

speakers that I should be brief. But, any one considering the condition of the dwellings of the poor—any one who regards the comfort of home—the place where the best virtues flourish, and where the worst vices grow,—and whoever remembers, again, how necessary it is that all those affections which should subsist between parents and children should be cultivated by the blessing and comfort of home,—will see that this is a matter of great importance; and it is also a matter of comfort to us to know that it is not at all neglected in the Westminster Normal Institution. I will take one illustration of the importance of these household things,—the duties which are owing to the sick. Much, not merely of the question of life and death, depends upon the manner in which a sick room is managed, but the length and duration of the disorder, the comfort of the patient, the spread of the disease, and vigour of the constitution after the disease is rooted out;—these greatly depend on the manner in which the wife or mother has managed and kept the sick apartment.

Every one of us, who may have suffered sickness, knows that there is so gentle and gracious a balm in the right administration of all the duties within the sick room, as to make sickness little formidable, comparatively speaking,—according to the amount of gentle, womanly, and rational attention which we may receive in the hour of sickness. In our institution you may hear, occasionally, a lesson given on all the particular duties which devolve upon a woman having the care of the sick,—and, I hold, it is a grand thing, that that institution circulates a knowledge of common things, and thus puts that into children's minds which they can never forget, because their own interest is connected with it; and that that institution is therefore doing a great good to society, and, on that ground, deserves the support of all philanthropists, of all who long to see the social condition of society greatly improved. But if we stop here, we should be imperfectly discharging our duty. There are great moral duties to be enforced; literature, philosophy, science, will do nothing for any country where moral instruction is not imparted. All the beauties and tastes of classical Italy,—what have they done for Italy? Or, the learning, so acute and so deep,

of Germany,—what has it done for Germany? What will any of the advantages by which any nation is distinguished, do for it, unless it be based upon religious truth, and filled with the life of moral power? As you observed, Sir, it is here where our great moral power lies,—that we are able in our schools to impart the knowledge of that best of Books—that truth which is above all truth,—that which constitutes the very Alp of mind,—that which pervades and lies at the basis of all science and of all sound philosophy,—that which is the only true code of ethics, and which alone furnishes a law to the conscience,—that which alone can give powerful motives to the heart,—and that which God has put his own stamp and signature upon, as being the vehicle of gracious influences. The Bible is an open book with us. I cannot imagine how or why people should object to the study of the Sacred Scriptures by all children, and, I was going to say, especially, by the very youngest. If the mind were a blank sheet of paper as it came into the world, there are plenty of influences to write evil upon it. Those influences come early enough,—so early, indeed, that I am sure we may not be afraid of being too early in the impartation of truth. Error will find a congenial soil,—vice will luxuriate in the heart,—there needs no foreign influence to make it productive of all that is evil to the individual, of all which lessens the strength of the nation, and provokes the curse of God. We must be early in our operation upon the mind of the children and infants to be taken charge of. This is taken care of in our institution; and this we conceive is one of the greatest boons which we can confer upon society. Many of the parents of these little ones are unable to instruct them. Many will not do so. Many will just cast them loose upon society, and leave them to the providence of the philanthropist. I hold that the duty of religious instruction is an obligation which primarily rests with the parent, and that that duty cannot be transferred. No parent, no head of a family, is at liberty to transfer the primary religious instruction of his children to another, if he is able to impart it,—and even those who are unable to impart it cannot turn the responsibility of the charge of their children upon teachers, whether gratuitous or paid. I owe to my children a duty