THE GOOD WIFE.

By the Author of "How to be Happy though Married," "The Five Talents of Woman," etc.

Are our readers familiar with the sketch of a good wife, which is given by Fuller in The Holy State? If not, they will like to have a few of the wise and witty remarks which he contains brought to their notice. It is one of those possessions for all time in literature which are as fresh and up-to-date as they were when first given to the world.

The first note of the ideal wife, according to Thomas Fuller, D.D., is that she "commandeth her husband by obeying him." Think of all that is implied in this, you who make so much fuss about the little word "obey" in the Marriage Service. Let the poor man fancy that he is the head of his house if it amuses him to do so. What does it matter so long as you are the neck that turns the head? Let your husband feel that you are managing him not for selfish purposes, but for his own good, and he will not object.

Fuller agrees with the poet Pope that the good wife is—
"She who ne'er answers till a husband cools, Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules."

"She never crosseth her husband in the springtide of his anger, but stays till it be ebbing water, and then mildly she argues the matter... Surely men, contrary to iron, are worse to be wrought upon when they are hot, and far more tractable in cold blood..."

With this compare what Robert Burton says. In his Anatomy of Melancholy he tells of a woman who, hearing one of her "gossips" complain of her husband's impatience, told her an excellent remedy for it. She gave her a glass of water which, when he braved it, she should hold still in her mouth. She did so two or three times with great success, and at length, meeting her neighbour, she thanked her for it, and asked to know the ingredients. The neighbour told her that it was "fair water," and nothing more, for it was not the water but her silence which performed the cure. Fuller's good wife keeps home if she has not her husband's company, but he is not so hard in this respect as were some of the older divines who said that a woman should go out of doors only three times in her life—to be baptised, married, and buried.

Commenting on the fiftieth verse of that chapter in the Book of Proverbs (the thirty-first) in which the "praise and properties of a good wife" are also set forth, Fuller says: "The woman hath her work within the house, and therefore can make the sun rise by lighting of a candle. She riseth while it is yet night." He did not approve of tea being sent up to a house-mother's bed, and of her remaining there until a late breakfast. He would rather agree with the great Duke of Wellington, who said that when we turn in bed in the morning it is time to turn out.

The clothes of the good wife portrayed by Fuller are "rather comely than costly, and she makes plain cloth to be velvet by her handsome wearing it." Music and painting are accomplishments, but dressing is a necessity, and all women should show their appreciation of art by putting on their dresses artistically. It is the wearer that makes the success of a gown. Speaking to a wife George Herbert said, "Let thy mind's sweetness have his operation upon body, clothes, and habitation." The ideal wife dresses according to her husband's purse, and does not think that a "gown, like a stratum of war, should be used but once." She does not expect her husband to bear all regards of expense, where her father left off.

"She doth not so remember what she was by birth, that she forgets what she is by match."

Referring to a matter which he wished to be made known, a man said, "I have taken the best way of publishing it."

I have told it to my wife." This was not the sort of wife contemplated by Fuller, for he says of that good lady, "her husband's secrets she will not divulge."

"Especially she is careful to conceal his infirmities." Before the days of Board Schools a bridgemoon, who worked in the garden of the Rector of his village, after being married, put his mark in the register. The bride did the same. Knowing that she was one of the best writers in the school, the Rector's daughter asked her why she made a mark instead of writing her name. "You see, miss," she answered, "my Jack is the dearest and nicest fellow in the world, but he is no scholar, and I thought that his not being able to sign his name would be less noticed if I pretended to be equally unable to write."

If her husband be "none of the wisest," the good wife "so orders it that he appears on the public stage but seldom, and then he hath coned his part so well that he comes off with great applause." This means that the man is prevented from making a fool of himself. How much worse sermons would be if ministers of the Gospel never married! One clergyman known to me preaches most excellent matter, but his manner spoils it. He makes grimaces, and has many awkward tricks which cause people to laugh. Of course he is a bachelor. I know another clergyman who preaches very well when his wife is in church, and very badly if she be absent from home. Probably she sees, when at home, that her husband "hath coned his part," or he may be afraid of a lecture after the service if he does not do well.

A good wife is always nipping off from her husband's moral nature little twigs that are growing in the wrong direction. She keeps him in shape by pruning. If John Johnson's wife had lived, there would have been no hoarding up of orange-peel, no touching all the posts in walking along the street, no eating and drinking with disgusting velocity. If Oliver Goldsmith had been married, he never would have worn that memorable and ridiculous coat.

When her husband is absent, the good wife becomes "deputy husband," and manages his business so well that he seems to have been at home when abroad. When he is sick, she does not show sorrow, for fear of putting him in low spirits, and because she is so busy nursing him that she has no time for idle tears. The children of the good wife, "though many in number, are none in noise; she steers them with a look whither she listeth." The mother of the Wesleys was in this as in other respects, a good wife. She managed her large family so well that the "oudious noise of crying children" was not heard in her home.

And when the children of the ideal mother grow up she "makes their hands to clothe their backs." Every girl, no matter what her position in life may be, should be taught to make her own clothes, and to do some work by which, if it ever became necessary, she could earn a living. The good wife "makes not her daughters gentlewomen before they be women." This was a protest against those who thought in Fuller's day, what some think even now, that work is only "gentlemaid work," which is comparatively useless, and that idleness is less degrading than so-called menial work.

"The heaviness of her servants" this good wife "maketh light by orderly and seasonable enjoining it; whereas her service is accordingly a preferment, and her teaching better than her ways."

Method is the oil that makes the wheels of the domestic machine run easily. The orderly arrangement of a household by no means depends upon the amount of money that is spent in it, but rather upon the order of habits of its mistress. Of course, clever servants can do a great deal, but even they become demoralised in time, when the mistress and the young ladies of the house are not orderly.