



ERRATUM.

Page 75. For "I would appeal to the theological writings of Miss Blunt,"
read "I would appeal to 'Readings on Morning and Evening
Prayer,' by Miss Blunt."

WOMAN'S WORK
AND
WOMAN'S CULTURE.

A SERIES OF ESSAYS.

EDITED BY
JOSEPHINE E. BUTLER.

London :
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1869.

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LONDON :
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

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INTRODUCTION.

ERRATUM.

Page 232, for "one-third, if she leave no children," read
"one-half, if she leave no children."

it may have been subjected on the one hand and the other.

The Essays, including the following introductory remarks, were all written before Mr. J. S. Mill's book—"The Subjection of Women"—appeared. Most of them were already in print. The others were out of the writers' hands. They have been allowed to remain without alteration. In some of them the same lines of thought are pursued more in detail which are opened up in Mr. Mill's book, and a measure of agreement will

be found with the general principles announced by him. As the effect of independent enforcement would be impaired if plagiarism were suspected, I think it desirable to say, on our first page, that the case is as I have stated it.¹ The writers have also been independent of each other, each in ignorance of what might be said by the others, and therefore only answerable for his or her own Essay.

I must, at the very beginning of this volume, enter a protest, in my own name and that of the other Essayists, against the questions treated herein being regarded as exclusively "women's questions," or the cause advocated as the cause, solely, of women. It has long been my conviction that the cause we advocate, though primarily and more immediately the cause of women, is secondarily in a yet graver and more weighty sense the cause of men; for I do not think that one can have read the Scriptures, or history, or human life, at all thoughtfully, without being struck with this—that wherever one class or set of human beings has been placed at a disadvantage as compared with another class, has been deprived of whatsoever just privileges or denied a legitimate share of God's endowment of the world, the class so treated is not always the one for whom our gravest fears admit of the most reasonable justification. If we look at the matter largely, taking spiritual as well as material consequences into account, and the moral retri-

¹ The only exception to this is the latter part of the Essay on the Education of Girls: those pages were kept back until after the 14th of June, when the Endowed Schools Bill was considered before a Committee of the House of Commons.

butions which are surely brought about by the avenging years as they roll on, we can scarcely fail to perceive that the class which suffers most eventually, is not the class which is deprived, oppressed, or denied, but that which deprives, oppresses, or denies.

I must distinctly declare, that I am not about to reiterate any accusations against the men of the present generation, nor yet against men of past generations, nor to charge any living being with a conscious and wilful participation in any existing social wrong. The evils in society to which public attention is now awakened may be said to be in a great measure the result of accident, and of the halting and unequal progress of society. To thank all those men whose justice, candour, and unselfish helpfulness is recorded in my heart each day of my life as among God's best gifts to our age, would be to me a more congenial task than the pointing out of anything that may seem yet to be wanting. But I believe that there is no truer kindness than to remind those who, themselves just, true, and generous, have been born to an inheritance of monopolized privileges, of the duties which such an inheritance entails. For wherever there is monopoly on the one hand, there is loss and waste on the other. A man born to the possession of a great neglected estate, on which he finds his labourers degraded, cottages in ruins, and fields which ought to be storehouses of sustenance for city populations going to waste, undrained, and untilled, will scarcely think he has done his duty to society if, having any available means of improving it, he dies, leaving his estate as he

found it, content to charge the ruin and neglect upon his forefathers or upon a series of accidents. It would not be thought that an unjust accusation had been brought against such a landowner, if a friend were to take him by the hand, and lead him through the dwellings of his tenants and labourers, and bid him mark the moral as well as material harvest of misery which each year of continued neglect was preparing for a number of human beings; even if such a friend were to reason with him on "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," until he trembled in the waking sense of deep responsibility, it would not be thought to be a harsh or needless counsel. Similarly it will be believed, I trust, that it is with an equal regard for the happiness of all human beings alike, men and women, the highly favoured and responsible as well as the spoiled and neglected, that I venture to remind the men of the present generation, that there is an entail more grievous than that which spreads its blight over so many estates in our fair England—an entail which is injurious to those who are supposed to be benefiting by it, no less than to the human fields which it desolates. There is a moral deterioration which is the invariable attendant upon the habit of the careless and irresponsible enjoyment of possession at the expense of the happiness and good of others. No portion of the human family can continue from age to age in the enjoyment of advantages which are not justly shared with others, nor in an attitude of indifference to the disabilities of another and a dependent portion of the community,—even though a

monopoly of such advantages may have been an heritage to which they were born—without suffering deterioration, gradual but sure, in the deepest part of their nature. For persons in such a case, whether they or their forefathers be chargeable with the blame of it, there is no certain moral health save in the awakened perception of existing wrong, and the conscious will to restore the balance to society, as far as it lies in their power to do so, by bringing a share of monopolized blessings into the lot of those classes who have suffered deprivation.

In the Bible, I find the labourer deprived of just wages, the wronged widow, the neglected orphan, the leper driven out of society, the uninstructed from whom the key of knowledge had been withheld, the Gentile stranger oppressed by the privileged Jew, each and all in their turn tenderly mentioned in those pathetic and paternal utterances, beginning with “Thus saith the Lord.” Their cry, it is said, enters into the ears of God. They are cared for by Him, and we dimly trust that restitution awaits them somewhere hereafter for loss suffered on earth.

Not that the kindness of God can always be said, so far as we yet see it, to fill up the measure of the unkindness of man. God’s kindness is in reserve, we believe, or how could we endure life, knowing what we know? But what shall we say of the broken hearts, the deep discouragement and dismay, the deadness of souls, the destruction of moral natures, which are in so large a degree the fruits reaped by the classes who are impoverished, deprived of light, hope, instruction, and

freedom, while others, who could give, have enough and to spare? God only knows how many millions of these, maddened by life's mystery, have voluntarily plunged into darkness, from the earliest period of the world's history down to last night's suicide from London Bridge, pitied no doubt by our Father in heaven, but doubting, fearing, it may be cursing, that most pitiful God, whose love and justice the poor heart can discern no longer athwart the black cloud of earth's cruelty. Yet I maintain that this very despair is less of a moral poison affecting the eternal destiny of a human spirit than is that blind self-satisfaction, deepening and hardening from generation to generation, which is engendered by the monopoly of privilege, and all the more if it be privilege of the noblest and highest kind. Wherefore, if I were a man, I would call upon my fellow-men to hearken and consider seriously what may be the deeper meanings of the invocation which is coming up on all sides from women in all parts of the earth, and in self-defence to prepare to render back such measure of justice as may seem, through whatsoever cause or accident, to have been withheld. For to persons who have rested in their privileges, who, even if not wantonly robbing any man of any good thing, have passed by on the other side, and dreamed away their lives in a thralldom to conventions and customs which are eating the heart out of society, to these the language of prophets speaking in God's name is stern. The shadow of the Almighty's frown rests darkly on those pages of Scripture which speak of the carelessly secure and neglectful. The language

used is sometimes that of entreaty, of a summons to wake up and behold, and repent: sometimes it is that of prophetic judgment; and that judgment our own eyes tell us, and the gloomy page of history tells us, is one which falls silently, scarcely recognised, generation after generation, upon the dominant and privileged family, state, race or nation, until, like the richly-endowed and privileged Jews who lived when Christ came into the world, they have become blind to their own blindness, and incapable of seeing light when light appears.

It is certain, then, that all who look upon this question of woman's interests from a grave and lofty point of view must behold it, as it is indeed, a question which concerns humanity at large, and that very vitally; and I wish it were felt that women who are labouring especially for women are not one-sided or selfish. We are human first; women secondarily. We care for the evils affecting women most of all because they react upon the whole of society, and abstract from the common good. Women are not men's rivals, but their helpers. There can be no antagonism that is not injurious to both. When women laying claim for women to certain privileges hitherto withheld are called self-seeking and self-asserting—terms applied to them by ladies living at ease, and ignorant of the facts of life, much more frequently than by men—it seems to be forgotten that the term "Women" is a large and comprehensive one. When men nobly born and possessing advantages of wealth and education have fought the battles of poor

men, and claimed and wrung from Parliaments an extension of privileges enjoyed by a few to classes of their brother-men who are toiling and suffering, I do not remember ever to have heard them charged with self-seeking; on the contrary, the regard that such men have had for the rights of men has been praised, and deservedly so, as noble and unselfish. And why should the matter be judged otherwise when the eyes of educated and thoughtful women of the better classes are opened to the terrible truth regarding the millions of their less favoured countrywomen, and they ask on *their* behalf for the redress of wrongs, and for liberty to work and to live in honesty and self-reliance?

The question is too large to be fully examined here (it will be approached from other sides in other parts of this volume), of how far this present distress among women is an exceptional distress, an accidental and transitory state of things, and how far, on the other hand, men have altogether failed, up to the present day, to reach the standard to which the teaching of Christianity would have led them in their relations to their fellow-creatures. I cannot myself doubt that the great principles announced by Christ have hitherto remained very imperfectly recognised in the most important of their adaptations, and that a future generation will look back with wonder on the present state of women as an illustration of the slowness with which society has become leavened by those principles. Yet it is evident that there have been periods since the Christian era when the failure to recognise those principles did not

entail such grave consequences as it does at this day, when circumstances and popular ideals of life were more favourable than now to the happiness and moral dignity of women. The present distress must to some degree be reckoned among the phenomena of a transition-period in society ; it is in part owing to the rapid advances in discovery, invention, expeditive processes, instruments of production, &c., which advances have been unequally yoked with our national conservatism of certain customs, conventions, and ideals of life and character. The great tide of an imperfect and halting civilization has rolled onward, and carried many triumphantly with it. But women have been left stranded, so to speak. Never was levity more out of place, or indifference less philosophical, than at such a crisis. It is a crisis which calls for action ; for it is evident that a readjustment of man's and woman's fields of work, and in some degree of their manner of life, must take place in order to restore the equilibrium of society. A much greater number of women must support themselves now than has been the case at any other time. The agitation for the enlargement of woman's sphere of work has a real and pressing cause. It has been said that nothing short of hunger will drive a nation to rebellion ; but here we actually have a large measure of that ghastly element of rebellion—hunger and a lack of honestly-won food. The census taken eight years ago gave three and a half millions of women in England working for a subsistence ; of these, two and a half millions were unmarried. In the interval between the census of 1851 and that of 1861 the number

of self-supporting women had increased by more than half a million. This is significant, and still more striking I believe, on this point, will be the returns of the next census two years hence. But the census does not tell how many of these two and a half millions are working for starvation wages, nor how many of them have declined from a position of respectability to which they were born to one in any class or rank, however low, in which they may have a chance of earning a piece of bread. Nor does the census include among these breadwinners the armies of women, counted by thousands in all our towns and cities, who are forced downwards to the paths of hell, by the pressure from above, through the shutting up of avenues to a livelihood by means of trade monopolies among men, and through the absence of any instruction or apprenticeship to qualify them for employment. Of this class of persons, and of this sorest of human griefs, we are never forgetful; no, not for a day. I speak for myself and for other *women* at least, my fellow-workers. The subject was thought too painful an one to be specially treated in a volume for general reading; therefore I think it the more needful to assert that these our fellow-women are not forgotten by us; on the contrary, we continually feel—and the public must be constantly reminded of it—that *there is no analogy whatever among men, however miserable certain classes of men may be, to the wholesale destruction which goes on from year to year among women*—destruction of bodies, of consciences, of souls; and the existence of this class would alone have been enough to urge us who are

happier to raise our voices to claim what we claim now—freedom and power to reach and deal with great social evils in their beginnings, and not only in a limited degree in their dire effects. At present, and indeed ever since the world began, this class of people have been generally left out of account in all theories of life, and in the framing of legislative and social measures, except so far as society has had to be protected against them as against a public nuisance, and so far as individual missionary efforts have attempted to restore a few of the fallen. I think that any theory of life or of public arrangements is thoroughly unscientific, as well as unchristian, which leaves this mass of people out of account, which deals with it as a fact which must be endured, but which must be as much as possible pushed into a corner, and fenced round so as to annoy and hurt the rest of the community as little as possible. Such economy resembles that of an indolent housewife who is aware of a certain chamber in her house which is full of the accumulated dirt of years, but which she fears to look into, hopeless of any possible cleansing, and the door of which she keeps carefully closed, content so long as the rest of the dwelling is not fatally infected by the presence of the evil.

It has been well said, that “philanthropy and politics, now flowing apart, will unite in one stream when philanthropists become conscious of power to reach the *sources* of crime and misery, and when statesmen understand that their functions are assigned to them for none but a philanthropic end. How few of us will or

can persevere in self-denial, if we seem to be striving for the impossible ; if while we are painfully draining a small pool of misery, a new and full tide pours in ! Under the crushing belief that, labour as we may, the result will be imperceptible, most of us turn away from a heartbreaking task, and try to forget other people's wretchedness. That mankind may reach a better state, philanthropy, like religion, must be the work and duty of all, not of a select few. With a view to this, women (whose heart is our great reservoir of tenderness) must have a hope of, not merely palliating, but uprooting national evils." Although there are in every town Refuges for the fallen, in which, and the missionary work of the streets, Christian women spend their lives for the restoration of their sisters, yet this work is but the draining of a pool into which a vast tide is continually pouring, which steadily swells the evil in spite of our utmost efforts. It is well known by all who have any practical experience of this subject, that want, the difficulty of obtaining work, friendlessness, and the absence of any technical or industrial education, are the main causes of this terrible destruction of human beings. It cannot be wondered at, then, that we confidently believe that the admission of intelligent and educated women to a participation in any social legislation which bears on this and kindred matters, and a share given to them in the necessary preventive as well as curative work which is required to be done, largely and wisely, would bring more light and hope into this dark portion of the world's history than has

ever yet been brought into it. It is well known that all legislative and social enactments bearing on this class of women have been made hitherto by men alone, without the counsel or practical aid of women; and yet it is the present and eternal interests of women especially that this matter involves. I say women, but there are tens of thousands of these who can scarcely be called women. Among the 9,000 women who are pursuing this calling in one of our great seaports, a late inquiry showed that 1,500 were under fifteen years of age, and of these about a third were under thirteen years of age. It is much the same in other towns. Think of this, you mothers who are living at ease, in your pleasant drawing-rooms, with your tender darlings around you! You can feel with me the truth of the saying, that "God could not make anything sweeter than a little girl;" but you surely will not be content to preserve the holy sweetness of those whom God has given you, without a practical effort to lessen the power of those sinister social forces which are at present driving whole armies of little girls to madness and early graves.

And do not suppose that these children of the poor are of a different nature from your own sheltered children. Every one who has had any large experience and intimate personal knowledge of this class, must have felt as often astonished at the strength of virtue and the resisting power of innocence, among the poor, exposed to vice and temptation, as at the inherent and unconquerable tendency to evil that there is among some of all classes, even the most protected. Any one who

is acquainted with the condition of women in the lower-middle classes,¹ as well as with the homes of the very poor, is inclined to be surprised that so many escape.

To mass all these women and children under one title as "infamous" is an indiscriminating philosophy, and betrays a great ignorance of human nature. A poor little French girl, bribed from her home by fair offers of honest employment and success in England,

¹ When Mr. Henley said in the House of Commons, on the 14th of June, that an extension of endowment funds to girls' schools was not pressingly needful, because "our girls are educated at home," I presume he was thinking of girls of the higher classes, the sisters of Eton and Harrow boys, &c. His words do not apply to girls of the class for whom a share of endowments has been requested: namely, the sisters of the boys who are at present benefiting from endowments in our provincial towns. These girls are *not* educated at home. They are the children of tradesmen, clerks, poor professional men, &c., who can just afford to educate their boys, and who *cannot* afford a governess at home for their daughters. These girls consequently go to inferior day-schools, if to any school, the teachers of which are among the foremost of those who are asking for a different state of things, feeling the unreality of their profession and the need of help. No one, I believe, proposes that the endowment of Eton should be extended to girls, while John Lyons' Will expressly forbids that girls shall have any share of the education provided at Harrow. Nor is it for the better classes, who can afford to have good governesses for their daughters at home, that we are at present concerned. Mr. Henley would probably be shocked himself if he were to consider certain statistics which I could bring before him about the recruiting of this great army of ruined women I have spoken of. Girls from this very class, for whom we are claiming education as their only salvation—humanly speaking,—frequently lapse into these ranks. I scarcely like to say what I know. It is not in their case a positive lack of a meal for to-day that drives them to this, but it is their generally exposed condition, the presence of temptation to frivolity, the absence of all mental resource, empty-headedness, love of dress, and the craving for some little affair of the heart to enliven the insipidity of their lives. And what, save a good education, can tend to the correction of all this? To say they can be educated at home, under mothers who are themselves uneducated, is to offer a stone to those who ask bread.

died in one of our great hospitals. She had endured an enforced life of the deepest ignominy for two years. In her illness her mind wandered, and to listen to her gentle ravings was like listening to some sweet, mournful song of an exile. She talked unceasingly of her dear home in France; she fancied herself wandering among the sunny, vine-clad hills of Burgundy, and her thoughts were all innocent, sweet, and lovely. There was no word of any hope in God, for she was uninstructed; but her heart yearned for an earthly paradise—her father's vineyard, her mother's cottage; and her innocent smiles and gestures showed sometimes that she believed she had found them all again. Every memory of the horrors of the last two years was blotted out. When the delirium ceased, she said, suddenly, "Je me meurs," and her spirit passed away.

Many such examples have come before me of the indelibility of the instinct of purity given by God to many women. I quote it as an illustration of the awful nature of those accidents of our social system which are diverting from their proper channels those gentle characteristics of womanhood which might bring so much blessing and happiness to society, and delivering them over to Satan, to work, through their own ruin, the ruin of others. The timid among us, both men and women, are glad to be allowed to forget the existence of this great shame in the midst of us; and there is no one fact of life which they more easily succeed in forgetting. Indeed, it is often considered needful for our own moral health, and a proper conces-

sion to the prevailing refinement of manners, to be ignorant, or to simulate ignorance, of it. But Christ's teaching in this particular does not seem to sanction such a measure of ignorance or of refinement. Kepler, the astronomer, speaking of the discoveries he had pursued, said, "I have thought God's thoughts after Him." Let any one consider, who believes that our social system can be securely maintained without taking into account the salvation of this class, whether he can apply the test of Kepler's words to his own conscience; has he thought God's thoughts after Him? What are God's thoughts? Was it not said, "It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these should perish?"

And by the salvation of this class I mean something more than the Refuge or Penitentiary, and something more than the application of sanitary measures for the protection of our army and navy, and of that portion of the respectable of all classes by whom in a measure these unhappy women are maintained, and to whom, no doubt, it is a present advantage to be able to sin with impunity. I would not speak lightly of any measures adopted by Government from motives of humanity and public necessity; but, considering that, in spite of all such measures, thousands of ruined women are, through want of employment, daily being huddled into workhouse graves—most of them *very* young women—I think it is not unreasonable, nor should it be considered "self-seeking," that women should say to those who have hitherto ruled all things for us, "Let us see if we can help you to reach a little nearer to the heart of this

evil." Is it enough that we should be able to say with regard to this matter, as a Parisian gentleman said to me, "We take care of our *men*," while we deny to thousands of our women every chance of earning a livelihood in any other profession than this?

The demand of the women of the humbler classes for bread may be more pressing, but it is not more sincere, than that of the women of the better classes for work. And these two demands coming together, it seems to me, point to an end so plainly to be discerned, that I marvel that any should remain blind to it. The latter demand is the attestation of the collective human conscience that God does not permit any to live as cumberers of the ground, and that the very condition of their moral existence is, that efforts made and pains taken by them should answer to some part of the needs of the community. But their position also is, as I have said, that of people stranded. The wave has passed them by. Their work is taken out of their hands: their place—they know not where it is. They stretch out their hands idly. A readjustment is needed, but it only slowly comes about. The present generation must be content to suffer as the victims of a transitional period; but for the next generation there is hope. Already the earnest action initiated in some quarters, and the sincere and kindly co-operation of some men and some women for the improvement of the condition of women generally, has dispelled in a great degree the despondency and the bitterness of soul which settles and deepens, when

as yet no voice has been raised, and the years go on without hope of redress.

In almost all important popular crises in history, it is evident that the two great parties which generally divide the actors in such crises have been possessed, in an almost equal degree, with one dread—the dread of Revolution. In the political crisis of 1832, for example, we read the speeches on the Conservative side, and find them full of gloomy forebodings of revolution, which revolution seems to minds so constituted the direct effect of the opening out of privilege to the many which has hitherto been the heritage of the few. There were sensible men who honestly believed that the Reform Bill of 1832 would revolutionize the country in a sense which, to them, foreboded much evil. On the other hand, if we read the letters and private utterances of those who were urging the extension of privilege, the leaders themselves of the great movement, we find them expressing a dread of the same evil, Revolution, but anticipating it from a very different source, namely, the denial of extended privileges. What both these parties honestly deprecated was, no doubt, anarchy, confusion, the upsetting of law and order, and a general movement which could only be suicidal. I think history contains few more useful lessons than may be learned from this agreement between contending parties, considered in relation to the wide disagreement between them as to the means of averting destructive change and main-

taining the balance of society. Is there any one now living who doubts that revolution would have followed ere long the denial of that extension of popular privilege for which a patient people had waited long? To the facts alone we need to look for an answer to the question whether those were right or wrong who believed that the admission of a numerous class to a hitherto monopolized influence would avert revolution, and tend towards healthy self-government. I think there is no slight analogy between such a case and the present crisis. The majority of Englishmen have, I believe, at this day, a secret dread lest the granting of the claims which are just now put forward by women should revolutionize society. I wish particularly to notice the fear, or presentiment, which seems to me the most worthy of our serious consideration—namely, the fear that to grant what they are asking would revolutionize our *Homes*. This is indeed a serious question; for I believe that Home is the nursery of all virtue, the fountain-head of all true affection, and the main source of the strength of our nation. On this subject I may be pardoned, as one who has had experience to the full of all the sacredness and blessedness of home, if I speak with warmth. It is sometimes supposed that the most fervent advocates of woman's cause are persons who have been pinched and starved in the matter of affection, disappointed in life, embittered by isolation, and therefore glad to exchange the exclusiveness of the domestic hearth for a communism in which they would not feel themselves left out, starved

and solitary. It is no wonder if the sighs, and even the invectives, of some such isolated persons should be heard mournfully sounding through the general advocacy of a renewed social order. But let me be permitted to remind the public, if it needs such reminding, that many of those who are toiling, praying, and arguing for the promotion of this cause, are among the happiest ladies in the land. They are among those who might—if God had permitted such a hardening of the heart—have rested content, and more than content, with the sunshine which has fallen upon their path. But it is precisely this abundance of blessing bestowed on them which urges them to care for the less happy, and which becomes a weight hardly to be borne in the presence of the unloved, unapplied existences of some others, and the solemn awakening energy of demand for a place in God's order of society which is now arising from thousands of homeless women. Not but that the happiest among us have not observed and pondered with amazement, from our very childhood, on certain customs, laws, and maxims prevalent among us, which seem only to recognise the existence of one half of the human family. But we had not long to wait to compare our solitary conclusions with the awful revelations of actual life around us. To be very patient under the miseries of *others*, appeared to us, as we grew up to years of discretion, to be an easy virtue: we desired to practise some sterner virtue than this, and we saw that our own happiness was the very reason why we should speak out boldly for the unhappy; and it con-

tinues to be a reason determining us to labour on in the same course, through evil report and good report. It is from the heart of my beloved home, with my children around me, that I speak; wherefore I trust I shall be believed to be free from indifference to the fear that our homes may be revolutionized or destroyed. And let it be clearly understood, that the promoters of the cause for which I speak are generally no less afraid of the revolutionizing of our family life than those are who oppose us in the strength of this very argument. Where we differ, it is as to the means of averting such a consequence: and here we differ not a little.

The true spirit of Conservatism is shown in the adaptation of old and tried principles to new and varying circumstances; and there are ancient and honoured principles which I hold as tenaciously as the strongest Conservative. But I maintain that to hold tenaciously to the exact outward form in which those principles may have clothed themselves, simply on the ground of the antiquity of that form, is often the surest means of revolutionizing, in the most undesirable sense of the word, the society which we wish to strengthen. "He that *will* save his life, the same shall lose it;" and those who, at all costs to others, are determined to reserve to themselves, in the midst of a people whose hearts are already failing them for fear, and in a time of perplexity and distress, the too often selfish comforts and exclusive enjoyments of home and family life, are not unlikely to lose the very blessings which they

are hugging, or carelessly enjoying, while the homeless are wailing outside.

I think I see that a great enlargement of hearts, and a free opening out and giving forth of the influences of homes, as reservoirs of blessing for the common good, would ultimately result in the restored security of all the best elements in our present ideal of Home, and that the saying would come true, "He that will lose his life for My sake" (for the sake of Him who taught that if a man have two coats he should give one to him that has none), "the same shall find it." Fair and happy homes would gather again, in larger groups, and their happiness would be placed on a surer foundation than that of the home-lovers of to-day, who are trembling lest they should be deprived of one particle of present comfort and enjoyment by the pressing case of those who have neither.

But before I continue this argument, I wish to say a word about that constantly reiterated assertion that "Woman's sphere is the home." The saying, as it is uttered now, in the face of the great facts of society as they lie confessed before us, is to a great extent wholly inapplicable, and assumes the character of a most ungentle irony. Many men who a few years ago echoed this cry, have had their eyes opened, and candidly confess that there was cruelty, though an unintentional cruelty, in the emphasis they gave to it before; yet there remain both men and women who continue solemnly to inform the women who are striving for

some work or calling which will save them from starvation, and who have no human being but themselves to depend on, that their proper sphere is *home*,—that their proper function is to be wives and mothers, and their happiness is to be dependent on men! Alas! these women have learned a lesson which neither they, nor the generation which follows them, are likely to forget, on the subject of dependence on men.

Like Pharaoh, who commanded the Israelites to make bricks without the material to make them of, these moralizers command this multitude of inquiring women back to homes which are not, and which they have not the material to create. I trust that such mocking words as these will cease to be spoken. But to enter on a larger view of the subject; in a deeper sense than these moralizers conceive *home* is the sphere of woman, inasmuch as under circumstances in the smallest degree favourable, women instinctively create a home around themselves. The instinct is strong to gather into a circle a group, small or great, divided by a certain invisible boundary-line of united interests, and little aggregate of comforts, from the outer world:

“ An ear that waits to catch
A hand upon the latch,
A step that hastens its sweet rest to win :
A world of care without,
A world of strife shut out,
A world of love shut in.”

Such a vision dwells more or less in every woman's mind, except where poverty and misery have blotted it

out. A poor woman before a magistrate, questioned why she and her family, one of whom had died of hunger, did not take refuge in the workhouse, replied, "We did not like to leave our home and our bits of comforts." Their bits of comforts were found to consist of one broken chair, and a board with some empty sacks upon it which served them as a bed. The tenacity with which women of all ranks naturally cling to home, or make a home of such elements as they find around them, might reassure the men who are at present so terrified lest domesticity should take flight from our land.

I dwell upon this tendency in women to call up domestic influences wherever they are, in order that I may indicate the direction of my hopes for the veering round again of some of the most difficult of our present circumstances towards the re-establishment, in various forms, of all that is good and healthful in our present ideal of family life. I plead that to grant the present demands of women will tend to the restoration of the true home ideals, and that the denial of those demands will hasten the day of disorganization and uprooting of sacred traditions, which is dreaded. How will the granting of them tend to this restoration? I can only briefly indicate, in the limits of this Essay, the hoped-for direction of feeling and practice under the supposed granting of the required conditions.

I think it would do so,

- (1) Through the restored dignity of women;
- (2) Through the opening out and diffusion of the home influence and character among the masses, by

the relegation to women of some of the more important work of dealing with our vast populations.

(1) At the present day women are cheap; their value in the great world's market has sunk to a very low ebb. Their attitude, speaking generally, is that of cringing for a piece of bread. What dignity can there be in the attitude of women in general, and toward men in particular, when marriage is held (and often necessarily so, being the sole means of maintenance) to be the one end of a woman's life, when it is degraded to the level of a feminine profession, when those who are soliciting a place in this profession resemble those flaccid Brazilian creepers which cannot exist without support, and which sprawl out their limp tendrils in every direction to find something—no matter what—to hang upon; when the insipidity or the material necessities of so many women's lives make them ready to accept almost any man who may offer himself? There has been a pretence of admiring this pretty helplessness of women. But let me explain that I am not deprecating the condition of dependence in which God has placed every human being, man or woman,—the sweet interchange of services, the give and take of true affection, the mutual support and aid of friends or lovers, who have each something to give and to receive. That is a wholly different thing from the abject dependence of one entire class of persons on another and a stronger class. In the present case such a dependence is liable to peculiar dangers by its complication with sexual emotions and motives, and with

relations which ought, in an advanced and Christian community, to rest upon a free and deliberate choice,—a decision of the judgment and of the heart, and into which the admission of a necessity, moral or material, introduces a degrading element. “Election makes not up with such conditions,” Burgundy said to King Lear when he relinquished Cordelia to his nobler rival, who declared, “Love is not love when it is mingled with respects that stand aloof from the entire point.” Truly, the present condition of society is one which does not favour election. It leaves little room for the heart’s choice. It has often occurred to me that the nature of a man must differ considerably from that of a woman if he does not care to be loved for *his own sake*, and does not desire conditions of life which allow of his knowing whether he is or not the deliberately preferred, the elect of the person whose companionship for life he solicits. I have seen a woman meet with an indignant rejection the offer of a man whom she knew had for his object simply *a wife*, and marriage in general. “If it is only a wife you want,” she replied, “there are wives enough to be had. Seek one elsewhere. I am not the person you seek.” I should be glad to see a greater degree of such self-respect both among men and women; but such a feeling can scarcely thrive in a society in which to act upon it would be for many women starvation and a wasted life, and in which it is not easy for a man to distinguish a genuine preference in a woman amidst the general scramble for husbands.

I am aware that many think that marriages of con-

venience, prudently arranged, are for the most part the happiest; and it is true that religious principle and kindness of heart, where there is any basis for mutual esteem, serve to make such marriages frequently very happy. But we cannot read the history of mankind without seeing that the desire of worthiness in one who would win the heart of a worthy person has been at all times of the world's history one of the strongest incentives to a noble life. That worshipful love of a woman who continually holds communion with God while practising the perfection of a dutiful life on earth is, I believe the strongest incentive which a man can have, next to the love of Christ, to a life of purity, duty, and self-denial. All the most beautiful stories of noble lives and deeds are found in countries and in ages where such love as this was possible. I do not say that we need more of emotion and sentiment among us than we have; on the contrary, I hope that education, earnest work in trades and professions, and a share in grave national interests, will correct the foolish sentimental tendencies of the women whose chief literature at present is the sensation novel; but I do not hesitate to declare my belief that we need—together with other and higher influences—a revival of the grave and romantic ideas of love which have prevailed in happier periods of human history, and which can never wholly perish. We need, in fact, *love* itself,—the love which is based on a deep respect—instead of those mimeries and desecrations of the name of love which prevail. I doubt whether a man generally

feels the best kind of attraction towards a woman who is socially worthless, though she may be in herself a good woman; he sees her not only with his own eyes, but reflected in the opinions of the persons around her. I have seen a lover's face kindle with a fresh glow of tenderness and admiration when some testimony came before him of the social worth of the woman he loved. I have marked also the grave efforts which young men have had to make when the women they wished to win were happy, industrious workers in some trade requiring skill and intense application, and possessed of that kind of beauty of face and mind which an earnest life imparts, and which is never seen in an idle or frivolous woman. In such a case the lover thought himself happy when he could for a moment arrest the work of the nimble fingers, and win a look from the watchful eyes intent upon the work in hand. The sense, as in this instance, of the reality and gravity of life on the one hand, and of the worth of the person to be won on the other, are no trifling elements in the moral progress of society. I give these slight instances, which the few steps already made in the direction of industrial openings for women enable me to note, in order to illustrate what I find it somewhat difficult to express in generalities. I believe that the opening out of a freer life for women would ultimately, though not very soon, tend to the increase of marriage, for the worth and therefore the attractiveness of women would be increased, and undoubtedly it would tend to the preservation of all that we wish to preserve in existing homes. On the question whether

it is desirable that women should marry more than they do, I will only say, that while men continue to preach the doctrine—implicitly believed by most of them—that in marriage lies the only possible salvation for women, and while the thoughts of women continue to be directed to it as the one aim of life, marriage is likely to become less and less desired by the nobler portion of the community, and the marriages which are made will for the most part fail to be truly dignified and happy. I cannot believe that it is every woman's duty to marry, in this age of the world. There is abundance of work to be done which needs men and women detached from domestic ties; our unmarried women will be the greatest blessing to the community when they cease to be soured by disappointment or driven by destitution to despair.

There has been a divorce among us between usefulness and beauty; it is a separation which involves a real loss of worth and happiness; and it ought not to be: for the highest beauty will, I believe, everywhere be found to rest upon the greatest utility. Who has not felt that the attractiveness of our better-class women, who too often lead the life of butterflies, is spoiled by the vanity and egotism which so easily take possession of minds devoid of great thoughts, and deprived of the invigorating influence of work? Egotism is a poison before which beauty perishes. The divorce is not less injurious, on the other hand, where thousands of women are obliged to spend their lives in such unceasing drudgery and ill-paid or unpaid toil, that beauty and

grace are meaningless as applied to them ; and thus, as we descend to the poorest populations of our towns, we find, in place of marriage, loose and lawless intercourse, consciences becoming darker and more dead through the ever-accumulating weight of crime and misery which is passed on as a family heritage, and even the physical type degraded for successive generations, till finally our Prisons, Penitentiaries, and Workhouses are crowded to overflowing with worthless, unwholesome human weeds, low-browed apes, in whom intelligence is all but extinguished, and love has perished, and the instinct of hunger and the lowest animal instincts alone remain. In such a state of things—although there are yet many homes among us where simple manners and high aims prevail, and although some women have risen to an exceptional excellence by the strength of their sorrow for their country, and a noble anger—we cannot hope to find the dignity of woman, in general, more than an empty name.

(2) But I have said that the desired end will also be advanced by the extension beyond our homes of the home influence. In the present pretty general realization of the futility, if not the positive harm, of many forms of private philanthropy, and the often-repeated deprecation of meddling individuals who pauperize the community by their old-fashioned, Lady-Bountiful way of dispensing alms and patronage, we do not perhaps quite foresee the reaction which is setting in, with a tendency so strong in the opposite direction that it brings us into the danger of once more missing the philosophy of the whole matter.

The tendency at present is to centralization of rule, to vast combinations, large institutions, and uniformity of system. I have a doubt about any wholesale manipulation of the poor, the criminal, scholars in schools, &c. I believe it to be so far from founded on a philosophical view of human nature and of society, that, if carried to extremes, the last state of our poor will be worse than the first. For the correction of the extreme tendencies of this reaction, I believe that nothing whatever will avail but the large infusion of Home elements into Workhouses, Hospitals, Schools, Orphanages, Lunatic Asylums, Reformatories, and even Prisons: and in order to this there must be a setting free of feminine powers and influence from the constraint of bad education, and narrow aims, and listless homes where they are at present too often a superfluity. We have had experience of what we may call the feminine form of philanthropy, the independent individual ministering, of too mediæval a type to suit the present day. It has failed. We are now about to try the masculine form of philanthropy, large and comprehensive measures, organizations and systems planned by men and sanctioned by Parliament. This also will fail, if it so far prevail as to extinguish the truth to which the other method witnessed, in spite of its excesses. Why should we not try at last a union of principles which are equally true? "It is not good for man to be alone" was a very early announcement in the history of the world; neither is it good for man to *work* alone, in any matter whatsoever which concerns the welfare of the great human family: and the larger the

work be which he undertakes, unassisted by her whom God gave to him for a helpmate, the more signal will be the failure in the end.

From the driest statistics we may deduce the lesson that everything worked on the elastic and varied principle of home-life thrives far better than the costliest Institution. In lying-in hospitals, under much greater apparent advantages, a larger average of poor women die than in their own humble homes. Workhouse girls brought up in masses never turn out well. Lunatics when boarded out, as at Gheel, or even in poor humble places, less clean and less well-fed, as in Scotland, are more apt to recover than in grand well-ordered Asylums. Everything lives and thrives better where there is the principle of play and freedom which home affords, and which is necessarily excluded where rule prevails, as it must do in enormous Institutions. And as in hospitals for fever or consumption the type of the disease becomes intensified by multiplication, so in conglomerations of beings of one character, the insane or the guilty, the mental or moral disease also becomes more intense. Nothing can supplement the true and needful educating process of individual freedom. The wholesale system tends to turn human beings into machines instead of training them to be self-depending responsible beings, possessing the self-restraint without which they have nothing; and all our labour is thrown away. The large and magnificently-ordered Institution is in danger of becoming as fatally a pauperizing influence as the Lady Bountiful; but the home develops freedom and energy.

We are told that judgment must *begin* at the household of God. Our English homes, which we continue to boast of as the strongholds of all virtue, might seem to be the least appropriate portion of the world to single out for warning. Doubtless there is goodness among them, and much wickedness outside. Yet I believe that a voice might justly say to them, as that of the angel of the Church of Thyatira, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee." A person conscious of innocence and every good feeling will hardly conceive that he has fulfilled his duty to his neighbours by simply being, without acting; nor does a whole family, however excellent, do its duty to society by simply existing. I believe we have flattered ourselves by thinking that our homes must have an influence for good, far and wide, if we simply continue good and pure, and keep within doors and enjoy our sacred seclusion. I think more is required of us than this, at least at the present age. The French speak of a selfishness *à deux*. I am sure that the prevailing character of many homes is only that of a selfishness of five or of ten, as the case may be. I do not deny that much good is done and sacrifices are made. I believe there are few families, not absorbed in money-getting or frivolity, who do not do good after their power; but with this there is often a conservatism of family comfort and life and warmth which approaches near to selfishness. We are stewards of the manifold gifts of God, and stewards are expected to dispense those gifts to others. The lives of happy people in happy homes are generally divided into two parts; a

part of the day is given probably to the visiting of certain institutions or districts of poor people. But when that is done they return to a very different world, and the spirit of conservatism and exclusiveness triumphs when they enter within their own park-gates and cross their delicious lawns into their comfortable houses. I think means might be found, where there is a will, to break down in a measure such a separation, and to give forth more freely of the strength and comfort and sweetness of family life to the homeless and solitary and sinful. I have seen a family of children grow up all the more tender and considerate because their parents housed with them for years a harmless lunatic, a stranger, whose simple and happy belief that he was an important member of the family was often the subject of innocent mirth. I have seen a marked elevation of sentiment and growth of Christian feeling among a household of servants, dating from the reception into the house of a poor outcast who died among them, instead of in the hospital, tenderly waited upon by them in turns. I think I hear some exclaim of such things, that they are impossible in most families, and extremely undesirable if they were possible. Nevertheless I invite my readers to think whether short of such—which may seem extreme measures—there ought not to be a greater readiness to share with others, who have few or no privileges, the blessings and brightness of our homes, for the good of society. I would particularly ask of fathers, whether they are not conscious of some selfishness in the enjoyment of the family circle, and whether the present fear

and uneasiness in regard to the stability of our long-established ideas about home may not be a permitted rebuke to them for that selfishness.

I wish to say a few words as to the relation to each other of the several claims which women are putting forward. There is a *dilettante* manner of viewing all these matters which prevails mostly in the drawing-rooms of the upper classes, which is unfavourable to a large view or sober judgment of them. Ladies, in the current slang of the day, will "go in" for female education, but reject all else; or they will practically sanction some one part of the movement which meets their taste or is not condemned as "unwomanly," while carelessly refusing even to look into the meaning or merits of any other part. I would not ask any one to approve of all that may be at present put forward, but it would be more praiseworthy in ladies if they were to leave the chatter of drawing-rooms more often, and commune with their own hearts,—if they were to endeavour to look at the whole matter more quietly, and see if there be not a necessary, a very significant connexion, among all the claims at present advanced. Growth may be imperfect if one part is pushed on and another, intimately related to it, is held back. The simultaneousness of the demand for industrial freedom and for higher education is based on a necessity. The education which most women need is one which will fit them for business in professions or in industries. With this latter is closely connected the degree of political freedom and responsibility which we seek in asking the

parliamentary vote. I do not see how the spirit of monopoly in trades and industries is to be in any way overcome while the monopolists are alone represented in the country, and those who are excluded from work have no political existence; for upon justice more than upon chivalry must our hopes at this day rest.

But there is more than the outward necessity for a simultaneous urging of educational and industrial movements. However tardily the discovery may have been made in our Public Schools and Universities, women have seen from the beginning of this movement the great value of industry, educationally considered. I believe it begins to be confessed that one considerable blunder of many educational schemes has been in divorcing the two. I do not mean that the School can be the Workshop, or can give technical or industrial training. It cannot; but our ideas of Education, among the better classes, have hitherto implied that there must be some people who think and some who work, and that the functions of these two classes of people are altogether different. It is not yet fully understood that the richest thought is the product of action, and the best and most fruitful action the outcome of thought. In consequence of this unnatural divorce, our workers become more and more mere mechanics, and our thinkers prove themselves incompetent to cope with facts. I have much sympathy with those working men who think that theirs is the only true culture after all. No doubt they have only a part of truth, but no more have those who live exclusively in the region of

ideas. It is well enough understood, that to make a nation truly great, thought must wed itself to fact ; but it is not so fully recognised that this is equally true of the individual, and that it is indeed essential to the development of the noblest type of human character. Experienced teachers of girls have told me that they have often had occasion to notice the advantage enjoyed by those who have had some amount of industrial training over those of the same age and general culture whose lives have given them in this respect nothing to do. A girl, for instance, who has learned to use her hands and her faculties, through the need of her help at home in something which requires skill, will certainly make greater progress in intellectual pursuits than another girl of the same capacity who has had no such necessity. The general intelligence of the young Geneva watchmakers who help their fathers in the trade has often been remarked. Here I must recur to my former subject, and observe, that it is very probable that the home-bond, the good ideal of domesticity, would in a great degree be restored and strengthened by the admission of daughters to the family trade or profession. When fathers, brothers, and sisters are working at one art, a sort of pride in the family excellence grows up which is a wholesome bond of union. Miss Corlett, secretary to the Queen's Institute in Dublin, says, " In these times, the working-classes lose position and miss prosperity by cutting off their families from their avocations. That a return to the old system is possible I doubt ; but the perfection of workmanship, the art of

old trades, was in reality the tradition from father to son or daughter, the whole family working together in producing the specialty of the trade, whatever it might be. Among goldsmiths the daughters executed chasing, among furniture-makers carving, among stonemasons sculpture, among engravers drawing and graving. Possibly, now, books and apprenticeship replace the family tradition, but we are forced to see that our art is inferior to the old productions.”¹

The following letter will, I think, be interesting to many readers. As the writer of it is not so well known in England as in America, I may mention that she is a member of the Society of Friends, a venerable lady of much experience. I have heard of her refined and

¹ At a meeting of the Co-operative Association in London, a speaker adverted to the success which Madame Lemonnier has had in carrying out the union of industrial with general education in her schools in Paris, now under the management of Madame Sauvestre; in contrasting it with the limited success which has attended the same effort at the Cornell University in the State of New York, he spoke as follows:—“What a rebuke to the attitude of the Cornell professors was the victory patiently and quietly won by the schools organized by Madame Lemonnier in Paris, where female students had accomplished all that they proposed to do, which the youths of Ithaca had thus far failed to achieve! Were the Cornell University less ambitious, and were its rulers, instead of attempting to rival the older seats of learning in the Eastern States, content to devote their ample resources and magnificent endowments to practically inculcating the principles of co-operation, and preparing the way for the rapid regeneration of society by sending forth, year after year, bands of educated workmen, whose enlightened minds and well-skilled hands acting in concert would give dignity to labour—bands of workmen who would form the nucleus of co-operative industrial colonies, and occupy the lands which only waited to repay willing toil with bounteous harvests—the rank of the Cornell University might, it is true, be lower amongst other universities, but it would stand unrivalled amongst the instruments Heaven has ordained to liberate the struggling masses from the curse of poverty and ignorance.”

gentle appearance at public meetings when a few words from her, much to the point and full of exquisite good sense, have been a touchstone by which the folly or wisdom of other speakers could be tested, as it were, instinctively by all. It is well known that the ladies among the Friends are of a refined and feminine character, and that this character is not the result of repression, but of the opposite :—

Roadside, near Philadelphia, 4 mo. 20th, 1869.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Thy letter of Feb. 1st I would have answered immediately, as thou requested, if only to say that, unaccustomed to write for the press, I must decline, as I have done when urged to furnish articles for the *Anti-Slavery* or *Woman's Rights'* papers, to prepare an Essay on either of the subjects proposed, worthy such a work as your publisher, Macmillan, designs.

Still, on further reflection, my age and experience enabling me to state facts connected with the Society of Friends, and the *Woman's Rights'* movements, and desiring to give all the aid in my power, I venture to make some statements from which some one of your writers may produce an Essay.

The stand taken by George Fox, the founder of our Society, against authority as opposed to the immediate teachings of the "Light within," gave independence of character to women as well as men. Their ministry recognised, as a free gospel message, they went forth among the nations "preaching the Word," and spreading their principles. Adopting no theological creed, their faith was shown by their works in the everyday duties of life, "minding the Light" in little things as well as in the greater; thus keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

In the executive department of the Society, the right conceded to woman to act conjointly with man has had its influence, not only in making her familiar with the routine of business relating to our "Discipline," but in giving her self-reliance in mingling with the various reformatory societies in the great movements of the age.

the character, and a restoration of the dignity of woman; and if these Essays should serve in any degree to prove that that elevation and that restoration can be attained by the encouragement of a higher and a more diffused education, by the opening out of industries and professions, and by the granting of a larger share in social activity and public services, I trust that it will be perceived, possibly more clearly than it has yet been, that for the attainment of this end, and for the securing of these means, men as well as women must take up the matter in a practical manner and contribute acts as well as speech; and that very much will depend on the wise decisions and timely action of our legislators in regard to those portions of this great movement which are, or will come, under the consideration of Parliament.

It has long been a matter of surprise to me that writers on these subjects (Christian writers equally with those who do not profess Christianity) seldom refer to any higher authority than that of St. Paul. Persons of almost every shade of opinion professedly bring their theories, with more or less of respect for that standard, to the standard of Christian ethics; yet, from the earliest ages of the Church until now, we find them very rarely indeed bringing them to the test of the very words and acts of Christ himself. They appear to prefer to be guided by the earliest adaptations of the principles announced by Christ, rather than the pure principles themselves. Thus accepting, as if it were a necessary

part of the principles themselves, the primitive form into which these principles were constrained by the circumstances of society, they have fallen into confusion and error, which they would have escaped by a faithful and constant reference to the pure principles themselves—to Christ, in short, and to none other. It seems as if there were a certain awe, a doubt perhaps, which keeps them at a distance from that Judge, while they continually appeal to and wrangle over the words and teachings of an apostle. This apostle spoke for the exigencies of a given period, and from the point of view of a man born under limitations of vision and judgment, but enabled by a divine insight to apply with wisdom the essential teaching of his Master to the accidents of the time and society in which he lived. It was thus, that, without revolutionizing society from the outside, or setting masters and slaves, men and women, at variance, by abruptly altering their relations, he promoted the most certain revolution and the deepest and only sure reformation, namely, that which begins in the conscience of men, chiefly in the conscience of those who are in a superior position, and who by freely granting freedom make it needless for the oppressed to snatch it. Mr. Lecky, and other modern writers, continually appeal to the teaching of “the Church,” not as superstitious believers in the Church, but the contrary; yet it appears to me that their writings, as much as those of the superstitiously dogmatic, tend to keep up in the minds of men a confusion between essential Christianity and the teaching of a society—call it “the Church” or by

whatever other name you please—which in a single generation departed from the simplicity of Christ, and whose dogmas, missing truth in the variousness of their corruption, have been by friends and enemies alike shouldered upon Christ, and, without sufficient examination, are supposed to have emanated from Him. When any one tells me that the Church or Christianity teaches this or that with respect to women and their social position, I go back to the words of Him who is acknowledged to be the Head of the Church and the Author of Christianity, and I frequently find very little likeness indeed in any of his teaching, whether of example or precept, to those views which, propounded by Councils, Fathers, or Decrees, have so greatly influenced the history of men and women, and nations, since Christ came upon the earth. If without a previous familiarity with the simple teaching of Christ in the Gospels I had read the last chapter of Mr. Lecky's "European Morals," I confess that I should thereby have been disgusted with essential Christianity as represented by him, and the more so because of the high and noble tone which pervades his writings. But it seems to me that he, like many others, mistakes the traditions of a vitiated Church for the essential ethics of Christ.¹

¹ Since writing the above, my attention has been arrested by the following sentence in Mr. Mill's "Subjection of Women:"—" . . . the practical feeling of the equality of human beings, which is the theory of Christianity, but which Christianity will never practically teach, while it sanctions institutions grounded on an arbitrary preference of one human being over another " (page 78). I cannot refrain from saying that I think even this most just, candid, and logical of writers is not perfectly clear in his discrimination between Christianity itself and the teaching and customs which

Among the ancient Jews, when perversions of principle and confusions of opinion resulted in some national crisis, the cry was "To the Law and to the Testimony!" A direct reference to the Law of Moses, a law which sometimes seems harsh enough, often revealed that the several regulations under it were inspired by an infinite tenderness; for that law took human institutions as they stood in a primitive state of the world, and by the introduction of a small and subtle principle sowed the seed of an emancipation which was to work from within. The social cruelties which came to be practised under the supposed sanction of Moses were not the fruit of his legislation, but of the traditions by which—Christ himself said—they had "made the Law of Moses of none effect." Something of the same kind has happened in Christian countries. In the midst of the present confusion which it seems to me there is among writers,

have adopted its name. If by the word Christianity he means here the truths and principles revealed and taught by Christ, then the above sentence is self-contradictory; for pure Christianity, in other words, CHRIST, could not at once teach the equality of all human beings and the justice of arbitrary preference of one over another. Sweet and bitter waters come not out of one fountain. Christ was the Light, and "in Him was no darkness at all." He never, either directly or indirectly, by word or by deed, sanctioned customs or institutions grounded on an arbitrary preference. Would it not be well if Mr. Mill were to define more clearly what he means by "Christianity?" If he means by it the teaching of Churches and Creeds claiming Christ as their originator, then I shall not be sorry to see him bring the weight of his logic to bear upon their inconsistencies and corruptions. But I am persuaded that a careful and candid examination of essential Christianity, apart from the errors that have been preached and practised by its professors, would convince a mind so candid and so generous as his, that that essential Christianity is itself the touchstone by which we must test the purity of Churches, as well as the morality of all our social theories.

Christian and materialist, with respect to the social direction of certain principles of Christianity, my appeal is to Christ, and to Him alone, not to any Church, or traditions, or Councils, or catechisms, nor yet even to an Apostle, who, I observe, while dealing with some matters of great social importance, says, "I speak this of permission and not of commandment." A greater than St. Paul is here; but we seem to have forgotten it. It is with hesitation and a deep awe that I approach this part of my subject. I must beg to be understood here to speak for myself alone. The several writers in this volume are agreed with me as to the moral law which we obey, and that He, whom we call the Founder of our religion, was the Example in its perfection of those virtues which we emphatically call Christian. But I imply no agreement with me farther than this,—although aware that in some cases the agreement goes farther,—when I record my own convictions in the first pages of this book. My words can be taken for what they are worth, but I am sufficiently convinced that it is well for men and women to say with courage and humility what they believe, and to witness with fidelity to what God and life has taught *them*. There is too much of an unconfessed timidity among the boldest of us. Even in writings which profess an indifference to what others think, there is sometimes an evident caution, and lack of courage to confess that we believe anything more than those whom we most esteem conceive to be true. The fashion of esteeming it childish to hold a strong objective faith is the cause of this timidity. It now

needs some little courage to confess to a belief which many of the most thoughtful, and practically the most Christian among us, have been compelled to abandon. It is supposed that we have had it from the nursery, and that we have had neither the courage nor the intellect needful to search and see whether it be well founded and reasonable. Such an imputation must, I imagine, be somewhat hard for men to bear; for it appears that while many have so much courage as is required to announce the most radical sentiments, and to run counter to the superstitions of ages for the demolition of an established order, there are not so many who have that yet higher courage to confess before their fellow-men, whose acute intellects may have fathomed the heights and depths of philosophy, "I believe in the power of Prayer;" or "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Women writers are peculiarly liable to subject the expression of their convictions to the promptings of a cowardly reference to the opinion of the public who will read them. For, indeed, in order to obtain a hearing at all, we are all but driven to degrading considerations of what will sell, and what will please or displease this or that class of thinkers who in turn hold rule over the literary market.

Once more I venture to say I appeal to Christ, and to Him alone, as the fountain-head of those essential and eternal truths which it is our duty and our wisdom to apply to all the changing circumstances of human society. Believing as I do that He is Very God, and that He was in human form the

Exponent of the mind of God to the world, I hold that His authority must be higher than that of any man or society of men by whom the Truth which we receive from them, so far as we receive Truth from them at all, can only be transmitted. I believe all His acts to have had a supreme and everlasting significance. The teaching of His great typical acts is not less profound than that of His words. His teaching was for all time; much of St. Paul's was for a given time. There has been at all times a silent minority who have held this belief, and gone back to this standard. In the darkest ages of the Church there have been women whose whole lives were a protest against the capricious and various teachings of the Church concerning women, and who consequently endured a life-long martyrdom. In the days of Luther and of the Puritans this silent minority maintained a similar protest against errors of a somewhat different tendency. I know not myself to what rightly to apply the name of Church, if it be not to such a company of faithful men and women who throughout all the ages have reflected the teaching of Christ himself in its integrity. These all asserted the equality of all men and women, and asserted it on Christ's teaching. I am not speaking here of any intellectual equality, about which more than enough has been said on both sides, and respecting which it seems to me that men are more anxious to retain a theory undisturbed, than to bring that theory to the test, which not the past, but a hoped-for future alone can supply. Of these subtle subdivisions, physical, intellectual, and

moral, in which the inferiority or equality of women is so jealously defined and guarded in theory, I find no hint whatever in Christ's teaching. The equality He proclaimed is on a wider and deeper basis, and until the truth of *that* equality is felt and admitted by Christendom, and recognised in our laws, our customs, and our religion, there will continue to be the uncertainty and unhappiness which now exist, and the reiterated attack and defence on the subject of those intellectual and moral ranks which, when truly known, and then only, will incline us to praise the excellence of God's creation, instead of taunting each other. Among the dullest of the poor slaves, before their emancipation, there were some whose intellects were so quickened by the agony of the iron of slavery which had entered their souls, that they discovered for themselves that principle so dreaded by those who would maintain for themselves the monopoly of privileges. Crouching among the sugar-canes, they secretly searched throughout the Bible for arguments against slavery, and so keen, and so dangerous to the minds of their masters, were the arguments which those poor negroes drew from the Scriptures, (in spite of the sanction which on the surface and at first sight many parts of the Bible seem to give to slavery,) that the masters found it convenient to forbid the reading of the Bible to their slaves. I need scarcely say that it was through a steady gaze fixed on Christ himself, not on Moses or St. Paul, that these slaves discovered the truth that liberty and equality are the law of Christ for the

world. Similarly, the same intense gaze, quickened by suffering and solitary questioning on a state of things that seems to us unjust, has led a silent minority of women in all times, and a greater number in these latter times, to conclusions which, had they been earlier expressed, would have been stamped as revolutionary.

The limits of this Essay are far too short to admit of more than the very slightest indication of Christ's teaching about women. In those beautiful pages of "Ecce Homo," which speak of Christ's dealings with certain women, and in which His acts are allowed to have a significance of which all ages should have availed themselves for guidance, the writer is nevertheless deficient and one-sided. How could he but be so? for he is a man; and to bring the fulness of the reflected light of intelligent consciences to bear upon the principles announced by Christ's acts and words towards women, would need the combined thoughtfulness and wisdom of a man and a woman; and the writer is a man and not a woman, nor does he thoroughly know women. There are few men who can thoroughly know the minds of women in a state of society in which the reality of woman's nature is repressed, and it is especially difficult for those who are in a position of life which confines their intercourse to women of their own class, which is only one class among many. The author of "Ecce Homo" has set the example to those to whom it did not occur to do so for themselves, of venturing straight into the presence of Christ for an answer to every question, and of silencing the voice of all theologians

from St. Paul to this day, until we have heard what the Master says. It may be that God will give grace to some woman in the time to come to discern more clearly, and to reveal to others, some truth which theologians have hitherto failed to see in its fulness; for from the intimacy into which our Divine Master admitted women with Himself it would seem that His communications of the deepest nature were not confined to male recipients; and what took place during His life on earth may, through His Holy Spirit, be continued now. It is instructive to recall the fact that the most stupendous announcement ever made to the world—the announcement of an event concerning which the whole world is divided to this day, and which more than all others is bound up with our hopes of immortality—the resurrection of Christ—was first made to women; nor can we wonder,—looking back over the ages since then, and seeing how any truths asserted by women, not at once palpable to the outward sense or proveable by logic, have been accounted as idle tales—that of the first apostles it should have been said, “the words of the women seemed unto them as idle tales,” when they declared that Christ was risen. Among the great typical acts of Christ which were evidently and intentionally for the announcement of a principle for the guidance of society, none were more markedly so than His acts towards women; and I appeal to the open Book and to the intelligence of every candid student of Gospel history for the justification of my assertion, that, in all important instances of His dealings with women,

His dismissal of each case was accompanied by a distinct act of *Liberation*. In one case He emancipated a woman from legal thralldom : His act no doubt appeared to those who witnessed it as that of a dangerous leveller ; for while He granted to the woman a completeness of freedom from the tyranny of law which must have electrified the bystanders, he imposed upon the men present, and upon all men by implication, the higher obligation which they had made a miserable attempt to enforce upon one half of society only, and the breach of which their cruel laws visited with terrible severity on women alone ; they all went out convicted by conscience, while the woman alone remained free ; but, be it observed (for this is sometimes perversely overlooked by persons who claim an immunity which is licentiousness, and who strike at the very root of equality, by separating self-restraint from the liberty which ought to be common to all), free in a double sense, free alike from the inward moral slavery and from the harsh, humanly-imposed judgment. The emancipation granted to another in the matter of hereditary disabilities was signal. In a moment he struck off chains which had been riveted by the traditions of centuries, and raised her from the position, accepted even by herself, of a "Gentile dog" to one higher than the highest of the commonwealth of Israel. In another case His "Go in peace," and words of tender and respectful commendation to one who had been exiled from society, contrasted solemnly with His rebuke to His self-satisfied host, who, while firmly holding his place among the

honoured of this world, marvelled that Christ should not seem to be aware "what manner of woman" it was who touched Him. To another, before ever she had spoken a word, He cried, "Woman, thou art loosed!" and to objectors He replied, "Shall not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" The tyrannies and infirmities from which He freed these persons severally, were various and manifold, and this does but increase the significance of his whole proceeding towards them. Search throughout the Gospel history, and observe his conduct in regard to women, and it will be found that the word liberation expresses, above all others, the act which changed the whole life and character and position of the women dealt with, and which ought to have changed the character of men's treatment of women from that time forward. While in His example of submission to parents, of filial duty and affection, in His inculcation of the sacredness of marriage, and of the duty of obedience to laws which *ought* to be obeyed, His righteousness far exceeded the righteousness of the Pharisees of His own or of the present day, it seems to me impossible for any one candidly to study Christ's whole life and words without seeing that the principle of the perfect equality of all human beings was announced by Him as the basis of social philosophy. To some extent this has been practically acknowledged in the relations of men to men; only in one case has it been consistently ignored, and that is in the case of that half of the

human race, in regard to which His doctrine of equality was more markedly enforced than in any other. It is no wonder that there should be some women whose love for *this Saviour* exceeds the love which it is possible for any man to feel for Him, and that, retiring from the encounter with prejudices which are apt to lurk even in the minds of the most just and most generous of men, they should be driven to cast themselves in a great solitude of heart before *Him*,—for He only is just—He only is holy—He only is infinitely tender.

In conclusion, I have only to say one word to my fellow-workers, and to those who have the cause we advocate at heart. I would counsel them to repress impatience by considering well the nature of an organic change. Organic growth cannot be healthy except under conditions of freedom from constraint; from the pressure, on the one hand, of the swaddling clothes of the past, in the shape of bad or worn-out laws or customs, which must be torn off and put away before there can be any free growth; from the pressure, on the other, of too great an urgency. Growth cannot be hurried or forced, any more than it can be cramped, without injurious consequences. In respect to the first-named condition of healthy growth, I am inclined to echo the words of the late Lord Durham, who, when taunted with too strong a desire to get rid of ancient abuses, replied, "I frankly confess I am one of those persons who see with regret every hour which passes over the existence of recognised and unreformed abuses." And among such abuses I reckon one that is now before

Parliament for reformation—I mean the state of the law bearing on the property of married women, and some other recognised evils which do not come so directly within the province of legislation. On the other hand, we who have waited long, hoping for the dawn of a better state of things, are under a temptation to regard the present necessity with an intensity which precludes a calm and clear survey of questions lying all around, and less immediately connected with the matter in hand. There is a danger of working with unripe material. If, perchance, an opportunity is presented to me of using persuasion or the power of private friendship, in order to win some influential person to give a nominal adhesion to our cause, I hesitate; for the mere adhesion of a few names, however great or honourable those names may be, appears to me utterly worthless, unless the will and conscience of the persons bearing the names are sincerely and unmistakeably with us. I dislike to see any one yield to the gentle compulsion of friendship, so far as to commit himself to any course of action before his whole heart is in the matter; nay, I would rather that he should stand aloof entirely until the urgency of his own conscience makes neutrality no longer bearable, and he exclaims to himself, “Woe is me if I do not this thing!” Then alone are his services of any true value. The use of unripe material is, I am convinced, very damaging to a good cause: for men need all the strength of a deep conviction to enable them to stand firm in the midst of the innumerable and recurring

reactions which every little practical failure so readily brings about in that public opinion which is based upon mere fashion rather than on a deep belief. And there will be failures enough to try our faith. Let no one suppose that we are unprepared for some measure of that disorganization and suffering, which must ever accompany a change from a worse to a better state. There will be suffering, and there will be evil too; for never in the whole history of the world, has the healthy action of any progressive principle been unaccompanied with suffering and misery, especially in its beginnings, and never was there a good cause which had not its enemies within its own bosom, worse than those which attack it from without.

The question is sometimes asked, in the midst of all this, What we hope for the future of the world? One word indicating that the light which I see before me is for the present a subdued light, and that my hopes are not those of an Utopian dreamer, may not be without its use. I cannot express my own convictions better than by using the words of a gentle philosopher,¹ quoted however only from memory: "There is an element in the economy of society which, from the day that it first made its appearance in the world down to the day when it shall have completely disappeared (if that day ever come), has affected and will affect profoundly the whole social mechanism; it will disturb, and to the extent of rendering them no longer recognisable, the laws of social harmony. This element is

¹ Bastiat.

EDITOR.]

Spoliation. It may be imagined that we have here to do with an accidental and exceptional fact, a transient derangement unworthy of the investigations of science. But in truth it is not so. On the contrary, Spoliation in the traditions of families, in the history of nations, in the occupations of individuals, in the physical and intellectual energies of classes, in the schemes and designs of governments, occupies nearly as prominent a place as property itself. Repair to the hut of the savage hunter, or to the tent of the Nomad shepherd, and what spectacle meets your eyes? The wife, lank, pale, disfigured, affrighted, prematurely old, bears the whole burden of the household cares, while the man lounges in idleness. What idea can we form of family harmonies? The idea has disappeared, for strength here throws upon feebleness the weight of labour. And how many ages of civilizing effort will be needed to raise the wife from this state of frightful degradation? Spoliation, in its most brutal form, armed with torch and sword, fills the annals of the world. Nor is it only on the limbs but on the consciences of men that she has imposed her yoke, realizing what would seem impossible—mental slavery! O Liberty, we have seen thee hunted from country to country, crushed by conquest, groaning under slavery, insulted in courts, banished from the schools, laughed at in saloons, caricatured in workshops, denounced in churches! It seems thou shouldst find in thought an inviolable refuge. But if thou art to surrender in this thy last asylum, what becomes of the hopes of ages and the boasted courage of the human race? Spoliation

is a phenomenon too universal, too persistent to permit us to attribute to it a character purely accidental."

There is a mournfulness in these words to which my whole heart answers back. Not, perhaps, until we have tried every remedy possible for earth's ever-renewing maladies, and found them only very partially successful—not perhaps until the world confesses itself utterly defeated in its last and main endeavour, will the Supreme Interposition take place which we invoke when we say from our hearts, "Thy kingdom come." But of this I am sure, that every effort which is made in sincerity and truth, every life which is spent and yielded up in the cause of suffering humanity, is hastening the advent of the Day which we long for.