

"The deepest wretchedness of life is continuance of petty pains;"

and none but the uninitiated can doubt that the mistress of a family is constantly exposed to trifling annoyances, which are, in reality, more difficult to bear than serious afflictions. How often, in cases where we see overwhelming reverses borne with fortitude and equanimity, does the temper give way before those petty inconveniences which are involved in the very existences of the social relations! How often do we see the woman who can stand by the dying bed of a parent, a companion, or a child, with the calmness of Christian submission—who can bear the unwonted privations and humiliations of poverty without a murmur—yet suffer herself and all around her to be made thoroughly uncomfortable, by any one of those trivial accidents to which she is liable, in the management of her domestic affairs! To such an extent is this true, that those great events which form eras in the existence of woman, can not be regarded as a proper criterion by which to judge of the strength of her character, or the equability of her temper. Never, until she has been tried as a housekeeper, is the worth of her character, or its deficiencies, fairly tested.

It is because we have not learned to seek strength from above, for the ordinary purposes of life, that these formidable "trials" obtain so much power over our happiness and usefulness; we feel that grace alone can enable us to bear severe afflictions, but do not expect it on those small occasions which are constantly occurring, and which, more than any other, go to make up the sum total of

domestic happiness or misery. We have called them small occasions; they are so in their nature, but not in their consequences. Whatever mars the happiness of a family, whatever affects injuriously the temper and moral character of children or domestics, possesses an importance which we cannot adequately estimate. And what more likely to do this than frequent ebullitions of anger, frequent paroxysms of fretfulness and impatience in her to whom they look for guidance and instruction?—Long after she has forgotten the feeling, and the circumstances which called it forth, the fatal influence is operating on these ductile minds, and preparing them for a repetition of the same scenes in future years.

We talk of commencing and finishing the education of our children—as if this education were not commenced with the very first drawing of infant intellect, and progressing ever since, without one moment's intermission. The mother is herself the first book read by her child; and what he sees there will certainly be copied into his heart and life. Her character and deportment, more than any or all other influences, are educating her children; and happy is it for society when the lessons daily learned of her are such as may safely influence their conduct and conversation. But let it never be forgotten, that example rather than precept is to form the character of those committed to our charge. It is worse than idle to expect that the formal inculcation of sweetness and patience will make our children amiable and forbearing, when they see us irritated by trifles, and thrown off our guard