

subject of the Duties arising from the ties of Natural Relationship. Holy and blessed things that they are! I am persuaded that even the best and happiest of us only half apprehend their beautiful meaning, and that we must look to the life beyond the grave to interpret for us all their significance.

In the next Lecture we shall discuss a very difficult question indeed—the Duties of a Wife—and then the Duties of the Mistress of a Household.

LECTURE IV.

Duties of Contract—Wives—Friends.

PASSING from Duties arising from the ties of *Blood-Relationship* (Parents and Children, Sisters, Brothers and so on), we reach the exceedingly important class of Duties founded on *Contract*; pre-eminently on the great Contract of MARRIAGE.

The formal Marriage Contract of most civilized nations includes two *natural*, and one *artificial* obligation.

First there is the mutual promise of Conjugal Union, to which is added a mutual engagement of exclusive Fidelity of each to each. This is strictly speaking the Marriage Vow; the one essential promise among monogamous races.

But the entrance into this bond brings the contracting parties so much more closely together than any other human connection, that it follows that they ought to afford *primary Benevolence* to one another, and seek each other's welfare before all others; reservation being

made of the rights of those to whom they already owe debts not annullable by the new contract. Most properly and wisely then, a second promise,—to “honour and cherish” each other, in sickness and health, poverty and riches, is, almost universally, added to the original simple vow of Fidelity. The obligation is acknowledged and reinforced by the vow; but it arises independently from the nature of the relationship.

A third vow of the wife is added by the English Church, and by many other Churches—namely, the Vow of Conjugal *Obedience*. Of this I shall speak in its turn.

All the world acknowledges the sanctity of the first of these vows, emphatically in the case of the wife. The offence of Adultery, which is the infraction of the vow, if no longer judicially punished in Europe as it once was, is yet commonly visited by the penalties of social ostracism. Long may this so continue! Many of you will think me harsh for saying it; but it is my deliberate opinion that when a woman has committed the enormous double crime, personal and social, of violating the law of chastity, and doing her husband the mortal wrong of breaking her marriage oath,—it is fit and right that the society which she has outraged should close its doors to her. Of this we shall say more hereafter.

Passing now to the pleasanter subject of the Duty of Wives to give *special and primary Benevolence* to their husbands (and vice versa), we meet of course the

invariable obligation to seek first the Moral Good of the object of our Benevolence. Wives cannot be generally charged with neglecting the *religious* interests of their husbands, as they understand them. On the contrary, I fear, they often worry them about believing what they consider necessary to salvation, in an unreasoning way which prevents thoughtful husbands from seeking with their pious wives that refreshment of spiritual life which they would find were not all these dogmas in the way. But the higher *moral* good of the husband occupies most wives comparatively little; and often a man who starts with a great many lofty and disinterested aspirations, deteriorates year by year in a deplorable manner under the influence of a sufficiently well-meaning and personally conscientious wife. If you ask, how can this be? the answer is, that the wife's affection, being of a poor and short-sighted kind, she constantly urges her husband to think of himself and his own interests, rather than of the persons and objects for which he was ready to sacrifice himself. “Do not go on that charitable errand to-day, you have caught a cold. It will answer as well to-morrow.” “Do not invite that dull old friend.” “Do not join that tiresome committee.” “Pray take a long holiday.” “By all means buy yourself a new hunter.” “Do refrain from confessing your unorthodox opinions.” This kind of thing, dropped every day like the lump of sugar into the breakfast cup of tea, in the end produces a real constitutional change in the man's mind. He begins to think himself, first, somewhat of

a hero when he goes against such sweet counsel ;—and then a Quixote—and then a fool. And a curious reciprocity is also established. The husband cannot do less than return the wife's kindness by begging *her* not to distress and tire herself by performing any duty which costs a little self-sacrifice ; and she again returns the compliment and so on, and so on, till they nurse each other into complete selfishness. I am sure that many of my audience must have seen this exemplified. But if, on the other hand, the wife from the first cherishes every spark of generous feeling or noble and disinterested ambition in her husband, and he, in his turn, encourages her in every womanly charity and good deed, how they will act and re-act on each other month after month and year after year ; each growing nobler, and loving more nobly, and being more worthy to be loved, till their sacred and blessed union brings them together to the very gates of heaven ! That is what marriage ought to be ; what it *is* to a few choice and most happy couples ; and what it might be to all.

I should like to have said much on the many ways in which, I think, enlightened moral ideas might help wives to make their husbands more *Happy*, but I can detain you only to name one of them. Tact is an excellent thing, a precious gift to cultivate where it can be used with perfect openness and honesty. But it is one of the worst consequences of the subjection of women, that, in thousands of cases, this tact is developed into the Art of Managing-a-Husband.

Manceuvres, crafty ways, wily little concealments, insidious flatteries and coaxings with an object ; these are the miserable and disgraceful means by which many a well-meaning wife and mother is driven to carry out the most innocent plans, the most useful projects for the family welfare and her children's education. Do not fall into them, my friends ! Do not, whatever be the difficulties of your position, descend to such arts. You may think you make your husband happy by "managing" him so cleverly for his good ; but you may depend on it, though his thick masculine brain does not detect Monday's little *ruse* nor Tuesday's small circumvention, yet that he has a constant and uneasy sense that he is not treated openly and in an above-board fashion, and that you are "too deep" for him. He at once mistrusts, fears and despises such a wife. The whole sincerity of the married life is spoiled ; and in short, whatever number of tricks you may score, you actually *lose the game*. If you could *win* it a hundred times over, it would not be worth degrading yourself into a domestic Mrs. Machiavelli for the purpose !

But now opens upon us the very *crux* of our subject—the third vow which a wife makes when married by the rites of the Church of England or those of most other Churches—the promise to *Obey*.

Of course a reason must be forthcoming for demanding such a vow, though we may privately

suspect that all such reasons did not precede, but follow, the simple fact; and that wheresoever *la loi du plus fort* prevails, wives are compelled to obey; and the vow only adds a mental fetter to the already existing natural chain, and registers a *fait accompli*.

Some people tell us that it is incumbent on a woman to take and keep this vow, because she is exhorted by St. Paul to "obey her husband in the Lord." I cannot fairly argue this point, being too far outside the pale of orthodoxy to consider a moral problem to be solvable by a text. But I would remind those who quote this passage in one Epistle of the great Apostle, to remember that they are bound to attach the same authority to a parallel passage in another Epistle, wherein the same Apostle commands *Slaves* to obey their Masters; and actually sends back to his chain a runaway who in our day would have been helped to freedom by every true Christian man or woman in America. The whole tone of early Christian teaching, indeed, was one of entire submission to the "powers that be," even when they were represented by such insane despots as Tiberius, Caligula and Nero. In our day, men habitually set aside this Apostolic teaching, so far as it concerns Masters and Slaves, Despots and their Subjects, as adapted only to a past epoch. I am at a loss to see by what right, having done so, they can claim for it authority when it happens to refer to Husbands and Wives.

Next to cutting the knot by Authority, I believe

the advocates of Obedience rest their argument on *Expediency*—an expediency they think almost amounting to a Necessity, and sanctioned by the practice of ages. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" was a pertinent question of old; but "How can two walk together *unless one of them have it entirely his own way?*" is the query put to us by these persons now. They have become so accustomed to the notion of one ruling and the other obeying, that any other kind of arrangement seems to them fraught with peril of domestic anarchy. My dear Friends! Will you please to tell me did you ever hear of any sort of despotism, great or small, spiritual or temporal, public or private, which was not justified by those who exercised it on these same grounds of its expediency, its convenience, its necessity for the benefit and safety of the governed? Does not the Church of Rome exert its tremendous sway over the intellects and consciences of men, in the honest persuasion of its hierarchs that it is good for these sheep to be entirely guided by their shepherds? Has not every empire in history been founded on the presumption that one supreme and irresponsible Ruler or Autocrat could govern a nation much better than a nation could govern itself? Nay, has it not been the work of ages, not yet accomplished, to make mankind understand that all the benefits and conveniences of a paternal Government are too dearly bought by keeping the nations in perpetual childhood?

How is a Church to go on without a supreme Head to determine doctrines? How is a State to go on without a despotic ruler at the helm? How is a Household to go on without an Autocrat to settle all questions by his simple volition? These questions are all very much on a par. Nay, it *ought* surely to be much easier for a little household, united by the tenderest ties, to "get along" peacefully, harmoniously and prosperously as a miniature Republic, than for Churches to flourish on Congregational principles, or States to rise to glory and prosperity, like that of our blessed England—on the basis of some millions of independent wills.

Again; after Authority, and after Expediency and Necessity, Obedience is vindicated by some persons on quite another ground, *not* its utility to the family generally, or to the State, but its *comfort to the obeying party*; the relief it offers to her conscience; the short cut it affords for getting rid of her "responsibilities."

Now I fear I must have a dreadfully hardened conscience, for it has never once occurred to me in life that my responsibilities were things which, (if I could only induce somebody to marry me,) might thus be slipped off and laid aside like old shoes. *What* responsibilities, I ask, are they which I could get rid of, if I were not a wretched "failure," and had a husband to love, honour and *obey*? For example—If I saw a child drowning in a pond, and my husband said, "Don't pick it out of the water on any account;" should I

get rid of my "responsibility" by sweetly taking my spouse's arm and walking away, saying, "Just as you think right, dear John"? Of course, by the law of England, if John had thrown the child into the pond himself, and I stood by aiding and abetting him, I should be held scot free, as acting under marital authority; but I scarcely fancy that my conscience would be altogether relieved of the sense of "Responsibility."

Or again, a much commoner case. I have an old Aunt, we will suppose, a very tiresome person, (as elderly Aunts I find, alas! are generally considered to be;) but she was infinitely good to me when I was a child, and I owe her a debt] of gratitude which I can never repay. Now she is old and deaf and stupid, and bores my husband to extinction, and he forbids me to invite her to our house, or give her the little cheer and comfort which her lonely old age can receive. Shall I get rid of my "responsibility" towards poor old Aunt Dorothy by writing her a little note and telling her, "I am sorry to observe that my husband wishes me to drop you, and of course it is my duty to obey"? Here again (and in short, in every imaginable case of a crime to be avoided or a duty to be performed), I find there is no getting rid of that Man of the Sea on my shoulders, viz., Responsibility. My husband or father *cannot* take it off for me, even if we both desire it. And why? For this reason, my friends! Because God has laid it on me, when He made me a Rational Free

Agent, not a Dog, or an Idiot! No vow I can take at any altar can make it thereafter Right for me to do Wrong, or Wrong to do what is Right. There may be sin *in making the vow*—I believe there would be sin in making any vow which should make it *more difficult* for me thenceforward always to do right; but no form of oath can bind me *not* to do it, any more than Herod's rash vow ought to have bound him to cut off the Baptist's head.

Let us then clear this matter away. Responsibilities, in the sense of moral answerability, cannot be shifted from one to another on any plea of Obedience after the human being has reached the age of full moral accountableness. You will bear in mind this latter definition. In the case of filial obedience, the *young* girl must justly defer to the moral *judgment* of her parents (rather than to their *authority*), in all save the most obvious matters of right and wrong. I suppose even the greatest stickler for parental authority would admit that if a parent bade a child to steal, he ought not to obey.

What, then, are the responsibilities which *can* be deposited in a husband's or parent's hands? They can only be those which concern matters *not moral*; matters concerning the pecuniary or other interests of the family. On a great many of such points the husband will usually be wisest, and may most properly be treated as Mr. Mill suggests, as the Senior, or Acting Partner in the Firm. And if things go wrong, bad invest-

ments be chosen, and so on, and the wife finds it any comfort to remark afterwards, that all the *Responsibility* rested with Mr. Smith, and that she had entirely washed her hands of it—by all means let her soothe herself with such consolation! Probably, however, if she be an able and sensible woman, she will have preferred to incur the "responsibility" of strongly advising Mr. Smith not to invest in Egyptian bonds or Peruvian mines.

Still more will it be impossible for any *mother*, I should think, to relinquish any control she may possess over her children's nurture and education by way of relieving herself of "Responsibility." It would be little consolation when Charley has broken his neck, and Edith is in her coffin, that she had left with their father the whole "Responsibility" of taking Charley out riding on a vicious hunter, and bringing Edith to visit a family in scarlatina.

I cannot pursue these arguments in defence of the principle of Conjugal Obedience. To me that principle seems irreconcilable with the fundamental basis of morality (namely, the full and independent moral responsibility of every adult human being); and (I may add) antagonistic no less to the very nature of that Love and Affection which it is so foolishly supposed to guarantee. *Love* naturally reverses the idea of obedience, and causes the struggle between any two people who truly love each other to be not who shall *command*, but, who shall *yield*. There is in

the world no harder duty than to oppose the will of our heart's best friend. I would go further, and remind you of a beautiful and wise couplet of Chaucer, which somehow has been repeated almost verbally by Spenser (Spenser, of the *Fairy Queen*; not him of *First Principles*!), a couplet I advise you all to commit to memory:—

“When mastery cometh, then sweet Love anon
Flappeth his nimble wings and soon away is flown.”

It is an insult, a wrong, a deadly wound to Love, for one of the lovers to turn round on the other and claim, not the sweet right to *serve*, but the bitter right to command and control. Practically, we know, in happy marriages this claim rarely crops to the surface; but the mere fact that it is *sous-entendu* in any discussion seems to me to take the bloom off conjugal love.

Nor are the actual consequences of this doctrine anything short of disastrous. We see one class of wives, of noble, free natures, fretted and galled all their lives by the fetters which some mean-souled man causes to clank whenever he is in an ill-temper. On the other side, we see another set of women who become perfectly passive and silly and “sweetly dependent;” and at sixty, when their husbands die, they are no better able to manage their own affairs than they were at six, but betray by their childishness that the whole moral work of life has been stopped

for them for half a century. My father (who highly approved of wifely obedience) used, nevertheless, to laugh at such widows, and said they reminded him of clocks with the weights taken off, which instantly set off buzz, buzz, buzz, till they ran down!

Are the *husbands* any the better or the happier for this monstrous idea, that they have a right to their wives Obedience? Certainly not. It cannot and does not fail to encourage their worst faults of selfishness and despotism, and to inspire them with contemptuous ideas of the very woman whom it ought to be the joy and *elevation* of their souls to honour. When a man does really honour his wife, we see how beautiful and happy is their married life; but he does it in sheer despite of their legal relation, and a very hard achievement it must be to honour a person who is actually bound body and soul, for life, to obey your orders; and whose very children are not hers but yours, to tear from her arms if you think fit! How many of the awful crimes perpetrated daily in England by brutal husbands against their wives would never have been committed had not the ruffians been taught by law and custom to regard their wives as their obedient servants,—their property,—we cannot compute; but I am convinced that such outrages on women, such wife-torture and wife-murder, will never cease till the whole notion of wifely subjection be radically changed.

I cannot pursue these arguments respecting obedience further; but will simply rehearse the con-

clusions which we seem to have reached on the matter.

Adult human beings, whether men or women, owe *Special Benevolence*,—that is, *Special Service*,—to those persons to whom they are bound either by ties of Birth, of Gratitude, or of Contract. These *Services* may be so far before all others that, while those persons need them, they are bound to pay them before seeking to benefit any other human beings. As a part of such service it is their duty to yield pleasantly and easily in all the small affairs and habits of life; to be perfectly unselfish, affectionate and considerate; and never to thwart or oppose the other unnecessarily. They are also bound to listen to the counsels and wishes of father or mother, husband or wife, not only with courtesy and patience, but with an honest wish to agree with them, and meet them if it be possible.

Beyond this, no adult human being ought to go in the direction of Obedience. To do so would be, not *Service*, but *Slavery*, or the immoral Obedience of the Jesuit to his Superior; a *Moral Suicide*, not to be justified on any plea, whether of authority or precedent, or expediency, or comfort.

If Marriage *necessarily* involved any such Obedience and abnegation of moral responsibility, then I should hold that it was not lawful for any woman to marry; just as I think it is not lawful for any man to become a Jesuit and take his vow of Obedience. But, of course, this is the very matter of our present contention. It is

not in the least necessary, that the Marriage oath,—which ought to be a reciprocal Promise of Fidelity, and a reciprocal Promise of Special Benevolence,—should have superadded to it, a vow that one of the parties is to be thenceforth, not only *devoted to the other's welfare*, but *obedient to his will*.

But if Moral Freedom be, as I have tried to show, so sacred and solemn a charge that we must *never* lay it aside even for the closest and tenderest human ties, how great is the obligation which lies on us to use it aright! How monstrous would be the position of any woman who should claim her exemption from filial or conjugal obedience on the strength of her moral responsibilities—and then should exhibit in her selfish, idle, useless, or worldly life, an utter ignorance or disregard of all which those awful responsibilities to God involve! No, my friends! Better a thousand times remain the most servilely obedient of wives in perpetual childhood and dependence, than claim your rank as Human Beings, Moral Free Agents; and then show yourselves no better than monkeys and parrots, or wilful, self-indulgent children!

You must awake, if you mean to be the pioneers of a nobler career for your sex, to the charge which lies on you not to use your liberty for a cloak for licence. There are women who call themselves “emancipated” now, who are leading lives, if not absolutely vicious, yet loose, unseemly, trespassing always on the borders of vice; women who treat lightly, and as if of small

account, the heinous and abominable sins of unchastity and adultery. For God's sake, my young friends, beware of such women! Shun them and repudiate them as representations of any emancipation which you desire to share. Whether in the highest ranks, among the "fast" ladies of fashion, with their indecorous and undignified habits, (smoking with the men of their society at night in smoking-rooms, and so on); or, in the middle class, the Bohemianism which, to young girl-students, seems so enchanting after the plodding ways of home,—in both, this pseudo-emancipation is equally to be condemned and denounced as having absolutely *nothing* in common with the movement for the true progress of women.

Beside the duties arising from the great formal Contract of Marriage, there are undoubtedly others arising from the informal and tacit contract of *Friendship*. In the older Greek Church and among the Bedouins there are regularly appointed rites to solemnize the mutual adoption of Friends. Such ceremonies, however, are by no means indispensable to give sacredness to the bond of every true and noble friendship of the closer sort; or to elevate its offices of fidelity and mutual service to the rank of moral obligations. I shall return to this subject a little further on.

Duties of Women as Mistresses of Households.

After treating of Duties arising from Blood-Relationship, and from the Contract of Marriage and Friendship we come to treat of the Duties which concern us, women, when we are MISTRESSES OF HOUSEHOLDS; and to begin, I must say at once that I have no sympathy at all with those ladies who are seeking to promote co-operative housekeeping, in other words to abolish the institution of the English Home. There may be indeed, specially gifted women, artists, musicians, literary women, whom I could imagine finding it an interruption to their pursuits to take charge of a house. But, strange to say, though I have had a pretty large acquaintance with many of the most eminent of such women, I have almost invariably found them particularly proud of their housekeeping, and clever at the performance of all household duties, not excepting the ordering of "judicious" dinners. Not to make personal remarks on living friends, I will remind you that the greatest woman-mathematician of any age, Mary Somerville, was renowned for her good housekeeping; and, I can add from my own knowledge, was an excellent judge of a well dressed *déjeuner* and of choice old sherry; while Madame de Staël, driven by Napoleon from her home, went about Europe, as it was said, "Preceded by her reputation, and followed by her cook!"

Rather I suspect, it is not higher genius, but feeble inability to cope with the problems of domestic govern-

ment, which generally inspires the women who wish to abdicate their little household thrones. Some sympathy may be given to them, but I should be exceedingly sorry to see many women catching up the cry and following their leading to the dismal *disfranchisement* of the home,—the practical homelessness of American boarding houses or Continental *pensions*. I think for a woman to fail to make and keep a happy home, is to be a “failure” in a truer sense than to have failed to catch a husband.

Assuredly the Englishwoman’s Home is the Englishwoman’s Kingdom, and those homes, with all their faults and shortcomings, are the glory of our country; better glories, I think, than if we could transport the Louvre and St. Mark’s, or St. Peter’s itself across the Channel. Out of the English home has sprung much of that which is most excellent in the national character; and with the abolition of it would follow, I cannot doubt, a dissipation of childhood, and a loosening of family ties, whereof the evil consequences would be measureless. Let me entreat you then, while doing all you can to amend the many and serious defects which cling around our home system, to lift no hand to break it down. Make your homes better and happier and freer than they are, but do not even speak of the alternative of forsaking them and turning ourselves into Bedoweens of the lodging house. For Englishmen, such a change would be very injurious; for women, it would be simply disastrous.

The making of a true Home is really our peculiar and

inalienable right; a right which no man can take from us, for a Man can no more make a Home than a drone can make a hive. He can build a castle or a palace, but, poor creature! be he wise as Solomon and rich as Croesus, he cannot turn it into a Home. No masculine mortal can do that. It is a woman, and only a woman; a woman all by herself if she likes, and without any man to help her, who can turn a House into a Home. Woe to the wretched man who disputes her monopoly, and thinks, because he can arrange a Club, he can make a Home! Nemesis overtakes him in his old bachelorhood, when a home becomes the supreme ideal of his desires; and we see him—him who scorned the home-making of a *Lady*,—obliged to put up with the oppression of his cook, or the cruelty of his nurse!

But it is our privilege, our faculty, to turn any four walls, nay even a tent under which we take shelter as we wander about the plains of the East, into a Home, if we so please it. And shall we relinquish the use of this blessed faculty, and be content henceforth, like *mere men*, to be only quartered here or there, not to be at home anywhere? Why even the little beavers, left in a drawing-room, set about making a dam,—a beaver’s Home, out of the coal-scuttle and the rug and the fire-irons! Shades of our grandmothers keep us from such degeneracy.

But not to pursue this spectre, let us take our stand *pro aris et focis*, and see what Duties belong to us in

right of our Home-Rule. (We, women, are the true *Home Rulers*, Parnell and Co. are impostors.)

In the first place, if Home be our kingdom, it must be our joy and privilege to convert that domain, as quickly and as perfectly as we may, into a little Province of the Kingdom of God: for remember what I have said all along; that we may look on all our duties in this cheering and beautiful light—first to set up God's kingdom in our own hearts, making them pure and true and loving; and then to make our homes little provinces of the same kingdom; and lastly to try to extend that kingdom through the world; the empire of Justice, Truth, and Love. We are entirely responsible for our own souls; and very greatly responsible for those of all the dwellers in our homes; and, in a lesser way, we are answerable for each widening circle beyond us. How shall we set about making our Homes provinces of the Divine Kingdom?

1st. Nobody must be morally the worse for living under our roof, if we can possibly help it. It is the *minimum* of our duties to make sure that temptations to misconduct or intemperance are not left in any one's way; or bad feelings suffered to grow up; or habits of moroseness or domineering formed; or quarrels kept hot, as if they were toasts before the kitchen fire. As much as possible, on the contrary, everybody must be helped to be better,—not made better by Act of the Drawing Room, remember, that is impossible,—but *helped* to be better. The way

to do this, I apprehend, is neither very much to scold, or exhort, or insist on people going to church whether they like it or not, or reading Family Prayers, (excellent though that practice may be) but rather to spread through the house such an atmosphere of frank confidence and kindness with servants, and of love and trust with children and relations, as that bad feelings and doings will really have no place, no temptation, and if they intrude, will soon die out.

One such point out of many I may here cite as specially concerning us women. Is it not absurd for a lady who spends hundreds of pounds and thousands of hours on her toilet, and takes evident pleasure in attracting admiration in fashionable raiment not always perfectly decent—to turn and lecture poor Mary Ann, her housemaid, on sobriety in attire, and set forth to her the peril and folly of flowers in her bonnet? The mistress who dresses modestly and sensibly, may reasonably hope in time that her servants will dress modestly and sensibly likewise; but certainly they will not do so while she exhibits to their foolish young eyes the example of extravagance and folly.

2nd. Next to the *Virtue* of those who live in our homes, their *Happiness* should occupy us. In the first place, no creature under our roof should ever be miserable, if we can prevent it. In how many otherwise happy homes is there not one such miserable being? Sometimes it is the sufferer's own fault: their minds are warped and despairful, and our utmost efforts perhaps can only

cheer them a little. But much oftener there is to be found in a large household some poor creature who has fallen, through no fault, into the miserable position of the family *butt*; the object of ill-natured and unfeeling jests and rude speeches; the last person to be given any pleasure, and the first person to be made to suffer any privation or ill-temper. Sometimes it is a poor governess or tutor; sometimes an old aunt or poor relation; now and then, but rarely in these days, a stupid servant; most often of all, a child, who is perhaps a step-child, or nephew, or niece of the mistress of the house, or alas! her own child, only deformed in some way, or deficient in intellect. Then the hapless frightened creature, afraid of punishment, looks with furtive glances at the frowning faces about it, tries to escape by some little transparent deception, and only incurs the heavier penalty of falsehood and the name of a liar; and so the evil goes on growing day by day. It is astonishing and horrible to witness how the deep-seated frightful human passion, which I have elsewhere named *Heteropathy*, develops itself in such circumstances.—the sight of suffering and down-trodden misery exciting, not pity, but the reverse; a sort of cruel *aversion* in the bystanders, till the whole household sometimes joins in hating the poor helpless and isolated victim.

My friends, if you ever see anything approaching to this in your homes, for God's sake set your faces like a flint against it! If you dislike and mistrust the poor victim yourself, as you probably will do at first, never

mind! Take, my word for it, the first thing to be done in the Kingdom of God is to do JUSTICE to all,—to secure that no creature, however mean, or even loathsome, should be treated with injustice. If you are, as I am supposing, mistress of the house, stop this persecution with a high hand; and if you have been in any way to blame in it, if it be *your* dislike which you see thus reflected in the faces of your dependants, repent your great fault, and make amends to your victim. If you are not mistress, only a guest perhaps, or a humble friend, even then you can and ought to do much; you can look grave and pained whenever the *butt* is laughed at and jeered; and you can deliberately fix your eyes on him, or her, with sympathy, and treat him with respect. Even these little tokens of condemnation of what is going on will have (you may be sure), a startling effect on those whose custom it has become to treat the poor soul with contempt; and they will probably be angry with you for exhibiting them. You will never have borne resentment for a better cause!

Nor is it only human beings who are thus made too often household victims. You must all know houses where some unlucky animal—a cat or dog—beginning by being the object of somebody's senseless antipathy, becomes the general *souffre-douleur* of masters and servants. The dog or cat (especially if it happens to be cherished by the human victim), is spoken to so roughly, driven out of every room, and perhaps

punished for all sorts of offences it has never committed, that the animal assumes a downcast, sneaking aspect, which inevitably produces fresh and fresh *heteropathy*. You attempt, perhaps, to give it a little pat of sympathy, and the poor frightened beast snaps at you, expecting a blow; or runs off to hide under a sofa. Mistresses of homes! don't let there be a dog, or a cat, or a donkey, or any other creature, in or about your homes, which shrinks when a man or woman approaches it! And here I may add, that without thus specially victimizing the animals through dislike, a household frequently makes the life of some poor brute one long martyrdom through neglect. The responsibility for this neglect lies primarily with the mistress of the house. She must not only direct her servants, but *see that her directions be carried out*, in the way of affording water, and food, and needful exercise. A pretty "Kingdom of Heaven" some houses would be if the poor brutes could speak; houses possibly with prayers going on twice a day, and grace said carefully before long luxurious meals,—and all the time the children's birds and rabbits left untended in foul cages without fresh food; mice thrown out of the traps on the fire; aged or diseased cats, or superfluous puppies given to boys to destroy in any way their cruel invention may suggest; fowls for the consumption of the house carelessly and barbarously killed; and, worst of all, the poor house-dog, perhaps some loving-hearted little Skye, or noble old mastiff or retriever, con-

demned for life to the penalties which we should think too severe for the worst of malefactors: chained up by the neck through all the long bright summer days under a burning sun, with its water-trough unfilled for days, or through the winter's frost in some dark sunless corner, freezing with cold and in agonies of rheumatism for want of straw or the chance of warming itself at a fire, or by a run in the snow. And all this as a reward for the poor brute's fidelity! When this kind of thing goes on for a certain time, of course the dog becomes horribly diseased. His longing to bound over the fresh grass—expressed so affectingly by his leaps and bounds when we approach his miserable dungeon,—is not merely a longing for his natural pleasure, but for that which is indispensable to his health, namely exercise, and the power to eat grass; and, if refused, he very soon falls into disease: his beautiful coat becomes mangy and red; he is irritable, and becomes revolting to everybody, and the nurse cries to the children, who were his only friends and visitors, "Don't go near that dog!"

I say it deliberately, the mistress of a house in whose yard a dog is thus kept like a *forçat*—only worse treated than any murderer is treated in Italy—is guilty of a *very great sin*; and till she has taken care that the dog has his daily exercise and water, and that the cat and the fowls and every other sentient creature under her roof is well and kindly treated, she may as well, for shame's sake, give up thinking she is ful-

filling her duties by reading prayers and subscribing to missions.

I assume that the master of the house, where there is one, will, as usual, look after the stable department. Where there is no master, or he does not interfere, the mistress is surely responsible for humane treatment of the horses, if she keep any. Further, I think every lady is bound to insist that any horse which draws her shall be free from the misery of a bearing-rein. She ought not to allow her vanity and ambition to be fashionable, to induce her to connive at her coachman's laziness and cruelty.

When the Mistress of a house has done all she can to *prevent the suffering*, mental or physical, of any creature, human or infra-human, under her roof, there remains still a delightful field for her ability in actually *giving pleasure*. We all know that life is made up chiefly of little pleasures and little pains; and how many of the former are in the power of the mistress of a house to provide, it is almost impossible to calculate. But let any clever woman simply take it to heart to make everybody about her *as happy as she can*, and the result I believe will always be wonderful. Let her see that so far as possible, they have the rooms they like best, the little articles of furniture and ornament they prefer. Let her order meals with a careful forethought for their tastes, and for the necessities of their health; seeing that every one has what he desires, and making him feel, however humble in position,

that his tastes have been remembered. Let her not disdain to pay such attention to the position of the chairs and sofas of the family dwelling-rooms as that every individual may be comfortably placed, and feel that he or she has not been left out in the cold. And after all these cares, let her try, not so much to make her rooms splendid and æsthetically admirable, as to make them thoroughly habitable and comfortable for those who are to occupy them; regarding their comfort rather than her own æsthetic gratification. A drawing-room, bright and clean, sweet with flowers in summer, or with dried rose leaves in winter; with tables at which the inmates may occupy themselves, and easy chairs wherever they are wanted; and plenty of soft light, and warmth, or else of coolness adapted to the weather—this sort of room belongs more properly to a woman who seeks to make her house a province of the Kingdom of *Heaven*, than one which might be exhibited at South Kensington as having belonged to the Kingdom of *Queen Anne*!

Then for the moral atmosphere of the house, which depends so immensely on the tone of the mistress; I will venture to make one recommendation. Let it be as gay as ever she can make it. There are numbers of excellent women—the salt of the earth—who seem absolutely oppressed with their consciences, as if they were congested livers. They are in a constant state of anxiety and care; and, perhaps with the addition of feeble health, find it difficult to get through their

duties except in a certain lachrymose and dolorous fashion. Houses where these women reign seem always under a cloud, with rain impending. Now I conceive that good, and even high animal spirits, are among the most blessed of possessions,—actual wings to bear us up over the dusty or muddy roads of life; and I think that to keep up the spirits of a household, is not only indefinitely to add to its happiness, but also to make all duties comparatively light and easy. Thus, however naturally depressed a mistress may be, I think she ought to struggle to be cheerful, and to take pains never to quench the blessed spirits of her children or guests. All of us who live long in great cities get into a sort of subdued-cheerfulness tone. We are neither very sad nor very glad; we neither cry, nor ever enjoy that delicious experience of helpless laughter, the *fou rire* which is the joy of youth. I wish we could be more really light of heart.

A few words must suffice upon the vexed question of Servants.

I do not represent to myself a household as a Despotism, so much as a Community, wherein some persons (the servants) have contracted, on certain terms, to perform a certain class of services for the heads of the house, their children and guests. The mistress (it is part of the contract) is authorized to give directions at all moments how those services are

to be performed; and she is also authorized (it is understood) to give such further directions respecting the dress and habits of the servants, their hours for coming home, the persons they shall admit into the house, &c., as may appear necessary for the order and safeguard of the house. But with these *directions* I think her claims to *authority* are exhausted. Into the employment of any leisure time her servants may have, and their private affairs generally, she has no right, in virtue of their contract, to intrude at all; and I cannot but think that the recognition of this line of demarcation, the formal relinquishment of the patriarchal relation (which can only now be really maintained in exceptional cases), and the careful observance of the contract, would be the safest, as it is the truest, basis for our future relationship with our servants. When this basis is fairly laid, I think servants can be better brought to respect their side of the contract; to do us just and honest service for honest wages; and, metaphorically and literally, to “sweep under the mats.” There remains, outside of their actual service, or of any assumption of authority on our side, an actually limitless field for the exercise of our natural influence as their immediate superiors and friends.

One word in concluding these remarks on Woman's duties as a *Haus Frau*. If we cannot perform these well, if we are not orderly enough, clear-headed enough,

powerful enough in short, to fulfil this immemorial function of our sex well and thoroughly, it is somewhat foolish of us to press to be allowed to share in the great Housekeeping of the State. My beloved and honoured friend, Theodore Parker, argued for the admission of women to the full rights of citizenship and share in government, on the express grounds that few women keep house so badly or with such wastefulness as Chancellors of the Exchequer keep the State; and womanly genius for organization applied to the affairs of the nation would be extremely economical and beneficial. But if we cannot keep our houses, and manage our servants, this argument, I am afraid, will be turned the other way, and we shall be told that *not* having used our one talent, it is quite out of question to give us ten; having shown ourselves incapable in little things, nobody in their senses will trust us with great ones.

LECTURE V.

Duties of Women as Members of Society.

IN the Second Lecture of this Course I spoke of the *Personal Duties* of Women. In the Third Lecture we discussed their *Social Duties* generally, beginning with their Duties as Members of Families, Mothers, Daughters, Sisters, &c. In the Fourth Lecture I spoke of the Duties of Wives and Mistresses of Households. We now come to the consideration of the Duties of a Woman as a *Member of Society*; reserving for our last Lecture her Duties as a Citizen of the State and Member of the Human Race.

In this Lecture I beg you to take note that I shall use the word "Society" in its narrower conventional sense, implying the association of equals for purposes of pleasure, mutual hospitality, visits, entertainments, and so forth. The larger sense of the word "Society," as applied to all human intercourse, is not here intended.

If the Home be, as it is often well called, "Woman's Kingdom," every drawing-room is woman's throne-room. Modern civilized society all proceeds on the