

the snow of age, know from widely-extended observation, as also from, it may be, a strangely-mingled experience, that our children are the most important elements to our comfort, our joy, our honour, our rest of soul,—in short, our most valued prosperity. If they are sick, or paralyzed, or ignorant, or coarse, or untruthful, or ungrateful, or deeply vile, then, indeed, does a dark shadow fall athwart life's weary pathway. If, on the other hand, they enjoy the blessing of blooming health, are well instructed, endued with a fine sense of honour, generous, loving, brightened and beautified by the pulsation of a heart full of sincere, unaffected piety, then, whatever the splendour or plainness of our dwelling, and the fulness or poverty of our resources, home is gladsome and blessed indeed, and a nation of such homes is of all nations the most happy and prosperous.

2nd. *The description given of youthful excellence.*

"That our sons may be as *plants, grown up in their youth*; that our daughters may be as *corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.*" In the reference to "plants" and "corner-stones" as illustrative of the excellence of young men and maidens, we recognize an allusion to two sets of qualities and two departments of usefulness. Our "sons" should be characterized by *vigour*—fresh, and strong, and healthy as "plants." Our "daughters" should be characterized by *comeliness*—"polished after the similitude of a palace."

There is, you are aware, a special distinguishing quality for every object and creature on earth, by means of which it is known, or is to be known, from others that may resemble it in other particulars. It may share in common qualities; but there is one which is its leading feature, its sign of difference, its abiding and most conspicuous virtue. Thus, the rose is known among flowers, apart from its form and colour, by its special sweetness of perfume; vinegar by its peculiar sourness; metal by its unchangeable hardness. A fox shares in the common qualities of animals; but its prominent characteristic is cunning; while a lamb is characteristically guileless, innocent, and frolicsome.

In harmony with this diversity in nature, the leading characteristic of our sons should be *vigour*,—as plants full of life