

## Selections.

## THE GENTLEWOMAN.

On Thursday evening, the 11th inst., Rev. Dr. Vin-ton delivered a lecture before the Mercantile Library Association, at Clinton Hall, N. York, on "The Gentlewoman." The effort was well worthy of the popular lecturer. The lecture was not only rendered exceedingly entertaining by its humour, but was characterized by useful lessons of instruction and elevated thoughts, as well.

The lecturer commenced with an explanation of the title, in an amusing conversation, interspersed with anecdotes and humour, between Mrs. Grundy and the Squire, in which the latter was compelled to admit that there was a good deal in a name. Whereupon the squire maintained that female was the proper designation of the highest style of the sex which he attempted to prove from Scripture, arguing that as Eve was called Isha, and Adam was called Ish, Ish being the Hebrew for man, and Isha the feminine of Ish, therefore eve was called woman because she was a feminine man—a female. He maintained, moreover, that your strong minded women, true Ishas, females, men of the feminine gender—in short, the Bloomer, represented the highest style of the sex; which Mrs. Grundy strongly contested, and she uttered many humorous sayings against the strong minded women who aspire to be men: and maintained the fallacy of "Women's rights." The Squire acknowledged his discomfiture, chose *lady*, which Mrs. Grundy objected to for reasons drawn from the indiscriminate use of that title in the Scripture, and from the Scripture account of ladies. The title of *woman* was then discussed. Not such a being as poets have sung—a supernatural creature—an angel dropped from the skies to earth—but a being of flesh and blood, belonging to earth, having relationships to the people of God in the world. Then upon the lecturer entered into a discussion or animadversion upon the portraits of men and women whom religious biographies and novels pretend to describe, condemning them as unlike the Bible representation of men and women, and any that we meet with in the world. Autobiographies and public diaries fell under the same condemnation; and an argument was set forth why a woman may not write a treatise on woman; in which connection the lecturer analyzed woman's feelings when speaking of her sex, and the different postures in which she placed her mind when writing to the masculine, or feminine, and described most beautifully a woman's letter to a woman, likening it to a mountain stream which one traces from its source to its departure; which description drew forth enthusiastic applause from the audience. The Squire then took up the thread of the subject that not every man is competent to describe a woman; for the misogynist, or woman-hater, would depress her as much too low as woman would exalt her too high; and this he showed from the misogyny of literature in a very amusing way, the humour of which excited frequent laughter and applause. Many satirical allusions to some of the follies of the sex were quietly alluded to in passing, whereupon the preliminary topics of female, lady, and woman, give place, as if by mutual consent to the title of *gentlewoman*, as the proper designation of the pattern of the sex. The gentlewoman was then described. Blood and education were necessary to form a gentlewoman. Her beauty consisted in the charm of kind affections beaming expressively, and pervading the movements with unaffected grace. The soul distinguished her from common women. Expression was described as "The soul looking forth from its windows, gladdening our hearts, and attracting the observer's soul, to welcome its fellow, blending them as it were into one embrace of delicious salutation. As when the sun bursts forth through the clouds and transmutates the dull leaden skies into an expanse of radiant wealth, so did the expression illuminate the countenance, kindle the eye, and effuse the cheek. Painters could not paint expression, because no human art could paint the soul, which was the reason why portraits of familiar things never satisfied. The lofty beauty of a gentlewoman was a beauty that emanates from the hidden ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." The lecturer then described early womanhood, when sisters

"Roam in maiden meditation, fancy free"—

children still, and loving with a child's young feeling, pure and gentle, not disturbed by passionate love, but rippling along in the same quiet flow over the depths of sensibility, as when they glided over the smooth sands of their young life, as the halcyon period of the parents joy around the domestic fireside. The apparent cruelty of invading that sanctuary by essers of marriage, and the mingled feelings of joy and sadness

at a wedding, were graphically portrayed; but to him whose duty it was to solemnize wedlock, the "accustomed duty," as the Prayer Book styles it, "of the marriage-fee," caused smiles to predominate over tears. The relationship of sisters was sweetly described. The gentlewoman was distinguished from the coquette by the absence of intense thirst for admiration, her superiority to the littleness of vanity. Coquetry was denounced as a false and low and wanton artifice. In an episode the lecturer described the masculine coquette as of two sorts—the seducer, and *petit maitre*—the first of whom was denounced as having a soul no bigger than a pea, a heart harder than a nether millstone, and deserving to have no sister to own him, and to hear his mother's curses consign him to the scorn of a coward's grave; while the *petit maitre*, a frivolous and contemptible fellow, whose vanity and weakness are equally conspicuous, escaped because no honest man thought him of importance enough to turn aside and kick him. The female coquette was analyzed, and her victims among the ingenuous men whose happiness she had destroyed, were portrayed as struck to earth by her sportive wand; and, waking out of their terrible swoon to look on woman as a sufferer, they were changed into woman haters, whose tongues when they talked of her, and whose pen when they wrote of her, were dipped into the soured and curdled milk of human kindness which her lightning spoiled. Another class of respectable and pitiable old bachelors were described as men with a forgiving temper, who resolve nevertheless to venture nevertheless into the circle of woman's fascination. We cannot refrain from inserting in full the following description of the bachelor's private quarters, which is but one of the many amusing passages in this lecture:—

"The chief room of a bachelor, who is known as that hopeless creature spoken of as *not a marrying man*, is always the front room on a street more or less frequented, where he may hear the sound of the passing world while he sits smoking or reading in his solitude. He chooses this locality from the force of his social instincts; which are gratified by the tokens that he is included among his fellows; while at the same time he is continually admonished of his self banishment. The front room on a populous street thus serves to freshen the bachelor's consciousness of independence, while it reminds him of his retirement. It keeps alive the sentiment that moved him to seclude himself, and cunningly blunts the edge of the pain of his seclusion.— And when his friend steps in of an evening (for a bachelor has friends) to smoke a segar (for all bachelors smoke segars), or to play a social game of cards (for all bachelors play cards), or to enjoy a word or two of chat and gossip (for all bachelors indulge in such conversation), the murmur of the noise of passengers in the street breaks up the silence which would be intolerable to him, besides being a too impressive witness to his visitors of the loneliness and desolateness of the bachelor's lot. Thus much by way of preface. The walls are hung with pictures, generally good, and mostly of the cabinet size, on subjects rural picturesque, historical, but never domestic; yet never without a female face or two alone on a separate canvass—choice articles of vertu. Exquisite tables or bronzes of statuary, (if he can afford them,) a small selected library, no newspapers except the evening paper of last night, lying close above a pair of embroidered slippers, much used but well kept, a sideboard, a bureau, a mirror, and easy chair of ample dimensions, with three more of the same sort, of less amplitude, and with one or two to fill up spaces with, a centre table, and a carpet, make up the furniture of the sitting-room. And you will not fail to notice that the carpet is most worn before the looking glass, while the rug will seem to have defended the carpet from wear before the fire. And if you peep into the bachelor's dressing case on the bureau, you will see things that are mysteries. The respectable mechanic's wife of whom the bachelor hired his chamber will speak of him as the 'Poor Gentleman.' She will show you his cold grave of dead children, his vacant chair, his half cent magazine, and his pictures and engravings all quiet and speechless, looking from their frames with a sort of reproach that they are left to waste their beauty on only one pair of eyes. And if you be a coquette who has not worn out your heart, you will relent with remorse at the sight of the expedients for comfort in the bachelor's quarters."

Next the gentlewoman was described as wife and mother, in humble circumstances and in prosperous circumstances; and the family group and the grandmother were pictured; and the household of the gentlewoman was vividly and truthfully portrayed. The secret by which the wife may retain her hold upon

the husband's love was disclosed by beautiful quotations from Washington Irving and the Bishop Jeremy Taylor. One of her most effectual means of gaining this, was to maintain the same delicacies of conduct through life that captivated him before their union. Next the gentlewoman in society was described as a hostess, as a guest, and at watering places and public resorts. In the capacity of a hostess she would receive you as a welcome guest, her salutation would be that of a friend, she would invite you to be at ease with yourself. For the time being she would be your companion, and you here; and you would find that she had surrounded herself with congenial persons of kindred tastes. As a guest you would notice how from the stores of information she would subsidize knowledge, sentiment, experience, art, to contribute to your delight. She would never lapse from the dignity of modesty and reserve, would display none of the affectation of prudery, and her presence would forbid the least approach to vulgarity. The lecturer denounced wholesomely the redowa and the polka, as danced in public halls with strangers, as lascivious, lecherous, disgusting, of which sentiments the audience testified their approbation by loud applause. The gentlewoman was attended in the public street, in the steamboat, the railroad, the omnibus, and was more particularly described in the country, and in the garden. Her untaught innate erudition in horticulture, whereby she flings grace and beauty and proportion over all the prospect with her own matchless art, her skill in transforming the confined area of our city yards into beautiful spots of garden landscape, her skill in arranging the bouquets in the parlour for a joy to the house of man—all these were described with a power and vividness truly pleasing. The gentlewoman was next attended to the homes of the poor, and by the bedside of the sick, and her nursing care of man at the sick-bed was most tenderly and affectingly described. An eloquent tribute was paid to Florence Nightingale as England's chiefest glory in the Crimean War—the noblest lady of the British realm—who in the rude huts and cold tents of the camp, ministered to the wants, not of the delicate and refined, but to a suffering soldier; not with hired willing servants to do her bidding, but almost single handed; not in her native clime where her health was safe, but on a Russian shore; not for the applause of Christendom, but with the approval of her conscience in imitation of her Saviour and for the smile of God; thus winning our homage as one of the gentlewomen of the world. (Loud bursts of applause.) The allotted time the lecturer deemed expired, and therefore omitted to fill up the topic of the education of the gentlewoman, simply alluding to the Bible, first of all, poetry, history, languages, biography, languages, biography, philosophy, the mathematics, book-keeping, music, drawing, novel reading, and the graces of dancing and the toilet, ending with the divine grace of piety, as together producing the gentlewoman's character; and concluded his lecture with these brief words:— "Mothers, fathers, thus may your daughters grow into gentlewomanhood, a comfort to your age, a blessing to mankind, a beauty and a praise before God and angels, as the polished Corners of the Temple."

This lecture to be appreciated must be heard. We understand that Dr. Vin-ton will repeat it in this city on the evening of the 24th Dec'r., before the Young Men's Christian Association; of which due notice will be given through the press.—N. Y. Churchman.

## THE PATHS OF THE SEA.

On Monday evening, the 22d inst., a lecture was delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association in this city, by Lieut. M. F. Maury, U. S. N., on the subject of "The Paths of the Sea." The lecture was exceedingly interesting, highly interesting, highly instructive, and evinced much profound scientific research on the part of the lecturer. The audience was very large.

Lieut. Maury commenced by remarking that the paths of the sea were very much the work of chance and circumstance, and he where the pioneer happens to direct his course. The routes to California, both by land and sea, had been much shortened and improved since navigation to that region commenced.—The route which Columbus took on his voyage when he discovered America continued to be the highway between Europe and this country till after the Declaration of Independence; so that Charleston was, up to that time, the half-way house between the colonies and the mother country. In 1775 Dr. Franklin crossed the Atlantic, and on his voyage discovered the difference between the temperature of the water of the Gulf Stream and that of the broad ocean, which discovery, through policy, he for some time kept secret.—