

which were lavished upon them in public, I argued, and of course correctly, that the gentlemen were disposed at all times, and in all places, to do justice to their merits, and that any lack of devotion which they might experience, arose from some defect in themselves. Being of an inquisitive turn of mind, I set myself to discover whether it were possible that creatures, apparently of so ethereal a nature, could be tainted with imperfections. I have often observed how very frequently continued diligence in any undertaking is followed by success; and in nothing is this great natural law more strikingly and satisfactorily exemplified than in the business of fault-hunting. Accordingly, I had not proceeded far in my explorations of the female character, before I struck upon several interesting specimens of the ore of which I was in quest. One of the largest and richest nuggets of it which I threw up was the variety known as deceptiveness. I have been acquainted with many young ladies, apparently of so thoughtless a disposition, so devoted to trifling and merriment, that they seemed to regard each succeeding year merely as a new Comic Annual; and yet, after a few seasons of delightful frivolity, they have suddenly degenerated into active, earnest and tidy housekeepers. Others, again, whom I had never suspected of any baser inclinations than those which directed them to the piano or Telemaque, I have caught, after marriage, engaged in superintending the roasting of beef, or the baking of pies, apparently with more energy than they ever displayed in the presence of their music or French teacher; and this, notwithstanding the many years' anxiety of careful parents, lest their daughters should injure their matrimonial prospects by learning the nature of a kitchen, or discovering the plant which produces that much used article of diet, called bread-and-butter.

Another very prominent fault which I have detected in the female character, is an indisposition to listen to reason. This peculiarity might, perhaps, be charitably regarded as a misfortune, rather than as a fault, were it not that, instead of humbly acknowledging their defect, and striving to overcome it by yielding in all things to the opinions of the wiser sex, the subjects of this infirmity too frequently express a sovereign contempt for the exercise of the reasoning faculty—that godlike power with which man (in contradistinction to woman) is so largely endowed. I have been often pained on chancing to constitute an unwilling auditor, while a worthy gentleman has endeavored to convince his wife of the propriety and advantage of his pursuing some questionable line of conduct. To all his arguments, which, I am proud to say it, appeared most conclusive, the lady would turn a deaf ear, and persist in her own irrational notions, pronouncing his most elaborate syllogisms to be “stuff,” and “nonsense.” And what rendered her weakness the more provoking was, that the fates, as if to humor her to the top of her bent, generally managed to twist events in such a manner as to make it appear, in the end, that her “notions” were not far from the truth, and that the gentleman’s conclusions were decidedly