

THE
CHARACTER OF WOMAN,
IN
A LECTURE,

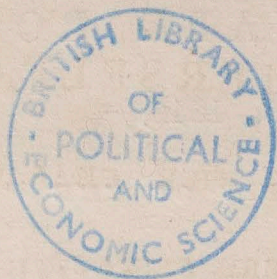
DELIVERED AT THE
HANOVER SQUARE ROOMS,
APRIL 13th, 1848,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
GOVERNESSES BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.

BY
THE REV. RICHARD COBBOLD, M. A.

AUTHOR OF
"ZENON, THE MARTYR," "THE YOUNG MAN'S HOME," &c.

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TO
WOMAN HERSELF,

THIS LECTURE UPON HER CHARACTER

IS, WITH SINCERE RESPECT,

HUMBLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

THE

LIBRARY

OF

THE

P R E F A C E .

THE reader of this lecture, should understand that it was delivered without a single note, or the perusal of a single quotation. This circumstance, probably gave it a degree of effect, and took off that tediousness, which otherwise might have been an attendant upon its production.

The origin of it, was, in the solicitation made to the Author, to collect shillings from his acquaintance, for the benefit of one specific branch of the Institution. Being but little able, at that time, from domestic affliction, to see many of his friends, he was nevertheless desirous of doing what he could for the Society. He therefore considered in what way he could exert himself more extensively for its benefit. The result of his reflection, was to offer himself and his services to the Society, to deliver a Lecture, upon the Character of Woman, at the Hanover Square Rooms, on any day the Committee might appoint. This offer was accepted; a day was appointed; and the lecture was delivered to a generous assembly, who approved of the exertions of the Author.

The apology for its publication must remain with those kind friends who desired to see it printed. "*There is nothing new*

under the Sun," so, the reader will not expect to find novelty in the following pages. If anything, however, shall be pleasant herein, to the minds of those who can appreciate the motives of the Author; and neither the public nor private taste be offended, it will be sufficient satisfaction to one, whose only desire is, to "*eschew evil and do good.*" He feels grateful to all, for their kind reception of his labours, and heartily wishing success to the Institution, for whose benefit he exerted himself, he humbly hopes, this explanation will be satisfactory to his friends and the public.

RECTORY, WORTHAM,

DISS,

May 13th, 1848.

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THE IDEAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN

PART II

BY

THE IDEAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN

EDITED BY

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THE IDEAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN

THE IDEAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN

LECTURE.



PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The very first words I utter by way of introduction, must be those of apology for the presumption which I may seem to be guilty of, in venturing to give a lecture upon such a subject. This apology is freely offered in the very outset, not only on account of the difficulty of the subject which your lecturer has undertaken, but, because some may suppose him to be stepping out of the bounds of his profession, as a quiet country clergyman. Five and twenty years of daily devotion to the pastoral duties of his profession, mostly spent in a retired village, might be considered sufficient to disqualify any man for addressing such an assembly as that which I now see before me. The very rusticity of occupation—the total ab-

sence of any thing like that which may be termed the cultivation of letters—and but little acquaintance with the elegancies, refinements and accomplishments of social life, might be enough to deter me from offering these observations to your attention.

These very things, however, may induce your generous minds to admit the validity of my apology, and superinduce a feeling of critical leniency towards one so totally unaccustomed to present himself to the public gaze of a metropolitan assembly. These things may, moreover, induce others to believe that there is a Power acting upon the mind of man, so superior to all common and ordinary calculations, as to enable him to undertake a task, for which, his nearest, dearest, and most intimate friends might deem him to be disqualified. I freely acknowledge the working of that Power, and ascribe it solely to Him who actuates every feeling of Charity, that I am here this day to advocate the cause of that class of the British community to which, in some measure, every family in this great kingdom is indebted.

It is the cause of that unprotected—unprotected did I say? neglected class, which makes me breathe an eloquence to which I might otherwise appear a stranger; and prompts me to be bold, not audacious, but honestly brave, in my endeavour to promote the welfare of an institution which has for its object, the relief of such an invaluable portion of the community.

Honourable it must ever be in man to stand forward in behalf of the defenceless! but, when he sees before him the cause of injured excellence; when he hears the sighs of female poverty,

arising from the hearts of those who have been trained and nurtured with delicacy, and accustomed to infuse that training into the minds of those who occupy the higher stations of life in this great kingdom, there is such a call upon him to come forth, that it makes even a shepherd a warrior, and enables him to combat with that great Goliath, the champion of the armies of prejudice.

Such my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, are the motives which have impelled me to leave the retirement of private life and to offer myself and my observations to your notice for an hour or so, a digression, for which I ask your indulgence, assuring you that I shall retire to my wonted occupation, the moment I have discharged my heart and mind of a duty, which, however difficult, I have undertaken to perform.

Before venturing, however, to grapple with the subject now in contemplation, I will freely confess that it is one surrounded by a host of obstacles, presenting a most formidable aspect.

Ridicule, than which there is not a more tenacious monster of society, and which is generally habited in the garb of effrontery, is one of the most impudent enemies female education has to contend with.

The *pride of Knowledge*, which is so apt to be filled with its own self-sufficiency as scarcely to admit of any degree of excellence in the attainments of the female sex, is another.

The *pride of Ignorance*, which thinks all wisdom, cultivation of letters, and mental acquirements mere folly, is another; but fortunately one which, in these days, hides its diminished head beneath the all-commanding voice of public reprobation.

Indolence, Inactivity and the Love of Ease, are slothful enemies, which when engendered by affluence, generally degrade, and debase the human mind beneath its proper condition.

Fear, yes! an unaccountable fear of man, is another, and this is generally accompanied by a host of enemies, throwing up obstacles, oppositions, formidable barriers, and superstitious dogmas, to so great a degree, that the human mind becomes involved in such a chaos of darkness, that it requires all the efforts of love to extricate it.

I know but one motive sufficiently powerful to actuate a man through the whole course of his life, to use and not abuse the talents God has given him, and that one motive is, the never to be forgotten responsibility which is laid upon him, to give an account of those talents to the Great Giver of them, who, whilst he bestows them, affords him the opportunity and the grace to bring them forth to his glory.

The talent committed to my care is the Word of Wisdom. May God enable me so to use it before this assembly that I may utter nothing derogatory thereto: but whilst I endeavour to engage your attention, He may be pleased to pour into your hearts a double portion of that fire and spirit of charity, which he has breathed into the soul of your most unworthy lecturer.

With such preliminary observations, I shall commence my lecture upon—

THE CHARACTER OF WOMAN.

THERE are but two ways in which I shall venture to treat of the subject now before me: yet, beneath these two may be included all that can be fairly introduced to your notice; I mean

THE IDEAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN.

AND

THE REAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN.

Beneath the *Ideal* may be considered all that poets, painters, sculptors, artists, novelists, and romantic writers have conceived of her.

Beneath the *Real*, all that historians sacred and prophane, biographers ancient and modern, have narrated of her, both as to the influence she has held in olden times, and that which in these latter days of Christianity she has and does more immediately possess.

I do not mean to say, that it is possible for me to adduce all that has been written under these two heads. That would be to attempt to detain you until time should be no longer, at least with this generation, before I could complete the task. I only

affirm that beneath the *Ideal* and the *Real Character* may be comprehended all that a lecturer could in any reasonable time, to make his words palatable, produce. My sketch must, at any rate, be but a slight one: yet, if that which is impressed upon my mind be but conveyed to your own, I will hope in the end, that I shall not have spoken in vain, to induce you to support the female character, in its humblest and most exalted position.

First, then, as to the *Ideal*.

Who does not love sometimes to dwell upon the *Ideality of Perfection*? No man of any mind, of any wisdom, of any perception, intellect, or imagination, but must some time or other, indulge in those bright reflective images which lead him to the contemplation of those days of Innocence and Simplicity in which man and his partner, counterpart or second self were originally formed. Whoever studies *man* either in the wonderful structure of his corporeal frame, or the still more delicate construction of his mind, must be carried back to that period when man was not as he now is, a being with a clouded comprehension. He was originally created *good*, and *was good*, and so was his amiable partner with him, with whom he delighted to contemplate the wonderful works of the Creator, in all their minute infinity amplitude and beauty. Alas that he cannot do so now without labour, care, and intense study. Ask any of the professors of modern sciences, what intricate pains they take to inquire into the minutiae of any one branch of their professions. Ask the professor of zoology, the professor of ornithology, the professor of

entomology, the professor of geology, conchology, mineralogy, or any of the minuter studies of botany, chymistry, or the grand one of astronomy: they will one and all tell you, that it requires the incessant labour of a man's whole life, to make himself master of any one of these studies. Nay, if you were to ask the professor of botany to lecture even upon a single blade of grass, in the infinity of the wisdom displayed therein by its great Creator, he would tell you that he might lecture three hundred and sixty five days in the year and still find matter only for increased reflection. What then must have been the simplicity, purity, and clearness of the first man's mind, who could give names to all the animated creatures of God's creation, and behold all his wonders, without any fear of offending him, or any consciousness of any termination to his delight?

It is this species of Ideality of man's original perfection, which forms the chief charm of the imaginative poet, the laborious artist sculptor, or architect, who builds up any structure of his imagination, either of words, or of stone, for this or any future age of the world to admire. As there is nothing to which man attributes greater qualities of admiration than he does to his own counterpart, so is there nothing, either in sculpture, painting, or poetry, to which he attaches greater ideality of perfection than he does to the female form. I do not mean to say that beneath the *ideal*, there is no *idolatry* for undoubtedly there is; since all idolatry is but the attributing qualities of immortality to that which is perishable.

This is evident in all the handy works of man, in every age of the

world, from the imaginative devices of the Chaldees, down to the more hideous monstrosities of the inhabitants of New Zealand. Wherever *superstition* has triumphed over the ignorance of the barbarian, or upon the mind of more civilized communities, idolatry has there assumed either the most pleasing or the most hideous transformations in exact proportion to the cultivation of the forms of civilization. It is for truth, and truth only, to correct the false impressions of overheated imaginations and to destroy the ideality of idolatry by shewing to man how impossible it is for any works of his creation, to equal those of his Creator.

You have but to walk into that magnificent institution of this Metropolis, the British Museum, and there you may stand in the midst of all the idols of the earth. The idols of Babylon, the idols of Egypt, the idols of India, the idols of Etruria, the idols of Greece, the idols of Rome, the idols of Gaul, of Africa, China, America, Britain and all the islands of the Sea, and if you can walk therein without reflection, if you can behold the things which have been, the dark things of ages gone by, and not feel thankful for the light of truth now cast upon them, I know not what use that institution can be to you, or how you can feel either a rational or a national pleasure in the possession thereof.

One thing you cannot fail to observe, namely the ideality of idolatry attached to the human form, particularly to the female figure. Men having lost the wisdom of God in which they were created, still "*thinking themselves wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, to birds, to four-footed beasts, and creeping things.*"

You have them there represented to your view, from the scaribæus and the ibis of Egypt, up to the lofty Memnon; and whilst you can admire the ingenuity of man in constructing such things in imitation of the works of nature, with so much skill, you cannot fail to shudder at the idea of nations having made them for themselves to worship, and bowing down to them with adoration, as if any thing in heaven were like them, or any thing from heaven resident within them.

It is a fact which history establishes, too clearly to be disputed, that among those very nations which displayed the greatest sentimentality for the external form of woman, even to the very height of idolatry, there woman was held in the greatest chains of mental degradation. You cannot fail to observe the multiplicity of female deities in the mythology of the heathen. Let me for a moment recal them to your minds, only just to shew you the ideality of perfection attached to the female form.

First we have, *Isis*, the mother of the universe from whom both God's and men were said to proceed: yet, inspect her image, and you behold the figure of an Egyptian woman suckling an infant of stone.

Foremost amidst the theology of the Brahmins is *Bhavanie*, the Indian Venus.

Who more magnificent in her lofty car riding on the clouds, drawn by those vain birds the peacocks, than *Juno* the Queen of Heaven?

If you descend into the depths of Ocean, there the heathen had the goddess *Amphitrite* presiding.

If you went down to the depths of hell, there also they had the goddess *Proserpine*.

War and Wisdom are represented under the beautifully sculptured image of the goddess *Minerva*.

Love and Beauty under the image of the goddess *Venus*. Then we have *Ceres*, the goddess of Agriculture. *Vesta*, the goddess of Fire, whose image generally found a place in the vestibule of every Roman house of any note. Then we have *Diana* the goddess of Chastity. *Flora*, the goddess of Flowers. *Pomona*, the goddess of fruit. *Iris*, the rainbow. *Hebe*, the goddess of youth. *Aurora*, the goddess of morning. *Nox*, the goddess of night. *Pales*, the goddess of pastures.

Then we have every talent and accomplishment deified under the female form. We have the *Muses* in their lofty temple.

Calliope, the muse of Heroic Poetry.

Clio, the muse of History.

Thalia, the muse of Comedy.

Melpomene, the tragic muse.

Euterpe, the muse of instrumental music.

Terpsichore, the muse of dancing.

Polyhymnia, the muse of song.

Urania, the muse of astronomy.

Erato, the muse of sonnets.

Then we have every grace, fancy, and passion deified under the female form. We have the graces *Aglaia*, *Thalia*, and *Euphrosyne*.

We have the fates, *Clotho*, *Lachesis* and *Atropos*.

We have the furies, *Tisiphone*, *Megaira* and *Alecto*.

Then we have *Nemesis* the goddess of vengeance. The enchanting *Syrens*, and the cruel *Harpies*. And *Nymphs* of the grottos, *Nymphs* of the streams, and *Nymphs* of the ocean, without end: all having their devotees, bringing them offerings, to propitiate their favours according to the vain conceptions or fancies of their worshippers. These will serve to shew you the idolatry paid to the female form. And would that I could say that this species of idolatry had been confined to the heathen nations of the earth: but not Isis with her infant Horus, nor Diana of Ephesus, have been more idolized than the *Madonna and Child* of the dark ages of the Christian Church.

One of the most memorable instances on record of the infatuation of this species of idolatry occurred in the death of the celebrated sculptor Torrigiano the contemporary of Michael Angelo. It was that Torrigiano who executed that elaborate piece of workmanship, Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster Abbey.

When he left this country, he was employed by the Duke d'Arcus in Spain to execute the statue of a Madonna and Child for the duke's private chapel. Receiving his orders from a grandee of the first class, Torrigiano purchased the purest and whitest marble which could be obtained: and took all the pains possible to execute his work with his utmost skill. In due time his labors were crowned with complete success, and his handy work created general admiration. The time came for the removal of the idol, to the place of its destination, and for the payment

of the artist, whose ideas of remuneration had risen with the general praise bestowed upon his performance. The mules arrived laden with bags of money, and to convey back the work of his hands: but, Torrigiano's rage and disappointment knew no bounds, when, instead of bags of ducats, he found only maravedi or pence. Being a very passionate man, he could not brook that which he termed an insult: but seizing his mallet, he broke the Madonna to pieces. Poor man! little did he think, at that moment, that he had signed his own death-warrant. But so it was. The Duke d'Arcus complained of his impiety to the Inquisition. The Inquisition summoned him to appear before them, and poor Torrigiano was convicted of being guilty of a crime of deeper dye than murder—that of sacrilege. Vain was it for him to plead that he had formed this deity with his own hands, that he had purchased with his own money the block of marble from which it was chiselled, that he had got a Spanish girl to sit for her likeness!—Superstition sat at the helm of reason, and poor Torrigiano was condemned to the torturing death of the wheel, from the agonies of which he only saved himself, by starving himself to death in his prison;—this was in the year 1522. God preserve our nation from any such infatuation.

I shall conclude this portion of the ideal, simply observing, that the art of sculpture may be prostituted to folly, whenever men carry their ideas beyond reason and truth into fancy and sentimental idolatry. There is something mournful even in the best sculptured busts, when we behold those silent, sightless,

lifeless representations of our friends, whom we remember in all the liveliness of their converse and talents. Better is it for us to remember and imitate their good examples, to treasure up their kind words, their bright instructions, their faith and patience, than to look upon a sculptured bust, often taken from an imperfect model, obtained when life and animation have ceased.—In-as-much as to live in the hearts of men, is infinitely preferable to living in the sight of their eyes—in-as-much as the spirit of a man is infinitely better than his body; so believe me, female worth, female talents, female piety, are infinitely dearer to a man of mind—than all the sculptured monuments of perishable mortality.

P A I N T I N G.

THE next view of the *ideal* which I shall take is that of *painting*. And if the female form has been idolized beneath the sculptor's hand it has not been less so beneath the painters. This is evident from all the productions of painting, from the earliest days down to the present times: from the Venus Anadyomene of Apelles, down to the deified Madonnas of the Italian school.

It will be sufficient for our present purpose to recal to your minds different celebrated painters, and see how fame reports them for their delineations of the female form.



Michael Angelo, is said to have produced the most perfect models of grandeur which ever were conceived of the female figure.

Raphael is pronounced to be eminent on account of that soft subduing charm of figure, combining character with grace and elegance of shape.

Titian is celebrated for his colouring and composition. His Venus's are every where extolled, and many a Christian Gentleman would think me either a Goth or a Vandal, if I were not lost in admiration before them. There are many who, perhaps would give thousands, for the possession of one of these idols, who could not bestow their five pounds in the cause of the Institution I this day advocate.

Corregio is pronounced to be visionary and dream-like in his delineation of the female figure.

Ludovico Caracci, says Sir Joshua Reynolds, approaches the nearest to perfection of any painter whose works I am acquainted with, in his execution of the female form.

Guido, who followed closely in the Caracci school, is exquisite in his graces, but artificial in his composition of female figures.

Dominichino comes next, who sought to combine all the expression of Raffaello, with the energy of Annibal Caracci and the colouring of Ludovico.

Nicholas Poussin always attached to ancient statues and graces, gave peculiar majesty to his female groups.

But why need I pursue the inquiry any further among foreign artists, such as Albert Dura, Holbein, Raphael, Rembrant,

Leonardo Da Vinci, Vandyke, and others; we have a host of artists in our own land all vying with each other to produce that *ideality of perfection*, which constitutes the chief charm of their productions. We have our Sir Godfrey Kneller, our Sir Peter Lely, our Gainsborough, our Moreland, our Sir Joshua Reynolds, our Sir Thomas Laurence, our Sir Benjamin West, our Opie, Gardiner, Sir David Wilkie, and a host of others, many of whose works deserve infinitely more praise for their truthful delineations, than for their fabulous representations. If you compare the works of the two presidents of the Royal academy, Sir Joshua and Sir David Wilkie: viz: the birth of Hercules, and the Rent Day, or the Chelsea pensioners; you behold a wonderful difference between truth and fable, the probability at least of nature, and the impossibility of fiction. Both, may be admirably painted, and we may admire the tone of colouring displayed in both: but the absurdity of an infant strangling at his birth, two enormous serpents is such a contrast to nature, that we are inclined to laugh at the subject, whilst the productions of Sir David are full of truth. It is written of him by one of his biographers, "This man would no more paint a lie, than he would tell one;" I knew him personally, and I believe it.

No one will deny that females possess powers as capable of cultivation in the fine arts as men. In portrait painting, especially in the miniature department, their touch is often finer, and the expression they bestow upon their pictures is very frequently more engaging.

I will not pursue the theme of painting any further; every one knows that the attempt of all artists is to produce some striking charm, to give that ideality of perfection to their figures which shall be pleasant to the eye, and command attraction. I shall conclude this portion of the ideal with a narrative from real life, in which, I once saw such display of talent in a female as commanded my respect, and made an indelible impression upon my mind. Yes; I once saw a lady who, by her ingenuity in the art of drawing, prevented a most serious fracas, probably a duel, and the death of a fellow-creature. It was during the late war, when the fiery-spirits of all grades were let loose upon our country, and cowards assuming sometimes the airs of military men, made their appearance in our provincial ball-rooms—that a man, not much worthy of the name of a hero, or a gentleman, entered into the public assembly room of a certain county town, in which several regiments were, at that time quartered. This man was a noted duellist—a desperate bravado, a capital shot, and about as impudent a fellow as ever found his way into polite society. He was also a caricaturist, one of the most dangerous qualifications of the art of drawing, which, like foolish jesting, may be very entertaining for the time, but will never bear the test of wisdom or reflection. He was patronized by a military nobleman, who led him about at that time, much in the same way as some young scion of fortune would a bull-dog, or a mastiff, and praised him highly for his bold bloodhound propensity, to quarrel with any one disposed to meet and oppose him.

This man amused himself in the ball-room by making sketches, or rather caricatures of the different ladies in the room, and exhibited them to his ignoble friend. Of course the ladies present were excessively annoyed, and the stewards of the ball placed in a very awkward position.

Whilst thus engaged, the folding doors opened, and a talented lady of rather portly appearance entered the room. The moment his eyes caught sight of her figure he was heard to exclaim—*“Aha! here comes one of the finest specimens for a caricature I ever beheld!”* and immediately his pencil and paper were ready for the sketch. Sagacious warrior! little did he imagine that he was that day to be subdued by a woman: but such was literally the case. Scarcely had this good lady seated herself, before others of her sex flocked around her, to tell her of the extraordinary character then in the ball room: and one lady exclaimed *“Look, my dear Madam, he is positively sketching you.”*

In one moment, this brave woman thinking of nothing but the indignity done to her own sex, and feeling shame for the assumption and impudence of the man, who was guilty of such ungentlemanly behaviour, begged of the ladies near her not to be alarmed, but to clear the way for the artist, and let him have a perfect view, and she would endeavour to sit for her likeness: adding only these words, *“Had I but pencil and paper, I would endeavour to give him the retort courteous!”* Pencil and paper were soon handed to her; and there for a few minutes, sat military impudence, and female dignity, fairly sketching one another, until, as may be supposed, shame spread her crimson mantle

over the face of the offending party, who becoming excessively agitated at the still, firm, and steady tracing of the lines of his face by a virtuous woman's hand, hastily put up his pencil and paper, and amidst the plaudits and hisses of the whole assembly marched out of the room fairly beaten by a woman. He and his friend soon after left the town, and never more dared to show their faces in its society.

The original sketch of this remarkable character is in my possession, exactly as it was drawn that very evening. It portrays, though in a rough style, the insolent bearing of the man, who thus presumed to infringe upon the rules of decency observed in polished society. I have traced in lithography the fac-simile of that sketch; and should any ladies think it of sufficient interest, to be worthy of their acceptance, I have a number of copies upon the table, which shall be distributed at the termination of the first portion of the lecture.

Brave woman, brave! Thy spirit was well taught
 To give reproof as Christian woman ought!
 No angry frown, no pride, no pique, no fear,
 No word of murmur spake disturbance near,
 The deed was done in gentleness of hand,
 By spirit prompted! Such deeds must command.
 Who marks injustice, lives in mercy too,
 Loves whilst she lives, is honest, just and true,
 Will ever find she has it in her pow'r,
 To put down impudence at any hour.

NOTE.—One hundred copies of the original sketch were distributed in the

room.—And, as the sketcher and the sketched have long departed this life, it can wound no one's feelings, that the fact should be publicly recorded. No personal malice could be said to exist in the minds of either one or the other; and it was certainly a happy termination of a provocation, which, but for a woman's courage and skill, might have been more serious. The author has a few more sketches of the same; and as many ladies who attended the lecture were disappointed at not being able to obtain one of them, he will be happy to send any such a copy.

A short record of the fact is attached to the sketch, with the following appropriate lines:—

“Who sketches character should have a care,
Lest he be sketched by hand of sketching fair.
Severest satire justice made on man,
When woman's pencil o'er the paper ran,
And sketched the monster who in folly dare
To vex and ridicule the gentle fair!”

And this brings me to the last portion of the ideal, viz: that beneath the Poets glance.

P O E T R Y .

What scenes now lie before me! Time and space,
Seem to unite in bringing to my mind,
The visions of antiquity remote,
When first the poet dared to raise his thoughts,
And soar on airy pinion of delight
'Midst realms of fancy, imaging the things
His words, though elevated, scarcely made
Equal his thoughts.



Ages of gone by deeds

Brought from the depths of his poetic vein,
 Though to his mind, first mistily revealed,
 Once grasped as known realities, become
 Remodel'd and improved, exalted, raised
 High, as his bright conception can express.
 I will not speak of sacred things revealed,
 By inspiration,—not at least as yet,
 Since they relate to character so true,
 That the ideal is reality.—

Mine, 'tis to prove, false phantoms may be made
 When theories imperfect shade the brain,
 So sweetly captivating, men may dream
 They see, they feel, they own they must be truth.
 But oft thus hurried onward by deceit,
 Their passions, not their judgments, are impelled
 To deeds disgraceful to humanity.

Gods there described, as uttering such words
 The vilest miscreant would scarcely use:
 And deeds of villany as done by them,
 Would stamp with infamy our mortal race.
 And Goddesses adored, so lost to shame,
 That false inamorata's vainly think
 The acme of perfection, is to sin.

Let us take the oldest and most sublime heathen composition that ever was penned, the Iliad of Homer. No uninspired poem has, as yet been found, either in dignity of style, invention, conception of character, plot, interest, or action, equal to this celebrated production of ancient Greece. I am not going to recite a

hundred lines of Homer, in his original tongue, though I have heard of ladies being so charmed by the euphonious numbers of the Grecian Bard ; that, as when a song is sung in a foreign language, their ears are so enchanted by the concord of sweet sounds, they can think of nothing else but the lofty strains, the glowing measures, and the soft cadences of the metrical dialect. It will be amply sufficient for our purpose, to quote from our best translation of this prince of poets, because I wish to convince your understandings more than to entertain your ears, with the perception of the spirit of this father of heathen poetry ; and to shew you what a very imperfect model of female worth he chose for his delineation ; external graces made to compensate for a degraded character, and producing, as is always the case, the most disastrous consequences.

You may always take it for granted, that where any poet's notions of divinity are imperfect and degraded, there his heroes and heroines will of necessity partake of the same deformity. The whole Iliad, in which gods and men are represented as engaged, is but a picture of a war, the object of which is to recover the beautiful Helen from the son of Priam, who had basely broken through every tie of hospitality by his ungrateful rapacity.

I must not pause to speak of the daring actions, defiances, and bravery of warriors ; the object I have in view is *the ideality of perfection* attached to the female form. And yet there is something so like our northern chivalric bearing in that *challenge to fight for lady fair*, which Hector conveys to the Grecian Camp,

that, believing it to be the very origin of Chivalry, at least we know of none earlier, I cannot forbear quoting it.

“ Yet, would'st thou have the proffered combat stand
 “ The Greeks and Trojans seat on either hand :
 “ Then let a mid-way space our hosts divide,
 “ And on this field of war the cause be tried.
 “ By, Paris there the Spartan king be fought,
 “ For beauteous Helen, and the wealth she brought ;
 “ And who his rival, shall in arms subdue
 “ His be the Prize and his the treasure too.”

The challenge is fairly given and received ; and Iris is sent from Heaven to call Helen to the ramparts to see the fight between Paris and Menelaus.

“ Meantime to beauteous Helen from the skies
 “ The various goddess of the rainbow flies ;
 “ Like fair Laodice in form and face,
 “ The loveliest nymph of Priam's royal race.
 “ Her, in the palace, at her loom she found,
 “ The golden web her own sad story crown'd.
 “ The Trojan wars she weav'd, herself the prize
 “ And the dire triumph of her fatal eyes.—
 To whom the goddess of the painted bow,
 “ Approach and view the wondrous scene below.
 “ Each hardy Greek and valiant Trojan knight,
 “ So dreadful late, and furious for the fight.
 “ Now rest their spears, or lean upon their shields,
 “ Ceased is the war, and silent all the fields.

“ Paris alone, and Spartas’ king advance
“ In single fight, to toss the beamy lance :
“ Each met in arms, the fate of combat tries,
“ Thy love the motive, and thy charms the prize.”

And that the beauteous Helen might appear in all that *ideality of perfection* which I have hinted at, the poet makes the old warriors on the ramparts lost in admiration at her beauty, at the same time that they put up a devout prayer to the gods, that she may be taken away from their country. Had her virtue been equal to her beauty such would never have been the prayer of her veteran admirers.

These, when the Spartan Queen approach’d the tower
In secret own’d resistless beauty’s power.
They cried, “ No wonder such celestial charms,
“ For nine long years, have kept the world in arms,
“ What winning graces! what majestic mien!
“ She moves a Goddess, and she looks a Queen!
“ Yet, hence! O Heavens! convey that fatal face!
“ And from destruction save the Trojan race!”

The venerable Priam is equally enchanted with her beauty, and, with the benevolence of years, invites her to a seat near to him, upon the tower; and endeavouring to make her at peace with herself, he enquires into the characters of the different heroes of the Grecian Camp. And here is one of the finest traits of the poets sympathetic pen, when he makes the beauty stand before the aged Sovereign and parent, a guilty self-convicted,

unhappy being, made to confess in the presence of wisdom her dreadful sufferings.

“Before thy presence, father, I appear
 “With conscious shame and reverential fear!
 “Oh! had I died e'er to these walls I fled,—
 “False to my country, and my nuptial bed,
 “My kindred, friends, and daughter left behind,
 “False to them all!—to Paris only kind!
 “For this I mourn! 'till grief or dire disease,
 “Shall waste the form whose crime it was to please!”

This is an admirable lesson, though given by a heathen, to all those who make the happiness of life to consist in mere external graces, and shows how dreadful are the convictions and accusations of a guilty conscience.

But the poet soon sets aside all these finer traits of virtue, through the corruptions of the deceitful goddess of beauty acting upon that most vulnerable point of female vanity, the fear of losing the reputation of being a beauty, and then to become an object of detestation rather than of admiration.

When, thus incensed, the Paphian Queen replies,
 “Obey the power from whence thy glories rise:
 “Should Venus leave thee, every charm must fly,
 “Fade from thy cheek, and vanish from thine eye;
 “Cease to provoke me, lest I make thee more
 “The worlds aversion, than its love before.
 “Now the bright prize for which mankind engage,
 “Then the sad victim of the public rage!”

This was too much for the beauteous Helen to bear—she submits and falls.

“’Twas then the fairest of her sex obeyed,
And veiled her blushes ’neath a silken shade.
Unseen and silent from the train she moves,
Led by the goddess of the smiles and loves.”

I may draw a veil over the remaining portion of the history of the frail and feeble fair one, having adduced sufficient to show the imperfect model which the heathen chose for his delineation. She was faithless. After the death of Paris, she married Deiphobus another son of Priam, whom she betrayed into the hands of Menelaus to regain his esteem. She did so: but, not for long: he died at Sparta, and vengeance then pursued the frail fair one, who flying to Rhodes, was there ordered to be strangled.

I need not quote any passages from the Imitators of Homer: or show you a similar frailty in the *Æneid* of Virgil, in Dido the Carthaginian Queen. Nor need I refer to the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, nor to the beauties of Horace. I will descend at once to the poets of our own land, and first and foremost to Spencer and his *Fairy Queen*. However quaint, verbose and prosy his style may appear to us, he is always chaste and pure, in his ideality of perfection. His six books of the *Fairy Queen*, are but the personifications of these six virtues. Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy.

I can afford but one quotation, since other poets, like Spirits called from the vasty deep, seem waiting to be noticed. That

one quotation is however a great example of the ideality of perfection, wherein the beauty of Holiness is shewn to be able to subdue the fiercest lion, and to make him as tame, gentle and subservient as the watch dog. I quote from *Una and the Lion*.

“The Lion would not leave her desolate,
 But with her, went along as a strong guard
 Of her chaste person, and a faithful mate,
 Of her sad sorrows, and misfortunes hard:
 Whene'er she slept he kept both watch and ward,
 And when she waked, he waited diligent
 With humble service to her will engaged.
 From her fair eye he took commandment
 And ever by her looks conceived her intent.”

The poet Milton is accused by some critics of making Adam, not sufficiently enraptured with the mental qualities of Eve; and only an admirer of her external graces. This I think unjust criticism, as I shall presently show, from the words he uses when conversing with the angel concerning her perfections.

“Yet, when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
 And in herself complete, so well to know
 Her own!—that what she wills to do or say,
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded. Wisdom in discourse with her,
 Loses discountenanced, and like folly shews.

Authority and reason on her wait,
 As one created first, not after made
 Occasionally; and to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness—their seat,
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelic placed!”—

Book viii. (546.)

If this be not the very acme of the ideality of perfection, where shall we find it greater?

Shakspeare differs widely in his delineation of female character. He makes woman *speak* herself, whilst other poets have attempted to describe her.

Few women has Shakspeare drawn more remarkable for wisdom, and none more for the simplicity and generosity of her nature than that of Portia, who gave utterance to that most celebrated speech of wisdom, which is one of Shakspeare's grandest and most sublime passages.

“The quality of mercy is not strained,
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,
 Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed,
 It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown.
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the fear and dread of kings:

But mercy is above this sceptered sway;
 It is enthroned in the heart of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself.—
 And earthly power, doth then shew likest God's,
 When mercy seasons justice.”

Yet this same Portia's Speech to Lord Bassanio I shall quote as a beautiful instance of the simplicity of nature, in an intellectual woman. Had such a character as that of Rachel Lady Russel, lived before the poet, I can easily conceive, how he would have treated it who can make Portia thus express that devotion of attachment, which was exemplified in the character of Lady Russel.

“ You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand
 “ Such as I am, though for myself alone,
 “ I would not be ambitious in my wish,
 “ To wish myself much better; yet for you,
 “ I would be trebled twenty times myself:
 “ A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
 “ More rich; that only to stand high on your account,
 “ I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
 “ Exceed account. But the full sum of me
 “ Is sum of something, which to term in gross,
 “ Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised,
 “ Happy in this, she is not yet so old
 “ But she may learn: and happier than this,
 “ She is not bred so dull, but she can learn:
 “ Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
 “ Commits itself to yours to be directed,
 “ As from her lord, her governor, her king.

"Myself and what is mine, to you and yours
 "Are now converted: But now, I was the lady
 "Of this fair mansion, mistress of my servants,
 "Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
 "This house, these servants, and this same myself,
 "Are yours, my lord."

Amongst *Romantic writers*, who has represented female character in the greater ideality of perfection than Sir Walter Scott? In descriptive poetry, either of scenery or individual character, I do not suppose the world contains a purer writer. There is a little book lately published called the *Female Characters of Scott* in which the writer glances at those of Flora Mac Ivor, Rose Bradwardine, Lucy Ashton, Rebecca, Edith-Bellenden, Amy Robsart, and poor Jeanie Deans. I need not pause to dwell upon any of them. They are familiar to most of my young hearers, and even our old heads cannot forget the admiration we gave them in our youth. I shall only add the warm wish of Sir Walter Scott, one expressed if not in poetry, yet in prose and in sincerity, every day, in our various domestic circles.

A chaplet for the hero's crest,
 Entwined by her he loves the best!
 To every lovely lady bright,
 What can I wish but faithful knight!
 To every faithful lover too,
 What can I wish but lady true?
 And knowledge to the studious sage,
 And pillow soft to head of age;

To thee dear schoolboy whom my lay
 Has cheated of his hour of play,
 Light task and merry holiday.
 To all, to each a fair good night
 And pleasing dreams and slumbers light.

But were I to descant upon all the beauties of the British Poets, and give you a quotation from each illustrative of his view of the ideal character of woman, I might detain you till midnight: for, from Chaucer down to Milman, I could only shew the same ideal picture.

I must however bring this portion of my lecture to a conclusion: and it shall be done in a few lines of address to Woman herself, in the language of a Spirit which lived with me in my cradle, inspired me in my youth—has been near me in my manhood—lives with me now—and will not leave me even when I die. It is the Spirit of Truth.

Woman! behold! how great! how grand! how good!
 Man when created 'midst the creatures stood;
 To him on earth, all living beings bow'd,
 Their names distinction to his wisdom ow'd.
 Created lovely, godlike, pure in mind,
 To nature, virtue, love and truth inclined,
 His was a paradise of mind and soul,
 A conscience free from burthen, or control!
 As o'er the vast-created, far devoted throng
 Of humble quadrupeds, he cast along
 The glance of thought, his spirit sought to find,
 Some sweet companion suited to his mind:

For him the creatures of the earth might move,
Pass, come, and go, they could not talk of love!
They could not dwell on elevated thought
By sight of wonder, sight of nature taught.
Instinct was all, and instinct bade them pay
Devoted homage to the man of sway.
'Twas thee he sought! he sought thee not in vain,
God gave him thee! Thou wast his joy, his bane;
Woman for thee! O, be it truly said,
Man's spirit speaks not solely to upbraid,
For thee he suffered in degraded sphere
The loss of bliss, for thee he first felt fear.
Weep'st thou? O no! be glad! be good! be pure!
Man will continue all things to endure,
Still cherish thee. He knows that perfect bliss
On earth, can never certainly be his:
Still in thy love, whilst life is sweetly given,
He will abide, and move with thee to heaven.
As sin of thee, first found his way to man,
So love, of thee, has made affection plain.

O woman! kindred spirit may'st thou be
Beloved of man! Of man who would be free.
May he respect, be ardent, be sincere,
And thou companion of his heart be dear:
As much he loved thee ere the morn he felt,
The eves' atonement bids him wish thee well.
The day will come when love exalted shines,
When spirit with the body so combines,
The life with liberty; that thou and he,
In love united shall be ever free.

At present wait thou! Man with thee will wait;
Patient in honour, patient in his state:
As God to him is merciful in love,
So he to thee as merciful would prove.

(R. C.)

PART II.

THE

REAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN.

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REAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN.

LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

I thank you for that respite which you have afforded me, so necessary to the effort of continued exertion. And I crave, if possible, even more and more of your kind consideration, since I have now to commence the most difficult portion of my lecture—

THE REAL CHARACTER OF WOMAN.

Reality is such a plain matter-of-fact quality, as scarcely to admit of any digression of fancy, either in the use of phrases, metaphors, or words: so that an orator, when confined to plain and simple statements, is apt to be considered insipid, on account of that very sameness of style which he is compelled to use in the narration of realities. A lawyer, when pleading earnestly in his clients cause, may make use of a thousand digressions, in order to establish more forcibly the strength of the position he maintains: but, a lecturer upon real character, has a much more difficult task to perform, since, to give effect to his

address, he must totally dismiss the ideal which is considered so entertaining, and run the risk of sameness in the face of an enlightened audience.

We have, however, even heavenly gifts and graces in earthen vessels, and in all, save in *Him*, in whom there was no sin, the dross of imperfection will ever be found commingled with the golden ore. This must not prevent our using our utmost endeavours to extract the precious metal: and to purify, and refine it (I am speaking mentally) and give it that stamp of sovereign authority which is to make it pass current among men for its true value.

According to the proposed tenor of my lecture, I am to consider *the Historical, the Biographical, and the Practically Christian Character of Woman*.

The former opens to our view a wide field of contemplation, even the History of the World—and there is no portion of that history in which woman has not had her share and influence.

The Biographical, though elaborate, may be confined to more modern times.

And the Practically Christian Character, to the experience of every man, who is not ashamed to confess, how much he has been and is indebted to the gentler services of that sex, who whether in the daily routine of domestic life, or in the exercise of those higher duties of public or private charity, ever has been man's best help-meet, without which, society would soon become as selfish as solitude, and man, as great a monster, as a certain literary lady has represented him to be.

In considering the historical character of woman, we must refer to the very earliest date of her existence, even to our Mother Eve.

The talented Authoress of *Woman and her Master*, has taken a most comprehensive view of the character of woman, both from sacred and profane sources. It would be injustice in any man not to appreciate highly the easy style of her composition, however much he may differ with her in judgment. And no sound theologian can fail to differ in judgment with one, who makes man a mere drudge from his creation, and woman a far superiorly gifted and intellectual creature.

“To the male, to Adam,” says this lady, “it appears, was assigned a first task of *corporeal performance*, for he was placed in the garden of Eden, to dress and to keep it. To the female, to Eve was permitted *the first exercise of mind*, in that call made upon her intellect, by *one*, who sought to influence human actions by intellectual means, though for an evil purpose.”—*Vide Woman and her Master. Chapter I.*

So, this lady goes on to prove that woman was a creature of far more inquiring intellect, lifted above the littleness of earthly occupation, because she suffered the sophistry of the serpent to beguile her into transgression, with his vain disputation concerning the Word of God; yes, more intellectual than man whose occupation was to cultivate the beautiful garden of Eden.

She must either ignorantly or intentionally forget, that long before woman was created, man had a highly intellectual occupation assigned to him by the Almighty giver of the mind,

namely, that of giving names to all the animated creatures of God's creation.

When you consider the order, beauty, construction, and classification in which they were brought for his inspection, that he might give them appropriate names: surely, he must have had a mind of such superior formation as we can scarcely comprehend. I verily believe that it was in the delight of this occupation, that man first felt the desire for an intellectual companion, to whom he might communicate the wisdom, thus breaking in upon his soul: and with whom he might converse upon the wonderful excellence of the great Creator: in fact, that an help-meet for the living soul of man might be given him. Be this, however, as it may, well would it have been for her, who is styled the glory of the man, if she had never sought a false glory, through the medium of transgression.

Your pardon Christian Ladies will be granted to one who whilst he honors and reveres the virtues of female piety, fails not to give honor to *Him* to whom alone honor is due. And whilst he contemplates the first historical record of woman, in the character of our Mother Eve, forgets not, that she was taken out of the first Adam, and returns into him again in that *second Adam*, in whom all are born to newness of life who possess that pure and heavenly wisdom which descended from him.

At the fall, however, both man and woman became degraded; and it was part of the penalty, attached by the Almighty Himself to woman's transgression, that "*her husband should rule over her.*" And if in the sad history of man since that period, woman

has been placed in so dependent a situation, as to be made to feel that rule sometimes an iron one, and her own condition comparatively abject,—we, as Christians, may indeed lament that it should be so; and, now that we know that the penalty of that transgression has been fully paid, we should endeavour that it should be so no longer, the man by exercising “*due benevolence*” towards his wife, and the wife seeing that she “*reverence*” her husband. This appears, to have been the mutual compact, or bond of union, between “woman and her master,” in the patriarchal ages of the world: as instanced in the lives of Isaac and Rebecca: And I fearlessly assert, that wherever the Word of God is respected, there that benevolence, and that reverence will ever be productive of as much domestic peace and happiness, as is allowed to a state of existence probationary for a better.

In speaking of the Scriptural Character of Woman, I know not that I can recommend to your attention a better little book than one recently published; I mean *Mrs. Balfour's Women of Scripture*. She forms a very fair estimate of the scriptural character of woman under the Patriarchal, the Mosaical, and the Christian, Dispensations. Under the former, she treats of the characters of Eve, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel. Beneath the Mosaical, she treats of the lofty ones of Miriam and Deborah. For female friendship, she instances the examples of Naomi and Ruth; for maternal piety, the conduct of Hannah. For female hospitality, the character of the Shunamite; for female patriotism, the character of Esther. For humility, the

Virgin Mary. And beautiful is the distinction which she draws between every woman who preceded her, and the humility of the Virgin.

“The heathen world,” she says, “with all its moral theories, and philosophical precepts, knew no such quality as humility; and even the religion of the Jews, did but feebly embody this great virtue. Hence, though Miriam and Deborah were noble and gifted women, Hannah and the Shunamite tender, gentle and benevolent, Esther grateful and patriotic, and each spiritual and energetic, we should not say of any, or of all of them that they were humble. The character of the Virgin is essentially so.”

For piety in old age, she instances the characters of Elizabeth and Anna.

For action and contemplation, the sisters of Bethany, Martha and Mary.

For inquiry and repentance, the woman of Samaria, and the woman who was a sinner.

For fidelity, Mary Magdalen and the heroines of the Cross.

For christian benevolence, Dorcas and Lydia.

For christian intelligence, Priscilla and Phœbe.

And though there are many other women whom she might have made mention of for their piety and devotion, yet she has well-done what she has done, and richly deserves this humble commendation at the hands of a christian lecturer.

Lady Morgan has admirably described the character of the Queen of Sheba; at the conclusion of which she says, with all that characteristic tone of triumphant defence of her own sex,

in which I would heartily join her, if she would but be a little merciful towards mine.

“The visit of the Queen of Egypt to Jerusalem, is a memorable record in the history of a sex, taunted for its feebleness and intellectual incapacity. The equal terms upon which this wisest of men conversed with, and confided in this woman of another land, and another faith, forms a corollary to his own adage; for here we see a woman, who opened her mouth with wisdom, and on whose tongue was the law of kindness.”—*Vide, Woman and her Master.*

I trust that in every Christian Land where women so well know that a greater than Solomon has visited this earth, there they exercise their faith in Him, and open their mouths with wisdom, and have the law of kindness upon their tongues.

I have no need to dwell upon those female characters, whose examples are not to be imitated; and, Scripture does not produce many individual instances of this kind, though we find a Jezebel and an Herodias celebrated and powerful for evil against the prophets of the Lord. When woman is conspicuously mentioned in Scripture, it is either for her piety or her strong natural attachment to her offspring, or for her resignation: witness the conduct of the mother of Moses, the mother before the judgment seat of Solomon, and the mother of our Lord.

“Each a fond mother giving up her son,

“Subduing nature—that God’s will be done.”

And this brings me to the consideration of the historical, from prophane sources.

The accounts of woman's character from heathen works, are but few and fabulous. The wonders narrated of the sex—of her beauty, her influence, her power, her daring actions and wonderful works, are so very extraordinary, that the calm reader is almost induced to doubt the existence of such persons spoken of, though seemingly given from authenticated sources. When we have read their histories, we do not find much worthy of being held up to Christian admiration, though for the sake of information, we may make use of the records of profane history in an inferior degree.

Amongst the female wonders of antiquity are, Semiramis, queen of Assyria; Cleopatra, queen of Egypt; and Zenobia, queen of Palmyra. The histories of these females present us with melancholy spectacles of ambition, vain glory, bloodshed and humiliating degradation.

The two former, though powerful, were artful to the highest degree, and neither of them celebrated for their virtue. The latter was a learned woman. We do not deny that they possessed talents and abilities, that they knew how to rule—and how to fight: nor do we deny to Zenobia, as much wisdom as any woman of her day and country possessed. She had for her prime-minister, one of the wisest heathens who ever wrote, Longinus the author of the celebrated Treatise on the Sublime. Yet his famous letter to Aurelian caused him his own death, the degradation of his Queen, and the ruin of her empire. And not until the present century have the ruins of Palmyra been fully discovered.

Among the women of Greece, though so well-known for the

ars elegantiae of external grace, we find very little cultivation of the mind. We may except, perhaps, a Sappho and an Aspasia; the latter famous for her school of oratory, and for having Socrates and Pericles for her pupils, and the former celebrated for her Lyric or Sapphic verses: yet, neither of these women were noted for their modesty or virtue.

It was not the fault however of the Grecian women, that they were not more intellectual. The fault lay not in any mental incapacity. It was rather in that degraded state of matrimonial bondage, in which they were held, man, looking upon her as a state companion to keep up his outward dignity, rather than a companion whose mind he might cultivate. There were among the Roman women strong exceptions to the general fashion of female dependence; and noble ones they were, such as Cornelia the mother of the Grachi, and Hortensia, the eloquent Hortensia who commanded the admiration of Cicero, when in the face of the whole senate of Rome, she stood up for the rights and privileges of her country women.

There were many admirable women in the Roman empire; but to note them, would take up more time than a lecture would permit. Let it suffice, that had their minds been cultivated in the same proportion as their external graces, they would have been as eminent for literary attainments, as they were for matronly dignity, and domestic virtues.

It was for Christianity to humble and exalt the female mind, by raising it to its just elevation, by breaking the chains of superstition; and restoring to it, the noblest freedom which could

ever be bestowed upon it, viz., the shewing to woman that she had an equal right with man, to life and immortality.

And this brings me to consider the Biographical Character of Woman.

B I O G R A P H I C A L .

BIOGRAPHY is but the culling flowers from the fields of History; which, like many a plant transplanted from its native soil, loses much of its healthy vigour and beauty.

Circumstances, providential circumstances, can alone render any man worthily conspicuous. Virtues may be learned theoretically, and the minds of men or women may be matured in private, and be the sources of greatness, which no human power can command to come forth, by God only, who gives to man a portion of his effulgence.

It is a truth which all biography attests, that the harder the struggles of Genius, the severer the trials of genuine philanthropy, the more oppugnant the circumstances which lie in the way of true celebrity, the more conspicuous become the characters which surmount them.

Genius is never more triumphant than when the whole world rises against it, and seems as if it would crush it to atoms. The victory is gained within itself; let but patience have her perfect work, and He who governs all things will bring it forth to his own glory. "Prosperity, is a more dangerous school by far than adversity. It is a more glorious conquest in man over himself, to support such a state without degradation, than the

worst ills, with heroic fortitude. And for this plain reason, that the former, as naturally debases the noble energies of the mind, as the latter calls them forth, into superior and dignified action." Hence, we may universally observe, that all those characters, men, or women, who have become eminent for their talents or virtues, have been brought up in the school of adversity: and what they suffered in coming out from darkness into light, no pen can possibly describe.

It is not that any man can attain, in this world, that degree of perfect light of prosperity in his pursuit or career of action, that shall give him entire satisfaction—

"Though numbers sit,

In contemplate eminence content;
As if this world were all to be desired.
But Truth above them fix'd upon the height,
Has no such votaries! Go higher thou,
Who fond of eminence in perfect love
Art ardent, indefatigable, firm,
Regarding truth more brilliant than the world,
More bright than human wisdom: there then pause
And breathe most freely, and behold the past,
The dangers and the distance thou hast gone;
Thence looking out, the promised land of bliss,
May happily be seen; be it thine with eyes
Of genius triumphant to behold the Prize."

I had need be a walking biographical dictionary, to expatiate upon all the eminent female characters who have distinguished themselves in the world. There is a work entitled, "The Noble Deeds of Women," published in the year 1835, containing

many biographical sketches, under these separate heads—"Maternal, Filial, Sisterly and Conjugal affection—Integrity, Honesty, Benevolence, Fortitude, Presence of Mind, Hospitality, Self-controul, Gratitude, Loyalty, Eloquence, Patriotism, Science. The biographical sketches are well-drawn, and present lively pictures of the events described.

It would be detaining you much too long were I to attempt to describe only the various works which I have read upon the Character of Women. Gibbon's Memoirs of Women, Miss Costello's eminent Women of England, The Rights of Women, Characteristics of Women, Woman's Rights and Duties, Woman's Worth, Woman's Mission, Woman's Education. Memoirs of Female Sovereigns, and that elaborate work of the present time, which to notice critically would take me many a day, I mean Miss Agnes Strickland's Lives of the Queens of England, a work of such industry and patient research, as are alike creditable to herself and her sex. Then there are the Wives of England, and the Literary Ladies of England, even within the last century, containing names familiar to us all, and some of whom are deserving of our highest commendation; (*the lecturer here enumerated almost every distinguished literary Lady of past days*). But there are many literary ladies living, who delight us with their works, and who, as long as female worth can be appreciated in England will be remembered. Some may be present whose blushes I would spare, and do not therefore mention their names. But, there is one, whom few men can hope to equal in the sublime altitude she has attained, in mathematical and astronomical science, I mean Mrs. Somerville;—I mention her as an indica-

tion, that the female mind is quite as capable of the severity of abstruse scientific pursuit, as that of man.

But the works of these ladies are their best biographers, and they need no such chronicler as myself to record their worth, however proud I may justly feel of them, as my country women.

I will proceed to consider the last portion of my lecture, which is perhaps the best, in-as-much as it is more generally applicable to all.—All cannot attain eminence in literary pursuits, but all in the practical duties of Christianity, may become candidates for the praises of Him, whose approbation will be bliss indeed—the thought of which brings me to consider the Practically Christian Character of Woman.

PRACTICALLY CHRISTIAN.

“When the hopes of distinction, the fairy land of youth, (says the modest writer of *Woman's Rights and Duties*, who added no name to her work, but simply, that it was written by a woman); when the hopes of distinction shall have past away, there springs up another, and a more *durable* feeling, one more consistent with vigorous action, viz: *the desire of utility.*”

She does not tell us whence this desire arises: but I can tell her, and a nobler feeling can never actuate the heart of man or woman, it springs from a sense of gratitude to the great Giver of all Good who, whilst he destroys the presumption of vain glory, leaves not the creature without vanity, but turns that vanity into the channel of practical utility.

Disappointment is good for us all, disappointment, even in the fondest hopes of our earthly ambition! But, when the female mind exercising its pure and heavenly faith, permits that feeling of practical utility, to predominate over all the vacancies of disappointment, it is wonderful how cheerfully active, how generously energetic, how amiably useful the female character becomes. The void of being nothing soon passes away before the loveliness of humility; and she who once imagined, in the midst of her disappointment, that she never should have another enjoyment in life, that all zest for employment was taken from her, and that she should never be able to do any thing;—now finds an interest in every thing. Things come to her hands within the compass of her power, and whatever her condition of life, she is astonished to find the variety of joy which God enables her to receive in all the practical duties of Christianity.

Apathy which afflicts only the lovers of frivolity, when deprived of their darling amusement, is banished from her sensible mind; and the pious thought, that she may be useful in her generation makes her turn every talent she possesses to account.

Then arise, the benefits of education. The sound, solid, noble principles and precepts, which, before lay dormant, because overladen with a mass of fancied pleasures of fashion, now produce their stirring and stirling effects, and woman finds that she has an example to set which may be beneficial to thousands. Then it is that her mouth *is opened with wisdom*, on her tongue is the *law of kindness*, and her hands are ready to every good work.

It is this spirit of practical Christianity which unites all the members of Christ's Church in Charity.

There is no limit to the practice of Christian duties. When I say there is no limit, I mean, as to the variety of ways in which Christians may do good.

“A word spoken in due season how good is it!”

“A friend in need, is a friend indeed!”

A cup of cold water!—A Samaritan act of kindness—The hand extended to prevent a fall—The lifting up the poor destitute from the earth—The spread of the Gospel over the world—The encouraging all public and private Charities—Hospitals, Infirmaries, Asylums for the destitute—Schools and Seminaries—healing the sick—recovering the lame, restoring sight to the blind—In a word, fulfilling the injunction of the Apostle,

“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things :”—for in all these things men aspire to the acquirement of that peace of God which passes human understanding. The kingdom of God is spread over all hearts, subduing the tempers, passions, corruptions, wickednesses, and evils of men, and making them love one another not only in word but in deed and in truth.

It is a delightful thought that where love is, there is the spirit of Universal Charity, contained in the Apostolic admonition! “As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men!” or, that “Be ye *doers* of the word and not *hearers* only.”

Love is the most active principle of Christianity. It is divisible into millions of particles, and yet solely and entirely whole. Eternal action and eternal rest ; for there is an everlasting activity, and yet an endless tranquillity ; like the glorious orbs rolling majestically in their courses, never, never for one moment in the same place, yet bearing such a relative regard to each others position, that look at them when you will, they seem to be now and ever in their places.—This Love is productive of all the great and good acts of Charity done in the world. Prompt to save, it is equally willing to be sacrificed ; to spend and to be spent for the good of others.

Grace Darling on the boisterous ocean ; Mrs. Fry, on the no less boisterous billows of moral turpitude in Newgate, or the the humble Sarah Martin in the prison at Yarmouth, exhibited the same unity of Spirit though they pursued different methods to prove the soul-stirring affections of their hearts. And though we have all but one Saviour ! but one Atonement once made for us all, yet the operations of the Holy Spirit are so various, and distributed over such space, that he must be a strangely bigotted man indeed who would confine those operations to any one exclusive channel. Had such been the feelings of the heart of your lecturer, he would not have stood where he now does, to speak before you of the Practically Christian Character of Woman.

How many, whilst I am at this very moment lecturing upon that practical character, are engaged in all the variety of duties which constitute the actual discharge of Christian obligation.

How many a fond sister, sits at this moment reading by a

sick sister's bed! How many a tender mother is watching the declining hours of a beloved daughter's life, and speaking of the Faith which supports them both!—How many an affectionate daughter is at this moment toiling hard with her needle to add some little necessary to the last hours of an aged mother's existence. We do not see them with our eyes—we know they exist—and our faith teaches us to pray for them to Him who “tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.” How many a devoted wife is at this instant sustaining the head of a sinking husband and though her heart is bursting, turns away her tearful eye, lest she should increase his agonies. We must not forget, likewise, how many faithful female domestics, are from morn till night, and from night to morning, the constant attendants upon the sick bed. Enough is it to make us exclaim with the favoured poet of the North.

“O woman,
When pain and anguish wring the brow
A ministering angel thou!”—SCOTT.

What need I add more, to convince you of the Practically Christian Character of Woman. Is there a man here so wretched as never to be willing to confess its worth? I trow not.

There is, then, but one more character of which I will speak, and oh! that I could speak of it as I ought; but may every word I have spoken (and my words have not been few) convince you of the respect I pay to it, and of the deep interest I feel for it, namely, that of the Governess.

God who knows the hearts of all, knows that I have but one motive in this address, that of paying public respect, and en-

deavouring to create the same in others, for that portion of the British community, to whose exertions on early life our country is, under God, mainly indebted for the production of such useful characters among men, as are profitable to a nation. At a period when National Education, or rather, that which is termed National Education; now confined to the casual instruction of the poor! At this period, when it is proposed by the legislature to give retiring pensions to those who have exercised the office of national school mistresses, for a term of years; shall that noble body of governesses, whose higher attainments and qualifications adorn our family circles, and whose instructions are reflected in the polished corners of the largest temple ever built to the glory of God, the whole Christian Church, shall they be excluded the sympathy and support of the families of this great kingdom? Forbid it, O ye great and powerful! ye rich and generous! ye wise and learned! I appeal to you not without authority. I appeal to you, not as one who begs, but as one who would awaken in you a spark of justice, till it should be kindled into a flame of gratitude, and burn in a steady fire of charity, to the glory of God.

I will enter into no harassing details of poverty, to awaken your sympathies! No, let me try rather, by the grace of God, to awaken honest affections, condemnations of ourselves, that we have in days past, been so indifferent to the claims of such a body, not only upon our generosity but upon our gratitude.

How many are there, who, when the vanities of life have lost their strong hold upon the heart, then think with a species of remorseful regret, of those who early instilled into their minds the

habits of application, and the encouragement to intellectual exercises. How many are there I say, who connect their early associations with that humble and amiable instructress, gone, perhaps, to a brighter and a better world, but whose latter years were lost sight of, in that whirl of forgetfulness, which an introduction to the gay world induced. Perhaps she perished in obscurity, perhaps in want, in poverty and distress, whilst we were rolling in all the vortex of dissipation, thinking only of our fancied freedom from the bonds of our instructress! Generous minds never forget generous instruction. Amongst the greatest pleasures of after life, are those of keeping up a correspondence and intercourse with such humble but honoured companions: and no pang can be greater to a sensitive and gentle heart, than the thought that such early and amiable friends should be deserted in the hour of destitution.

How thankful then should we all be, that an Institution arises amongst us, affording us the opportunity for present exertions, to make amends for past neglect.

I do not mean to say that the encouragement of public Institutions like the present should, in any way, prevent the exercise of our private duties; or, that because we devote our portions to this public Charity, we are therefore to cry *Corban!* *Corban!* No such thing: but, this I do say, that in-as-much as well directed benevolence is infinitely better than promiscuous donations, given merely for the sake of importunity, so Institutions like the present afford us the pleasing prospect that we shall keep alive the flame of Charity from generation to generation.

Is it to be cast in our teeth that we are merely attached to

momentary ebullitions of feeling, and that we are not to encourage the thoughts of future generations, being benefitted by our endeavours? Where then is that bright spirit of Christian Love which gives us communion with those saints in light, Dorcas and Lydia, Priscilla, Phœbe, Martha and Mary?

Is this the last day of the world?—It may be, and if it be, let it find us united in the spirit of love, doing as we would be done by.

But if generations are yet to come, and children yet unborn, are to be taught, must they not learn the same lessons we have learnt, have the same prospects we hope to have, pursue the same path we have pursued, and perform the same works of piety we perform?

If generations are yet to come, and we are to be succeeded by our children, and they are to grow in every grace and every virtue, oh! let them see that the piety of their ancestors is not to be forgotten. Let them see that in our encouragement of such an Institution, as the present, we sought not our own glory, but His, whom they may seek to glorify, in every good work. So shall we hold their affections in the best bond of unity, for we shall enjoy with them both time and eternity.

Let them see that we laboured in the Lord for their benefit: and whilst we sought to ameliorate the condition of the English governess; we sought to wipe away a stain from the past generation, which is acknowledged on all sides to have been but too visible. That stain of neglect we endeavour to wipe away through the instrumentality of this society.

1st. By exalting the tone of Female Education throughout the

kingdom, by the establishment of *A Queen's College in London*, whence, *certificates of Qualification* may be obtained, which we trust will lead to a higher and better appreciation of the services of those ladies, who may devote their time and talents to the education of the daughters of our land. We trust that this will also tend to make those ladies feel their situations more comfortable to themselves, beneath the consciousness of the possession of some mark of approbation worthy of their regard.

This Society offers *a home* for governesses, during the intervals between their engagements.—The *respectability* of such a *home*, the cheap terms upon which they may be temporarily provided with board and lodging, and add thereto, the placing themselves under the auspices of those Benevolent and Enlightened Ladies, who form the Committee of admission to the Home, are sufficient blessings to recommend it to your attention.

The Temporary Assistance afforded delicately and privately, through the Ladies' Committee, to those most deserving individuals, whose trials and struggles of life are beyond the ordinary observations of the world, is another most amiable feature of this Institution; and one, which awakens warm sentiments of respect in the hearts of those, whose pleasure is to do much good without any ostentation.

The Annuity Fund, is already so extensively known for its utility, and is beginning to be felt as a blessing throughout the country, that it can only be a source of grief to us, that we are not enabled to see a greater number elected out of the host of worthy applicants, whose distresses we sincerely commiserate. But we have every promise of increasing means, for this benevolent object.

The Provident Fund, including as it does a Savings Bank; is an admirable encouragement to the young, in-as-much as it lays the foundation for their future support, from that noblest source of independence, viz: their own exertion.

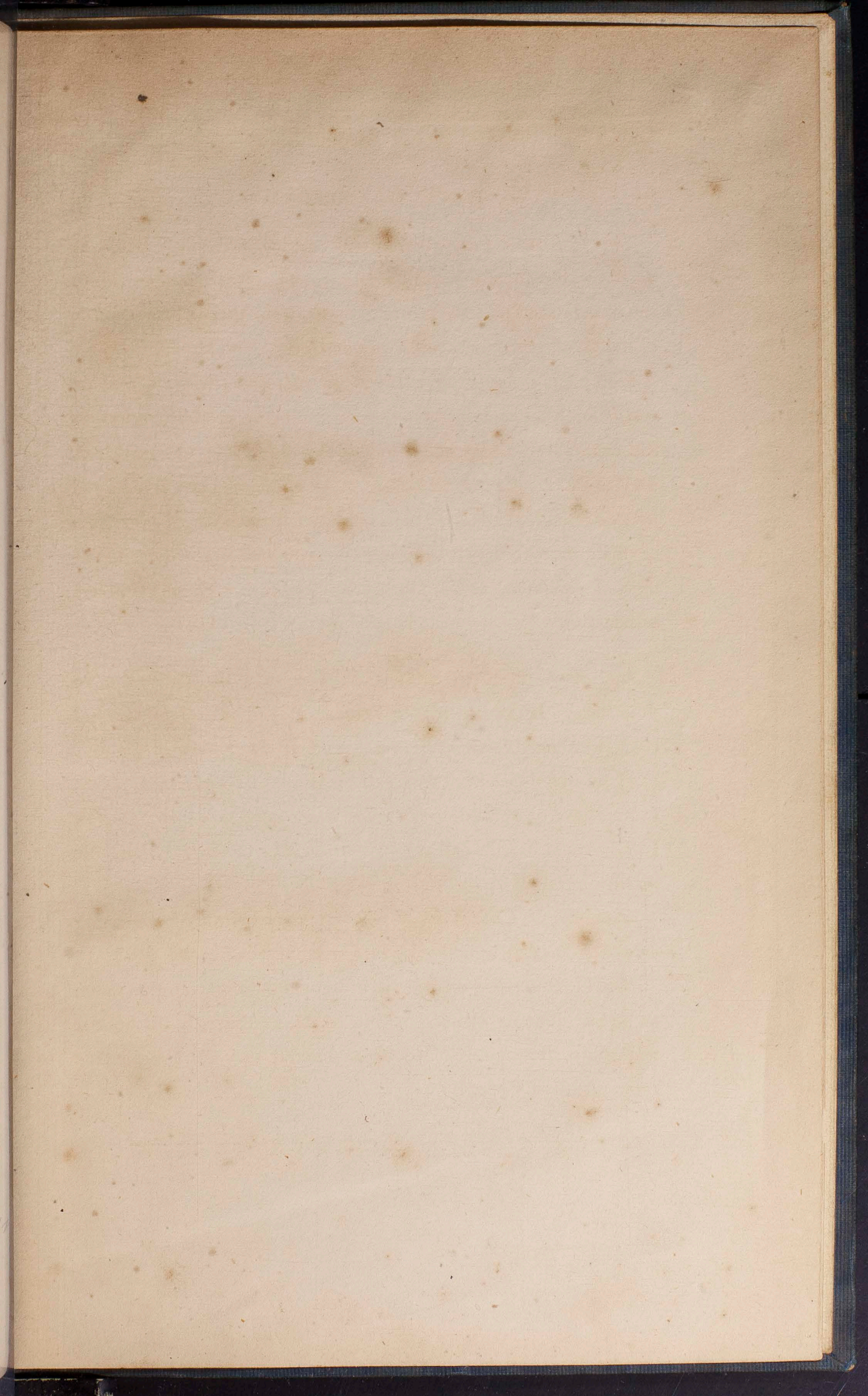
Lastly. *The Asylum for the Aged* offers, to our view, a noble rest of such respectability, as a nation may be proud to extend to the venerable Governess. An asylum afforded by an individual, may carry along with it a feeling of dependence, but when offered by this Society, supported as it is by the Benevolent of all classes in this great country, it can only be given and received with feelings of thankfulness to God, and therefore with the noblest satisfaction.

And now, my Christian friends, I commit the Institution to your care. It is your own, it is mine, it is the cause of many, I trust, who may come after me. And, if the humble example I have set this day be but followed by better and wiser men, whom I may have provoked to jealousy in so good a cause; though I know them not, I shall rejoice for the sake of so truly laudable and honourable an Institution.

Glad should I be, if I had only set the example of beginning an annual lecture upon so interesting a subject.

May God increase the powers of our successors, and give them, as he has done us, the disposition to do all things to his honour and glory, through Him to whom honour and glory are alone due. And so farewell!





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