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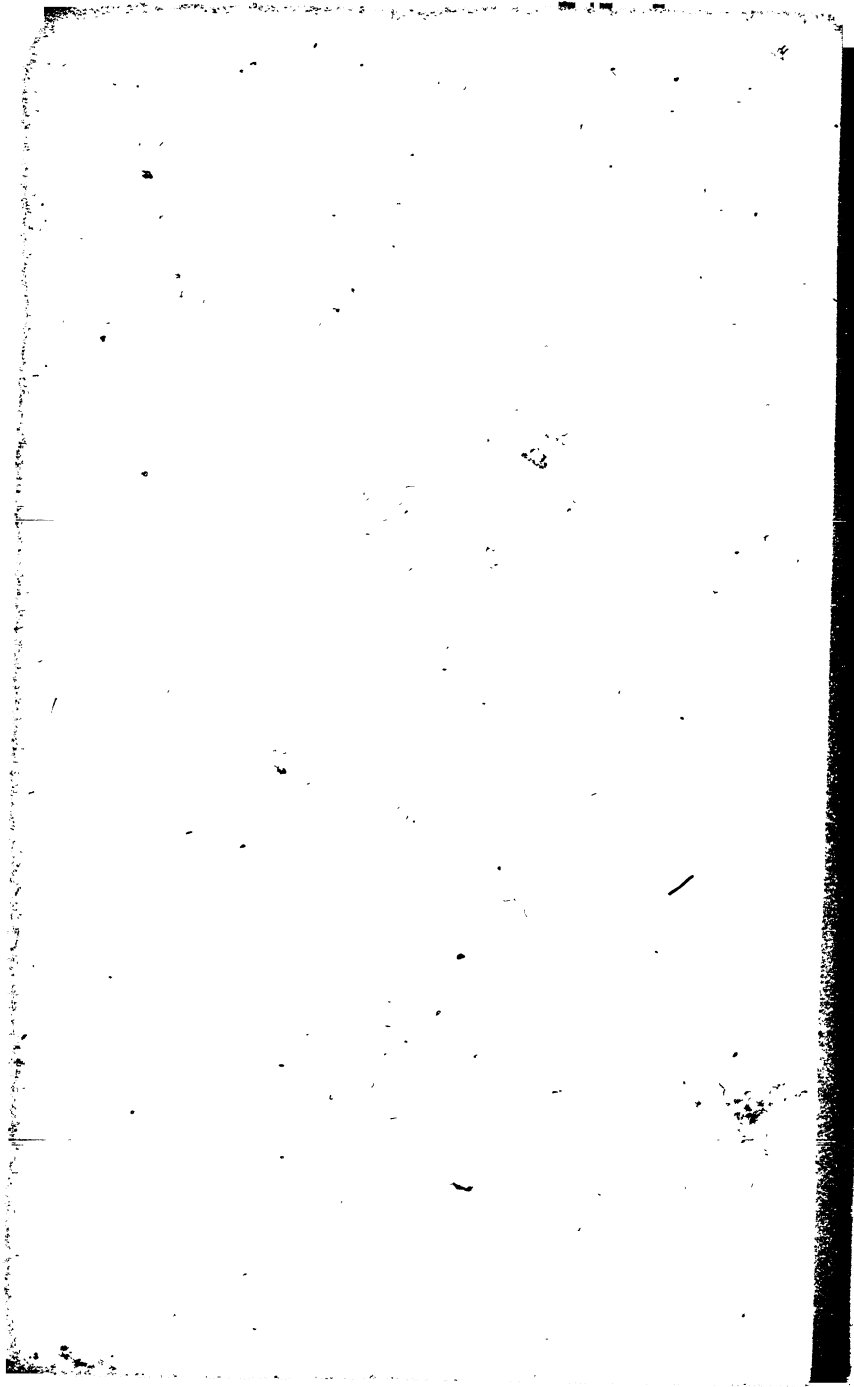
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LETTERS

TO A

Y O U N G L A D Y,

ON LEAVING SCHOOL, AND ENTERING
THE WORLD.

DEDICATED. BY PERMISSION. TO LADY HEAD.

BY A LADY. [*See next French*]

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY.

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1855.

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TO LADY HEAD.

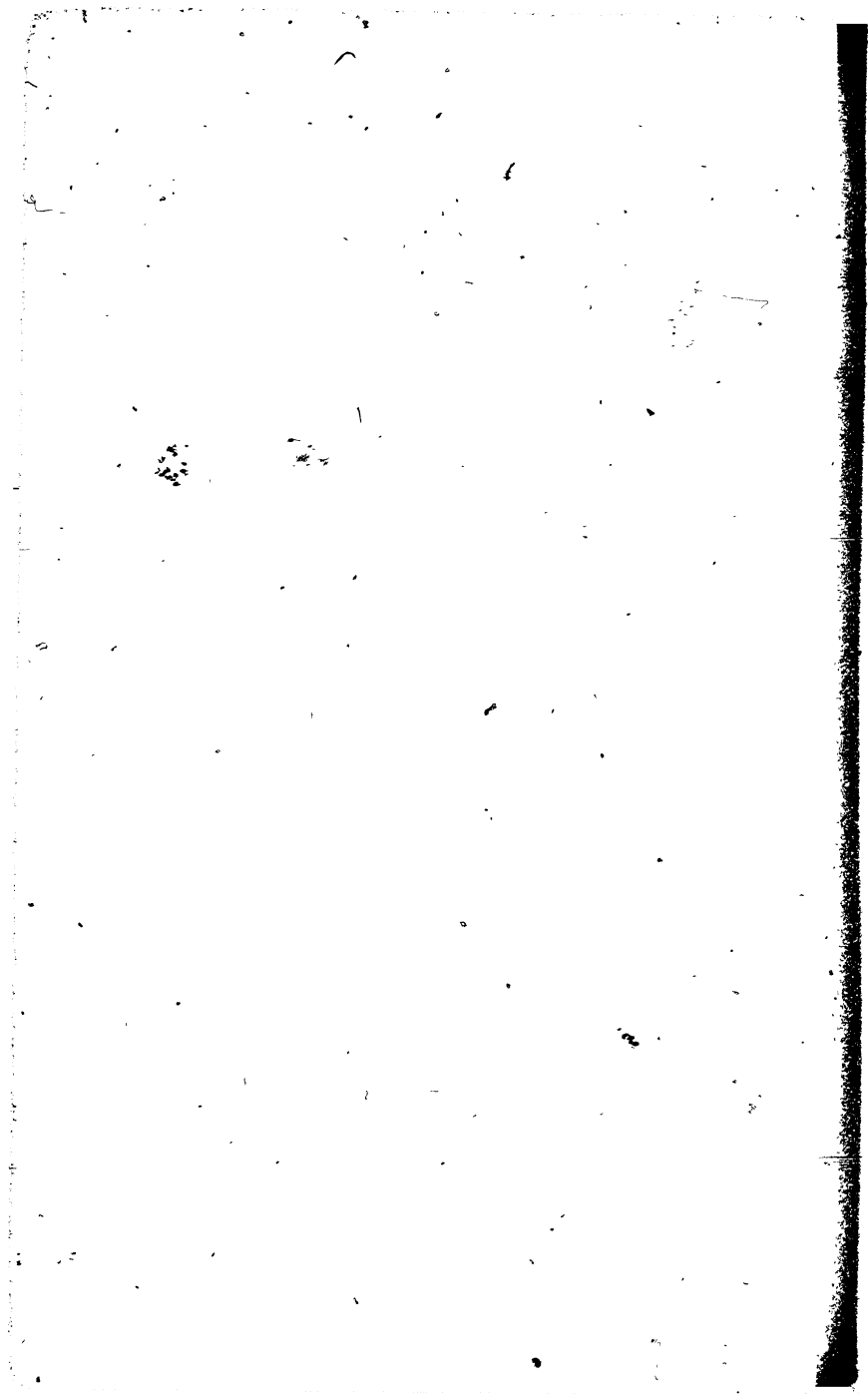
MADAM, —

Permit me thus publicly to offer to your Ladyship my grateful acknowledgments for the permission, so kindly accorded me, of dedicating my little work to you; the kind motive for which will, I trust, exonerate you from any remark, should my humble efforts be deemed unworthy your kind patronage. I have the honor to be,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's obliged and obedient Servant,

SARAH FRENCH.

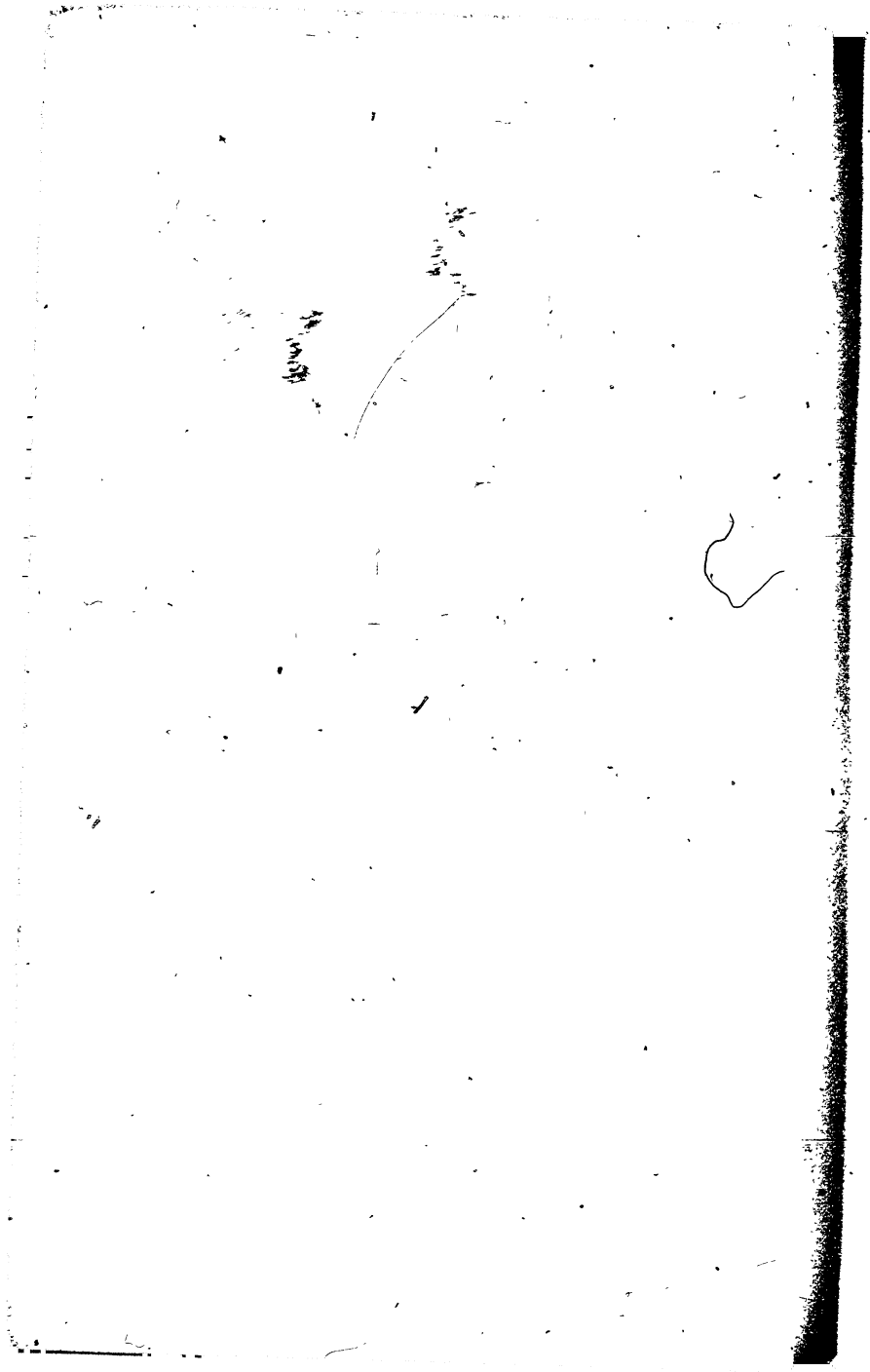


P R E F A C E .

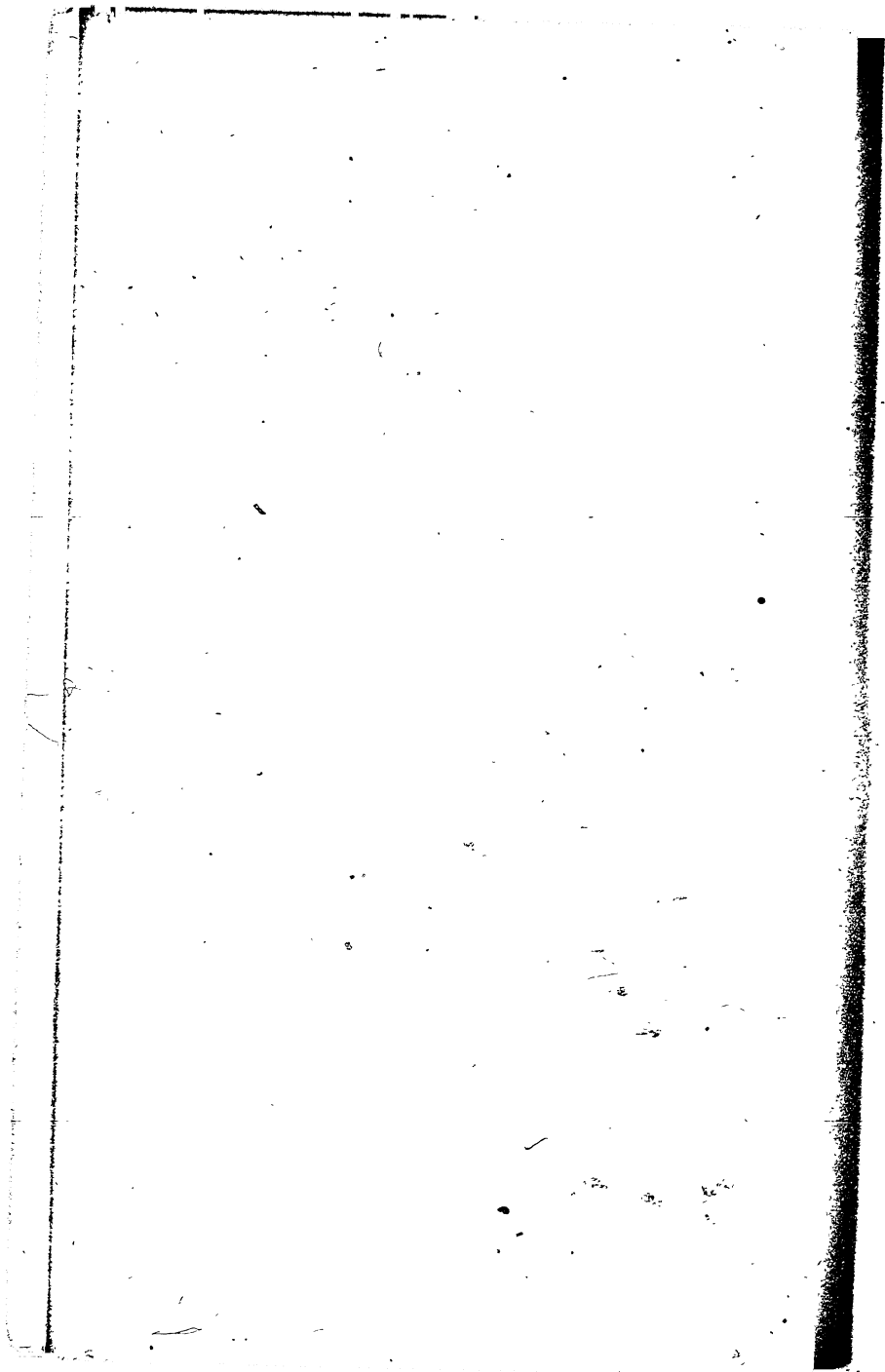
It is said, that, when Socrates had built himself a house, some complained that it was too small. He met this objection with the remark, that, if he could but fill it with friends, it was sufficiently large.

Should any similar charge be brought against my little book, I will only say, that, if the few desultory hints thrown together in it be only acted up to, I trust both the young and all my other kind friends will be satisfied.

S. F.



LETTERS.



LETTERS TO A YOUNG LADY.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

YOUR affectionate letter, dated just after the death of your lamented mother, only reached me a few days since, with another, written only three months ago. The first went a very circuitous route; having been sent first to Bombay, thence to Madras; and eventually found me, not at Calcutta, but up the Ganges. I am indeed much grieved at your bereavement: a mother's loss is always most severely felt; but, in so large a family of girls as yours, must be doubly so.

How gladly does my heart respond to your affectionate appeal, that I would, far

as my ability and the distance between us will admit, supply her place to you all! You, in particular, my dear Anna, as my god-child, have a special claim on my heart; and, when I answered for you at the font, I little contemplated spending nearly fifteen years in India.

Feeling a parent's interest in yourself and sisters, I shall willingly become a regular correspondent, and offer a few hints for your guidance. You are, I find, soon as the period for mourning expires, to "come out." I know that, with most young ladies of eighteen, this is an anxiously desired epoch; anticipated, not only as an emancipation from the thralldom of the schoolroom, but as a license for plunging into a vortex of gaiety, amusement, and visiting. From you I hope for better things: I trust you will regard it as a —

"Call to duty; not release from care."

How often do we hear it said of a young lady, that she has *completed* her education; which would imply, that it is nothing more or less than a certain amount of knowledge!

But, in my opinion, the various rudimental studies to which the attention is directed at school, should, instead of being termed the education of a girl, be only regarded as a means to aid in drawing out the intellectual powers to full exercise, and thus developing and strengthening them. All education is for eternity, as well as for time; consequently, the limit of life is the only period when it finishes.

Before I can really be of service to you, you must, on your part, resolve to do all in your power (and this, let me tell you, is *much*) towards perfecting your education. I never write or speak to the young on this subject, without adverting to what the excellent Hannah More says on it: "Education is not made up of the shreds and patches of useless arts, but is that which inculcates good principles, cultivates reason, subdues the passions, regulates the temper, habituates to reflection, and trains to self-denial; and is that which more especially refers all actions, feelings, sentiments, and passions to the love and fear of God."

The present is assuredly the most favor-

able period you could desire for maturing the mind, and striving for intellectual acquirement, — shall I say, for learning to think and reflect; and that, not merely on what you read, but on all that you hear and see passing around you. I am no advocate for *overdoing* the matter in the educating of girls; for I consider it time, labor, and money thrown away, and that it is worse than useless. Mind, I say *overdoing*. I have seen many young people crammed, shall I say, with the raw material of knowledge; who perhaps, for two, *three*, or *four* years, have daily committed a certain amount to memory; and there it lies, crude and undigested; so much so, that you would hardly think its possessor had two ideas. Think not, from this, I would have you forward and presuming, proud of displaying the stores of your mind; far from it; nor would I have you superciliously looking down on those who may have had less advantages than yourself. No: I would have you able to appreciate character, and to respect innate worth and good sense, wherever and however manifested. I would

have you particularly alive to the conversation of people older and better informed than yourself. I would have you modestly and unassumingly try to draw information where it seems most likely to be obtained ; and what you thus learn must not pass away, as if it were water in a sieve : you must think carefully on what has been said, and, if worth remembering, note down every new light or fresh idea started on any subject. You will always find those older and more capable, ready to enlighten you, if you show signs of intelligence, and they think you will appreciate what they impart. You will also derive much benefit by referring afterwards to books on subjects you hear discussed. It is strange that the conversational powers of the young are not better cultivated ; for learning, like money, does no good hoarded up. Not that I would have you make an ostentatious parade, serving only to gratify the vanity ; but she who really converses to gain, and not display, information is in little danger of falling into this error. You see, then, how much depends, not on the quantity

you acquire, but on the way you exercise the mind on what you have learnt; as a girl may be for years at school, and there embrace a wide circle of studies, and attain a degree of proficiency in them, and yet be poorly educated after all. Now, then, is the time for self-improvement, and, before you are called to the more active duties of life, to prepare yourself for them. The present opportunities are golden ones; and the formation of your character now depends on yourself. Rely on my offering, from time to time, every suggestion as it arises: I may often be desultory, but I trust not the less useful for that. I feel very sanguine that you will soon come to a right way of thinking and acting.

I had got thus far, when your short but welcome letter was put into my hands by Major Clayton, who came overland. You will see, by the commencement of this, how long the two first were in reaching their destination. The spirit in which your last is written pleased me greatly; and from it I augur much good in future. You tell me you are pretty well grounded in

rudimental acquirements, and have made fair progress in general accomplishments. So far, so good. You ought to have done all this; for I know a vast amount of time and money has been expended on you.

At the moment I received your letter, I also had one from a friend I knew only as a girl. She was then surrounded by affluence, and indulged in every wish of her heart; in fact, was a spoiled child. Her education, though it cost an immense sum, was very superficial; it was only in showy accomplishments that she at all excelled, except that she wrote a good hand; and this, to use her own expression, "was all the education she had to start in life with." She was not even thorough in the accomplishments she boasted of. She married a man, who, attracted by her fortune and good looks, took all the rest on trust. They were both reckless and extravagant, and, in a few years, ran through her immense property: her husband died, and she is now reduced to comparative indigence, without being capable of any effort for her own and daughter's

support. She tried a situation as governess in a family ; but her previous habits totally incapacitated her from keeping it. In a school she was still less successful ; and now she is depending on an aunt, who, energetic herself till age came on, most grudgingly accords her a small quarterly instalment, that barely suffices for the support of herself and child. At her own request, I give this brief sketch of her worse than useless life. It certainly, however, "points a moral," and a great one. Let me entreat you to regard it as a beacon. Oh! how bitterly does she now lament the past, but has not sufficient energy to redeem it. She even reflects on her parents, for so weakly yielding to her childish folly ; the mischief of which it now seems impossible to undo.

This is but one among many similar instances of grossly neglected advantages ; and, even in a less aggravated degree, how very many there are, who lament not having made better use of their time, even among those who regard education only in the common acceptation of the word ! If the

aphorism be true, that "whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," how much stronger does it apply to educating the young! Now, then, is your time, ere the cares of life assail you, to redeem all lost opportunities. With the ability which, from your letters, I should suppose you possess, I will hope you will strive to reach a high moral and intellectual standard. Should I be mistaken, and you, or either of your sisters, are less highly gifted in this respect, do not despair; for great talents have nothing to do with the discipline of the heart and temper; and I have no hesitation in saying, that a young woman whose heart, temper, and feelings are well regulated, without any intellectual acquirement, or even many advantages of education, has often been found a more desirable partner for a man, than a highly cultivated and accomplished one, who has neglected this internal discipline; particularly if she have the presence of mind which such a character generally possesses. How often will such a female become pre-eminently useful, and acquire a degree of respect

and consideration which the most splendid talents fail to command! In any case of severe misfortune or emergency, how will she shine, and, if married, endear herself to a husband! But it does not follow from this, that intellectual culture is to be neglected. If time and talents are yours, you will, I hope, set up a high standard, and aim at great intellectual superiority. Think what they lose who neglect this, and do not care to cultivate their minds; — what refined pleasures, what glorious thoughts and feelings, you may purchase, at the easy price of a few hours' daily application to study; and, more than this, what years of self-reproach may you save yourself hereafter, when you may vainly regret the wasted time and talents you can neither bring back nor improve. How many hundreds — nay, thousands — do this, who feel and lament their neglect every way! How many parents vainly strive to urge their children on; feeling the disadvantages they have subjected themselves to, from various causes! — some through wilful neglect in themselves; others from

ill health, or some preventing cause. Whatever it may have been, matters little: the evil is before them, too late to be remedied. You must have seen this frequently, and the deep regret it has called forth; and will you, then, be so culpable as not to save yourself a similar disappointment? I trust you will never feel aught but real sympathy for any one who, too late, desires to recall the opportunities that are for ever gone. Never try to acquire knowledge for show. So far as we cultivate and try for mental acquisitions to enrich and ennoble our natures, to enlarge and elevate our understandings, so as to become better, wiser, and more useful to our fellow-beings, then do we apply them to their proper end and use. To be really beneficial, they must be founded on, and emanate from, religion. In acquiring them, as in any thing else, you must *begin, go on, and end prayerfully*. How easy it is to attain any thing desirable, if you only pause a moment, and think where you can go for help, and be sure to find it,—not by asking man for aid, but God! You never go to him in doubt or

uncertainty. Whenever you ask *his* blessing and assistance in a right cause, you are sure of it. He has promised it to every right desire; and will he not hear and listen to your praiseworthy askings to be wiser and better, and enable you to set rightly about becoming so? I will give you — but not in my own words — a definition of intellectual culture. “It implies, not simply a memory filled with facts and principles, but possessed of the power of recalling and applying its knowledge. It requires, not an imagination filled with beautiful images, selected and conceived by others, but one so quickened and disciplined that it can select, combine, and judge for itself.”

Most, if not all, mental acquirements are in your reach, even should you have neglected them at school. Do not fancy, because you are out in society, the prosecuting these studies will mar your enjoyments: far otherwise. They may chasten your love of worldly pleasure, I grant; but they will give you more than they take away, and will certainly make you feel on better terms with your fellow-creatures:

consequently, they will give a zest to your social enjoyments. Should you ever become a wife, how much more highly may you be estimated by a husband, if well informed, and capable of entertaining him with something more than the *désagrémens* of your kitchen, or the scandal of the day! How delightful will it be to converse with him on all general subjects! I have known instances where the most bitter mortifications have followed this want of early attention to intellectual pursuits. The husband in one case I knew was himself a man of high attainments; but, in the choice of a wife, he was caught by a pretty face and lively manner. Her education was superficial; but it was her own fault; for she had had every advantage. They were far from happy; for they had not a feeling or idea in common. His disposition was good, and he did not treat her unkindly; but they both felt and suffered from her great inferiority in a mental point of view. I really pitied her; because, too late, she saw her error; and in company, I have seen her regard, with

almost jealousy, the seeming pleasure with which her husband conversed with any intelligent female, particularly if she were young.

Although I would, of course, wish to see your mind highly cultivated, as I before said, and deem it extremely reprehensible in those who have time and talent not to become so, — you may, nevertheless, be very respectable without it, and many do; but there is a talent you must improve, since you cannot get on in the ordinary affairs of life without it, — I mean common sense; and you will hardly believe me, when I say, this is a very rare qualification, and certainly not a showy one; but it is invaluable, and serves us for use every day and hour of our lives. Like many other good qualities and things, it is greatly underrated; particularly by those, of whom I shall speak hereafter, who recklessly set public opinion at defiance. How often have I, in after-life, thought of that pithy sentence I was compelled to commit to memory when young, bearing on that subject! but of which I then took little notice, though

it has led to much after-reflection: "Fine sense and exalted sense are not half so valuable as *common sense*: there are forty men of wit to one man of sense; and he who carries nothing about him but gold will always be at a loss for ready change." This, and many others like it, conveys a sermon in but few words.

You are young, — very young; still, in going out into society, you acknowledge yourself to have, as it were, entered the world; and, O my dear young friend! if you really knew how hardly that world will judge you; how it will scan your every action; how little of youthful folly and inexperience it will set down as an extenuating balance in the scale against your actions, — you would assuredly deprecate its blame, by watching your conduct, and not wittingly brave its censure.

Reflect, for one moment, on your position as an immortal and accountable being. What a wide field of usefulness is now opening before you! how much is claiming to be done at your hands! and you are not free to say you *will*, or you *will not*, comply

with the conditions God and nature have imposed on you, in common with mankind. *Onward* you *must* go, improving or perverting the talents committed to your care, in a world that is constantly exacting the performance of some duty or other, — either to watch the bed of suffering and sickness, or to bear them in your own person, subject to all the vicissitudes of life ; — perhaps to struggle with adversity, or perchance to incur the heavy responsibility of mispending and abusing affluence ; or perform the duties of a sister, daughter, or, it may be, a wife, in all their various phases ; — to bear with, and suit yourself to, the temper, prejudices, and faults of one to whom you are for ever united for better or for worse ; and, thus bound, what is to release you ? Not the neglect or ill-treatment, not the poverty, not the downfall, of him you have sworn to stay by through life. Let him eventually prove a gambler, inebriate, or even an apostate from his God, — nothing but death can free you from these trials, if they fall on you. You have made a solemn compact with your God, as well as man ; and he

alone can support you under such sorrows, if you have to meet them; and, if so circumstanced, faint not; and remember that, dark as your prospects may seem, you must *hope on, trust on*, and light will break in upon your darkness, and good arise out of seeming evil. It has often made me shudder to hear people, speaking of husbands who were, in many respects, not what they ought to be, say: "I would not live with so and so: I would go away, and leave him." Leave him to what? To a hardened heart and evil ways? Is this right? Oh, no! duty points out a different line of conduct. What were the solemn words at the altar? "For better or for worse, till *death shall part.*"

To bear and forbear is an imperative duty; and, were it more generally acted upon by women, how much happier would they and all around them be! But, while I would thus prepare you for trials, are there to be no flowers strewn in your path; and, if so, you would say, may you not gather them? Oh, yes! take and enjoy with thankfulness every blessing, every innocent

pleasure in your reach, bestowed by the Giver of all good. Far be it from me to damp your buoyant spirits; for they whose minds are rightly disciplined, cannot be long unhappy, whatever the trials that beset them. They may be overwhelmed for a time, but soon remember from whose hand the discipline comes. All I desire is to prepare you for the great struggle of life, and to teach you *so to feel*, and *so to act*, that you may find, under all circumstances, "that peace which passes man's understanding, and which the world can neither give nor take away."

While I would urge you to employ your talents to the utmost, during the present, I would almost say golden, years, and to improve yourself, not only in intellectual acquirements, but in remedying any deficiency in the rudimental parts of your education,—let me beg you will not be discouraged, should you find the task difficult, and you have not that aptitude for committing to memory you once had. There is the education of the heart, the discipline of the feelings, and subjugation of the temper :

this you can carry on, and this is by FAR the most important.

I shall hope soon to hear from you, but in the interim shall write as opportunities may offer; and I trust, however desultory my hints may be given, you will receive them as they are meant,—solely intended for your good. I may offer advice that is unnecessary; but influenced only with a view to your improvement, and not having any means of ascertaining where I can really be most beneficial, I must give my remarks generally, leaving their application to yourself; which I think I may safely do, if you really and earnestly take up the task of self-improvement.

With affectionate love to your sisters, I remain,

My dear Anna,

Your affectionate

LETTER II.

MY DEAR, KIND AUNT, —

FOR such you know you always permitted me to call you, — how can I sufficiently thank you for your truly kind and maternal letter, in answer to mine! So great a length of time elapsed, that I began to despair of ever hearing from you, till your acceptable communication reached us. What were then the feelings of myself and sisters, I can hardly tell you; nor how very much we are indebted for your offer to supply poor mamma's place. She was, indeed, anxious about us; but too ill, for the last two years, to act up to her wishes respecting us. It seems to me as if you were sent in answer to her prayers, to guide and watch

over us. Though at such a distance, yet I sincerely trust not one word of your kind admonitions will fall to the ground; for, oh! what do we not owe you for them? It is true, that you have pulled me down from the high pedestal of self-esteem on which I was mounted; and on which, but for your kind observations, I had quietly, self-deceived, remained. How much have I yet to do, and how little have I hitherto done! How mistaken, too, have my views of things been; and what a career of pleasure I fancied I had in prospective! But, if it be not too late, most earnestly will I set about making up for lost time. Oh that I could annihilate the distance between us, and have you with us altogether! but, for the present, this may not be. Yet, separated as we are, I hope, aided by and acting on your kind suggestions, to bring both myself and sisters to a better way of thinking and acting.

Your letter did indeed come opportunely; for I was so delighted to hear from you, and so struck with the home truths it conveyed, that I could not forbear reading it to

a young friend, who came to us the day before I received it, to stay a month or six weeks. She listened attentively till I had finished, and then burst into tears, exclaiming: "Oh that I had such a sincere and anxious friend!" But I must tell you all about her. She is an orphan, left to the guardianship of a distant relative; a man of known integrity, who takes good care of her property, and thinks in doing that, and providing her with an accomplished governess at an enormous salary, he has done all required of him. She was greatly struck with your letter; and it is perhaps to her strong convictions of the force of your remarks, that I partly owe my own. In her early years she had great advantages, which she says she did not entirely neglect; but, averse to exertion of either body or mind, she learned every thing superficially; except the more showy accomplishments, which, she was led to believe, were of paramount importance. Since she has resided with her guardian, she has been under a mercenary governess, who, for the sake of retaining a high salary, let her do just as she pleased.

This she now bitterly laments, feeling her deficiency; and she is determined this lady shall be dismissed, after she is handsomely remunerated. She is, she says, resolved, if I will give her the advantage of reading your letters, — which I readily promised, — to pursue the same plan for self-improvement that we do. Let me, my dear aunt, beg of you to give us every possible hint, that we may have the full benefit of your advice and ideas. Take it for granted we need all you can say, or rather write, to us. I will, on this account, even leave you in the dark as to the actual progress we have made in our education. First and foremost, let us know what books you recommend; and tell us what method will make them most profitable to us.

Thus far I had proceeded in my letter, when I was for some days interrupted. I now enclose a note from my Cousin Julia, who, like ourselves, would fain cling to you as a friend, in the real meaning of the word. She at first was afraid you might deem her troublesome; but I felt sure, that, if you could do her any good, trouble was out of

the question. She has given me permission, in order to save postage, to transcribe her epistle : —

“MY DEAR AUNT, — Shall I, amid the superior claims of Anna and Caroline, find a place also in your regard and interest? Shall I not be deemed troublesome in craving a portion of your time and admonition? I have read your letter to my cousins, with feelings I can hardly find words to express, — I will not say, of envy ; for, if permitted to participate in your kindness, I should not care how widely the benefit extends. The earnest desire you express for the improvement of the young generally, makes me feel pretty certain, that you will take an interest in mine. But I will take up your time in apologies no longer, but will open my heart, and tell you all the disadvantages I labor under ; and, if you can point out any means in my power to master them, be assured no exertion on my part shall be wanting, that perseverance and energy can accomplish.

“I almost blush as I tell you, that here I am, turned of seventeen, more deficient, than many girls of twelve, in what is termed scholastic learning. But I well remember before a serious illness in my eleventh year (I think it was

typhus fever), I could learn and retain very well; but now, let me study ever so hard, when I go to repeat, I seem quite to forget it all. It was so mortifying at school, that I gave up in despair; and this I now regret; for somehow I seem to fancy, that lately, after studying much, although I cannot repeat the words of what I have been learning, yet I seem to have got the sum and substance; for the sense and sentiments seem completely my own. I know I have a taste for drawing; but, unfortunately for me, my Aunt Forster, with whom I now reside, is passionately fond of music; and although I find it very laborious, not having a taste for it, still, to gratify her, I have tried, and by dint of very great application have mastered, several pieces that are her favorites. And well and tenfold have I been repaid by the approbation she has bestowed on my performance. This encourages me to hope to improve generally; and I not only look forward to seeing your letters to my cousins, but trust, should time permit, to be favored with one direct to myself. Till when, I remain,

“Your affectionate niece,

“JULIA.”

Kindly, then, my dear aunt, act up to your promise, and unsparingly point out

whatever you conceive to be our duty. Fear not giving offence. We too highly appreciate your wish to see us what we ought to be, to misconstrue your words or meaning. We are only too thankful to know we have a friend who will unshrinkingly speak the truth. I shall not fail writing often; but trust you will not wait for the acknowledgment of one letter ere you despatch another, should any opportunity offer of sending it. I know you would not, if you knew the feeling the receipt of your letters creates.

I have often had misgivings as to the necessity of doing more towards the completion, or rather furthering, of our education; but the feeling was temporary, and not encouraged, lest it might interfere with the plans I had formed to put in practice on my *entrée* into society.

Again and again thanking you, I remain,

My dear Aunt,

Your ever-grateful

ANNA.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

You ask me to name a few of the books I deem most beneficial for you to read. I will give you the names of some I should wish you not merely to *read*, but to *study* with attention. It is not the reading a multiplicity of books, so much as the thoroughly digesting the contents of a few well-selected ones, that will be any advantage to you. This properly done, your taste will be formed; and you will be in little danger, should you by any chance fall in with any thing of a bad tendency; because you will find no pleasure in the perusal of such. But a young person, who is fond of reading every thing that comes in

her way, runs a great risk of having her taste and principles vitiated, if not ruined, if she have not laid the foundation of a taste for solid reading ; but if she have imbibed this in her early years, what widely different results should we see ! and how far less trifling and frivolous would the conversation of young females be, because there would be a mind well stored with ideas to draw upon !

It is very strange ; but, although there be no display, yet you can converse but a very short time with a person, be they young or be they old, without finding out whether or no they are well-informed. How very frequently do we hear it remarked : " I have seen but little of such and such a person, but she seems extremely well-informed ; " which is but saying, in other words, she is well read. We are always pleased with the conversation of such. It gives them a degree of influence over us ; so true is it, that " knowledge is power. " I am delighted to hear you express yourself so determined to pursue a course of useful reading, and will do my best to promote your laudable desires.

I am very certain it is not necessary to name the *Book* of Books, as I am very sure that will have your daily attention; yet I must give it a first place in my notice. You will find Nicholl's "Help to Reading the Bible" a most useful publication. It is one of those issued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and appears to be one of which we cannot speak in too high terms, or too strongly urge the youthful reader of the Bible to study. Nor is it the youthful alone who may be improved by it: those of mature age will find it not only useful, but highly interesting. It commences with a chapter on the divine origin of the Bible; then with one on its miraculous preservation in all its original purity; then follows one on the moral effects of the great book; and thus it goes on, and is so excellent throughout, and so useful as a whole, that you cannot without difficulty say which is the most serviceable *part*. There is also an admirable little work, called "Mason on Self-Knowledge," which, as a book for study, we cannot appreciate too highly. Nor can I too

earnestly urge you to read, *mark, learn,* and *inwardly* digest it. This is by no means a recent publication, as it was written in 1745; but it is an excellent standard work, and teaches us to look into our inmost soul, and to test all our motives to action by the purest doctrines of Christianity. It teaches us also to lay aside the prejudices of self-love; and lays our hearts bare and open to ourselves, from whom they are often the most hidden; and it also leads us to bring out much latent evil, known only to ourselves.

Self-knowledge is assuredly a most important acquisition; and "Know thyself" was among the great maxims of the ancients. It emanated, I believe, from Thales, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece; and he admitted it to be the hardest thing for mortal man to do; and this conclusion was probably drawn from his own experience.

"Self-knowledge," says Mason, "pierces into the inmost recesses of the heart and mind; strips off every disguise, and lays all open; and makes a strict scrutiny into the very soul, and judges most critically of

the thoughts and intentions, and shows with what exactness and care we are to search and examine ourselves, to watch over our ways, and keep our hearts, which we cannot do without it."

We have abundance of injunctions to study ourselves from the sacred volume, both in the Old and New Testaments. Mason says: "All other knowledge makes a man vain; but self-knowledge makes him humble." I sincerely hope, and earnestly entreat you to make this little book your study: this will, indeed, be rightly commencing the task of self-improvement.

Not being near you for many years, I hardly know how your education has been progressing, or whether you are sufficiently well grounded in the rudiments of history to pursue a regular course of more voluminous reading in it. Of all studies, after those more immediately connected with religion, history is the most profitable; and, unless the taste has been vitiated and perverted by the light reading of the day, it is the most interesting too. I would by no means have you discouraged, if you find

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you have not laid the foundation you wish you had, and *now* feel you ought to have done. Unfortunately for them, many young ladies are apt to throw down as dull all books which do not excite or amuse, particularly historical ones; but if the characters are worked up into a highly-exciting work of fiction, that is sure to be read; though it is doubtful, after all, if aught but the story be remembered: the moral instruction is lost.

I own I am surprised to hear you say, you have committed nearly the whole of the history of your own country to memory, and think it very dull and dry. I have, to my great astonishment, heard many express it as their opinion, that they could not see what moral, applicable to their own use, could be drawn from history, as the characters were so far above their own sphere of life. But this is a very erroneous idea. All whose actions are recorded, however high their rank, are but frail and erring mortals like ourselves; subject to the same passions and feelings, working for good or evil, as subdued or indulged in. What food

for the reflective mind does history offer ! and none more so, than that of our own country ; in every page of which we can trace the hand of an All-wise and All-directing Providence ; making man, while apparently pursuing the dictates of his own will and fancy, the instrument for some great purpose. Little did the licentious Henry VIII. think he was doing aught save following his own will and his own way, when he was the unconscious means of working out the Reformation. Did not John's selfish and arbitrary conduct the more firmly establish the liberty his tyranny sought to subvert, by rousing the barons to insist on the Magna Charta ? How did a simple impulse of gratitude save the kingdom from anarchy, and preserve our Reformed religion, by bringing the Gunpowder treason to light ! What a lesson is conveyed in the fate of Philip's Armada, showing the nothingness of man, and the insignificance of his greatest efforts, when opposed to the Divine Will. Who would have thought, while viewing this invincible and wondrous armament, pouring down, in

such overwhelming numbers, on our apparently devoted isle, in all the pomp and strength of human greatness, — that so small a portion of it would return, not to tell the tale of defeat through man's instrumentality, but through the immediate interference of God himself, so beautifully described in Elizabeth's motto: "He blew with his winds, and they were scattered." And to what reflections does Elizabeth's own character give rise! How very great does she appear, as God's vicegerent and sovereign to govern her kingdom! how very inconsistent and vain as a woman! self-deluded by her besetting sin, vanity, to her dying hour; and she lived to the age of seventy.

Ambition is a hard taskmaster; and all who follow in its wake must do its biddings; and, for this, must look only to the ends to be attained, and disregard the *means*. Whom do we find, of the many who have attained sovereignty by crime and violence, die in peace? Whom do we know, of all we read of in history, that have pursued a prosperous course, and were reaping the

fruits of their toils, — *pomp* and *place*, — that could say, “Here will I stop: thus far and *no farther*. will I go”? Was ambition ever satisfied; or did it ever bring happiness? No. What? Cannot all the ponderous volumes of sacred or profane history offer one isolated case? I think not. The bad may have gluttoned over successful revenge, and said they were satisfied because they had ruined their victim; but this is not what I mean by being satisfied or happy.

In all history, whether ancient or modern, we read one *grand lesson*: that, whatever man may do, he is but the instrument of God, in working out the divine will. How very interesting it is to watch the vicissitudes of life in the great, and to mark the fluctuations of empires and kingdoms, — to watch their gradual rise to splendor and magnificence, and then to notice their fall to insignificance and ruin, — to think of the vast structures that for ages have defied the hand of time, and whose magnificence and splendor we could form no correct or adequate conception of, but for the vestiges they have left; and these place their exist-

ence beyond the power of doubt! Some of these are now crumbling to the dust; some few are still mocking that destroyer, Time, to which, like the rest, they must ultimately succumb.

In perusing the annals of Greece and Rome, what bright and self-denying examples do we find of patriotism and magnanimity such as we can but admire! But it must be remembered, that much that was highly praiseworthy in a Pagan would be cowardice in a Christian. It was heroism in the Pagan to avoid shame by death; but such conduct would be cowardice in a Christian, who must patiently bear unmerited ignominy and obloquy, and not fly to death.

I must here give you my first incentive to the study of ancient history, as a girl, perhaps hardly so old as you are, and the historical fact that led me with such ardor to study history. I heard a sermon preached on the way in which Alexander the Great met Jaddua the priest, when he went to him, in such wrathful ire, because the Jews refused to aid him in the destruction of

Tyre. This account is still as vivid on the mind as when first I flew to "Rollin's Ancient History" for a full account. Like most others, it offers an important lesson of the contravening power of God, when the ways of man are not in accordance with the Almighty's designs. Jaddua, seeing himself, with all the inhabitants, exposed to the wrath of a conqueror who had in every thing been invincible hitherto, had recourse to the protection of God, and gave orders that public prayers and sacrifices should be offered. The night after, God appeared to him in a dream, and bade him cause flowers to be scattered up and down the city; to set open all the gates; and go clothed in his pontifical robes, with all the priests dressed in their vestments, and all the rest clothed in white, to meet Alexander; and not fear any evil, inasmuch as he would protect them. This command was punctually obeyed; and, accordingly, this august procession went out to wait the arrival of the conqueror. The Syrians and Phœnicians who were in his army, and who thoroughly hated the Jews, anxiously and joyfully awaited, in hopes of

seeing him wreak his vengeance on them, to whom they bore such mortal hatred. Soon as the Jews heard of Alexander's approach, they set out to meet him as before described. Alexander was struck at the sight of the high priest; on whose mitre and forehead a golden plate was fixed, on which the name of God was written. The moment the king perceived the high priest, he advanced towards him with an air of the most profound respect, bowed his body and adored the august name on his front, and saluted him who wore it with religious veneration. Then the Jews, surrounding Alexander, wished him all kinds of prosperity. All the spectators were filled with inexpressible surprise; they could scarcely believe their eyes, at a sight so contrary to their expectations; and when the king was asked how it was that he who was adored by everybody adored the high priest of the Jews, — "I do not," replied he, "adore the high priest, but the God whose minister he is; for, whilst I was at Dium, and my mind fixed on the Persian war, I was revolving by what means I should conquer

Asia, — this very man, dressed in the same robes, appeared in a dream, exhorting me to cross the Hellespont ; and assured me that his God would march at the head of my army, and give me the victory over the Persians." Alexander added, that, the instant he saw him, he knew him by his habit, stature, and face, to be the same person he had seen at Dium ; and he was firmly persuaded it was under the immediate command and conduct of God that he had undertaken the war ; and was quite sure he should hereafter conquer Darius, and destroy the Persian empire. Alexander then embraced the high priest and all his brethren, and walked with them to Jerusalem.

I know not why I did not advert to this without transcribing it ; but it so impressed my mind at the time, that the impression can never either be erased ; or the feeling less vivid.

What a correct habit of thinking and judging, — what food for reflection, might be obtained by a careful perusal and study of Pope's "Essay on Man" ! the greater part

of which might be committed to memory with advantage. Cowper, too, is beautiful, and will afford you much delight; his descriptions are so simple and so very natural, you may realize them, and bring all he depicts with so much pathos before the mind's eye. Pollok's "Course of Time" must by no means be forgotten. It is all very beautiful; but the few pages that contain his summary of Byron's character are replete with much truthful reasoning.

A propos of Byron, my dear Anna, I must anticipate my hints, and beg of you, unless you can meet with a selection of his beauties, never seek them by wading through his infidel, and, I may say, blasphemous productions. You may lose a pleasure, but you will also lose a pang; for who could see the darkened soul of one so talented, and not bitterly lament its perversion? Not any thing could convince me but that he felt and lamented this darkness in his dying hours at Missolonghi; and if he had had a pious wife or sister near, to lead him to a Saviour, he might have undone much of the mischief he has doubtless wrought, by letting the

world know his estimate of these things on a death-bed. Whatever the provocation, not any thing, in my opinion, could justify Lady Byron's separating herself from him.

You will find some valuable hints for reading profitably in "Watts on the Improvement of the Mind." Addison's "Spectator" is considered a very desirable study for youth, and leads to solidity of thinking. Shakspeare you must become well acquainted with; for his beauties can never be sufficiently studied; and it is to be regretted that so many coarse allusions are interspersed; but they belong to the time in which he wrote; and although they may disgust you, as they do many young minds, yet his beauties are beyond any thing. You cannot read a page in Shakspeare without finding something new and beautiful. If you could read him with a judicious friend, it would be of great benefit to you.

Let me beg you never to read a book tainted with infidelity, however talented the writer may be.

Of the three great poets, Milton, Young, and Thomson,—Young is my especial favorite. Mrs. Chapone, mentioning him, says that she liked his beauties as she did gooseberries, only when they were gathered for her; but that she could not select them. There were in his writings so many hard words, they made her mouth sore to utter them,—or something to this effect. For my own part, he was my favorite from a very early age. I studied him much, and never found him dry or uninteresting. I believe I was first led to admire this writer, from a gentleman staying at my father's giving me an edition which he read with me, having previously engaged my interest by telling me that, till he read "The Infidel Reclaimed" in it, he was a sceptic, but never *after*. You are, you say, fond of poetry. I rejoice to hear it: my favorite writers will then stand a better chance of becoming yours. By the by, I have said little of Milton or Thomson. Read them with attention, and let them speak for themselves; their world-wide celebrity can neither be enhanced nor lessened by my

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humble remarks; and even those who would not understand Milton would hardly dare object to him, or impugn his great and daring genius; for such it undoubtedly is. How few could or would have ventured on such a theme! The conceptions of his mind are wonderful indeed.

You will find biography not only highly amusing, but most instructive too. We read with such great interest the lives of those authors we most admire. These are generally truthful; and they must be so, to work their way and be read.

I have not named many books; but trust, as I said before, those I have enumerated will become *studies*. They will form the taste, and lay a good foundation. Should you, as I hope, be well grounded in the Grecian and Roman histories, as well as with those more immediately connected with them, you will then, with no small interest, make yourself acquainted with those I may term your more immediate neighbors; all of whom, more or less, are connected with or brought by various circumstances in contact with England. In fact, all

are connected by links in the great chain of events. The history of every country forms one of them. No country stands isolated, or has an isolated history; and strong are the ties that bind the old to the new world.

Never despair of redeeming lost time in reading, or indeed in any educational matters, if set to with determined and resolute perseverance. Whatever your deficiency, you can soon recover lost ground. You may do more for yourself and by yourself than any person can do for you, with the resolve to improve. How many are there in the bright phalanx of great characters, that are England's proudest boast, who owe all their greatness to self-improvement and self-effort! Read the biography of many that are gone, and see the disadvantages under which they have labored; and how all these obstacles have succumbed to perseverance and industry. And not in our own country only have indomitable courage and energy so successfully shone, but in all others likewise. Every difficulty yields to perseverance. Read and learn, look around

you and see what it has done and what it can do. We want not to go back to a Demosthenes, — who, by the by, is without parallel, and one would almost think was raised to show what can be done by untiring effort. We have, in our own annals, our mitred bishops, our learned judges, our unrivalled engineers, &c., — all owing their celebrity and usefulness to their own unassisted and praiseworthy perseverance. And if they have toiled through poverty, lack of instructors, and even want of time, and these attained, through all the other difficulties that must have obstructed their path, — will you be frightened, who have every means in your reach, and only require a little energy and resolution? What mole-hills have you to skip over, while they had literally Alps to cross! You have a few books to peruse, all full of interest; they, the dry and ponderous volume to get through, the intricacies and abstruse perplexities of science to unravel; and all this they have done. Let the American young lady look at, be proud of, and copy, the great Franklin, who, as an exemplar, is a

host in himself. He alone is sufficient to incite the young, and show what perseverance can do.

I knew a young lady who had reached the age of sixteen, without any of that rudimental instruction on which education must be based. She was entirely ignorant of a single rule in grammar, nor could she tell you scarcely any thing, or why one part of speech was called by its name, or what were its properties; though she had learnt several grammars through, at a common village school. She had a very superficial knowledge of geography, and knew but little of history. Her family resided in the country, and there was only the small school which I just named; and you must remember that, in those days, these village teachers had no training, as in this country at the present time. At the early age of twelve, she felt the want of better education, and strenuously urged her father to send her to a seminary of some repute, a few miles off; but he, being a man of dilatory habits, though he promised to comply with her wishes, and meant to do so, kept procrastinating.

tinating from month to month, and from year to year. Her thirst for information kept increasing; she was passionately fond of reading. From a clerk in her father's office, she acquired a knowledge of the first four rules of arithmetic, — the rest she acquired by herself. At her earnest request, her father stipulated for more general instruction; but the clerk, averse to trouble himself, took advantage of her father's supineness, and merely gave her several pages a day to commit to memory, out of the standard authors, both in prose and poetry, hardly thinking she would learn them. However, she did do so, and gained thereby such a taste for solid reading as induced her to follow it up by herself; and, by the time she was sixteen, she had gained a valuable stock of ideas and information, gleaned from the best English writers. At this advanced age, she got to school, where, notwithstanding all she had acquired, she found much she was deficient in; and which, doubtless, was far more laborious to acquire than it would have been earlier. But she roused all her energy, and set to;

when, she says, the seeming difficulties vanished, and all she had previously learnt told ; so that, from appearing very deficient for her age, she soon took a high standing in the school. Now, this girl may be said to have educated herself. I have merely related this, because her position in society was similar to your own ; to show you how easily she overcame difficulties under which many a less energetic character would have despaired. Of course, there are many more striking instances, in which perseverance has been still more indomitable.

One thing I must say, ere I conclude this letter ; that I most strenuously advise you, if you ever think to become a wife, never venture in the paths of literature : a woman who seeks notoriety in them is rarely calculated for the quiet detail of domestic duty. She has entered the public arena, and must there seek her happiness. The celebrity that she must court, if the candidate for public approbation, is totally incompatible with the claims on a wife ; for if she have the talent for writing, and is successful, will she not take a distaste to the sober

duties that must find their reward in themselves, and not in the applause of the world?

But I have extended this letter to a great length. You may hear from me again on this subject, some time hence. Adieu, my dear Anna,

Your affectionate

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR ANNA,—

OF all the valuable and accountable talents committed to our care, surely time is the most important ; and to trifle with it is indeed incurring an awful responsibility ; for it will assuredly be required at our hands, with usury. Well might the poet exclaim :—

“Throw years away ? Throw empires, and be blameless.

Moments seize ! heaven's on their wing.

How may we moments wish, when worlds want wealth to buy !”

People, and particularly young ones, talk so much of *not* having time ; and yet how much they might command by a little judicious management ! And to do this is not only an imperative moral duty, but a

religious obligation, since the trifling away or rightly spending it affects our well-being hereafter as well as here. Oh! what a fearful aggregate would it make, if the mispent hours of only one year were added up, and then taken from the full amount of that period! What a small portion would it show devoted to right purposes! Surely, as mothers, we do not half impress on our offspring the value of time in their early years. Zealously and earnestly, then, improve every minute, and think not, because you happen to be blest with affluence, you can afford to be idle and fritter away your time with impunity; for of time, as of money, it may be said, "Where much is given, much will be required." If you feel its value, you must use it rightly; and, to do this, rise early, as the first step to the due improvement of time. Do not say you never can, never could rise, early. Rather say, habitual indolence has such hold on you that you find it difficult to shake it off; and I admit it is so. Nay, you may say you think it impossible to conquer this habit; but this is not correct. Heavy and indolent as you

may be, there are times when you can and do get over it, and without much effort can rise early. A party of pleasure, or any other occasion of excitement, it is to be done: you will really make the effort, if you feel the importance. And you will pray for the divine help, in conquering a habit so totally incompatible with positive duty.

I would earnestly beg of you not to lose sight of the necessity of economizing your time; and think not, because others waste it, you may trifle with it also. Alas! if we could lay this flattering unction to our souls in all other respects, and think, because so many do wrong we are not required to do rightly; then we might leave every thing undone that we disliked to do. But I know, and so do you, young as you are, that it is no such thing; for, as I before said, here we are, with certain demands on us, and not free to say we will, or we will not, answer them. A plain line of duties lies before us, and in that line the proper employment of time stands pre-eminent. Man's life is made up of years, his years of

months, his months of weeks, they of days, and his days of hours, and they of minutes. They, therefore, who would improve their lives, must improve their minutes as they fly. They are so soon gone, that many regard a moment as of little worth, who would not on any account trifle away a day or an hour. Life, at its very best and longest, is but short. It is soon gone. We have but one life to lose on earth: that spent, we for ever lose the opportunity of doing good to others, or seeking good for ourselves. But every passing moment, whether improved or trifled away, is telling on the destiny of the never-dying soul. We are impressed by every passing event, for good or for evil. A wasted moment leaves its mark on the soul; a neglected opportunity of doing good is a self-inflicted injury.

Continued idleness in the field of worldly duties is moral suicide. In this view, how rich the privilege of being industrious appears! Let us remember the strong obligation that lies on us to improve each moment, as a golden talent, for which we must give an account at the bar of God.

No man knows how much good he can do for himself and fellow-creatures, till by ceaseless diligence he has filled up the measure of his day, and employed every power and every moment in fulfilling the great end for which he was made. Life, however short it may be, is long enough for them who rightly consider for what it was given; but is far too short for those who have a procrastinating spirit, ever putting off till to-morrow what can be done to-day.

You see, then, my dear Anna, how imperative it is on you to make the most of your time; and that to neglect doing so is a positive sin, since the *omission* of doing good is commission of evil. There is not any way of half doing what is right: there are but the two paths; and, if you walk not in the one, you are surely travelling in the other.

In trying to enforce the economical disposition of your time, I must not neglect to tell you, that, without acquiring orderly and regular habits, you *never* can have any to spare. Order and regularity ought assuredly to rank with the minor virtues; for most of

our valuable faculties, and acquirements too, are depending on them; and for no one early acquired habit will you hereafter be so thankful, if you take pains to practise it *now*. And it is equally, nay more, important now, than by and by. It is far, very far, from being selfish; for it affects others as much as yourself, and, next to good temper, contributes to the happiness of all with whom you have to do. I think the curing a habit of this kind one of the greatest difficulties they have to overcome, who seek to correct themselves in after life. Habit here is almost *inveterate*. Think, then, how truly grieved you will be to see your inability, not only to keep things right, but to teach others to do so. You may do it for the time; but you little know the tenacity with which the habit clings to you, nor the disadvantages it ever brings. Phrenologists will tell you, you have not the bump of order, and that you will not, therefore, be able to fulfil its requirements; but all I insist on is, that you act on *principle*, — the principle of acting, as far as in you lies, up to what you know and feel to be right.

And I am very sure, from the feeling with which you receive my letters, and the resolutions you tell me you have formed for self-amendment, you will not stop short now, but steadily persevere till you have overcome every obstacle that stands between you and the acquirement of all you need. How thankful ought the young to be, that God has been pleased always to place a reward for trying to do rightly, in the pleasure and satisfaction that is sure to follow any successful attempt to overcome the inclination to persevere in wrong! In fact, duty performed invariably brings peace and happiness; and, if the struggle have been great, so much greater has been the comfort our perseverance has brought. Did I, my dear Anna, think your habits were other than strictly regular, and that you did not regard personal neatness as a most imperative duty, I should never close a letter to you or your sisters without enlarging on the inconvenience and annoyance it must cause. As the fault grows, so will the evil, till it is gigantic, and will stand before you overshadowing every endeavor for better

habits ; till, despairing of getting over it, you will sink down, and be crushed, as it were, under the wheels of this Juggernaut, and go on, the rest of your life, in a continual muddle. This habit will affect you, not in one but every action of your life, from the most trifling to the most momentous ; militating against your best endeavors for a life of usefulness, and robbing you, daily and hourly, of one of the most precious earthly boons, — time. What, for instance, so bad as a disorderly house ? There is double the work for the servants ; double, nay treble, the care and expense for the mistress herself ; and then the wardrobe of a person of untidy and irregular habits will assuredly not last half the time. Did your own observation never lead you to notice a marked difference between two sisters ? the apparel of one lasting so much longer than that of the other ; they sometimes accounting for it by saying one is harder on her clothes than the other ; meaning, I suppose, she wears them out faster. This may, in part, be true ; but it is more generally owing to the greater care taken by the one. She who is careful

will have every thing for her use ; while her sister, with the same resources, will have numerous wants which her sister knows nothing of, and in supplying which, or rather re-supplying which, she must lose considerable valuable time, or perhaps the opportunity of doing some good to another. Are not these cogent reasons for early habituating yourself to neatness and regularity ? Never say, never allow yourself to *think*, you cannot do any thing that is a duty, or fancy that you cannot bring any and every difficulty in the way of doing what is right to the footstool of mercy. Remember the words, "*Ask*, and it shall be given you." Here we are, then, at the grand remedy for young and old. Only pray, in sincerity and truth, to do what is right. Who can gainsay this ? Is it then difficult ? It ought not to be so to young or old. Oh, my beloved girl ! in pointing out these easy means to you, and, in fact, in every letter, what truths and convictions come home to my own breast, and tell of golden opportunities neglected in so many ways, — some never, I fear, to be recalled or redeemed.

But let this confession, instead of lessening, give a TENFOLD force to the admonitions my letters convey. You have yet the time before you, and, I think, want not the necessary self-command and energy. I therefore hope you will resolve, and, having done so, will carry your resolutions into effect.

You can hardly conceive the rapidity with which difficulties vanish before a determined mind. You find them yield, till you almost ask if they ever existed. The praiseworthy determination soon becomes a principle of action ; but once fail in acting up to it, and, with an overwhelming force, it breaks down the feeble barriers of irresolution, and no good can be expected.

With every feeling of affectionate interest, I remain,

My dear Anna,

LETTER V.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

BELIEVE me, that among the many efforts requisite to complete your education, that of striving to bring your temper into subjection is a highly important one ; but still, I think, not so difficult of attainment as it would appear ; because I have seen many instances of a successful attempt to bring it under proper command. In short, my dear child, there are none of what are termed arduous duties, that do not cease to become so, if set about in a right and prayerful spirit. Oh, if you really knew how much your own happiness, and that of all about you, depends on the subjugation of your temper, how watchful would you be ! You would

struggle for a mastery over it, as for your life. I would urge it, also, on religious grounds; for an ungoverned temper is a powerful auxiliary of the Evil One, and, of all bad passions, is perhaps the most encroaching; and, where it gains the ascendancy, there is no saying where it may end, or to what crimes it may lead us; for do not the daily records, as well as the historic page, teem with sorrowful and tragical events, all arising from the want of command of temper? Look around, and see how the happiness of whole families is imbittered by the irritability of one member in it; and then think how a little self-command might have turned away this unpleasantness, and produced harmony and love. It is not one of those evils of life that occasionally annoy and distress; it is incessant; and, wherever the unfortunate possessor of a bad temper is, there is surely discord. How very, very often, in a family party where peace and comfort seem or rather should prevail, will a cross word or irritable reply dissolve the pleasing charm, and call forth, first one angry word, and

then another, till all chance of restoring peace is gone! I have seen the head of a family come tired and worried by cares and perplexities of business, laboring perhaps under intense anxiety about some momentous undertaking, hoping to get the mind relieved by the soothing comforts of his own fireside, absolutely driven from it to the tavern, by some frivolous and irritating remark, — some foolish reprimand for trifling neglect, or omission in the execution of some unimportant commission, — working so upon the overwrought nerves, when the utmost care and watchful attention were needed, and would in all probability have been successful in fitting the individual for the ensuing day's exertion. Can a woman, doing this, be acting a Christian's part? But you will say, "I am in no such position." True, my dear child, but bad temper is a growing evil; and several girls, young as yourself, have I known to render the life of doting parents miserable, by giving way to this selfish passion. In one instance, she was an only child, indulged to a fault; and how did she evince her gratitude? By

never allowing her mother a moment's rest. The servants were still more to be pitied; as the intense love of the parents for their wayward child enabled them to bear with her; but the poor domestics were complete victims. Would that this were the only cases! but, alas! they are far from being so.

Look, then, around you of a morning, and think and resolve that, whatever provocation you have, you will bear with, and strive, by an amiable deportment and unselfish manner, to bear with it, and to yield to the wishes of others; for may we not, I ask you, if we are watchful, often detect ourselves making unnecessary remarks, and doing unnecessary things, solely because we must give way to feelings we ought prayerfully to smother and restrain, and not by these means blow up into an angry flame? Could we but remember, that, fast and great as they grow, these angry feelings have frequently *small, very small* beginnings, and, by being watched, might easily be suppressed, — how soon, then, could we conquer this, *if indulged in*, hydra-headed evil!

and conquered *it must be*. My dear Anna, as a Christian it is incompatible with your high and holy calling. What say the Scriptures? "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." What said our blessed Lord, when scorned, reviled, and crucified, and in such agonies as we can never comprehend? What, I repeat, did he say? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." St. James, in his epistle, dwells very strongly on this evil, inasmuch as in two or three chapters we find him exhorting us to keep a guard over our tongue, the power of which he beautifully illustrates under the simile of the small helm, which, he says, properly turned, moves the great ship; and, then, he more strikingly compares it to the little spark that kindleth a great fire. The power of speech is, assuredly, if not perverted, a wondrous blessing. Why should we, then, abuse it as we do? How rarely do we think of the magnitude of the gift of speech! O my child! when we come seriously to reflect, how very many more inestimable gifts are as highly valued, and as frequently abused! Not any thing will aid

you so much in subduing your temper, as the remembrance that those with whom you have to do are fellow-mortals, subject to like failings as yourself; and that, although you see their faults, you are perhaps hardly conscious of your own, and do not at all times recollect they have as much provocation from you to bear with, and perhaps have not had half the teachings and admonitions that you have.

The further we proceed (I say *we*, because I trust your good resolutions accompany me), the more shall we find the advantage of studying "Mason on Self-Knowledge;" for, assuredly, what he teaches must be the only foundation on which we can with advantage build our educational structure; and self-knowledge *thoroughly acquired* will be an adamant base. It will be the alchemist's cureka, transmuting all baser metal to gold.

Another incalculable mischief, arising from bad and unsubdued temper, is the influence it has on others. How many, in constantly being with you, will be more or less like you! If you, therefore, set a watch

over your temper and feelings, you may be leading them to good as well as yourself. As I told you just now, all your attainments must come to the touchstone of religion; and you cannot, as I observed before, be religious unless you are forbearing. It is no use pleading temperament and impulse; for these are not safe guides, but principle, based on a sense of right and wrong. Impulse will carry you away, and not allow judgment fair play; not so moral effort, which teaches you to overcome evil and every disinclination to acting rightly. Moral courage is a most valuable attainment; and, if you possess it, how nobly and firmly will you do what is right! not for the applause of the world, but because you know the line of action you are pursuing is right. While sensible of this, the world may talk and blame you as it pleases; it may assign whatever motive it likes best to your actions. You heed it not, the plain path of duty lies before, and in it you walk.

Let us digress, for a moment, to think what value we may set on the opinion of the world generally. Very little, I fear; since

it is the thoughtless mass, and not the thinking few, who will judge you ; and, if you know yourself rightly, you will feel and know you have often had credit when you should have had blame, and blame when you deserved approbation. I own I am frequently grieved to see the wayward, pettish manner of many an otherwise amiable girl towards a perhaps too indulgent mother ; and often have I seen a parent's cheek tinged, as it were, with shame, at some ungracious or untoward speech from a girl, whose duty pointed out a very different line of behavior. To me, this pert forwardness of manner seems more peculiar to this side the Atlantic ; but right and wrong are of no country, or rather they belong to all and the same rule of duty : the same standard of correctness of behavior pertains to all places and people. Aim, then, at this self-subjection, and think no moral effort too great that helps to make you really better. If you learn to know yourself, you must be humble, because the self-examination to which self-knowledge leads, will show you the natural depravity

of the human heart, and you will know and feel what you really are.

Educated persons can offer no excuse for giving way to temper, because they know better, and wilfully do what they know to be wrong. Besides the actual benefit you and all around you derive from suppressing bad temper, you acquire a habit that will actuate you in other things, which perhaps by these strivings has become a principle; but, though through self-reliance you may occasionally do right, remember it is God alone who can enable you to put this self-restraint, and to conquer a bad passion. I know several, who, influenced by religion, have from vile tempers become really amiable characters; whereas, if they had not watchfully guarded and restrained them, they might have been a pest to themselves and friends, instead of a blessing, the remainder of their lives. Had a violent-tempered man suffered the loss Sir Isaac Newton did from the inadvertence of his little dog, who knows where the effects of his passion might have stopped, or upon whom he might have wreaked his anger?

1 Think what bad passions arise out of anger,
and what awful results are the consequence.
r What more unchristianlike or more baneful
7 in its effects than revenge? Can we, if we
o indulge in anger, say where or how it will
1 end? Who can give way to bad temper,
3 and be like the meek and lowly Jesus,
1 doing good to those who strive to injure us?
3 Every year, month, and even day, do the
; evil passions that emanate from bad temper
7 gain strength. Look well, then, to your
1 heart, and see how great are your failings
- and short-comings even in your duty to
- your fellow-creatures; and remember, how-
; ever they may provoke and annoy you, that
- like them you are fallible and imperfect,
; and need allowance made for your own con-
; duct too frequently. Above all, what are
3 your daily conditions made with your God?
- You ask him to "forgive your transgres-
- sions, as you forgive others who trans-
; gress against you." What awful mockery is
; this, if you harbor one particle of resentment
; to your fellow-creatures! How frequently
; will the bad temper of one individual mar
- and spoil the comfort of a social evening!

And ~~yet~~ how many are there whose duplicity will not suffer this ; but who carry a mild and amiable exterior abroad, who are the veriest tyrants in their families, though outwardly they appear all blandness and amenity ! Should you, in searching your heart, find you are of a wayward temper, lose no time in making a firm resolution to overcome it. Many and many a fault goes uncorrected, because the force of habit is so strong we fancy we cannot break it, and therefore do not try. Neither can we of ourselves do this ; but is not our sufficiency of God ? and can we not, with a strength not our own, accomplish more than even this ?

The temper has so decided a bearing on the manners, that it is perhaps better to offer a few remarks on the latter \ here. With many they become quite a secondary consideration ; and I often have remarked a sort of nonchalance of manners in the young, to me, and I should think to most people, very displeasing. Modesty is always becoming to youth. I do not like to see shyness. You, I trust, will hit what the French so

aptly term the *juste milieu*, and be equally remote from shyness as from a bold, confident manner. I have seen very young ladies doing the honors of a parent's house and table with the most ladylike self-possession, without one particle of that overweening boldness so very unbecoming and offensive. They could venture a remark, pay attention to the guests, and yet evince a becoming girl-like simplicity of behavior. I have heard girls, rebuked for this unseemly forwardness, argue in reply, that they were out in society, and would insinuate a probability that there might be but a few steps between their present position and presiding in a house of their own. This I should say to them: That, were I a gentleman, I should look for far more fitness of conduct in a girl, brought forward unusually early in life, if she were a modest and unassuming character, than from one too confident in her manners; as a quiet, ladylike demeanor is always befitting the young. I should very particularly desire you should avoid a tittering, giggling manner so frequent in young ladies, but very offen-

sive, and which often leads a sensible girl to be taken for quite the reverse. Another thing very unbecoming is to see a young girl taking the lead in conversation, perhaps rudely contradicting a parent or elder guest, peremptorily it may be; asserting her opinion, and with much pertinacity too, on things that are of no moment whatever. Nothing can justify this, unless she were vindicating the character of some injured friend; but even then she might choose a better and more effectual way of doing this. Never give countenance to what is ill spoken of others by even seeming to take an interest in idle gossip, much less repeat it. It is an evil that assuredly "grows on what it feeds on," and soon becomes a most inveterate habit. The desire to know the business of others becomes a sort of morbid craving; and you will never be easy unless listening to or repeating idle gossip. So lately introduced into society, you should avoid making yourself any way conspicuous, particularly in loud talking: you can be cheerful and lively without this. I know many girls who were most intelligent and amusing

in their conversation, quick and even witty in their replies, who, I do believe, were rarely heard beyond the circle they addressed; and yet they had great fascination and gayety of manner, and seemed to win golden opinions from all.

Whatever you do, avoid slang. You may perhaps start at this, and tell me it is an unnecessary precaution; and right glad shall I be if it is so, as it will give me reason to hope you dislike to hear a female use it, and, consequently, will still more object to use it yourself. I have known young ladies who could hardly speak without it. A very little observation will enable you to notice the bad effects of this practice. I know some young people have such a natural smartness of manner, that a witty remark comes out almost unconsciously, and they utter the most clever things without being hardly aware of it. This is all very well; but it is a gift by no means to be coveted, for it often leads to a satirical habit, than which I know nothing more injurious. Satirical persons can never have friends; or, if they have, it is ten chances to

one but their aptitude for ridicule disturbs the friendship, and renders it very doubtful. But if witty, you perhaps say a good thing, and it calls forth a degree of encouragement ; you are tempted to go on, and then, if any droll idea strikes you, out it comes, regardless of the feelings it may wound. Thus are you led on till almost every word annoys. This is not to be helped, if indulged in. Do not therefore give way to the propensity, nor yet to a spirit of mimicry ; it may gain you the momentary applause of the thoughtless and giddy, but will secure neither the friendship nor esteem of the wise and good ; it will make you feared and hated. Study the happiness of others in the social circle as well as out of it. Seek, by every little amenity of manner, to soothe and assure those in your company who seem to need it : if they possess any bodily infirmity, let it be sacred. Devote your attention to them, and try to make them forget it. Let them not feel their inferiority in any respect. This, my dear child, is praiseworthy ; and, if it do not increase the hilarity of the gay and giddy,

it will soothe the wounded spirit, and give you a degree of self-satisfaction that the most brilliant sallies of wit would fail to do. I knew a family of several daughters, the other side the Atlantic, talented to a degree, but so satirical and given to mimicry, that they are absolutely feared, at least were so when I knew them. The eldest lost a most eligible opportunity of settling for life, and all through the foolish propensity for saying a good thing. I was once conversing with a gentleman who was paying great attention to one of the girls, and he candidly confessed his regard, but admitted that, whatever the struggle cost him, he must break off, since he found nothing could cure her of satire. So that two young persons in one family suffered for giving way to one of the most dangerous gifts a woman can possess.

Always aim at simplicity of manners. Be cheerful and courteous to all. Nothing pleases so much as an openness of manner. Be habitually polite, but never cringing. Feel kindly to all around you, and you will act so. This is no difficult task, if you

remember the ties that bind you to your fellow-creatures. The mutual claims of society are stronger than most people think; but, when they do not show themselves in friendly and kind actions, they are selfish. For instance, are we on a journey so circumstanced as to be compelled to pass a day or two alone? have we contagious sickness that excludes the visits of a neighbor, or from whatever cause we lose the pleasure of friendly intercourse, how very much we feel it! But this is, doubtless, a very selfish feeling, and we regret the privation for ourselves alone. Ask the poor criminal, whose crimes have led him to forfeit communion with his fellow-men, and he will tell you the value of social intercourse, so necessary then to our happiness. Ought we not to love one and all? and those whom we cannot love, we should *pity*, not *hate*. We all view with feelings of interest the new-born babe; we know the strong love of its mother. Let us, then, remember that the vilest outcast of society was once as innocent and fondly loved; that, like ourselves, he has an immortal soul; that for

him, equally as for us, a Saviour has bled and died. Can we know and feel this, and not yearn to do all the good we can, and wherever we can? But, although next to our families, the social circle claims our love and attentions, it behooves us to watch and search our hearts that we be not influenced by selfishness. This may not signify to others, provided we do our duty to them; but it is a matter of infinite moment to ourselves, whether we act from purely philanthropic motives or not. If we love mankind as we ought, we shall never be otherwise than courteous. There are some who must and will be ungracious in their manners. How a kind and feeling refusal softens a disappointment, when we cannot comply with a request! If you try never forget to practise those little amenities of manners, they soon will be, as it were, natural to you; and you will rarely or never be guilty of rudeness. Civility costs us nothing, and is very gratifying to others; and an obliging disposition will always find every little act of kindness repaid with interest. Dr. Johnson was once asked how he came to speak

always so correctly : he replied, "Solely by trying always to use the best language on all occasions." This principle would apply and work well with regard to manners. I have read it somewhere as a fact, that a soldier on duty as sentinel was suffering from intense thirst, and, seeing several young ladies, he humbly entreated one of them to bring him a little water, as it was death to leave his post. Two or three disdainfully refused, and passed on. One pitied him, and went back for the so much desired relief. It happened afterwards, I think at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, that both the young lady and soldier were there. He was a Catholic, she a Protestant ; but she owed her life to the gratitude of the man she had so kindly assisted.

I do not know any thing that creates such general estêem as constant urbanity of manner. But, then, if it is only taken up as a conventional practice to gain popularity ; if it springs not from a purely philanthropic feeling, it is of little worth. At any rate, it will not, like the genuine prompting of humanity, carry us onward and heavenward.

It is of no real value, unless it spring from a feeling of kindness to our fellow-mortals, founded on a sense of our own need of reciprocal acts of beneficence and love from them. It must emanate from neither impulse nor whim ; in fact, you must in all things, no matter what, let the former yield to principle and a sense of duty. These faults, to which I now direct your attention, bear strongly on the comfort of others as well as yourself ; and the neglect to correct them is sure to bring annoyance and inconvenience. I will therefore close my letter, well assured, if what I have said be insufficient, not any thing I can add will do any good. In hopes of hearing from yourself or sisters, I remain, my dear Anna,

Yours affectionately,

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR EMMA, —

I HAVE long been going to write to you, as your sister tells me you always take an interest in reading my letters. I regret to hear you are so completely absorbed in grief. Most sincerely do I sympathize with you in your recent disappointment. I well know what a hard lesson it is for the youthful heart to learn to bear its first trial. You must have felt it severely. Your prospects were so bright and promising, that I am sure you can hardly realize the sad reverse. I will not attempt to console you, because time alone can bring any alleviation. I can only refer you to *Him* who *can* and *will* support you under every trial it pleases him

to send you. *Man has* deceived you ; *God never will*. He has in wisdom afflicted your young heart, and blighted your fair prospects ; but, remember, he never permits these things without some good purpose, some wise end. You must, therefore, pray for submission to his will, and grace to bear whatever he sees fit to lay upon you ; and must try to feel it is *God*, and not *man*, that is thus dealing with you. The conduct of Frederic Elphinstone has been base in the extreme, and admits of no palliation. You cannot, you ought not to regret that circumstances have arisen to prevent your being united to him. Were he even desirous to return to his fealty, you could not trust him again. You could never look up to him with the respect every woman should feel towards a husband : his conduct, to say the least of it, has been most unmanly. As a Christian, you are bound freely to forgive the injuries he has done you. You must bear no resentment, seek no revenge ; and, above all, must not through pique act foolishly, and, by trying to show indifference, take a revenge that may injure

yourself, and not annoy him ; for, after acting as he has done, he will care little what you do or say.

Trouble is sometimes sent to us as a punishment ; sometimes to wean us from the world, and show its insufficiency to satisfy us. Till the present, your cup of happiness has been filled to overflowing, and you have now first to pay for its hitherto happy exemption. Perhaps there was danger of your clinging too much to the world and worldly things, and you might have loved the creature more than the Creator. Yes, you may be very sure this stroke was sent in mercy ; it must be so, for "God doeth all things well."

Do not think me hard or unfeeling, for I know the anguish of a young and trusting heart when thus bitterly deceived ; and well can I imagine your disappointment, for I find all was prepared for your nuptials, and that guests were invited, and young friends selected, who were to accompany you to the altar. It is assuredly a grievous trial ; but how much worse it might have been, had you married a man capable of

acting thus! You must soon have found him wanting in honor and integrity, and consequently have been miserable. Rouse, then, your maiden pride; call up every feeling of self-respect, and mourn not for one who has betrayed your trust, and forfeited your esteem. Rather rejoice that the merciful intervention of Providence has saved you perhaps years of repentance and sorrow. You have nothing to reproach yourself with. The fault is not yours that you have been basely deceived. Therefore try to believe this trial in mercy sent, and do not give way to useless repining. Seek useful occupation for your mind, and, above all things, try to yield yourself to your Heavenly Father's discipline with childlike faith and submission. Pray for these, and they will be given you. A few short months over your head, and you will see things in a very different light. The idol you have as it were worshipped will no longer seem worthy your preference; and you will wonder how you could ever have been so infatuated. You say your hopes have been so completely blasted, that you will never

marry, as you can never again give your confidence to, or put trust in, any man. You must not judge of the many by one. That there are more like him, I doubt not; still there are many of sterling worth and probity. You say you will live and die an old maid; and, should your feelings continue such that you cannot form a second attachment, by all means remain single. And be assured, that few characters have greater claim to our respect and esteem, than a pious, sensible, right-minded, unmarried woman; and you may perhaps find greater and more unalloyed happiness and fewer cares than in wedded life. But be assured, that the single state is no diminution of the beauties, the abilities, and happiness of the female character. On the contrary, our present life would lose many of the comforts and much of what is absolutely essential to the well-being of society, and even of the private home, without the unmarried female. To how many a father, a brother, and even to a sister, is she both a necessity and a blessing! How many orphans have to look up with gratitude to

her care and kindness! How many nephews and nieces owe their young felicities and improvement to her! Were every woman married, the paternal home would often be a solitary abode in declining years; and that, too, when affectionate attentions and solicitude are the most precious, but not otherwise attainable. It is from the class of single women that we are chiefly supplied with governesses; and it is from a lower class of females that nearly all our domestic assistance is derived, among which, that of nurse is the most indispensable; and can rarely be filled by a married woman.

What a vast change in the general happiness would ensue, were every *female* married as soon as grown up. Human life, in that case, would assume a very different aspect, and consequences result that could be hardly calculated on till realized; so much does the general welfare of society depend on the unwedded female. She is therefore, perhaps, as important an element in social and private life as the married woman. The utility of each is different, but both are necessary; and it is unworthy and

discreditable in man or woman to depreciate the unmarried condition. And if, from what is useful and beneficial, we turn to what is interesting, the single lady is not surpassed by the wedded matron ; and for no small portion, if not the whole, of her life, she is the more interesting personage. The wife resigns, or ought to resign, all her claims to general attention. She ought to concentrate all her wishes to please her husband. She has quitted the arena of public life, and should seek no more the general gaze, or strive to win the meed of admiration ; for she has become distinct and private property : but the unmarried lady still remains the candidate for honorable notice, and injures no one in receiving it from those of the male sex who are in the same condition, and who are as much at liberty to pay attentions as she is to receive them. Do not, then, give way to a morbid state of feeling. Remember that as a Christian you are expected to bear trouble and disappointment. God saw where it was best to strike the blow, and *there* it has fallen.

I trust soon to hear from you, — that,

however deeply you may feel, still you can rise superior to trial, knowing from whom it comes. Seek out such of your fellow-creatures as need your sympathy and kindness; and, in solacing their grief, you will partly forget your own. Go among your poorer brethren, aid and comfort them, and learn that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. I rely on your good sense, my dear Anna, to conquer this despondency, and feel sure you will soon do so. At the moment I received your sister's letter, telling me of your changed prospects, a lady was with me, recently arrived from England. She knew Miss Trevor, whom your sister, in her last, informs me is now the wife of Frederic Elphinstone, and says a more decided flirt does not exist. She is sweetly pretty, and fascinating in her manners, and has been often heard to boast that she rarely failed securing a lover in any man she marked to become such, even were he engaged to another. Indeed, my friend Mrs. M. told me of an instance that came under her own observation, in which a plain but excellent young woman was engaged to a

gentleman, and bade fair to be comfortably settled. She was, I believe, a governess, and had a widowed mother depending on her daughter's salary for her support. In the prospect of settling, and obtaining a happy home for her lone parent, she gave up her situation, and was, but for Ellen Trevor's whim, to have been married in a few weeks; but the cruel, heartless girl did as she said, — won a heart she cared not for, and broke that of a pious, dutiful daughter; for the poor girl was ardently attached to him; she was pledged to —. Mrs. M. said the acquaintance was never resumed, but that the young lady returned to the family she left, but sadly changed: her spirits became depressed, and, from what I could gather, her heart was well nigh broken. However, she had a strong sense of religion, and, it is to be hoped, would soon see the folly of grieving for one so undeserving her esteem and regard. Let me hear from you soon, saying how you are; and believe me, my dear Anna,

Your affectionate

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

You say, in one of your last letters, there is one of your studies in particular that you will gladly take up again; and that is astronomy. It certainly is a science that calls forth the most sublime feelings. I do not mean the more abstruse parts, but the general principles and theories. What a feeling is excited even in viewing the starry firmament! With what reverential conceptions of the Deity is the heart filled! and when, by a little study, we find all those glorious bodies are governed by certain and immutable laws, and that all is order and regularity, how is that reverence increased! Then, to consider their distances and magni-

tudes, and see with what unerring precision their periodical revolutions are performed! How do we see the work of God in all its splendor and magnificence, yes, in all its perfection too! For, trace him where we will, we find no flaw in his works; no irregularity meets the eye; no casualty is dreamt of, that can interrupt the order that pervades the whole. Who can observe all this, and not exclaim with Young, —

“An undevout astronomer is mad”?

Again, remarking on the countless years these stupendous orbs have gone their circling rounds, he cries, —

“What arm, Almighty! put these wheeling globes
In motion, and wound up the vast machine?
Who rounded in his palms these spacious orbs,
And bowled them flaming through the dark profound?”

You cannot, my dear Anna, contemplate any of the celestial phenomena, without feelings that seem to exalt your very nature. The more wonderful and incomprehensible they are, the more is our veneration increased. How can we view the fleet, eccen-

the comet darting through space with a velocity that almost mocks our vision, without increased awe! and yet, eccentric and mysterious though it be, this, too, is governed by the same unerring law, and tells as plainly of an Almighty God. In many respects, our conjectures are vague and uncertain; still even the returns of these strange visitants may be calculated and accurately foretold. Oh, how wonderful are the works of the Almighty! What are the boasted efforts of man to these, great though they be? See what they become after the lapse of ages! Crumbled to the dust. Look at the structures that, century after century, have been the admiration of mankind, and seemed for a while to defy the hand of time, eventually yielding to its power, and hardly leave enough to tell their former grandeur. As the work of man, doubtless they have been great. But how are they lost in contemplating those of God, which astronomy presents! Yet, strange to say, how many are there who gaze on the beautiful scene, regardless of the Hand that called them into being! How many countless ages have

these bright orbs shone on in undiminished splendor!

Let us come nearer home, and mark the solar system. See the central sun and the planetary tribe, all in regular motion, performing their stated duties. How absurd would he be deemed, who should for one moment doubt their periodical returns, or suppose that any but atmospheric causes should prevent our noticing their accurately regulated movements! We never doubt the return of the seasons, never speak of or calculate on moonlight at the new moon; for we know that then we see not her borrowed brightness. We are, however, certain, that, at the stated period fixed by God, we shall see her in all her chastened brilliancy. Cannot the school-girl, by a simple problem, tell with unerring precision the very moment when the beauteous Orion, or any other bright constellation, will shine resplendent in the zenith? Do not eclipses, long foretold, occur exactly at the moment predicted? How true, and yet how incomprehensible, are these things to our capacities! And because they are too great and

infinite for our finite understandings, dare we question the wisdom and goodness of God? And because his ways are past man's finding out, shall the scoffer and infidel dare presumptuously to doubt them?

We have undeniable proof that all these bodies are governed by unerring laws; but beyond this all is conjecture. That they are wonderfully beautiful we know, and, as the pious Addison says, are —

“For ever singing, as they shine,
The Hand that made us is divine.”

Oh, what sublime reflections does even a moderate knowledge of astronomy give rise to! Take but a few glances through a telescope, and you will be lost in wonder and delight. You will need no other inducement to follow up this lovely science. In contemplating its phenomena, how are we carried away beyond the petty cares of this world! Will the mind, that finds pleasure in tracing God in these glorious works, stoop to the meaner feelings of our natures? Surely not. I always augur much good from any of the young, whom I see fond of

astronomy ; for, whatever the frame of mind they begin in, they must, as they progress, become better ; for one cannot even write on these subjects without increased feelings of awe and adoration.

You speak much of liking it, but do not say what progress you have made ; but if you have only at school *thoroughly* learnt that part which constitutes the use of the globes, you have laid a fair foundation to pursue it further upon.

Of course, natural philosophy has formed part of your rudimental study. You must not consider you have done much in the way of completing your education, if you are ignorant of a science that elucidates the laws of nature, and makes us acquainted with some most interesting facts connected with those laws. You will, by studying it, learn the properties of matter, and with it the principles of gravity ; all bearing on your favorite study of astronomy, &c. But I cannot enlarge on these interesting subjects. Pursue them ; and you will find, in so doing, a self-reward, and be led on from one pleasing and useful subject to another, till your

mind will be enlarged, your feelings improved; and, instead of the thoughtless votary of fashion and gayety, you will soon be the well-informed, rational young woman, understanding that the true end of existence is to try and daily become wiser, better, and more useful in the world. — Farewell, and believe me, my dear Anna,

Your affectionate

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

FRIENDSHIP, I think, is generally understood by the young to mean a confidential intimacy with another. There is a social, sympathetic feeling in us, that naturally draws us to those with whom we are associated, whether we are in our homes or at school. As friendship springs from our best feelings, it may necessarily be supposed to, and really does, give a strong color to our future lives; consequently, it exercises a powerful influence on the character. As it generally, like many other great results, springs from small beginnings, you must be careful to know the habits and disposition of your youthful associates, ere you attach

yourself to them. How many owe almost the whole of their future destiny to the intimacies they form in early years! It is a very erroneous but common idea to fancy, that, in youthful friendship, there must be confidential communications; and that, if you do not make them, you do not fulfil its requirements, or if you are not the recipient of such from those you deem friends, you infer that they do not love you, consequently they cannot trust you. Such should remember that, so young, you cannot have many, if any, secrets of your own to impart; and must, therefore, do what in *strict justice* you have no right to do,—tell those of your family. If it is their faults, they should be sacred to your own bosom; if it is their plans of business, you betray a trust; if you suspect or really have discovered a sister or brother, or any other relative, having matrimonial prospects opening upon them, delicacy and honor alike forbid you to talk or write on these matters. Besides, those of your own age have rarely that maturity of judgment necessary either to advise with you or to guide your actions. But this is

not to hinder you from forming an attachment to any girl of your own age, whose manners and principles are approved by your family. Many of the friends of early years become highly valuable through life, and to whom we owe not only our happiest hours, but the improvement of our best feelings. If any youthful associate has the moral courage to tell you of your faults, or to refuse from principle to join you in any plan for amusement or gratification, appreciate her candor, and cultivate her affection; for she who does this, bids fair to become a valuable friend through life. This honesty must be mutual: if, like you, she desires to continue the cultivation of her mind, you may congratulate yourself on having found one likely eventually to prove a friend indeed. The more equal your standing in the world, the better chance of deriving advantage from the connection; as one who owed much to your generosity or benevolence might rather flatter than reprove or reason with you, if she saw you wrong; and one far above you might make you feel this superiority. But, perhaps, you may

argue, Not, if she be a real friend. I answer, yes, my dear Anna; for, though it may dispel the youthful illusion that supposes a friend perfect, it is highly necessary that you not only *know* but *remember*, perfection belongs not to human nature, and you must not expect it. You must be prepared to find your friend subject to as many imperfections as yourself; but, if she have the requisites I have before enumerated, you must be satisfied and thankful. There are many you may esteem, who may in several points be any thing but eligible as intimates. There may be those in whom you see *much* to love, who may be very amiable in disposition, and who, if properly brought up, would have turned very valuable characters, whom it would be hardly *safe* to be much with, inasmuch as they are totally regardless of those outward observances which the world exacts, and which, if neglected, subject you to severe animadversion. You will, as you mix in the world, meet amid the young some that you cannot afford to be on terms of intimacy with, because they have perhaps, from mere thoughtless-

ness, incurred not only the world's dread laugh, but its unqualified censure also. From these you must keep aloof, but you must not add one iota to the blame or obloquy that attaches to them; for, in many instances, the world draws its conclusions, not only hastily, but wrongly. And these thoughtless ones, relying on not deserving all they hear is said of them, set the opinions of it at defiance, and pursue the same unthinking course. And this, let me tell you, is every way wrong. It is, to say the least of it, setting a bad example.

If, in matters of moment involving principle, public opinion should go against you, you must unshrinkingly do your duty, and leave it to time to do you justice. If the whole tenor of your conduct be propriety, you will soon live down any injurious conclusions. If unjustly aspersed, bear with what may be permitted for some wise purpose. Should such be the case, you will, like the moon when shadowed by a cloud, shine brighter when it has passed over. No station is so high, no power so great, no character so unblemished, as to exempt us

from the attacks of malice or envy ; and though, as I said before, you must not set the opinion of the world at naught, you must bear in mind its decrees are not infallible, or always founded in justice.

Let me entreat you rather to try and extenuate than blame those who thoughtlessly have run counter to public opinion, for they are doubtlessly not deserving half the censure they incur ; and it is greatly to be lamented, that they should so totally disregard what is said, and lay themselves so open to remark. Indeed, I have known some even purposely act with seeming folly, just, to use their own expression, "to set people talking." With regard to yourself, in whatever friendships you form, try to do good to those you attach yourself to ; remember how all-powerful is influence either for good or for bad, and how much you may have to answer for, as those you associate with become better or worse by your example. The historic page offers bright examples of friendship ; and, to the honor of human nature, we see many beautiful instances in every-day life. But, alas ! how many a pro-

prising youth, who bids fair to become a shining member of society, and who had set out in life with excellent principles, a good disposition, humane, charitable, and generous, kind to their friends and amiable to all around them; and yet often have all these fair appearances been blasted merely through forming a friendship with a bad character, whose example and influence have been so great that the very individuals, who promised in the outset to be such blessings to their families and the world in general, have sunk so low as to be a burden and disgrace. Here I am speaking of the opposite sex; but the principle holds good with females also. Never form a friendly bond with a girl who shows the slightest levity in religious matters; for, if her mind be not imbued with religion, she is no fit companion for you.

But judge no one harshly; pity those in your inmost heart, who foolishly and rashly incur public odium. Take it for granted,—and you may safely do so,—that people are not half so bad as they are represented to be; and, though you must not be intimate,

be very sure there are many extenuating circumstances, in almost every instance, of which those who delight in speaking ill of their fellow-beings will not take note. How strange that it should be so, and how contradictory too! Yet so it is; and, as you mix in the world, you will find that many, who, with seeming delight, dwell, nay, enlarge, on the faults of others, are yet among the very first to relieve distress, and will readily forego any personal gratification to soothe and assist the sick, and alleviate, if possible, the suffering of their friends and neighbors. This shows the necessity of what I have before said, as to keeping a guard over the tongue; since, when given way to, it will cause you involuntarily to err, as those I have mentioned undoubtedly do. I am no advocate for that selfishness which would shut up our hearts, as it were, in ourselves and for ourselves; but I think we do not fulfil the requirements of our natures, if we do not delight in social intercourse and the exchange of friendly offices. It was wisely intended by God, who created us, to be dependent on each other; and, when we

have been so circumstanced as to need and receive the sympathy and aid of our own fellow-beings, how grateful we feel, and how we long to reciprocate the kindness they may have shown us! With what heartfelt delight do we welcome a friend from whom we have been separated some time! and if in a foreign land we meet a countryman, though he may be a perfect stranger, still, away from home, and it may be alone, how do we feel drawn towards him by feelings we cannot account for!

All I would urge on you is, care in forming intimacies; for, as I before said, there are many with whom we may exchange kind offices, with whom it would be dangerous to associate much. And there are many whom we may really esteem, and yet various causes may exist which forbid more than friendly and occasional intercourse. Again, a young girl must not yield to impulse, and attach herself to another, merely because she has a pleasing manner, and, it may be, ready wit, with a great flow of spirits. All these fascinate the young, and tend much to preclude the due exercise of judgment, parti-

cularly if she be at all insidious ; and many a guileless heart is thus entrapped, as it were, into a friendship that can be productive of no good, but which may do much harm. If any, who profess to be a friend, flatter you constantly, suspect her sincerity, and be on your guard ; watch and see if any motive of self-interest be likely to influence her. Mark the principles by which she is actuated, and narrowly watch her general conduct. But, be it what it may, lose no opportunity that may present itself, of doing her good ; on no account, side with her on any point that is wrong. Never give your opinion dictatorially, but with sincerity and mildness ; give your reasons quietly, and have done with the matter. This determination to act up to what you deem right is soon understood, and may save you much temptation to do wrong.

It is with friendship as with love : a young girl forms a beau ideal, which she invests with every, or at least with many, perfections. This she carries in her mind ; and the first young companion she meets who pleases her, she fancies possesses all that

she thinks desirable in a friend. She gives this friend credit for being far more perfect and free from faults than poor humanity could possibly admit of, and is often disappointed to find the being she has set up very far from what she expected. But this error, time will soon cure, and dispel the youthful illusion, and you will find perfection appertains to no mortal breathing, and vainly do we expect it. But you will find many, who, though not free from faults, are yet safe friends, on whose judgment you may rely, and on whose opinion you may put great reliance; but never depend on one whose principles you doubt. Always act cautiously, remembering that human nature is frail and erring; and forget not that there is "a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." That Friend secured, you may go to at all times; whatever the emergency, and whatever the doubt, lay your trouble at his feet, and you will be counselled rightly. That you may be able to go to him in humble confidence is the sincere prayer of, my dear Anna,

Your affectionate

LETTER IX.

MY DEAR ANNA,—

THERE is one thing which you may smile to hear me name as a part of education, and that is, *presence of mind*; and that it is a most essential qualification I think nobody will gainsay, and one which will add most materially to your usefulness to your fellow-beings; and that certainly is, or should be, one of the great objects of education. In short, presence of mind is, say what you will, a most indispensable and desirable qualification. I am aware that it is generally considered the result of temperament, but it is wrong to consider it so; and, were we to allow it, it would be deviating from what I have all along so anxiously insisted

on, — that your duty must result from that discipline of the mind, which leads us to act from principle. What infinite mischief may arise from the want of it, and what an amount of suffering to ourselves and others may be prevented by a little presence of mind! Often think how you would act, how you should act, in such and such an emergency. It is not the time to do this, when any evil occurs, and calls for a prompt remedy. How very many calamities and casualties might be averted, and how much suffering mitigated, by a little foresight and a little forethought! In case of accident, how much a cool, collected person may do in moments of imminent danger! Human sympathy is so strong that people are often re-assured, in the greatest peril, by seeing another so. Here, again, must this, like every other good thing we acquire, be brought to the grand touchstone, — religion. For what can possibly induce this feeling so much as a firm reliance on God? If this be a living principle in the individual, presence of mind must surely follow; for we cannot possibly be so distressed or alarmed, whatever the

danger, when there is an all-pervading sense of God's over-ruling providence; because, feeling this, what coolness and energy must result! If there is no fear of the evil, how freely can we act! It is very necessary too, to complete your usefulness, to understand simple remedies, and their application. How many females are burnt to death, because through fright they go the very way to add to the flames that may have caught their dress, instead of taking measures to extinguish them! How may a speedily-applied styptic to an amputated limb, or other like casualty, save an hemorrhage when it has recommenced bleeding, and no medical aid is at hand! How many have been suffocated, who would have been saved had they known that simply extending themselves on the floor, and crawling along, would have prevented this! How often has the cool, determined courage and intrepidity of a single and apparently helpless woman warded off burglary, and probably murder! I cannot now recollect the particulars, for it was told me in early youth; but the nerve and determination of an offi-

cer's wife saved herself, her husband, and one or two little ones; and not only these, but the poor Irish family where they were sheltered. It was in the time of the Irish Rebellion; and I think he was in a militia regiment then called out: indeed I now remember it was. But I will neither give the name of the corps nor himself, as there is no doubt the lady, though a delicate, feminine little woman, had done more credit to the sword than her husband, who, on this occasion, undoubtedly showed the white feather. It is my firm opinion, that the presence of mind which results from religious principle almost renders a person invulnerable, and invincible too. The consciousness of God's providential care makes them courageous, and induces people to consider them proof, as it were, against the effect of accident. We are every moment ~~of our~~ lives subject to some casualty or other, or called on to witness them in others, when a collected manner is of the greatest service, and may, if it do not prevent the mischief altogether, save the most serious results.

It is so weak and selfish, nay, so wicked,

to yield to our feelings, and thus bring on what a little presence of mind would save. I might bring many instances from history, both ancient and modern, to prove what presence of mind has enabled its possessor to do; and need go no farther than our own brave and lamented Wellington, in whom it was a living principle, and to which he probably owed his unparalleled success. But I wish to bring it to every-day life. For in every instance do trifles make the sum of human things; so may this valuable acquirement greatly lessen the aggregate of human evils, or, rather, of sorrow and suffering. I must confess I am often annoyed at the injudicious conduct of females in cases of accident, where, instead of soothing the sufferer, and restraining their own feelings, they give way to them, not only in a childish but a most unchristianlike manner; and, by weeping and wailing, add greatly to the critical state of those whose distressed state they may deplore.

I have said enough, my dear Anna, to convince you of the full value and necessity of having presence of mind, without which

your power of usefulness must be greatly circumscribed. I have also shown you that it should emanate from a consciousness of the over-ruling providence of God; since they who possess this confidence cannot, in any distress or emergency, feel as they who trust in an arm of flesh. That you may persevere in this path of duty, looking up to and acting under his Almighty care, is the prayer of, my dear Anna,

Your affectionate

LETTER X.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

I THINK, from all I have said, you will see, that, whatever advantages you may have received at school, there is much left for you to do yet. And when we consider how subject all are to reverses of fortune, even the most affluent, and remember the precarious tenure by which we hold every earthly good, we shall find all education incomplete that does not teach us the means, should they be required, of self-support. The sons of a family, whatever be their expectations, are always provided with a profession; but not so the daughters, who are too frequently brought up as worse than useless, rarely prepared for self-support; and this

perhaps renders them still more thoughtless than they would otherwise be to the various contingencies and stern realities of life. Let me, therefore, entreat you not to forget that although, at present, you may see no chance of being called on for self-exertion, as a means of support, that there are so many mutations and fluctuations in life, so many changes arising from causes over which you may have no control, and yet must feel the influence of. I hope to see you determined on being prepared for such a change; looking forward, as I before observed, to life as a field for duty. The consciousness of possessing means of self-support, and thus rendering yourself under any circumstances independent, will not only give you self-respect, but cause you to be respected by others. Whatever, therefore, may have been deficient in your rudimental acquirements, seek to remedy it by diligent application: this will give you one respectable mode of independence. To be able to instruct thoroughly and faithfully will give you great advantages under any trying reverse. We read much, and hear

more, of ladies not being duly appreciated, who take on them the responsible charge of governess. This may, in some few instances, be the case ; but I trust they prove the exceptions, and not the rule. For, rely on it, a conscientious discharge of her duties, a pleasing capability of imparting instruction, and a certain degree of self-respect, will assuredly command confidence and esteem that will ensure kind treatment, and often high consideration, toward a governess in a family. It is a delightful feeling to know you are not a burthen to your friends ; but how gratifying when by our exertions we can perhaps soothe the declining years of a parent, or, it may be, aid in the support of a family of younger brothers and sisters ! Rely on it, " Knowledge is power."

* I have recently seen an excellent example in a young lady, a very youthful character, who has had to act a mother's part to several younger sisters ; and, to fulfil this responsible position, she in a most praiseworthy manner declines all pleasure that interferes in this commendable duty. Nay, I have been told that her self-denial is such

that she will not let any self-enjoyment lead her to tax her remaining parent, who would often, to promote her happiness, take charge of his motherless younger girls, that she may enjoy herself, which she rarely permits. A girl who will act thus is doubtless capable of much self-denying energy, and would never be wanting in duty, whatever it might be. I do not know her intimately, but understand her father is justly proud of his daughter.

What a bright example of the line of duty I would here enforce is Miss Mitford! Who can sufficiently admire her self-denying efforts to support the declining years of her aged father, and even to liquidate his debts? To do this, she had recourse to her pen, not for display, not from a desire of celebrity, but for the pious purpose of solacing her parent. She has attained a never-dying fame. But this greatness was unsought, and was thrust on her; and with her name as a beautiful writer will ever be blended the remembrance of her filial piety. She has lately published what in all probability has been her last effort with her pen, as she

is now herself bowed down with infirmity and years. We may pity her for her bodily pain; but, doubtless, in such a character, every earthly trial is so sanctified that it becomes a blessing, working out for her an eternal and exceeding weight of glory hereafter.

The vicissitudes of life are such that we can none of us calculate on security in any earthly good, and more particularly in pecuniary matters; and therefore much mortification and misery might be saved, perhaps to whole families, were young ladies brought up and educated with a view to self-support. I remember, in my early years, the family of a respectable tradesman, who, living in comparative affluence, were by his sudden death reduced to apparent poverty. He left eight children, some very young; the eldest son I know was so; but his widow, a woman of strong religious feeling and of an energetic character, though she knew nothing of the business, rose superior to her trials, and determined to see what her efforts would do. She knew in whom she trusted, and, to the admiration of all who

knew her, diligently applied herself, and learned sufficient of her husband's trade to support her family in credit and respectability, till her son was educated, and fit to take and conduct it. I will not name what it was; but, let it suffice to say, it required great vigilance, as, were the workmen so inclined, a wide scope offers for peculation. It is so long ago that I have but an imperfect recollection of any thing but the noble feeling and energy of the bereaved one, whose conduct was the talk of the whole country. I need not say how beautifully she realized the promise given by God to help the widow and fatherless. This anecdote is a fact, and took place at least forty-eight years ago. And, in the very same town, I remember a physician's widow and several daughters, who, for want of the ability and energy to exert themselves, and who had not the moral courage to work, deeming it derogatory to the husband and father's memory and position as a professional man. However, they were reduced to the most abject misery, begging often from door to door of such as knew them. Now, without

even many advantages of education, a little energy surely might have averted such degradation ; and, had these poor girls been early taught to become independent, how much more respectable had they been ! I cannot now remember what had been the prospects of the father in his lifetime, as they were thus reduced when I first knew them. Their tale, though melancholy, is not an exaggerated one ; and I fear it is that of hundreds. Let these *facts* — for *they are* really such — be an incentive to you to prepare yourself for any reverses that may occur. Forgive me for again reminding you, that, whatever the position of the individual, “ Knowledge is power.” It is no less strange than true, that persons of superior attainments are generally accorded a degree of respect and good feeling. If a well-educated man or woman attain distinction, their elevation seems a natural consequence of superior education ; and you do not hear the remarks that are called forth, when one of ignorant mind and vulgar habits is raised in life. And I have often heard it remarked, that, if a young man in a higher grade of

life joins a ship's crew, there is not the slightest deference accorded to his former position. His white hands and refined habits have no effect on the jack-tars by whom he is surrounded ; but, if he be well-educated, there is a tacit deference paid to his attainments, that no wealth could buy. How very often has a female, who experiences a reverse in life, been compelled to take a very subordinate situation, because in her early years she neglected the advantages before her !

Begin, then, to render yourself independent now, and acquire habits that may make any diminution of attendants or means not felt. Do every thing for yourself that you possibly can. Learn to make every thing you wear ; but I would not have you always do it, as you can afford to have it done, and you would thereby take from the earnings of those who may be putting the very principle in practice I have been urging and advocating. It is better to give employment, and pay fairly for it, than money ; and you should try and employ, in preference, any who you know are working hard from

a laudable motive. I have frequently been grieved to see the wealthy display their thrift and industry in things that would have encouraged industrious poverty, and cheered perhaps more than one sinking heart. I wish we oftener recollected how easily this may be done, as it would so greatly enlarge our sphere of real usefulness. Depend on it, there is more real benevolence in doing this than actually giving. But I have said enough to show you the advantage of possessing this feeling of independence, and encouraging it in others. I therefore close my letter, remaining, my dear Anna,

Your sincere and affectionate

LETTER XI.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

I MUST take advantage of the present opportunity to say a few words on a subject I feel to be a very delicate one; and, though it is a task I hardly feel competent to direct you in, yet I cannot pass it entirely over. Much has been written on it by others, it is true; but it never appeared to me with any great advantage to the young, since a female has only a sort of negative power of action, — I mean in the selection of a husband. Unless very peculiarly situate, much choice rarely falls to a woman's lot. She has merely the power of rejecting any who offer, with whom she feels she could not be happy; and certainly, with

whatever feeling she might regard the immoral or wicked character, she will deem it a positive duty to decline any intimacy; much less a near connection for life, with such a one.

Marriage is, after all, quite a lottery; for there are so many adjuncts to happiness, not exactly depending on good or bad principles of an individual, that it behooves a girl not only to pause and consider, but prayerfully to seek direction from on high. The affections are so gradually worked upon and won, that, in nine cases out of ten, inclination leaves judgment in the background, and a girl blindly yields to what she erroneously believes to be fate. Of this, my dear Anna, be well assured, that she, who confidently prays for the divine blessing and guidance on her decision, can never make a wrong one. She will surely be directed rightly, however she may fancy herself unworthy the mercy she supplicates; yet, if she do it in heartfelt sincerity, she has nothing to fear; for has not the blessed Saviour said, "*Ask, and ye shall receive*"? Oh! well would it be for us all, in every

difficulty, to go in humble trust, and lay our trouble before our God.

Let me here entreat you, whether married or single, to beware of coquetry. Never, for the sake of gratifying your vanity, lead a man to think you will accept him, when you have not the slightest intention of doing so. How many, both married and single, in the thoughtless buoyancy of their spirits, trifle with and wound the feelings of a too sensitive lover or husband, perhaps totally unconscious of the misery they inflict! This conduct is equally culpable in a wife, or in her who expects to become one. In either, it is equally despicable, equally beneath her. A right-minded woman will think no sacrifice of vanity too great to spare him she loves a pang. A female of lively disposition ought carefully and prayerfully to watch over herself, and remember what construction may be put upon her conduct, not only by the world at large, but by the very individual who may seem gratified and amused by the preference shown him. And small would be the triumph, could she but hear the bitter and sarcastic remarks that

circulate perhaps over a cigar by two or three favored beings, who perhaps have fluttered round these thoughtless ones the whole evening, regardless of, because unconscious of, the censure they may be incurring. How very many there are who act thus foolishly, who do not mean to do wrong; and would shrink from such conduct, were they not led on by thoughtless impulse! And who is it they thus annoy by such a line of conduct? Whose feelings are thus wounded? A mere casual acquaintancé?—an indifferent person? No: he they have sworn to honor and obey through life, in weal or woe, sickness or sorrow, riches or poverty. Oh! if such unthinking beings could but hear the remarks of the husband who is spared this trial, and who is probably gratified by the tacit deference exemplified in his more happy choice, they would not be very proud of these temporary conquests.

Should you have a kind and affectionate husband, never pain his bosom by slighting him, or showing pleasure at the attention of others. Never give him cause to reproach

you with the slightest levity. Do not think a great flow of spirits an excuse; because *principle*, not *temperament*, must be the basis of action. Right-minded conduct must be the result of moral effort, for that will always lead you to act rightly.

I have written more on this subject than I otherwise should, because in earlier years, when I mixed in society, I saw much of this, and frequently observed many carried away by an almost uncontrollable *gaieté de cœur* to the very verge of impropriety, who had not a thought of wrong. Though there is great nicety in drawing the line, yet the proper demarcation can always be traced by principle. It is said, "By others' faults, the wise correct their own." Do you, my dear Anna, turn this pithy adage to account, and make your own observation with a view to self-correction; but, mind, not acrimoniously to gratify the lover of scandal by talking of and enlarging upon what you see. Perhaps I shall advise you better, by telling you to mark and closely copy those whose pleasing and lively manners are chastened by proper control. I would not see the

young gloomy or reserved in company, I would have you always cheerful, and wish you to feel kindly to all around you, considering your enjoyment of the social evening like an oasis in the desert; and I would have this feeling of pleasure enhanced by the remembrance that no duty is left undone. It generally happens, that, unless all about us are well, we do not join the festive throng; but, however we enjoy ourselves, we must not forget, that, as in the midst of life we are in death, so in our happiest, gayest moments, are we incident to trouble and misfortune. How ought all this to chasten our mirth and hilarity! O my dear-girl! how far more delightful a feeling may be ours, should we have foregone the scenes of social enjoyment and pleasure to soothe the afflicted! and thankful am I to say, that many, very many, whom we would deem selfish and thoughtless, are, when sickness or sorrow calls for their sympathy and efforts, all kindness and self-denial; which shows how the world judges from appearances, and how frequently we may be wrong in our conclusions. Notwithstanding

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which, we must not affect altogether to despise it.

I will here, my dear Anna, add a few observations on dress and general expenditure. You cannot, will not, I trust, suppose any remarks I make personal, because I have not the opportunity of knowing whether they are needed or not; and therefore I shall touch on every subject on which my observations are likely to be useful; trusting from your letters you fully appreciate my motives, and desire me to continue my hints. In dress, a woman whose mind is well regulated, will always be guided by circumstances: for what may be imprudence in one may be perfectly right in another; and what parsimony in one, prudential economy in another. One thing is very certain: it is highly sinful in any woman to dress beyond her means. Finery is always out of place, and all extremes of fashion should be avoided. A true gentlewoman will never be conspicuous in her appearance, and will always conform to the wishes of her father or husband. In this you can never be too particular, as your very religious principles

may become involved or called in question. If your husband wishes, and he can afford it, that you should be well dressed, you are bound to make such an appearance as will satisfy him ; but on no account, if his income be limited. If such be the case, you may, by management, neatness, and economy, make a respectable appearance at a trifling expense. There are a hundred little ingenious contrivances and industrious resources to effect this, in the reach of all.

A single woman, of narrow means, who tries to appear dressed beyond what she can afford, shows very bad taste, and bad policy too ; for it may seriously militate against her settling for life, as no man of sense will marry a woman who does it. I have often heard young men, speaking on this subject, remark of a young lady, that she seemed a nice girl, but was too fond of dressing expensively to suit either his taste or income. And this has been said of girls who had not the slightest expectation of carrying one penny to a husband. This overweening fondness for dress is considered by men to

be a principle that may be carried out generally, and pervade the whole management of a house and table, and not merely confined to decoration of the person. Whatever you do, never try to compete with any one in expense and show, however ample your fortune. Have things suitable to your means, but rise superior to the petty desire of having a more expensive gown or a more elaborately manufactured piece of furniture than your neighbor. Be neat and regular in your habits. You little know how difficult it is to acquire these, unless you begin early. Custom, indeed, in this is second nature. Orderly habits may well be ranked among the minor virtues. You cannot, indeed, — you cannot realize the annoyance that follows the want of them, or judge what deep feelings of regret and self-reproach follow a neglect of them in early years. It often has grieved me to see the lavish expenditure of some females, who have been brought up in habits of strict economy, but, marrying men in affluent circumstances, have made themselves ridiculous by launching into every extravagance. How often does a

thoughtless wife take advantage of a too indulgent husband's generosity, and run into boundless expense! and, by so doing, frequently lead him into pecuniary difficulties, abusing both his affection and his confidence, which are probably so great as to overcome that moral courage which should prompt him to restrain her folly. But she who does this is any thing but a helpmate. What could be expected of such a one, should a reverse of fortune occur? Could she be, as in duty bound, the affectionate soother of a husband's care? Will she cheerfully succumb to circumstances, and delicately, without murmuring, submit to trial and privation? I would not recommend you to marry, without a competency on one side or the other; but, if an unexpected change for the worse should come afterwards, *then* I trust you will show yourself noble and energetic, making every effort and sacrifice that prudence demands. How very much a woman, under such circumstances, may do! How often has she set an example that has roused the sinking spirits of her

husband, and made him true to himself, enabling him to retrieve his affairs, and go on smoothly the rest of his life! And how frequently does a man, whose affection has weakened his moral courage, go on till his very principles of integrity and honor become involved! because he fears to tell a thoughtless and extravagant wife, to whom he is perhaps fondly attached, that she must retrench her expenditure, and give up those luxurious habits and indulgences that have become almost necessary to her existence, at least to her happiness. And, when the gathering cloud shall break, how will she act? To what distressing and fruitless repinings will she not give way? How will she unman him whom she should help to bear up in the hour of trial and misfortune? But how does that woman command our respect, who, in the hour of trouble, rises superior to it; who casts off every selfish feeling, resolved to try and lighten the burden that has fallen on her husband! No matter what the cause which has led to these trials, she remembers, that, when she

went to the altar, she vowed unconditionally, whether in sickness or health, riches or poverty, to share his lot through life.

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Your affectionate

LETTER XII.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

WHEN I first addressed you, I did not intend adverting so largely as I have done to your probable future position as a wife; but I have unavoidably been led to do so, because, although I hope you have some few years before you, ere you take on you the cares and responsibility of the married state, still, woman's duties through life are so blended and connected in one grand link, and bear so strongly on one another, that my advice seems incomplete without doing so; and I appear to leave you where you most need a friendly hand.

It too often happens that, when a young woman is what is deemed well settled for

life, it is thought that every thing is done ; that is to say, when she is married to a man in a certain station in society, well able to support her comfortably, likely to be indulgent and kind, with all the little et ceteras comprised in the common acceptation of the term, "well settled." And certainly these are important points, and such as call for great thankfulness, not only in a parent, but in a wife so situate. But this is not all that is essential to her happiness. Once a woman is married, her whole existence often changes, and takes a color from her altered position ; and it is highly necessary it should be so, unless it involves high principles, as she is bound to try and assimilate her taste to that of her husband ; and I have often known very bad effects result when such is not the case, and a woman affects indifference to his wishes, or annoys him by direct opposition to them in things of really no moment whatever. How often has this uncourteous manner led to a bitterness of feeling most inimical to domestic happiness ! and this not unfrequently arises from a foolish wish to appear independent. Sometimes it ema-

nates from temper, on which I have already offered a few hints, and pointed out the evils of a contradictory spirit. I have often seen an affectionate husband mortified beyond measure, when in gladness of heart he has proposed some little scheme or plan he thought would please and gratify his wife, and he has met, not only a cold indifference, but absolute ill-temper. This, to say the least of it, is not only most ungrateful, but injudicious too; for surely it can be no effort to feel pleased and gratified, where every thing is thus done solely to promote your happiness. I must think it a duty, even if such be not cared for by you, to be pleased at such proof of affection. Enter into a moderate enjoyment of amusement, if such be a husband's wish; for, if he really love his wife, he will always be glad to have her with him, and it is of great importance that she be associated in all his enjoyments. But the *juste milieu*, so requisite in all things, is particularly so here. Extremes are always bad. Enter, then, with zest into every innocent gaiety in which he delights. Drive him not from his

home by morose and gloomy moods; be careful never to make a harsh or indifferent reply. Ever receive him with good humor; and, whatever your annoyances in domestic arrangements, beware of having a string of grievances to relate when he comes in. Never appear annoyed, should he unexpectedly bring in a friend: never be too busy to amuse them. If fond of music, let your piano be ever open, and his favorite piece on it.

But, to enable you to promote his happiness, you must economize your time, and rather lessen that you devote to the world than the portion that is your husband's due; for his claims are paramount to all others. If he is oppressed with a multiplicity of business, can you do nothing to relieve him? Many women are capable of *much* in this way; but this greatly depends on a man's feelings. To some it would be a gratifying proof of affection; others would dislike it. This a little tact would soon enable you to find out. Should he wish to leave his busy office, and transact a little business quietly in his house, you will take

care no idle gossip or unnecessary interruptions disturb him. If the cloud of anxiety overhang his brow, it may be as well not to notice it at first ; but should you observe it day after day, then have no hesitation in striving to learn the cause. It is astonishing what relief, in a quiet, delicate way, a sensible woman may afford ; but it must be a woman who has won the *respect* and esteem, as well as love, of her husband, — one of whose judgment he has a high opinion.

If he be a man of buoyant spirits, and he find not cheerfulness in his own home, he will seek it elsewhere, and independent of it. Therefore, as a wife values her own happiness, let her beware of driving him to this. Pleasure is specious, and ever ready to spread her blandishments ; and let the young wife take care, if her husband's taste get thus perverted, that she do not by her conduct bring on this trial. Should such a one await her, let her be instant in prayer, and vigilant in effort, to recall her wanderer, but not with reproaches. If the evil continue instead of diminish, let her pray on, trust on, committing her way

unto God, who will assuredly bring it to pass.

If you are at all intelligent, and you have a husband who is scientific, how soon may you assimilate your taste with his, and find interest in his conversation and pursuits, ay, and pleasure too! His expanded mind will enlighten and enlarge yours; while your participating in his studies and feelings will increase his affection. What sources of real gratification will thus open to you! and if, by reading and reflection, you have become well informed and intellectual, your mind, thus prepared, will find as it were a fountain of enjoyment that the world dreams not of, — how superior to, and independent of, all those gratifications in which common minds delight!

One thing I would particularly urge on you. Never, in conversation with female friends, give utterance to any opinions your husband may have expressed. You cannot be too much guarded on this point. You may injure him seriously by not attending to it. You may tell me you cannot help differing, if your opinion does not coincide

with his. If you love him, it will be no difficult matter; and if you have taken care to marry a man who is your superior, and to whom you can look up,—and this every woman should do,—you cannot help gliding into his way of thinking. If, owing to circumstances over which you may not have had any control, you should be united to one you can neither regard as your superior nor look up to, you must not let the world into your secret, but, by treating him with respect, make others do so too. A little judicious conduct in this particular, if it do not remedy, will greatly lessen, the evil; but I hope you will, by a sensible choice, avoid this.

That God may direct you rightly, and that you may pray him to do so, is the fervent wish of,

My dear Anna,

Your affectionate

LETTER XIII.

MY DEAR ANNA, —

I HAVE now written you several letters, in which I have considered your position in many of the relations of life, and have, in them all, urged you to make religious principles the basis of action; for on no other foundation can we hope to raise the superstructure of happiness. We may receive the best advice; form the firmest resolves for moral conduct; and may perhaps, self-relying, do pretty well for a time: but how soon do we find our self-reliance fail us, and learn that of ourselves we can do nothing! The divine aid, and a strong sense of religion, can alone carry us through. We must remember that,

trifle as we may, and try hard as we can to forget it, the end of all earthly things is the grave; and that time will soon be lost in eternity.

I must here stop to give you the benefit of an extract I copied when young; but cannot recollect from whence, as I was in the habit of writing down any thing that struck me:—

“Recollect the purpose for which you were born, and, through the whole course of your life, look at its end; and consider, when that comes, in what you will put your trust. Not in the bubble of worldly vanity: it will be broken. Not in worldly pleasures: they will then be gone. Not in great connections: they cannot then serve you. Not in wealth; for you cannot carry it with you. Not in pride; for in the grave there is no distinction. Not in the remembrance of life spent in conformity to the silly fashions of a thoughtless world; but in a life spent righteously, soberly, and godly on this side the grave.”

You do not, my dear Anna, want to be told what religion is; for all its great and

important truths have been laid before you ; and you know that, compared with them, all other acquirements are nothing worth. All this, I am certain, you know ; and yet such is the human heart, that nothing but continual prayerfulness can keep you in the humble practice of its duties. The more earnest and sincere you are in religion, the more humble will you be. You know your position as a lost sinner, saved by the grace of God alone. You know that, do what you will, you cannot save yourself ; and knowing this, oh, let religion be an all-pervading principle ! See and feel God in every action of your life. Do not *talk* religion : *act* it, and let all around you see it your only comfort and stay in affliction, — your only hope in sickness or death. Let them also see, that, when blest with prosperity and health, it influences every action, and doubles, though it chastens, every pleasure. Of all the pleasing sights in life, none is so much so as that of a young person really serious and devout ; in the fullest sense of the word, walking with her God. Woman's influence is great in many, nay,

in most things; but in nothing is it so all-powerful as in religion. It may often operate silently and imperceptibly, but not less powerfully on that account. They who make no pretensions to it themselves will narrowly watch you, if you profess to be guided by its dictates; and if they see it an all-pervading, active principle, making you more devout and humble, more charitable and conscientious, and less selfish,—then may you hope to be, under the divine guidance, exerting a powerful influence for good; but if they see it has no effect upon your life,—no power upon your character,—should you be filled with spiritual pride and bitterness, unwilling to practise self-denial, hard in your judgments upon your fellow-creatures,—then will a powerful influence for evil have gone forth; and who shall say where it will stop? Influence never stands neutral; it is sure to be working for good or evil.

Let nothing induce you to think, because you are young, you have plenty of time before you. You may have many years, or you may not have a day. Look around,

and see how many, in early years, are hurried into eternity. Oh that we could realize that word in its awful, *never-ending* import! Religion, depend on it, is no matter of speculation; it is a stern and startling reality, not like other qualifications and acquirements that may or may not be called into play. It is an awful certainty, that our being ends not with time; but as the river flows on, and is lost in the ocean, so will time glide on, and merge into eternity. Start not, my dear girl, at this truth, though it is a fearful one: Are you afraid that religion will interrupt your pleasure, or damp your cheerfulness? It will do no such thing: it will enhance every enjoyment. Of all the lamentable sights I ever witnessed,—whether of suffering of the body, or of mental agony,—none ever caused such melancholy feelings as that of a clever woman with a darkened and perverted soul. I have rarely met such instances; but I grieve to say there are *some*. A woman destitute of religion is an anomaly in nature, and creates a feeling of horror that I can hardly express. It is

awful to see either man or woman destitute of religion ; but the latter seems, if possible, to be the more distressing spectacle.

It is in the hour of trial that we feel the true comfort and value of religion. See the bed of sickness, where it fills the heart of the sufferer ; how calmly resigned he is ! Mark the patient submission ; hear the hopeful and pious ejaculations. See the futility of wealth and worldly pleasures, compared with religion, in affording comfort at such an hour. Then turn to a similar scene of suffering, where no sense of piety has softened the path to the grave ; all, all, that is seen is a dread eternity and an angry God ; and then, again, at such a time, how unfitted are both body and mind to prepare for the awful change that awaits them !

If your religion be pure, how it will enable you to bear up yourself ! and how it will enable you to comfort others in their suffering !

Whatever you do, avoid controversy in religious matters. You do not, I trust, want strengthening in your faith. It is, I would hope, too firmly fixed to be shaken.

Should you ever find moments — and it is to be feared that at times we all do — when you feel more inclined to shake off than follow up serious impressions, do not yield to the feeling : fly to prayer and your Bible, and you will soon be in a better frame of mind.

There is one thing I must caution you about. We must be careful, when we pray, to do so rightly. We cannot expect an answer to prayer if we “ask amiss.” I had an important lesson on this. A person, who had lost two dear children in one week, wrote to a friend, who she well knew would sincerely sympathize with her. She said she had not been permitted to repine during their illness ; but had been enabled, instead of asking their lives, to pray for resignation to the divine will, whatever it might be. This friend, as was expected, did feel greatly for the bereaved mother ; but told her she might bless her God for giving her grace to beg submission to his will, instead of craving for the lives he saw fit to take. She wrote as follows : “You know my son Edward, and my daughter Margaret.

They were, in childhood, at death's door with scarlet fever. I felt it so hard to give them up, that I wearied Heaven with prayers that they might live; for they were every thing to me; and I prayed again and again, — oh, how fervently I prayed! — they might be spared; and they were granted to my prayer: but how often have I since thought, had I but said, 'Thy will, not mine, O Lord, be done,' what hours of suffering had I escaped! You know what they both are." Poor woman! I have often thought of her. The daughter was subject to epileptic fits, and the son was then running a fearful career of wickedness. What became of them I know not; but the daughter, then verging on forty, was incurable. Think of this, my dear Anna, and weigh it in your mind; and implore your God, that, in every emergency, you may have grace to bear whatever issue he may send to your trials. Young as you are, you must expect them; but by this means you can sanctify them to your eternal good.

If you are truly religious, you will never be too anxious about results; but, having

committed your trouble to God, in humble confidence trust in his mercy and goodness. We are frequently too anxious; and, instead of patiently waiting God's time, try to work things round ourselves; and, while we are vainly exerting our worldly wisdom, God sees fit, by some unexpected turn of providence, to bring all about, though by widely different means from what we expected. How very often we see this exemplified in the lives of individuals! Oh that we knew the *full* and *blessed* import of the word *trust*! how many overanxious and embittered hours would it save us! Look at the sickly parent, murmuring and worrying, too often, about those she must leave; instead of firmly trusting in Him who has promised to protect the helpless, and who is far more able, and fully willing, to supply the place of those he takes away. See the bereaved widow and her orphans, left apparently without any resource. See how a way is opened for them; how they are always provided for. "Leave thy fatherless children: I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me," saith God by his prophet Jeremiah.

And yet how frequent are the exclamations of surrounding friends! how many the fears expressed of the desolate condition of the bereaved ones! and yet how unnecessary all this anxiety and mistrust! for those deprived of nearer ties are ever the immediate objects of providential care. And if those left have been the objects of special trust and prayer, how will the faith of the departed bring back blessings on those left!

So you see the effects of piety will affect others beneficially as well as yourself. Remember the words of the Psalmist: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." And so sure is it that prayer, rightly offered, is surely answered. It may not be immediately; for it may not be for our good. Now do we often "cast our bread upon the water, to find it after many days." If we know that what we ask is right, and such a petition as we can carry to the throne of grace, let us keep on asking; for it is sure to be heard and answered.

You are, I think, naturally charitably dis-

posed. Be thankful that you are so, and that God has given you this disposition. Improve it as a talent committed to your care. Pray that you may rightly use it. But, oh, search well your heart in its exercise, and watch yourself, lest one alloying feeling mixes itself! - Pray that every impulse of charity may emanate from love of Him who tells us that not even a drop of cold water, offered in his name, is unaccepted or unnoticed by him. However humble the offering to a fellow-creature, you may always let a private ejaculation go up, unknown to all save God and yourself, and thus sanctify it to your own eternal good.

However limited the means of an individual, there will always be found plenty for the exercise of charity, if the heart be so inclined. There are so many ways open to the young for exercising it, that there is no excuse for its neglect. Oh, what a blessed gift is that of loving to do good!— a heavenly one that calls for our warmest gratitude. How very much can even a girl like you do, and in so many ways, besides

merely giving money! You can work for the poor; teach the poor; visit them; read to them; comfort them in sickness and sorrow. When they are thankful to you, you can point out whose grace directed you to them. You can make them understand that God saw and pitied them, and sent you; and that to him their thanks are due. And you can tell them they can show their sense of God's kindness to them, by trying, on their parts, to do good to others.

You will not, either, if truly religious, disregard charity in a more comprehensive sense. You will pray that it may so influence your heart, that it may lead you to forbearance for the faults of others. It will teach you to pluck the mote from your own eye, ere you try to remove the beam from that of your brother. You will put the most favorable construction on the conduct of others, and to judge no one harshly and severely but yourself.

You have so few claims on your time, that I hope you will always be ready to aid in any public charity, where the efforts of the young may be very beneficial; and the com-

bined efforts of many can do so much more than mere individual exertion; but this must not be at the expense of one home duty, one private claim. Here must an industrious economizing of time be again insisted on; proving what I have before maintained,—that our duties are all so linked one with another,—following and connecting with the other; for, if you waste your time, how can you spare any for the sacred purposes of charity? And here the young, whatever their pecuniary resources, may be rich. How many claims has a clergyman on the youthful portion of his congregation! and how greatly may his arduous and laborious duties be relieved by their co-operation! Reflect for a moment on what is required of him; then reflect on the claims he has on you. I think there is something beautiful in the tie between a conscientious, anxious clergyman and the youthful part of his congregation; and how, in aiding him in his good works, as well as listening to his teachings, may you be said to be travelling together onward and heavenward. In his Sunday School, you may be most efficient;

for here he must be assisted, and by active co-operation too. How many excellent plans may he form, which individual effort can never carry into execution! Will not their failure lie at your door? This good may be done in other ways than merely attending the Sunday School. In your daily walks, you may find several unfortunate little fellow-beings, perhaps cursing and swearing, whom you may tempt and lure to the Sunday teaching. A few kind words, — a little temporary relief, — and you may win the heart sufficiently to carry it, as it were, to your God. Contrast to him his or her present state to that which altered conduct may lead to; tell of the results of industry; promise to help and clothe him; and if a boy, and you have no suitable apparel, look round and see if you have no charitably disposed friend who has children, who will aid you in this. Many would bless God in their hearts for the opportunity you would thus give them of doing good. But here you must take care no lurking feelings of display or ostentation be the incentive to action. Make this a matter between you and your

God; for he alone reads and knows the heart. To him alone, therefore, you must be accountable.

As I before said, you never will have less claims on your time, or more golden opportunities for doing good, and in so many ways. You can hardly enter your father's kitchen, without being able to effect some good work, or putting in a word that may be blessed to some ignorant servant; which may correct some error, or remove some prejudice, or confirm some good feeling. It is strange, and very wrong too, that we should, in our dealings with our domestics, be so hard with them; making no allowance for their gross ignorance. They are — at least those on the American side the Atlantic — mostly of the Roman Catholic persuasion. Consequently, we leave them to their priest, and perhaps too often, and for too trivial a reason, find excuses for detaining them from their place of worship. How, then, or when are these poor, untaught fellow-mortals to learn their duty? How can we expect them to be faithful to us, if we cause them to neglect their duty

to God? Do we ever ask ourselves, on their leaving our roof, Have we done them any good? Still less do we inquire, when they first come to live with us, Can we do them any good? And yet this, my dear Anna, would be *practical religion*. They go to a morning service at their own place of worship, come home to be busy in providing for our wants, and then they spend the remainder of the sabbath in visiting their friends, idling about the streets, or, it may be feared, are still less profitably employed. Ought things so to be? Can we not do our part by giving them leisure on the week-day to prevent this, even if at a little sacrifice of our own comfort?

One thing is highly necessary in your charity; and that is, to endeavor to find proper objects for its exercise, and try to prevent being imposed on. If once certain there is real distress and suffering, relieve it to your utmost. Never mind a grateful return. Stop not, however your benevolence is met. Let the object be ever so loathsome, think of nothing but the command to do good to all men. You must do

good for goodness' sake. And, oh, let me entreat that no feeling of bigotry may stay your hand, where you know there is real suffering or distress! It is enough to know there lies a fellow-mortal, — one whom the blessed Saviour died to save, — one who is of as great value in his eyes as yourself. Ask his ailings, and not his creed: Show that yours is a right one, since it teaches you to follow your Master's steps and commands, and be thankful, very thankful, for the grace given you to like to do good; for it is not of ourselves this comes. Only, my dear Anna, contrast the feelings with which you enter your father's house, after having been employed making others happy, with what you feel as you go home after a gay party, vapid, tired, and perhaps disappointed. In exercising your charity, you have done a deed for which you dare hope a recompense. You have made one step heavenward. You will, without seeking the applause of the world, enjoy an internal satisfaction, and perhaps bring a blessing on yourself in the hour of need. You will probably say, Can such an hour ever come to me, with my

prospects? Yes, my child, your wealth, whatever it may be, can never screen you from sickness, sorrow, or suffering. But God has said, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy: the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble."

Thus you see, my dear Anna, how doing rightly brings its own reward. May you and your dear sisters be anxious, "with all your gettings, to get understanding." Early make God your friend, and his Bible your guide. It is an infallible one; and, if you pray to him, he will be his own interpreter.

I remain

Your affectionate

THE END.

