

## A MAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMAN.

BY PROFESSOR J. STUART BLACKIE.

## PART I.



HERE is a good deal of talk at the present day tending towards the abolition, or at least the softening down and shading away of the great lines of demarcation which Nature and the traditions and usages of all nations, from

the oldest times, seem to have drawn between the sexes. That this tendency has a certain root of rightness in it seems not to be doubted; for in so far as either sex may be able to borrow the graces and virtues of the other without losing its own peculiar type, it will, of course, be the more perfect. If the granite could appropriate the warmth of the sandstone without losing its hardness, or if the sandstone could take to itself the hardness of the granite without losing its warmth, then, of course, there would be in each case a union of excellencies in the compound, which does not exist in either of the rocks taken separately. But here precisely lies the difficulty. The union of opposite qualities is, undoubtedly, a higher excellence; but in a great many cases this higher excellence can be obtained only by sinking or subordinating some distinctive feature of one of the types.

It were, no doubt, possible to create a creature combining the strength of the man with the beauty of the woman; but the strong would not appear so strong, nor the beautiful so beautiful, in the compound as when each was presented with its own peculiar virtue in its undisturbed and unconfounded type: even as a birch-tree mixed up with an oak would cease to be a birch, or an oak mingled up with the grace of the birch would cease to be an oak. And exactly so, a man in the main lines of his expression and character must be predominantly and distinctively a man, and a woman a woman. Up to a certain point they can be assimilated, and below a certain point they are identical; but beyond the level of assimilation, they cannot be brought nearer without being destroyed. With this proviso, the ambition of the woman to take on as much of the male culture as possible is quite legitimate; but let her beware of the too much. She cannot become a man in some of the fundamental qualities of her nature, any more than a bird can be-

come a quadruped, or a flower a tree. The affirmation of the one sex is the denial of the other. Let us therefore endeavour to specify in detail what those distinctive features and qualities are that make a woman a woman, and divorced from which she wanders out of her type, and becomes neither a man nor a woman, but a monster.

Those who are so zealous to break down the wall of partition that by the precedent of ages has established itself between the sexes, should observe, in the first place, that Nature seems to be of a different opinion; for she has certainly, in the physical presentation of the two creatures, taken care to make them look as distinctively different as a birch-tree is from an oak. The structure of the woman is altogether more slender, her stature as a rule less, her tissue more fine, her nerve more delicate, her muscular strength and capacity for hard work less. Let a young man and a young woman of average fibre set out on a pedestrian expedition, and it will be found in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that the lady will be more fatigued after walking ten miles than the gentleman after walking twenty; and the lady who, in despite of this fatigue, out of a pure spirit of ambitious rivalry, perseveres in vying with the more robust animal in his proper domain, will be sure to pay the penalty of her abnormal ambition, if she live a few years, in more ways than one.

In close connection with this more delicate physical constitution of the woman is the fact that her emotional nature is more keen, her sensibility more quick, her passions more violent, her instincts more imperious, and less submissive to necessary limitations, than in the man. This strongly-rooted sensibility in women is the cause of their characteristic persistency in all matters that depend in any considerable degree on sentiment. It is in vain to combat sentiment with reasons. A woman of strong passion and fine sensibility will hold by her instincts, and leave your arguments to float, and in so doing may, in not a few cases, be right; but if the case is one in which cool judgment, and not keen feeling, is to decide, she will probably be wrong. Arguments in such cases are stronger with a man, because he is either naturally less richly furnished with sentiment, or has trained himself to keep his sentiment in subjection; but with the woman it is omnipotent, as belonging radically to the constitution of her nature. You may bend the branches of a tree, and force them to grow, as we sometimes see, contrary to nature, downwards; but if you tug at the roots, you kill it.

Again, the faculty of observation in woman is more quick and more minute than in man. She deals more in particulars than in generals—in persons rather than in principles. She is more akin to the artist and to the poet than to the philosopher, and in all cases describes better than she concludes. This seems to argue that in brain-force, or power of thinking, she

is, as a rule, inferior to the man. She argues generally rather by induction from special facts than by deduction from large principles; and she has a habit of leaping from a fact or two, accidentally picked up, to a sweeping generalisation, such as can safely be built only on a broad and deep foundation of facts. She seems to have neither range, nor patience, nor grasp for severe reasoning. Those who deny this—and I have no pleasure at all in maintaining it—are forced to attribute the general inferiority of women in persistent brain-work to neglected education, a narrow sphere of action, and the hereditary social tyranny of the stronger sex; but in the face of so many manifest differences, both physical and moral, it seems difficult for an impartial mind to believe absolutely in the cerebral equality of the sexes.

The acuteness of the observant faculty in women, combined with the larger amount of love and sympathy to be immediately noticed, opens up the famous chapter of the curiosity of the sex which, from Blue-beard downwards, has been famous in story. I do not think this quality a vice in itself: quite the contrary; for the want of curiosity arising from apathy or dulness is always a vice; and not to be curious is simply to be indifferent. Like all other healthy instincts, it becomes a vice only when in excess, or when wandering out of its natural domain. To be curious about other people's matters is certainly an impertinence; but a woman having no engrossing occupation will readily find frequent occasion to make herself at home in her neighbour's business, and will as readily justify herself by asserting her right, and even duty, to employ liberally the sympathy which binds together every member of the human family. In connubial relations, she will be apt to consider it a breach of confidence if she is refused access to all her husband's doings; and if she is yoked to an easy lord, she will certainly assert her right to open all his letters, and believe that it is not to gratify her own curiosity that she does so, but purely to save him trouble. All this is extremely amiable, but may sometimes be inconvenient.

If woman is differentially inferior to man in the thinking faculty, she is decidedly superior to him in the finer emotions; and let this not be considered a small matter; the emotions are the steam-power that sets the great moral machinery of the world in motion, or, as Burns has it—

“The heart's aye  
The part, aye,  
That makes us right or wrong.”

And even the cold politic Napoleon knew enough to say, though he did not always act on his knowledge, that “the moral forces are two-thirds of the battle.” Women have proverbially more love and more fidelity than men; and, if they have less energy, they have less selfishness. To those on her own level, woman is more sympathetic and more communicative; to those beneath her, more pitiful, more merciful, and more benign; to those above her, more deferential and more respectful. Her greater reverence and respect for authority makes her more devout and more religious than man, and she will overlook or ignore a gross

superstition in the gratification of a noble emotion; insomuch that, while an irreligious man is not uncommon now even where the received faith is least liable to sceptical objections, and may, without piety, practise many virtues and exhibit many graces that will secure the esteem of his fellow-citizens, an irreverent and irreligious woman is always out of nature, and a sort of monster. The general moral superiority of women is apparent from what is commonly said, that when they are bad, they are very bad—meaning, of course, that they are generally good and better than men; or, as a Parisian correspondent wrote to a friend from the heat of the Barricades, in 1830, “if the men became tigers, the women became devils.” Of course, in measuring the value of the emotions, it is always understood that, even in their greatest strength, they submit themselves to a certain regulation, owning always with graceful loyalty the natural sovereignty of reason as supreme in a reasonable animal; for emotion can no more act alone in the difficult passages of life than a ship, even with the faintest breeze, can reach its destination in safety without the pilot and the ballast. Intense love fixed on a single object may readily create intense hatred in other directions, as its natural negation; and intense hatred generally means great injustice; and so it shall come to pass that the most Christian women not seldom display a greater want of the specially Christian virtue of charity than their more cool yoke-fellows. They hate strongly, because they love strongly; and in this way a husband will often look with the most perfect indifference, or it may be with the most kindly charity, on slanderers and calumniators, whom his more sensitive yoke-fellow cannot name without indignation. Again, usurped by her finer sensibilities alone, a woman's daily life may become a torture to herself, and an annoyance to those about her. Sensibility acts as a spur to the imagination; and this faculty, if once allowed free rein, is apt to gallop off with the helpless rider to a phantom world of bright hopes, doomed to a speedy disappointment, and the self-projected shadow of imaginary fears.

To this usurped dominance of sentiment in women is to be attributed the not uncommon phenomenon observable even in the best specimens of the sex, that the living power of their faith, acting as a magnet pointing to the polar star of their life-voyage, is so feeble and variable in its action, as compared with the steadiness of their theological creed. In all cases with both sexes, intellectual faith or orthodoxy of creed is more easily maintained than the living faith of the heart, which has to do daily with the stormy buffets or the irritating frets of life; but in proportion as independent thought is less active, experience less wide, and sentiment more strong, the orthodoxy of the head which comes by tradition asserts a more undisputed sway over the soul. Women, therefore, as a rule, are more orthodox than men, though their faith under trying circumstances may be less reliable. I have known a mother who lost half the joy of her first baby by a morbid habit of magnifying into imminent realities every shadow of a possible danger to the dear one that might cross her path. Religious

mothers of this temper might learn to live a happier life if they would put into practice the familiar precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. (See Matt. vi. 25—30.)

In estimating the value of the emotions, we must distinguish them carefully from volitions. To wish is not to will; and it is not always that the nobility which inspires a woman's wish can shape itself to that firm determination of which the outcome is a noble deed. Decision in willing is, on the whole, rather a male than a female virtue; and when we say, as we often do, that a woman has a will of her own, or, as the song says, that you must "give her a' the plea," this only means that in cases where her interests are very strong and within a certain range that belongs more particularly to her, she will know how, with the generality of husbands, to take her own way; but this is a very different thing from saying that her will is constitutionally strong in proportion to her wish. Not seldom, when a bold resolution is taken to carry out any wish with which a woman's breast may be possessed, she will be found more fertile to object than eager to co-operate.

As a decidedly emotional creature, it may be looked upon as a kind of exceptional abnormality in a woman when she takes to studies and professions where the intellect only is exercised, and called upon to work independently of, and even antagonistically to, the heart, as mathematics, law, logic, and metaphysics. In this view it may be observed that women are made of the same stuff as great poets, who, like Goethe, love to

furnish their imagination with concrete pictures, rather than to exercise their thinking faculty on abstract formulas. Like Goethe, also, it might be expected that natural history should be their favourite scientific recreation, as much as mathematics and logic should be their natural aversion. I have not found, however, that my fair friends have given themselves with any special prominence to the study of those fairest objects in the physical world of which themselves are the counterpart in the moral world. The Greco-Latin terminology, in which the science of flowers is encased, has sometimes seemed to me one strong reason why we can name so few distinguished female botanists. If this explanation be not accepted, then we must fall back on the principle that for pure science, as a cognitive process, women have naturally small taste, and that we are to look for the most luxuriant manifestation of their particular excellence in literature and the fine arts rather than in the domain of science; and so far as literature is concerned, they have, specially in the most recent times, vindicated their right to an honourable rivalry with the other sex. Of this George Eliot and Mrs. Browning may stand as sufficient proof; but in the region of the fine arts their successful efforts have as yet been few and far between; and the fact that no great female musical composer has ever yet appeared, even in the most musically-cultured countries, has been accepted by many persons as a satisfactory proof that women generally are deficient both in the constructive faculty and in the intellectual conception which leads to its exercise.

## A MAN OF THE NAME OF JOHN.

By FLORENCE M. KING.

### CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

#### DOUBTS AND FEARS.

GEORGE, who is Mr. Holt?"

It was Mrs. Marchmont who spoke, as she solemnly entered the study, where her husband was enjoying his pipe and his paper, on the morning after her arrival at home.

"Who is Mr. Holt?" repeated Mr. Marchmont in surprise.

"Yes. Who are his people? Where does he come from? What introductions did he bring?"

"Oh!" said Mr. Marchmont, laying his paper on his knee. "He didn't bring any introductions—he introduced himself."

"Then you know absolutely nothing about him?"

"Well," said Mr. Marchmont slowly, and with a twinkle in his eye, "he is an artist and a gentleman. I know that;" and then he took a gentle puff at his pipe.

"George, you are too tiresome!" said his wife, half laughing, half annoyed. "Do you call yourself a proper chaperon for your daughters? I leave you alone for a few days to keep Gypsy out of mischief, and come back to find a penniless artist, from no one knows where, like a tame cat about the house, and you looking on with your eyes shut!"

Mr. Marchmont puffed on placidly, and finally remarked, "Mr. Holt is not penniless. He told me he had private means."

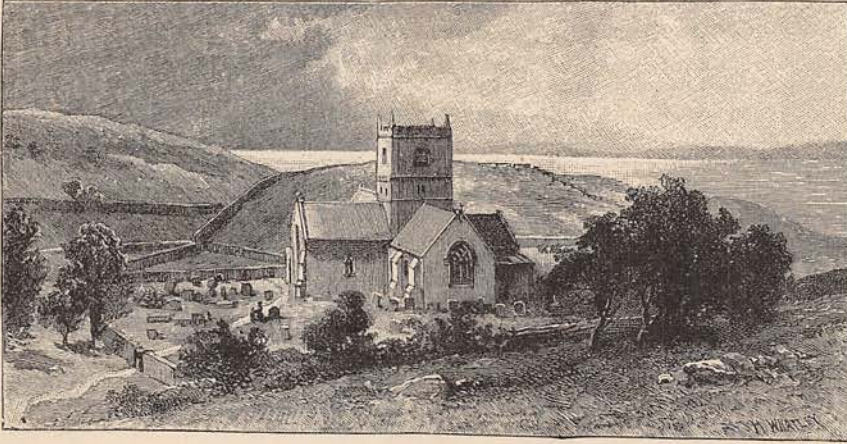
"What are they? £100 a year—£200—£1,000? No, of course you don't know," as Mr. Marchmont made a gesture implying complete ignorance on the subject. "You never do know anything. You didn't know Jim was in love with Nellie till he came and asked for leave to marry her."

"What a match-making old mamma you are!"



Channel. One thing he must bear with, and that is rough accommodation in the matter of steamboats; for in this western land they have not yet taken a

lesson from the Rhine or Clyde, or even Solent, in the management, cleanliness, speed, catering, or appointments of their steamers.



CLEVEDON CHURCH, SOMERSET.

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### PART II.



CONFORMABLY to the delicacy of her frame, there is a beauty in the composition of a woman, a grace in her motions, a charm and a fascination peculiarly her own. This nature seems to have given her as a sort of compensation for her lack of strength and energy,

so that in her weakness, as Anacreon sings, she can conquer both fire and iron by the mere graciousness of her presence. Let her never forget this: and in all that she does, be assiduous to temper and to harmonise and to sweeten that society which she cannot always guide. Let her know also that by a gentle influence, indirectly applied at a convenient moment, she may secure greater victories in important social matters than by planting herself as an armed champion in the war. As personal beauty is her special dower from nature, so it is natural to expect that she should have a finer æsthetical instinct than the man, and that this should manifest itself in her habitual presentation and in the quality of her surroundings: she should delight in dress, in elegant articles of furniture, in tasteful decoration of all kinds, in flowers, in birds, and in everything, whether in life or nature, that appeals to a fine sense of the beautiful.

In a man's rough work, a very delicate appreciation of beauty, with its natural accompaniment of a horror for what is opposed to beauty, would in many cases rather be a hindrance: so, except in the special case of

the artist and the poet, nature has taken care in respect of the atmosphere in which he must move, to make him somewhat pachydermatous. Education and habit, of course, go far to strengthen this fine instinct in women; insomuch that a disorderly woman or a slut is justly as much an object of contempt as a coward is amongst men. The passion for dress and decoration in women is, of course, fostered by the admiration which their graces extort from the other sex; and, though there is a sense in which, as the poet has it, beauty when unadorned is adorned the most, in the general case elegant and tasteful, and sometimes even gorgeous, dress will perform the same service to a beautiful woman that a good frame does to a picture; and I for one should not feel inclined to have anything to do with a woman who had not the sense to know this. A magnificent picture always demands a somewhat costly frame; while, on the other hand, a plain woman, like a plain picture, though she should not affect a flaunting showiness in her apparel, will hardly fail to find a certain compensation for her meaner figure and features in a tasteful regard for her dress. Whether in reference to the desire to display themselves to advantage women are naturally more vain than men, is a question which I cannot answer; but the love of a spontaneous tribute of admiration from our fellows, which is principally concerned in vanity, seems to be natural to all creatures; and the only difference between the sexes in this regard will be that each sex will naturally seek to attract admiration, and to feed its vanity, where vanity is not altogether extinguished in subordination

to nobler sentiments, by the display of its strongest and most effective points. Now, as the glory of a young man is his strength, and the glory of a young woman is her beauty, it is natural to expect that, while the woman, when vain, will have pleasure in parading her graces, the man will have a corresponding satisfaction in exhibiting his strength. Nevertheless, as dress strikes the eye constantly, while feats of strength can show themselves only on rare occasions, it may be true, as a rule, that young men, when vanity is a leading element in their character, or when on critical occasions their personal appearance excites special attention, are no less apt to display their self-appreciation by dressing well than young women; only a certain carelessness in the matter of dress, for many good reasons, will be much more readily pardoned by a young woman in her lover than the lover will be willing to overlook any such carelessness in his fair one.

What has just been said about vanity may apply to ambition. Is woman more ambitious than man? No. Every creature not weak, feeble, and insipid must in a certain sense be fond of power: power is only unhindered or victorious energy: unhindered energy is highly accentuated life: and this every living creature in good condition must desire. But every creature will naturally direct its ambition to that sphere of energy which nature has shaped out for it. Every married woman, therefore, will naturally be ambitious to exercise an influence over her husband, and even to direct and to rule him in that sphere of his action which is not altogether independent of her. She will be ambitious also for her husband's fame, because such ambition is the natural expression of that respect which is never absent from the right hand of love: in proportion as she honours her husband privately she will wish him to be honoured publicly; and as there is no stage for public honour in a free country so grand as politics, she will wish her husband to be a statesman, a member of Parliament, or some sort of Court official; and she will delight in the parade and show, the flaunting of titles, and the blowing of trumpets which such position implies. But the pure love of power in the political sense is a passion of which only exceptional women are capable: women cast in the mould of the Scottish Lady Macbeth, the Greek Clytemnestra, and some few ladies remarkable for beauty and badness in the annals of the Tower and the pages of the Criminal Calendar.

As being stronger, more energetic, and more aggressive than woman, man is naturally the more courageous animal; while the woman is constitutionally timid. She knows her place, and will not naturally put herself in face of a danger where she cannot stand. Riskful courage she may indeed show on great occasions, and when under the stimulus of a strong excitement, as in hunting; but as a rule she is not made for bold physical venture, and instinctively prefers the kindly occupation of waiting on the wounded to the soldier's duty of dealing hard blows in the battle. To this natural timidity may be ascribed, no doubt, that disproportion of the female will to the female wish previously noticed. A woman retreats from the

offered realisation of her wish not so much from deficiency of will as because she shrinks from the dangers which its realisation may imply. In her own sphere, where she thoroughly knows the ground, she may have will enough. As a timid creature, she is also fearful of being alone. She must always have some one to walk with her or to talk with her, and support, encourage, and direct her in sudden emergencies. Altogether, she is more of a social and gregarious animal than the man. But of this love of company, timidity is not the only, or indeed the principal cause. Women have greatly fewer absorbing occupations than men; severe study and concentrated thought, also, which demand solitude, are foreign to a woman's nature: so to fill up the void she must always be talking to somebody about something or nothing; and, when she cannot find this society, she naturally flies as a refuge to what is nearest to her: viz., the last new novel, a sort of loose Epos of daily life, full of the sort of stuff—personal character, adventures, and incidents—which forms the staple of social converse on common occasions to men no less than to women.

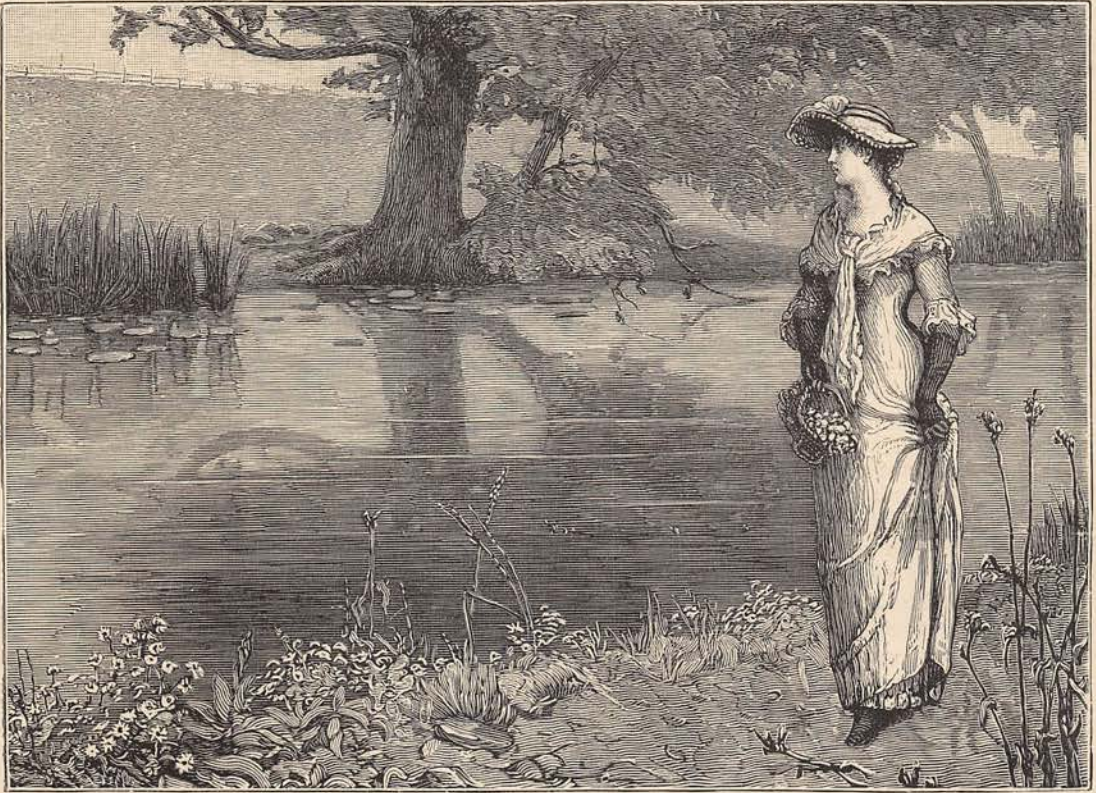
As a creature of less forward daring than the man, the woman is gifted by nature with a certain fine tact of doing with a delicate indirectness things which the male achieves shortly and effectively, but not always without harshness, at a single blow. Everybody knows what the French word  *finesse*  means; and it is a word rich with a various fulness of significance which no bearded creature, even with all the address of a practised French diplomatist, can exhaust. And if the exercise of this fine social subtlety in the woman has its root in a certain feeling of weakness, it is not therefore a fault. On the contrary, she is just doing what every wise strategist does when dealing with a strong enemy: he plays the fox because he can't play the lion. It may be quite true in the general case, as Napoleon said, that Providence is on the side of the strong battalions; but even when the battalions are strong, as the French were at Crecy, the battle may not always go with them; and where the battalions are decidedly weak, as the English army of brave Henry on that field was, the weak men must be compensated not only by valour, but by wisdom. But there is another cause of this dexterous social strategy in word and deed so characteristic of the sex. The finished lady avoids the direct utterance of her purpose, not because she is afraid in any self-regarding sense of some harm that may befall herself, but because she is afraid of giving offence and causing pain to others. This, of course, is only a familiar phase of that supercharge of love which is her divinest gift; and one cannot but pardon a certain want of truthfulness on occasions which proceeds from so unselfish a fountain. On not a few occasions, to understand what a woman really wishes, a man requires to have an eye well exercised in the amiable discounts and dainty abnegations so familiar to the best specimens of the sex, to understand at a glance that when she says "No," she really means "Yes."

Not only from their timidity, but, as above remarked, from their great nervous susceptibility, women are

naturally unfit for the military profession ; and not only for that, but for all fields of activity in which hard and severe work, with great strength and cool endurance, are required. No man expects a penknife or a razor to do the work of a hatchet ; and the works of women are, by the necessity of their physical constitution, finer and more feeble than the works of men. It is accordingly one of the signs of a low stage of civilisation when women are made to bear heavy burdens, and to

perform hard tasks belonging properly to the stronger sex ; and—though it is difficult to see why women should be debarred from the general practice of medicine, for which in some of its branches they seem rather to have a peculiar fitness—if for certain operations of surgery no common physical strength, with great firmness and coolness, are required, I should say that, as a rule, men are better calculated than women for the performance of such operations.

## THE LILY WREATH.



TOWARDS the stream a little maid  
 Now trips across the lea,  
 And who to-day so blithe and gay  
 And light of heart as she ?  
 As on she speeds, she laughs and sings,  
 And joy pervades her song,  
 While birds essay to trill her lay  
 The trembling reeds among.

She comes to search the streamlet's bed  
 For lilies white as snow,  
 A wreath of twine, that she may shine  
 Wherever she may go.  
 For she's to-day the Queen of May,  
 A sovereign of renown,  
 And 'tis proclaimed that all so famed  
 Should wear a dainty crown.

She weaves the flow'rets one by one,  
 A zone of beauty grows,  
 And proud is she that majesty  
 Is hers where'er she goes.  
 Anon the village green she nears,  
 Where stands the May-pole tall,  
 And every tongue, of old and young,  
 Proclaims her queen of all.

But soon those flow'rets fade and die,  
 And droop athwart her brow ;  
 Her queenly pomp 'mid dance and romp  
 Has gone for ever now.  
 "Alas !" she cries, " I see full well  
 That pride is but a dream ;  
 It comes and fades for little maids,  
 Like lilies of the stream."

EDWARD OXENFORD.

## A MAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMAN.

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## PART III.



BY reason, partly, of their inferiority in physical strength, partly of their finer susceptibility, women have less freedom of action than men; and the range of their experience of life is much more confined. A man can put forth his feelers in a thousand directions, from which a woman, whether from want of muscle or want of nerve, or from nice moral sensi-

bility, is debarred; and if it be true, as Schiller says, that "men grow larger with their larger sphere," then woman in her smaller sphere is apt to become more confined in her range of idea and more narrow in her notions than her more roving companion.

Another element that narrows the sphere of a woman—and that an element fixed imperatively by nature—is maternity, and her destiny as the key-stone of the family circle, the monad of the social system. However wrong it may be in mothers to bring up their daughters with the notion that they ought to look on marriage as a primary object of life, the fact is that even in the most unfavourable circumstances seven women out of ten, or more, will be married; and equally certain it is that the manifest destiny of the majority of the sex will influence the feelings of the minority. Marriage and family life will in this way come to be looked on by young women pretty much as a profession is looked on by young gentlemen; and this destiny, while it brings with it, no doubt, certain valuable compensations, cannot fail to exercise a marked influence, both on the sphere of a woman's culture before she is married, and on the range of her experience when she is married. From this contraction of the field of female energy arise certain dangers that ought to be guarded against, and certain consequences that seem unavoidable. On the one hand, there is the danger that women may be artificially kept within a circle much narrower than the fair sweep of their capacity. Partly from want of exercise, partly from the imperious will of her free-ranging lord, she may be relegated into the nursery, and the kitchen, and the private parlour—*τὸ γυναικείον*—and become, as in ancient Athens, in Turkey, and to a considerable extent in modern Germany, more a mother of children and a dignified house-

keeper than a companion and fellow-traveller through life to her husband. On the other hand, the consequence seems unavoidable that as the mother of a family the woman will be tied down to a routine of interesting, but narrowing, certainly not always elevating, duties; she cannot attend properly to her young ones, and specially to the baby, and at the same time take a warm interest in the weighty matters that agitate the world outside; nay, she will be driven, not rarely, to become so utterly indifferent to anything outside the range of her maternal ministrations, that she voluntarily lays aside all the accomplishments in which as a young woman she had rejoiced, and which had formed no small item in the attractions by which she gained the object of her maidenly ambition—a good husband. With these strictly maternal occupations the economy of the household, or housekeeping, will conspire to prevent the married woman from participating largely in the range of social experience which belongs to her lord; and in these various ways there will be generated a certain limitation in her sympathies and conceptions which the autocratic instinct of her partner may not seldom be more forward to cherish than to correct. This, of course, is wrong. On the husband the double duty lies of, at once, for his own sake, preventing the ambition of public life from encroaching on the kindly genialities of the fire-side, and for his wife's sake taking every opportunity of widening her view from the quiet precincts of the domestic establishment into the bustling arena of social life in Church and State.

The narrowness of the sphere in which a woman's social life is generally confined is the mother of a vice or fault, from which only women of exceptionally strong intellects and large interests are free, viz., the habit of treating the smallest matters as extremely important, interpreting a significance into accidental trifles, and exaggerating small faults and slips into serious offences. This tendency is intensified by the more acute sensibility of the sex, which makes them feel—to use a simile—as if the prick of a pin were as deep and as dangerous as a stab from a dagger; and again, from the idleness of many women, whether unmarried or married, and not engrossed by the cares of a fertile motherhood, which leads them not only to attach undue importance to what happens within their own circle, but to intermeddle, wherever a fair opportunity offers, with other people's matters, and to gather up loose talk from all quarters, which easily ripens into lies and slander. On this besetting sin of a section of the sex St. Paul has touched, in a well-known passage (1 Tim. v. 13), with the trenchant phrase of which he was so great a master; in extenuation of which we would only remark that this intermeddling proceeds not merely from the horror which all nature has of a vacuum, but from that quiet sympathy with anything vital, which, as it is one of the strongest instincts, so it leads to all the most beneficent agencies of the sex.

That women are more given to petty envyings, and jealousies, and rivalries than men, is a remark to which I have often listened with pain—not from men, but from women: good specimens of the sex. Such unholy jealousies are found amongst all competitors for public favour, both men and women, especially artists and other exhibitors; and, if it be true in any degree that women, who live in a certain sense by exhibition of their charms—as men, no doubt, have their strong points, which they are nothing loth to parade—are more given than men to petty jealousies and evil-speaking of one another, it cannot be because their moral nature is less noble, but because of the very fact which we have just been accentuating: that their range of thought is more limited, their judgment less cool, their sensibility more fretful, and their leisure more abundant. Occupation is the best specific against the entrance of all petty passions. A busy man will forget an unkind expression hastily dropped, which an idle woman will seize upon and nurse into the dimensions of a studied affront.

Of jealousy in amatory relations I need here say nothing; for it seems unquestionably to belong more to individual idiosyncrasy, social habits, and climatic temperament than to the difference of sex. Husbands, I presume, are more given to jealousy in Asia than in Europe, in Europe than in America; and the jealousy of a woman for another woman will be less the more she has trained herself to a confidence in the character, and the less she clings to the mere person of her lord. Anyhow, jealousy is a mean passion strongly steeped in the selfish element which delights in exclusive possession, and by which only low and ignoble natures will be habitually controlled.

In these latter days, which from the great French Revolution of 1789 have been marked everywhere by free self-assertion of all kinds, and strongly-pronounced individualism, the question has arisen how far the female sex shall be encouraged to step beyond the narrow bounds within which, by social tradition and positive law, they have from the earliest ages been confined; and there can be no question that in proportion as society has advanced, the gap between the male and the female sphere of action has sensibly diminished. It is also of importance to observe that as society advances in wealth and material well-being, the increased expense and difficulty of keeping up a domestic establishment suitable to the times will cause the number of unmarried women to increase; and the question arises, *What are they to do?* Of course, under such a change of circumstances, every hindrance ought to be removed that may prevent women from taking part in employments from which they are not excluded by physical or mental disabilities or moral considerations. Experience will afford the best proof how far they are able to hold their own against the superior energy of the male; but there are not a few professions and occupations, it is obvious to remark, hitherto confined to men, in which the moral virtues so conspicuous in women are as important as the intellectual and physical energy of the male. In this view, EDUCATION and the practice of MEDICINE

in its familiar routine seem to be marked out as the peculiar province of the female. In the "Iliad" it is noticeable that the person who surgeons the wound of Patroclus ("Iliad," xi. 740), one of his favourite heroes, is a lady—

"Who every healing herb doth know  
That on the breast of earth may grow."

The aptitude of women as teachers may now be considered as sufficiently proved; besides their natural love of order, and their sympathies with the young, they carry a grace and a graciousness with them into everything they do, that points out the schoolroom as one of their most natural spheres of action. Then, as to higher stages of educative activity, there seems no reason why women should not lecture and preach when they have the gift. Observe, when I say *preach*, I do not think they ought to be made bishops or supreme administrators in any shape; there are many reasons against that. But preaching depends as much on a special emotional inspiration, which women may have, perhaps, even more naturally than men. There were "wise women" among the ancient Hebrews, of whom honourable mention is made in the Books of Samuel and elsewhere in the Old Testament Scriptures; the *Bructeri* on the banks of the Lippe in the Rhine country had their patriotic *Velleda*; and though St. Paul, from the irregularities which had grown rank in the Corinthian Church, found it right in the then circumstances to prohibit a woman from speaking *in the Church*, there were, nevertheless, prophetesses of note in those earliest Christian times (Acts xxi. 9), and they may justly be expected to show themselves in an age when their general status in society is almost as superior to what it was amongst the ancient Greeks and the modern Turks as freedom is to slavery. Apostolic fervour and saintly purity they certainly will never lack; while recent conferences have taught us that when they have once overcome their natural reluctance to public exhibition, their eloquence and power of graceful expression, and the whole tone of their address, are admirable. From the loveless wranglings and the soulless formulas of the LAW, as from the factions and squabbles of professional politicians, they will thank Heaven that they are naturally excluded; though this, of course, is no reason why they should not, as citizens, exercise an indirect influence on politics by voting for Members of Parliament and other public officials in a representative constitution. Unmarried women, whatever the marriage laws may say of the married, have a *persona standi* in the State as well as men; and in democratic states, or mixed governments with a strong infusion of democracy, as in England, where the most ignorant and dependent of the male population are placed in the matter of representation on the same platform with the most competent, it is difficult to imagine a valid reason for the exclusion of well-educated and noble-minded women.

To conclude: In practically dealing with the professions and occupations proper for women, it must never be forgotten that there are exceptional women, as there are exceptional men—women of a masculine type, and men of a feminine type. I do not, therefore, see why,



if any woman find herself of such a decidedly masculine type as to wish to practise as a barrister and wrangle in the Law Courts, or be an M.P. and do battle with an outrageous Irishman or a hard-headed Scot, she should be forbidden to do so by any absolute law of exclusion. Let her go and play the legal or the Parliamentary Amazon, or even the soldier, as *La Pucelle* did at Orleans, in the reign of Henry VI., if that suits

her genius. But in such fashion to unsex themselves publicly can never be the interest or the policy of normally constituted women. The more they confine themselves to those professions and occupations that offer the greatest scope for their peculiar virtues and graces, the better for themselves and for the society of which, when worthy of themselves, they are always the better half.\*

## SOME CURIOUS QUAKER CUSTOMS.

BY A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.



AN OPEN-AIR MEETING.

**A**LTHOUGH the numerical strength of the Society of Friends has, I believe, remained stationary for the last few years, there is no doubt, alas! that most of its quaint old habits and customs are gradually dying out. I admit there may be good excuses for many of those members who are discarding the dress and manners of their parents; they may not be convenient or becoming to all, and younger Friends will say that these old customs arose at a time of great social corruption, and as a protest against the bigotry, the senseless extravagance, and the licentiousness that prevailed at the end of the seventeenth century. Whether *we* are more tolerant, less wasteful, or more pure, is a question I will not attempt to decide, but at any

rate we are more advanced, and owing to the enormous increase of education, the power of the press, and the easy modes of communication, our righteous grievances are more likely to be attended to in the natural course of justice than by our wearing any special dress or adopting an unusual formula. Notwithstanding all this, I, for one, sincerely regret the soft grey and dove-coloured skirts, the graceful shawls, and the immaculate lawn or muslin kerchiefs and caps we so seldom see amongst us now.

Talking of dress, I may mention that when this Society was *first* organised by George Fox, there is no record of any special dress, only a passing notice that the members generally wore black hoods and green

\* The writer alone is responsible for the views expressed in this paper.—Ed.