great probability, that the turn, taste, employments, amusements; and general carriage of the persons so intimately joined, and so frequently together, will be mutually agreeable.

The occasion or motive of first entering into the marriage contract, is not of so much consequence to the felicity of the parties, as what they find after they are fairly engaged, and cannot return back. When I visit a new country, my judgment of it may be influenced a little, but neither much nor long, by flattering hopes or hideous apprehensions, entertained before actual trial. It has often been said that dissensions between married people, generally take their rise from very inconsiderable circumstances ; to which I will add, that this is most commonly the case among persons of some station, sense, and breeding. This may seem odd, but the difficulty is easily solved. Persons of this character have a delicacy on the subject of so close a union, and expect a sweetness and compliance in matters that would not be minded by the vulgar ; so that the

smallness of the circumstance appears in their eye an aggravation of the offence. I have known a gentleman of rank and his lady part for life, by a difference arising from a thing said at supper, that was not so much as observed to be an impropriety by three fourths of the company.

This, then, is what I apprehend occasions the importance of equality in rank. Without this equality, they do not understand one another sufficiently for continual intercourse.—Many causes of difference will arise, not only sudden and unexpected, but impossible to be foreseen, and therefore not provided against. I must also observe, that an explication or expostulation, in the cases here in view, is more tedious and difficult than in any other—perhaps more dangerous and uncertain in the issue. How shall the one attempt to convince the other of an incongruity of behaviour, in what all their former ideas have taught them to believe as innocent or decent, sometimes even laudable? The attempt is often considered as an insult on their former station, and instead of producing concord, lays the foundation of continual solicitude, or increasing aversion. A man may be guilty of speaking very unadvisedly through intemperate rage, or may perhaps come home flustered with liquor, and his wife, if prudent, may find a season for mentioning them, when the admonition will be received with calmness, and followed by reformation; but if she discovers her displeasure at rusticity of carriage, or meanness of sentiment, I think there is little hope that it will have any effect that is good. The habit cannot be mended; yet he may have sagacity enough to see that the wife of his bosom has despised him in her heart.

I am going to put a case. Suppose that the late ———, who acquired so vast an estate, had married a lady of the first rank, education, and taste, and that she had learned a few anecdotes of his public speeches

—that he spoke of *this* *here* report of *that* *there* committee—or of a man's being *drowned* on the coast of the *Island* of Pennsylvania. Now, I desire to know how *she* could help *pouting*, and being a little out of *humor*, especially if he came home full of inward satisfaction, and was honestly of opinion that he spoke *equally as well as any other* in the house? That things may be fairly balanced, I will put another case. Suppose a gentleman of rank, literature and taste, has married a tradesman's daughter for the sake of her fortune, or from desire, which he calls love, kindled by an accidental glance of a fresh colored young woman: Suppose her never to have had the opportunity of being in what the world calls good company, and in consequence to be wholly ignorant of the modes that prevail there: Suppose, at the same time, that her understanding has never been enlarged by reading, or conversation. In such a case, how soon must passion be sated, and what innumerable causes of shame and mortification must every day produce. I am not certain whether the difficulty will be greater, if she continues the manners of her former, or attempts to put on those of her present station. If any man thinks that he can easily preserve the esteem and attention due to a wife in such circumstances, he will probably be mistaken, and no less so if he expects to communicate refinement by a few lessons, or prevent misbehavior by fretfulness, or peevish and satirical remarks.

But let me come now to the latter part of the maxim, which I do not remember to have ever met with in any author—that there is a much greater risk when a man marries below his rank, than when a woman marries below hers. As to the matter of fact, it depends entirely on the justness and accuracy of my observations, of which every reader must be left to judge for himself. I must, however, take notice, that when I speak of a woman marrying below her station, I have

no view at all to include what there have been some examples of—a gentleman's daughter running away with her father's footman, or a lady of quality with a player; this is, in every instance, an act of pure lasciviousness; and is, without any exception that ever I heard of, followed by immediate shame and future beggary.—It has not, however, any more connexion with marriage, than the transactions of a brothel, or the memoirs of a kept mistress. The truth is, elopements in general are things of an eccentric nature: And when I hear of one, I seldom make any further inquiry after the felicity of the parties. But when marriages are contracted with any degree of deliberation, if there be a difference in point of rank, I think it is much better the advantage should be on the woman's side than on the man's; that is to say, marriages of the first kind are usually more happy than the other.

Supposing, therefore, the fact to be as now stated, what remains for me is, to investigate a little the causes of it, and point out those circumstances in human tempers and characters, or in the state of society, which give us reason to expect that it will, in most cases, turn out so. Whenever any effect is general, in the moral as well as natural world, there must be some permanent cause, or causes, sufficient to account for it. Shall we assign as one reason for it, that there is, taking them complexly, more of real virtue and commanding principle in the female sex than in the male, which makes them, upon the whole, act a better part in the married relation? I will not undertake to prove this opinion to be true, and far less will I attempt to refute it or show it to be false. Many authors of great penetration have affirmed it; and doubtless taking virtue to be the same thing with sound faith and good morals, much may be said in its favor. But there does not appear to me so great a superiority in this respect, as fully to account for the effect in question. Besides, the advan-

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tages which men have in point of knowledge, from the usual course of education, may perhaps balance the superiority of women, in point of virtue; for none surely can deny, that matrimonial discord may not arise from ignorance and folly, as well as vice. Allowing, therefore, as much influence to this cause, as every one from his experience and observation may think its due, I beg leave to suggest some other things which certainly do co-operate with it, and augment its force.

1. It is much easier, in most cases, for a man to improve or rise after marriage to a more elegant taste in life, than a woman.\* I do not attribute this in the least to superior natural talents, but to the more frequent opportunities he has of seeing the world, and conversing with persons of different ranks. There is no instance in which the sphere of business and conversation is not more extensive to the husband than the wife; and therefore, if a man is married to one of taste superior to his own, he may draw gradually nearer to her, though she descend very little. I think I can recollect more instances than one of a man in business married at first to his equal, and, on a second marriage, to one of higher breeding, when not only the house and family, but the man himself, was speedily in a very different style. I can also recollect instances, in which married persons rose together to an opulent estate from almost nothing, and the man improved considerably in politeness, or fitness for public life, but the woman not at all. The old gossips and the old conversation continued to the very last. It is not even without example, that a plain woman, raised by the success of her husband, becomes impatient of the society forced upon her, takes refuge in the kitchen, and spends most of her agreeable hours with her servants, from whom, indeed, she differs nothing but in name. A certain person in a trading city in Great Britain,

\* See Note C.

from being merely a mechanic, turned dealer, and in a course of years acquired an immense fortune. He had a strong desire that his family should make a figure, and spared no expense in purchasing velvets, silks, laces, &c. but at last he found that it was lost labor, and said very truly, that all the money in Great Britain would not make his wife and his daughters *ladies*.

2. When a woman marries below her rank, I think it is, generally speaking, upon better motives than when a man marries below his, and therefore no wonder that it should be attended with greater comfort. I find it inserted in several papers of the Spectator, and I think it must be admitted by every impartial observer, that women are not half so much governed, in their love attachments, by beauty, or outward form, as men. A man of a very mean figure, if he has any talents, joined to a tolerable power of speech, will often make himself acceptable to a very lovely woman. It is also generally thought that a woman rates a man pretty much according to the esteem he is held in by his own sex: if this is the case, it is to be presumed that when a man succeeds in his addresses to a lady of higher breeding than his own, he is not altogether void of merit, and therefore will not in the issue disgrace her choice. This will be confirmed by reflecting that many such marriages must be with persons of the learned professions: it is past a doubt, that literature refines as well as enlarges the mind, and generally renders a man capable of appearing with tolerable dignity, whatever have been the place or circumstances of his birth. It is easy to see that the reverse of all this must happen upon the other supposition: When a man marries below his rank, the very best motive to which it can be attributed, is an admiration of her beauty. Good sense, and other more valuable qualities, are not easily seen under the disguise of low-breeding, and when they are seen, have seldom justice done them. Now as beauty

is much more fading than life, and fades sooner in a husband's eye than any other, in a little time nothing will remain but what tends to create uneasiness and disgust.

3. The possession of the graces, or taste and elegance of manners, is a much more important part of a female than a male character. Nature has given a much greater degree of beauty and sweetness to the outward form of women than of men, and has by that means pointed out wherein their several excellencies should consist. From this, in conjunction with the former observation, it is manifest, that the man who finds in his wife a remarkable defect in point of politeness, or the art of pleasing, will be much more disappointed than the woman who finds a like defect in her husband. Many do not form any expectations of refinement in their husbands, even before marriage: not a few, if I am not much mistaken, are rather pleased than otherwise, to think that any one who enters the house, perceives the difference between the elegance of the wife, and the plainness, not to say the awkwardness of the husband. I have observed this, even down to the lowest rank. A tradesman or country farmer's wife will sometimes abuse and scold her husband for want of order or cleanliness, and there is no mark of inward malice or ill-humor in that scolding, because she is sensible it is her proper province to be accurate in that matter. I think also, that the husband in such cases is often gratified instead of being offended, because it pleases him to think that he has a wife that does just as she ought to do. But take the thing the other way, and there is no rank of life, from the prince to the peasant, in which the husband can take pleasure in a wife more awkward or more slovenly than himself.

To sum up the whole, if some conformity or similarity of manners is of the utmost consequence to matrimonial comfort—if taste and elegance are of more con-

sequence to the wife than the husband, according to their station:—and, if it is more difficult for her to acquire it after marriage, if she does not possess it before—I humbly conceive I have fully supported my proposition, that there is a much greater risk in a man's marrying below his station, than a woman's descending from hers.

### LETTER III.

I HAVE not yet done with the maxims on matrimonial happiness; therefore observe,

4. That it is not by far of so much consequence; what are the talents, temper, turn of mind, character, or circumstances of both or either of the parties, as that there be a certain suitableness or correspondence of those of the one to those of the other.

Those essay writers, who have taken human nature and life as their great general subject, have many remarks on the causes of infelicity in the marriage union, as well as many striking and beautiful pictures of what would be just, generous, prudent, and dutiful conduct, or their contraries, in particular circumstances. Great pains have been taken also to point out what ought to be the motives of choice to both parties, if they expect happiness. Without entering into a full detail of what has been said upon this subject, I think the two chief competitors for preference, have generally been—good nature and good sense. The advocates for the first say, that as the happiness of married people must arise from a continual interchange of kind offices, and from a number of small circumstances, that occur every hour, a gentle and easy disposition—a temper that is happy

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in itself—must be the cause of happiness to another. The advocates for good sense say, that the sweetness of good nature is only for the honey-moon; that it will either change its nature, and become sour by long standing, or become wholly insipid; so that if it do not generate hatred, it will at least incur indifference or contempt; whereas good sense is a sterling quality, which cannot fail to produce and preserve esteem—the true foundation of rational love.

If I may, as I believe most people do, take the prevailing sentiments within the compass of my own reading and conversation, for the general opinion, I think it is in favor of good sense. And if we must determine between these two, and decide which of them is of the most importance when separated from the other, I have very little to say against the public judgment. But in this as in many other cases, it is only imperfect and general, and often ill understood and falsely applied. There is hardly a more noted saying than that a man of sense will never use a woman ill, which is true or false according to the meaning that is put upon the phrase, *using a woman ill*. If it be meant, that he will not so probably beat his wife, as a fool; that he will not scold or curse her, or treat her with ill manners before company, or indeed that he will not so probably keep a continual wrangling, either in public or private, I admit that it is true. Good sense is the best security against indecorums of every kind. But if it be meant, that such a man will not make his wife in any case truly miserable, I utterly deny it. On the contrary, there are many instances in which men make use of their sense itself, their judgment, penetration, and knowledge of human life, to make their wives more exquisitely unhappy. What shall we say of those, who can sting them with reflections so artfully guarded that it is impossible not to feel them, and yet almost as impossible with propriety to complain of them?

I must also observe, that a high degree of delicacy in sentiment, although this is the prevailing ingredient when men attempt to paint refined felicity in the married state, is one of the most dangerous qualities that can be mentioned. It is like certain medicines that are powerful in their operation, but at the same time require the utmost caution and prudence, as to the time and manner of their being applied.—A man or woman of extreme delicacy is a delightful companion for a visit or a day. But there are many characters which I would greatly prefer in a partner, or a child, or other near relation, in whose permanent happiness I felt myself deeply concerned. I hope no body will think me so clownish as to exclude sentiment altogether. I have declared my opinion upon this subject, and also my desire that the woman should be the more refined of the two. But I adhere to it, that carrying this matter to an extreme is of the most dangerous consequence. Your high sentimentalists form expectations which it is impossible to gratify. The gallantry of courtship, and the complaisance of general conversation in polite circles, seem to promise what the downright reality of matrimony cannot afford.

I will here relate a case that fell within my observation. A person of noble birth had been some years married to a merchant's daughter of immense fortune, by which his estate had been saved from ruin. Her education had been as good as money could make it, from her infancy: so that she knew every mode of high life as well as he. They were upon a visit to a family of equal rank, intimately connected with the author of this letter. The manner of the man was distinguished and exemplary. His behavior to his lady was with the most perfect delicacy. He spoke to her as often as to any other, and treated her not only with the same complacency, but with the same decency and reserve, that he did other ladies. To this he added

the most tender solicitude about her not taking cold, about her place in the chamber, and her covering when going abroad, &c. &c. After their departure, the whole family they had left, excepting one, were two or three days expatiating on the beauty of his behavior. One lady in particular said at last, "Oh! how happy a married woman have I seen." The single dissenter, who was an elderly woman, then said, "Well; you may be right; but I am of a different opinion: I do not like so perfect and finished a ceremonial between persons who have been married five or six years at least. I observed that he did every thing that he ought to have done, and likewise that she received his civilities with much dignity and good manners, but with great gravity. I would rather have seen him less punctual and her more cheerful. If, therefore, that lady is as happy in her heart as you suppose, I am mistaken; that is all. But if I were to make a bet upon it, I would bet as much upon the tradesman and his wife, according to the common description, walking to church, the one three or four yards before the other, and never looking back." What did time discover? That nobleman and his lady parted within two years, and never re-united.

Let me now establish my maxim, that it is not the fine qualities of both or either party that will insure happiness, but that the one be suitable to the other. By their being suitable, is not to be understood their being both of the same turn; but that the defects of the one be supplied or submitted to by some correspondent quality of the other. I think I have seen many instances, in which gravity, severity, and even moroseness in a husband, where there has been virtue at bottom, have been so tempered with meekness, gentleness and compliance in the wife, as has produced real and lasting comfort to both. I have also seen some instances, in which sourness, and want of female softness in a woman, have been so happily compensated by easiness

and good humor in a husband, that no appearance of wrangling or hatred was to be seen in a whole life. I have seen multitudes of instances, in which vulgarity and even liberal freedom, not far from brutality in a husband, has been borne with perfect patience and serenity by a wife, who, by long custom, had become, as it were, insensible of the impropriety, and yet never inattentive to her own behavior.

As a farther illustration, I will relate two or three cases from real life, which have appeared to me the most singular in my experience. I spent some time, many years ago, in the neighborhood of, and frequent intercourse with, a husband and his wife in the following state. She was not handsome, and at the same time was valetudinary, fretful and peevish—constantly talking of her ailments, dissatisfied with every thing about her, and, what appeared most surprising, she vented these complaints most when her husband was present. He, on the other hand, was most affectionate and sympathising, constantly upon the watch for any thing that could gratify her desires; or alleviate her distresses. The appearance for a while surprized me, and I thought he led the life of a slave. But at last I discovered that there are two ways of complaining, not readily distinguished by common observers: The one is an expression of confidence, and the other of discontent. When a woman opens all her complaints to her husband, in full confidence that he will sympathize with her, and seeking the relief which such sympathy affords, taking care to keep to the proportion which experience has taught her, will not be disagreeable to him; it frequently increases instead of extinguishing affection.

Take another case as follows: Syrisca was a young woman the reverse of beauty. She got her living in a trading city, by keeping a small shop, not of the millinery kind, which is nearly allied to elegance and high life, but of common grocery goods, so that the poor were her chief customers.

By the death of a brother in the East Indies, she came suddenly and unexpectedly to a fortune of many thousand pounds. The moment this was known, a knight's lady in the neighborhood destined Syrisca as a prize for Horatio, her own brother, of the military profession, on half pay, and rather past the middle of life. For this purpose she made her a visit, carried her to her house, assisted, no doubt, in bringing home and properly securing her fortune; and in as short a time as could well be expected, completed her purpose. They lived together on an estate in the country, often visited by the great relations of the husband. Syrisca was good natured and talkative, and therefore often betrayed the meanness of her birth and education, but was not sensible of it. Good will supplied the place of good breeding with her, and she did not know the difference. Horatio had generosity and good sense, treated her with the greatest tenderness, and having a great fund of facetiousness and good humor, acquired a happy talent of giving a lively or sprightly turn to every thing said by his wife, or diverting the attention of the company to other subjects. The reader will probably say, he took the way that was pointed out by reason, and was most conducive to his own comfort. I say so too; but at the same time affirm, that there are multitudes who could not, or would not have followed his example.

I give one piece of history more; but with some fear, that nice readers will be offended, and call it a caricature. However, let it go. Agrestis was a gentleman of an ancient family, but the estate was almost gone; little more of it remained but what he farmed himself, and indeed his habitation did not differ from that of a farmer, but by having an old tower and battlements. He had either received no education, or had been incapable of profiting by it, for he was the most illiterate person I ever knew, who kept any com-

pany. His conversation did not rise even to politics, for he found such insuperable difficulty in pronouncing the names of generals, admirals, countries, and cities, constantly occurring in the newspapers, that he was obliged to give them up altogether. Of ploughs, waggons, cows, and horses, he knew as much as most men: What related to these, with the prices of grain, and the news of births and marriages in the parish and neighborhood, completed the circle of his conversation.

About the age of forty he married Lenia, a young woman of a family equal to him in rank, but somewhat superior in wealth. She knew a little more of the strain of fashionable conversation, and not a whit more of any thing else. She was a slattern in her person, and of consequence there was neither cleanliness nor order in the family. They had many children; she bore him twins twice—a circumstance of which he was very proud, and frequently boasted of it in a manner not over delicate, to those who had not been so fortunate in that particular. They were both good natured and hospitable; if a stranger came he was made heartily welcome, though sometimes a little incommoded by an uproar among the children and the dogs, when striving about the fire in a cold day; the noise was, however, little less dissonant than the clamours of Agrestis himself, when rebuking the one, or chastening the other, out of complaisance to his guests. The couple lived many years in the most perfect amity by their being perfectly suitable the one to the other; and I am confident not a woman envied the wife, nor a man the husband, while the union lasted.

It is very easy to see from these examples, the vast importance of the temper and manner of the one, being truly suitable to those of the other. If I had not given histories enough already, I could mention some in which each party I think could have made some other man or woman perfectly happy, and yet they never

could arrive at happiness, or indeed be at peace with one another. Certainly, therefore, this should be an object particularly attended to in courtships, or while marriage is on the *tapis*, as politicians say.

If I look out for a wife, I ought to consider, not whether a lady has fine qualities for which she ought to be esteemed or admired; but whether she has such a deportment as I shall take particular delight in, and such a taste as gives reason to think she will take delight in me: I may pitch too high, as well as too low, and the issue may be equally unfortunate. Perhaps I shall be told there lies the great difficulty. How shall we make this discovery? In time of youth and courtship, there is so much studied attention to please, from interested views, and so much restraint from fashion and the observation of others, that it is hard to judge how they will turn out afterwards.

This I confess to be a considerable difficulty, and at the same time greatest upon the man's side. The man being generally the eldest, his character, temper and habits may be more certainly known. Whereas there are sometimes great disappointments on the other side; and that happily both ways. I am able just now to recollect one or two instances of giddy and foolish, nay, of idle, lazy, drowsy girls, who, after marriage, felt themselves interested, and became as spirited and active heads of families, as any whatever; and also some of the most elegant and exemplary, who, after marriage, fell into a languid stupidity, and contracted habits of the most odious and disgusting kind. These instances, however, are rare, and those who will take the pains to examine, may in general obtain satisfaction. It is also proper to observe, that if a man finds it difficult to judge of the temper and character of a woman, he has a great advantage on his side, that the right of selection belongs to him. He may ask any woman he pleases, after the most mature deliberation, and need

ask no other; whereas a woman must make the best choice she can, of those only who do or probably will ask her. But with these reflections in our view, what shall we say of the inconceivable folly of those, who, in time of courtship, are every now and then taking offence, and sometimes very great submissions are necessary to make up the breaches? If such persons marry, and do not agree, shall we pity them? I think not. After the most serene courtship, there may possibly be a rough enough passage through life: but after a courtship of storms, to expect a marriage of calm weather, is certainly more than common presumption; therefore they ought to take the consequences.

On the whole, I think that the calamities of the married state are generally to be imputed to the persons themselves, in the following proportion:—Three fourths to the man for want of care and judgment in the choice, and one fourth to the woman on the same score. Suppose a man had bought a farm, and after a year or two, should, in conversation with his neighbor, make heavy complaints how much he had been disappointed, I imagine his friend might say to him, Did you not see this land before you bought it?—O yes, I saw it often.—Do you not understand soils?—I think I do tolerably.—Did you not examine it with care?—Not so much as I should have done; standing at a certain place, it looked admirably well; the fences too were new, and looked exceedingly neat; the house had been just painted a stone colour, with panneling; the windows were large and elegant; but I neglected entirely to examine the sufficiency of the materials, or the disposition of the apartments. There were in the month of April two beautiful springs, but since I have lived here they have been dry every year before the middle of June.—Did you not inquire of those who had lived on the place, of the permanency of the springs?—No, indeed, I omitted it.—Had you the full measure you

were promised?—Yes, every acre.—Was the right complete and valid?—Yes, yes, perfectly good; no man in America can take it from me.—Were you obliged to take it up in part of a bad debt?—No, nothing like it. I took such a fancy for it all at once, that I pestered the man from week to week to let me have it.—Why really then, says his friend, I think you had better keep your complaints to yourself. Cursing and fretfulness will never turn stones into earth, or sand into loam; but I can assure you, that frugality, industry, and good culture, will make a bad farm very tolerable, and an indifferent one truly good.

NOTE. Some French phrases have been translated, and a few other verbal alterations made, in the preceding Letters.



## NOTES.

### NOTE A. Page 8.

THE author might well have dwelt longer on the extreme *defectiveness* and *imprudence* of many pious people in the religious education of their children.

1. They are *defective*, both in pious example, and in exertions to instruct their children in the knowledge of divine truth. The reasons why their example is so defective, are, that they are wanting in deep, habitual piety, and that they are not aware, or do not habitually consider, how great an influence the temper of mind which their daily conduct exhibits, has in forming the character of their children. The remedy, therefore, is, that they possess more spirituality, more of that mind which was in Christ Jesus, and that they remember, that in religion, as well as in other things, example is the most important part of education.

Their neglect of the religious instruction of their children, is to be traced to the same sources; that is, to a want of deep, habitual piety, and an ignorance or forgetfulness that it lies in their power to promote the spiritual welfare of their children. Many possess so little sensibility to divine truth, and are so little impressed with the scenes that await them and their children beyond the grave, that they feel little solicitude whether they love God, or hate him, whether they go to heaven, or to—hell. The *temporal* welfare of their children awakens all their anxieties; they cannot endure the prospect of their suffering from indigence, or of their being ignorant, or despised; while their spiritual poverty, their ignorance of divine things, and their *vileness* in the sight of God, are seldom thought of.

But there are some parents, who do feel anxious for the best interests of their children, and who fervently pray for their spiritual welfare, who yet neglect their religious instruction, from an idea, that as God only can give repentance, no means or motives can be of any avail. Such do not consider, that means have as much efficacy in religion, as they have in any thing else. Means derive their efficacy, in all cases, solely from the will and agency of God. Our encouragement to use means in any particular case, depends on the reason we have to believe, that God has, in his purposes, connected such means with the end desired. Now, from scripture and experience, we know, that God has established a connexion between religious instruction and vital piety. We have reason to believe, that if there were no defect in religious instruction, it would ordinarily, if not uniformly, produce its proper effect on the heart. If pious parents were convinced of this truth, how could they endanger the eternal interests of their children by neglecting to make them acquainted with the character and the commands of God, and by placing teachers over them at school, who will give them no instruction of this kind. But the evil does not stop here; for,

2. There is much *imprudence* in the manner in which the little religious instruction that children do receive, is generally conducted. It is conducted in such a manner, that early and unnecessary prejudices are excited against religion, and that, after much labour, but little real knowledge of divine truth is gained.

In the *first* place, religion is often so exhibited to the view of children, that they unavoidably become impressed with the idea, that it is a thing which produces gloom and melancholy. The fact is, that the views which many pious people entertain, of some of the doctrines of the Bible, do render them gloomy. The only remedy for this, is, that they obtain more enlightened views of the benevolent character of God, and of the various methods which he has adopted for displaying his love and promoting the happiness of his creatures. When a parent addresses his child on any religious subject, when he presents to his view any truth or doctrine of the Bible, he should, though always serious and sometimes solemn, yet ever do it with a tone of voice and expression of countenance, which shall leave on the mind of the child the impression, that that truth or doctrine is a source of joy to the parent. How

often is the very contrary impression made! How often is the child, while driven to the conviction that religion is necessary to save him from destruction, and that an attendance upon the duties of religion is imperiously required, left without any reason to suppose that religion is in itself desirable or delightful.

In the *second* place, children are often so managed, that they come to consider it as the chief office of religion, to impose a severe and unnecessary restraint upon every species of enjoyment. This impression is made while they are very young. The restraint, for instance, which is laid upon the child on the sabbath, often, for want of proper caution and instruction on the part of the parent, produces a false and unhappy impression in regard to the nature of religion and in regard to the character of God.

The child should be led to form his first ideas of the design of the sabbath, by having a difference made in the employments of the day. This may be done by accustoming him, as soon as his capacity will allow, to spend a little while several times during the day, in learning to read and in receiving religious instruction. If these lessons are conducted so as to interest, and are not protracted so as to become tedious, they will have a happy tendency.

In regard to the restraint which is to be placed upon his amusements in subsequent childhood and during the period of youth, it is important that he should distinctly understand, and be impressed with the conviction, that whatever restraint religion may impose, is reasonable, and designed to promote the happiness of himself and others. Let him be made to perceive, that as far as amusements are innocent, no restraint is imposed. He may easily be made sensible, that this is the general principle which governs his parents in the restrictions they impose, although he may not, in every instance, be able to perceive what it is that renders a particular amusement hurtful, or improper. If the parent asks how he shall know where to draw the line between amusements that are innocent and those that are not, no other than general directions can be given.

We may venture to say, that amusements which are improper for professors of religion, are improper for all. A refusal or neglect to enter into a public engagement to serve the Lord, cannot release from the obligation, binding on all, to love him supremely and to obey him perfectly. No young persons, therefore, can be

allowed to engage in any amusement, in which the disciple of Jesus may not consistently engage.

If, here, the christian inquires what amusements he ought to avoid, he may be safely directed to fly from all which he knows to have a tendency to lead into sin, in which he cannot hope to enjoy a sense of the divine presence, which produce a state of mind or of feeling which disqualifies him, while it lasts, for serious or devotional duties, or which he finds to take away his spirit of prayer and his aspirations after communion with God. This subject is treated with ability in "Biddulph's Dialogues," a little book which is especially recommended to the perusal of those, who think they possess the spirit of Christ, while they retain their fondness for gay amusements and frivolous conversation.

Where religion has a place in the heart, it destroys the fondness for gaiety and frivolity, by giving a relish for higher enjoyments. And even without religion, a well cultivated and well furnished mind finds sources of pleasure far superior to all that the round of fashionable folly can afford. Would parents, then, supersede the necessity of restraint, and save their children from their mad propensity to frequent scenes, where health is often exposed, where precious time is wasted, where temptations are presented, where the mind is dissipated, and where the heart is often corrupted, let them early store their minds with useful knowledge, give them a taste for reading, and especially teach them the fear and love of the Lord.

A *third* reason why the religious instruction of children so often fails to produce its proper effect, is, that it is conducted in such a manner that little real knowledge of divine truth is communicated to the mind. The child may indeed *hear* a great deal, he may *read* a great deal, and may commit a great deal to *memory*; but as to *understanding* what he hears, reads, and commits, that is out of the question. Now, what benefit, what sanctifying influence, can be expected from mere *sounds*? God is wont to make divine truth the medium of sanctification; and in order that it may have this effect, it must be *perceived* by the mind: but no divine truth is perceived, so long as the terms and propositions which are used to express it, are not understood.

And not only does such instruction (if instruction it can be called) possess no efficacy to benefit the child; but it produces a posi-

tively bad effect. It is an irksome task, to hear and learn long, unintelligible lessons; and the unpleasantness of these religious lessons, is considered by the child as the unpleasantness of religion itself. The idea of religion becomes permanently associated in his mind with the idea of the religious tasks which he has been required to perform; so as to revive in his breast, when he hears or thinks of religion, the painful sensations which the performance of those tasks has been accustomed to excite.

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NOTE B. Page 16.

THE doctrine of the *association of ideas*, which is here just hinted at by the author, is fundamental in the philosophy of the human mind and in the science of education. Two ideas are said to be associated, when, if the one is brought into the mind, it habitually or frequently suggests the other. If I think of or visit a spot, which I formerly visited in company with a dear friend, now absent or dead, the recollection of that friend is excited in my mind. Why does the idea of the spot bring into my mind the idea of the friend? Because, by my formerly seeing the spot and the friend together, the two ideas became permanently associated. In like manner, an idea is associated with a desire or aversion, or with an emotion of pleasure or pain, when the introduction of the idea into the mind is wont to excite that particular desire, aversion, or emotion. Thus, the idea of the amiable qualities of a friend, is associated with an emotion of love. And the idea of the distress of a fellow creature is associated with an emotion of compassion; and this emotion, with a desire to afford relief. Some associations are the necessary result of the constitution of the human mind; but for the most part, they are casually formed by the circumstances in which an individual is placed. Hence, the associations of ideas and feelings which different persons have formed, are exceedingly different. The idea of a book, or of study, for instance, is associated, in the mind of one child, with various agreeable ideas and

pleasant sensations ; while, in the mind of another, the same idea, in consequence of unskilful and injudicious management on the part of the parents or instructors, has become associated with ideas and sensations of the very opposite kind. Again, in the mind of one child, the idea of a parental command has become habitually associated with the idea (and of course with the act) of obedience ; while, in the mind of another, the same idea has become firmly associated with the idea of disobedience ; and if the idea of scolding and blows occurs, (as it probably will in this connexion) it brings with it the associated idea of successful resistance. Once more, in the minds of many children, an association has been formed, by the tales of the nursery, between the idea of darkness and those of ghosts and hobgoblins. This association is often so riveted, by repetition and by impressions of terror, that it can never afterwards, by any courage, or reason, or philosophy, be entirely dissolved.

A full illustration of this subject would exceed the limits of a note. Let it suffice to recommend the study of it to all who have any thing to do in the business of education, or who have any desire to possess a knowledge of human nature. The chief business of a skilful education lies in watching over the associations of ideas and feelings which are formed in the mind of the child, in presenting objects and truths so to his view that he shall form such associations as are desirable and according to the reality of things, in guarding him against unhappy or improper associations, and in dissolving those of the latter kind when they happen to have been formed. A knowledge of this general subject is also necessary, that a person may become better acquainted with his own heart, may learn what is the sin which most easily besets him, and may obtain that general knowledge of human nature, which is universally and justly esteemed so highly important.

On this subject see Kames' Elements of Criticism, Vol. i. chap. i. Hamilton on Education, Vol. i. and Stewart on the Mind, Vol. i. chap. 5. Miss Hamilton's Letters on Education, though erroneous in a few points, and considerably defective on the subject of religious instruction, are worthy to be thoroughly studied by every one whose province it may be

“ To teach the young idea how to shoot.”

It is earnestly recommended, that either this, or some other work,

containing the elementary principles of education, *be made a regular study in academies and boarding-schools.*

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NOTE C. Page 21.

Dr. Witherspoon is correct, as far as he goes. Children *may, sometimes*, be rewarded "for doing well," with "sweetmeats and play things." But much caution is necessary, to prevent their placing too high a value on the gratification of appetite. They are very prone to this error, from the circumstance, that from the gratification of appetite, their first, and, during a considerable period, their principal enjoyment is necessarily derived. As soon, then, as they become capable of higher enjoyments, they should be taught to appreciate them according to their superior value. They should be led, for instance, to consider the approbation and smile of the parent, a reward more to be desired than a cake or a toy. Instead of this, how often are they treated in a manner, which increases the predominance of appetite, and thus gives additional strength to the selfish principle. The manner in which parents frequently speak of the food that is brought upon the table, in case either the quality or the cooking is either a little better or not quite so good as usual, necessarily makes an impression upon the mind of the child, (and too often correctly enough), that these circumstances are very interesting to the parent, and are considered by him as of very great importance. Especially, when the mother is the cook, and is led, by the office, to be discriminating and observing in the various qualities of food, she is the more liable to manifest much satisfaction on some occasions, and to make many apologies on others. The influence which this must have on the mind of the child, is obvious.

Nor should children be left to suppose, that the only motives from which they ought to perform beneficent actions, are, that they may be rewarded, either with a cake, or a toy, or even with a smile of approbation. Let them be taught to consider the happiness of others a sufficient reason for acting; and to deny themselves,

or willingly suffer some privation, when they can by this means promote the happiness of others in a greater degree. Let them be taught too, to do good for the sake of obeying the commands of God, of pleasing him, and gaining his approbation. The consideration, that a child may be, as yet, entirely selfish, is no reason why he should be left ignorant that he is *capable* of acting, and that it is his *duty* to act, from a more exalted principle.

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NOTE A. Page 46.

THE opinion of Dr. Goldsmith respecting such writings, is very noticeable: "Above all things," he observes, "never let him touch a romance or novel. These paint beauty in colors more charming than nature, and describe happiness that man never tastes. How delusive, how destructive, are those pictures of consummate bliss! They teach the youthful mind to sigh after beauty and happiness which never existed; to despise the little good which fortune has mixed in our cup, by expecting more than she ever gave; and, in general, take the word of a man who has seen the world, and has studied human nature more by experience than precept, take my word for it, I say, that such books teach us very little of the world."

The heart at thirty is by no means the softer, for our weeping at fifteen over the sorrows of Werter; nor are we better qualified for the duties of *real* life, by being much conversant with scenes that never existed but in imagination.

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NOTE B. Page 52.

FROM the importance of a similarity of "education, taste, and habits of life," may be seen the danger of choosing a companion,

long before the connexion can take place. However suitable two individuals may be for each other at the time the engagement is made, their subsequent education and habits may be so dissimilar, that the case will, in a few years, be altogether changed. In youth, the character is liable to become, even in a short period, very much altered; and unless the alteration is, in each, nearly the same, (which is often far from being the case) it is impossible that they should continue to be as agreeable or as suitable to each other as at first. Perhaps no case of this kind is more frequent, than where a young man receives a liberal education. While pursuing this course, he experiences a great change in his taste and in his intellectual character; in consequence of which he finds, that such society and conversation as he formerly preferred, gradually ceases to interest. And especially he finds, that the object of former tender attachment, (if he had fixed upon one, and if her education has been neglected) possesses less power to please. The various sympathies, in which their souls once mingled, are gone. It is not that his affection is transferred to another. It is not that his heart has ceased to be susceptible of tender emotion. But the union of soul has ceased. No longer does every sensation that rises in the breast of the one, touch a responsive chord in the breast of the other. They are no longer inclined to converse upon the same topics; they have become incapable of participating in each other's joys. Most of the things which interest and please her, have ceased to interest and please him. The things which chiefly interest and please him, she has never formed a taste to relish or a capacity to understand. She wonders at the change; but knows not how to account for it: and imagines, perhaps, that it is chiefly owing to fickleness in her friend. He perceives the cause of the evil, but cannot explain it to one who is ignorant of the philosophy of the human mind. What shall he do? He sighs at the remembrance of former days; feels that they can never return; drops a tear over the grave of his fond anticipations;—*and flies from her whom once he loved.* Perhaps this is a criminal step. It certainly is, if taken without mutual consent and in violation of a formal and unconditional engagement. But it must be a sacred obligation, which can bind him to marry one, who can never be a suitable companion, and who is unqualified to promote his happiness or usefulness in the station which he is to fill.

What is the remedy of this evil, so serious, and yet so frequent? Let young men wait, before they enter into any engagement, till they know what kind of companion they shall want. *And let the young female beware, how she receives the vows of one, whose taste, and habits, and intellectual character, are yet to be formed.* If the lady possesses a capacity and desire of improvement, and her education is likely to bear some proportion to that of the gentleman, the danger is diminished, and some advantages may arise from an early connexion. But if she is to remain *in statu quo*, it is morally certain, that her hopes will be disappointed. In general, there is so much uncertainty, what changes education, and perhaps religion, may make in the character of one or the other of the parties, that it is safest for young persons to postpone all engagements of this kind, till their intellectual and moral character is formed, and till they know what station in society they shall fill.

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NOTE C. Page 57.

It is undoubtedly a fact, that women seldom make any great advances, either in elegance of taste, or in the cultivation of the mental powers, after they enter the conjugal state. It is hence easy to see the importance of making all the improvement possible, while they remain single. This is especially important in the case of females who expect to fill the higher stations in society. It would be a trite topic, to expatiate on the general importance of female education. A happy change is taking place in the public mind, and in the public practice, on this subject. Men have learned, that females have minds capable of high cultivation; and they feel, that for a lady to be *very fine*, is a poor atonement for her being *very ignorant*. Some females, too, have been conscious of their own powers, and have shown what attainments in mental excellence the sex is capable of making. Nor need we fear, lest much learning should make females mad. The reason why we see that to be sometimes the case, is, that learning is so uncommon a thing among them. The present insipidity of the conversation is

most polite circles—made up of little facts and details, with minute and trifling comments upon them,—is in no small degree owing to the general want of cultivation in the female mind. But the blame does not rest wholly on the fair. Not unfrequently, when they would fain unite in giving the conversation a more dignified tone, they are discountenanced. It seems, indeed, to be the opinion of some men of education, as well as others, that the moment a gentleman comes into the company of young ladies, he is absolved from the duty of talking sense.