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## HOME.

BY THE REV. H. GILES.

If we regard home, as God designs it, as Nature guided by its truest impulses, by its highest sentiments, as Nature faithful to reason and Religion, would have it, there is nothing else that associates itself with fairer images or more radiant thoughts. The affections in which the home originates, the affections which the home contains and fosters, imply whatever is brightest in life—whatever is most lasting and most lofty in goodness—whatever is least deceitful and most sincere in the world—whatever, in the dream of an immortal hope, supplies the best analogies of Heaven. No one can despise these without despising what God has consecrated, and what man has, in his best estate, ever the most honoured.

The affections in which the home originates, or should originate, are to the opening heart its oil of gladness; and the flame which they nourish is surely the brightest that ever falls upon this lower pilgrimage. They are the poetry, the prophecy, the Religion of the present life, the vision of its beauty, the anticipation of its goodness, the religion of its love. They are the elements from which all that is richest in the ideals of our being take their forms, and draw their inspiration: which romance heaps into story; which art breathes into Scriptural and pictured creations; which the Drama reproduces in the scenes that most delight or move us; which, from the first, poetry and music have not ceased to sing, and which continue still the charm of their sweetest strains. Nor are these sentiments to be depre-

ciated, because experience sometimes disappoints and sometimes reverses them; because that in actual trial the dream of poetry often leaves but vacancy, and the hope of prophecy but apathy; because that, however happy the result, it is a happiness which must be willing to part with ardour, and to accept tranquillity—which must be ready to bear with lassitude, and even be content to suffer. These sentiments are entwined with all that gives dignity to man, and without them the life of man had been worse than brutal. For what is there that raises humanity from earthliest baseness! What is there that embellishes or softens intercourse! What is there of purest sacrifice or most heroic deed, which is not directly or indirectly associated with these sentiments, or with the relations which imply them! They are not merely beautiful, they are solemn. Accordingly, in every state of society above the most savage, men celebrate the commencement of domestic life with religious feeling, if not always with ritual ceremonies. The occasion is one of gratulations, but so, too, it is one of seriousness. Smiles melt into tears, and gladness is ripened by reflections. The vows which contain promises for life, though fraught with sincerity and happiness, are not made with exultant utterance; there is a degree of melancholy in their tones; they are not loud but deep; and, music in them as there is, it is the low, low, music of humanity. Even in the height of the feast, amidst bright flowers and joyous faces, in the chaos of mirth, in