

her. She has been taken from among her companions, and set on high as an object of adoration, the intellect of man has been humbled before, and her very caprices have been laws to him. Is it to be wondered at, if she cannot at once resign her queenly station, and become the gentle and submissive and forbearing woman? Is it strange that the reproof or the cold rebuke of him who once taught her that she was all perfection, should sound strangely to her ear, and fall with bitterness upon her heart? The change which takes place in the mere *manners* of him who was once the devoted lover, is hard to understand. "I cannot describe," said a lady, who was by no means remarkable for sensitiveness of feeling, "I cannot describe how unhappy I felt the first time after my marriage, that my husband put on his hat and walked out of the house to his daily business, without bidding me farewell. I thought of it all the morning, and wondered whether he was displeased with me, nor until I had questioned him on the subject, did I discover (what was perhaps equally painful to me then,) that he was so occupied with his business, as to have forgotten it." Many a misunderstanding in married life has arisen out of circumstances as trifling as the one just recorded; for when a woman has been made to believe that she is the sole object of her lover's thoughts, it is difficult for her to realize that the act which transfers to him the future guardianship of her happiness, exonerates him from those minute attentions, which have hitherto contributed so much to her enjoyment. Do not mistake me, gentle reader; I do not mean to say as some have ventured to assert, that "Courtship is a woman's Paradise, and Marriage her Purgatory," for my own blessed experience would quickly give the lie to any such false theory; but I would merely suggest whether this exaltation of a mistress into something *more than woman*, before marriage, does not tend to produce a reaction of feeling, which is apt to degrade her into something less than the rest of her sex afterwards; and whether he who saw no faults in his "ladye-love" will not be likely to see more than she ever possessed, in his *wife*?

Charles Wharton had certainly committed this common error. Loving his mother and sisters with the most devoted affection, he had learned to regard them as models of feminine virtue and grace, yet there was something of sombre and grave in their characters, which did not exactly agree with his *beau-ideal* of woman,

"Skilled alike to dazzle and to please."

He was therefore peculiarly susceptible to the charms of playful wit and gaiety in his beloved Mary, and finding her thus in possession of the only gift which was wanting in his home circle, he, by a very natural error, attributed to her all the other qualities which he found there in such perfection. He had created an imaginary being, who should unite the lighter graces with the nobler virtues, and, fascinated by the beauty, and the sunny temper of Miss Lee, he found no difficulty in embodying in her form his ideal mistress. For a time he was perfectly enchanted, but the familiar intercourse of married life at length discovered some defects in the character of the young and light-hearted wife, and Wharton, feeling as men are apt to do,

"As charm by charm unwinds,
That robbed their idol,"

was almost tempted to believe that he had utterly deceived himself. But in this opinion he was as far wrong as when he had fancied her all perfection. Mary possessed all the material for forming an estimable woman, but she was young, thoughtless, and untaught. She was one of a family who lived but for society, and whose deportment to each other was an exemplification of the old copy-book apothegm: "Familiarity breeds contempt." The self-respect which inculcates personal neatness as a duty—the respect towards each other, which should be as carefully cherished between brothers and sisters, as the affection which, in truth, will not long exist without it—were entirely unknown among them. In society, they were models of propriety, but, in the domestic circle, there was a want of method, and a neglect of neatness which could not fail to be injurious to every member of the family. I may be mistaken, but, it seems to me, that habitual slovenliness cannot fail to have its effect upon the mental as well as the bodily habits. To a well balanced mind, external order seems as essential as intellectual purity, and however great may be the genius, there is surely something wanting to a perfect equilibrium of the faculties, when the body—through the medium of which ideas must necessarily be conveyed to the mind—is habitually neglected, and consequently exposed to disgusting rather than agreeable images. But whatever may be the effect of a want of neatness on one's individual character, there is no doubt as to its influence on others. No man can have a proper respect for female purity and delicacy, when he has been accustomed, from childhood, to witness