A TREATISE ON DOMESTIC ECONOMY, FOR THE USE OF YOUNG LADIES AT HOME, AND AT SCHOOL.

BY MISS CATHERINE E. BEECHER.

REVISED EDITION, WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS AND ILLUSTRATIVE ENGRAVINGS.

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TO AMERICAN MOTHERS, whose intelligence and virtues have inspired admiration and respect, whose experience has furnished many valuable suggestions, in this work, whose approbation will be highly valued, and whose influence, in promoting the object aimed at, is respectfully solicited, this work is dedicated, by their friend and countrywoman,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.
The author of this work was led to attempt it, by discovering, in her extensive travels, the deplorable sufferings of multitudes of young wives and mothers, from the combined influence of poor health, poor domestics, and a defective domestic education. The number of young women whose health is crushed, ere the first few years of married life are past, would seem incredible to
one who has not investigated this subject, and it would be vain to attempt to depict the sorrow, discouragement, and distress experienced in most families where the wife and mother is a perpetual invalid.

The writer became early convinced that this evil results mainly from the fact, that young girls, especially in the more wealthy classes, are not trained for their profession. In early life, they go through a course of school training which results in great debility of constitution, while, at the same time, their physical and domestic education is almost wholly neglected. Thus they enter on their most arduous and sacred duties so inexperienced and uninformed, and with so little muscular and nervous strength, that probably there is not one chance in ten, that young women of the present day, will pass through the first years of married life without such prostration of health and spirits as makes life a burden to themselves, and, it is to be feared, such as seriously interrupts the confidence and happiness of married life.

The measure which, more than any other, would tend to remedy this evil, would be to place domestic economy on an equality with the other sciences in female schools. This should be done because it can be properly and systematically taught (not practically, but as a science), as much so as political economy or moral science, or any other branch of study; because it embraces knowledge, which will be needed by young women at all times and in all places; because this science can never be properly taught until it is made a branch of study; and because this method will secure a dignity and importance in the estimation of young girls, which can never be accorded while they perceive their teachers and parents practically attaching more value to every other department of science than this. When young ladies are taught the construction of their own bodies, and all the causes in domestic life which tend to weaken the constitution; when they are taught rightly to appreciate and learn the most convenient and economical modes of performing all family duties, and of employing time and money; and when they perceive the true estimate accorded to these things by teachers and friends, the grand cause of this evil will be removed. Women will be trained to secure, as of first importance, a strong and healthy constitution, and all those rules of thrift and economy that will make domestic duty easy and pleasant.

To promote this object, the writer prepared this volume as a text-book for female schools. It has been examined by the Massachusetts Board of Education, and been deemed worthy by them to be admitted as a part of the Massachusetts School Library.

It has also been adopted as a text-book in some of our largest and most popular female schools, both at the East and West.

The following, from the pen of Mr. George B. Emmerson, one of the most popular and successful teachers in our country, who has introduced this work as a text-book in his own school, will exhibit the opinion of one who has formed his judgment from experience in the use of the work:

"It may be objected that such things cannot be taught by books. Why not? Why may not the structure of the human body, and the laws of health deduced therefrom, be as well taught as the laws of natural philosophy? Why are not the application of these laws to the management of infants and young children as important to a woman as the application of the rules of arithmetic
to the extraction of the cube root? Why may not the properties of the atmosphere be explained, in reference to the proper ventilation of rooms, or exercise in the open air, as properly as to the burning of steel or sodium? Why is not the human skeleton as curious and interesting as the air-pump; and the action of the brain, as the action of a steam-engine? Why may not the healthiness of different kinds of food and drink, the proper modes of cooking, and the rules in reference to the modes and times of taking them, be discussed as properly as rules of grammar, or facts in history? Are not the principles that should regulate clothing, the rules of cleanliness, the advantages of early rising and domestic exercise, as readily communicated as the principles of mineralogy, or rules of syntax? Are not the rules of Jesus Christ, applied to refine domestic manners and preserve a good temper, as important as the abstract principles of ethics, as taught by Paley, Wayland, or Jouffroy? May not the advantages of neatness, system, and order, be as well illustrated in showing how they contribute to the happiness of a family, as by showing how they add beauty to a copy-book, or a portfolio of drawings? Would not a teacher be as well employed in teaching the rules of economy, in regard to time and expenses, or in regard to dispensing charity, as in teaching double, or single entry in bookkeeping? Are not the principles that should guide in constructing a house, and in warming and ventilating it properly, as important to young girls as the principles of the Athenian Commonwealth, or the rules of Roman tactics? Is it not as important that children should be taught the dangers to the mental faculties, when over-excited on the one hand, or left unoccupied on the other, as to teach them the conflicting theories of political economy, or the speculations of metaphysicians? For ourselves, we have always found children, especially girls, peculiarly ready to listen to what they saw would prepare them for future duties. The truth, that education should be a preparation for actual, real life, has the greatest force with children. The constantly-recurring inquiry, 'What will be the use of this study?' is always satisfied by showing, that it will prepare for any duty, relation, or office which, in the natural course of things, will be likely to come.

"We think this book extremely well suited to be used as a text-book in schools for young ladies, and many chapters are well adapted for a reading book for children of both sexes."

To this the writer would add the testimony of a lady who has used this work with several classes of young girls and young ladies. She remarked that she had never known a school-book that awakened more interest, and that some young girls would learn a lesson in this when they would study nothing else. She remarked, also, that when reciting the chapter on the construction of houses, they became greatly interested in inventing plans of their own, which gave an opportunity to the teacher to point out difficulties and defects. Had this part of domestic economy been taught in schools, our land would not be so defaced with awkward, misshapen, inconvenient, and, at the same time, needlessly expensive houses, as it now is.

Although the writer was trained to the care of children, and to perform all branches of domestic duty, by some of the best of housekeepers, much in these pages is offered, not as the result of her own experience, but as what has obtained the approbation of some of the most judicious mothers and housekeepers in the nation. The articles on Physiology and Hygiene, and those on horticulture, were derived from standard works on these subjects, and are sanctioned by the highest authorities.
The American Housekeeper's Receipt Book is another work prepared by the author of the Domestic Economy, in connexion with several experienced housekeepers, and is designed for a supplement to this work. On pages 354a and 354b will be found the Preface and Analysis of that work, the two books being designed for a complete course of instructions on every department of Domestic Economy.

The copyright interest in these two works is held by a board of gentlemen appointed for the purpose, who, after paying a moderate compensation to the author for the time and labour spent in preparing these works, will employ all the remainder paid over by the publishers, to aid in educating and locating such female teachers as wish to be employed in those portions of our country, which are most destitute of schools.

The contract with the publisher provides that the publisher shall guaranty the sales and thus secure against any losses for bad debts, for which he shall receive five per cent. He shall charge twenty per cent. for commissions paid to retailers, and also the expenses of printing, paper, and binding, at the current market prices, and make no other charges. The net profits thus determined are then to be divided equally, the publishers taking one half, and paying the other half to the board above mentioned.

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CHAPTER I.
THE PECULIAR RESPONSIBILITIES OF AMERICAN WOMEN.
There are some reasons, why American women should feel an interest in the support of the democratic institutions of their Country, which it is important that they should consider. The great maxim, which is the basis of all our civil and political institutions, is, that "all men are created equal," and that they are equally entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

But it can readily be seen, that this is only another mode of expressing the fundamental principle which the Great Ruler of the Universe has established, as the law of His eternal government. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," are the Scripture forms, by which the Supreme Lawgiver requires that each individual of our race shall regard the happiness of others, as of the same value as his own; and which forbid any institution, in private or civil life, which secures advantages to one class, by sacrificing the interests of another.

The principles of democracy, then, are identical with the principles of Christianity.

But, in order that each individual may pursue and secure the highest degree of happiness within his reach, unimpeded by the selfish interests of others, a system of laws must be established, which sustain certain relations and dependencies in social and civil life. What these relations and their attending obligations shall be, are to be determined, not with reference to the wishes and interests of a few, but solely with reference to the general good of all; so that each individual shall have his own interest, as well as the public benefit, secured by them.

For this purpose, it is needful that certain relations be sustained, which involve the duties of subordination. There must be the magistrate and the subject, one of whom is the superior, and the other the inferior. There must be the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, teacher and pupil, employer and employed, each involving the relative duties of subordination. The superior, in certain particulars, is to direct, and the inferior is to yield obedience. Society could never go forward, harmoniously, nor could any craft or profession be successfully pursued, unless these superior and subordinate relations be instituted and sustained.

But who shall take the higher, and who the subordinate, stations in social and civil life? This matter, in the case of parents and children, is decided by the Creator. He has given children to the control of parents, as their superiors, and to them they remain subordinate, to a certain age, or so long as they are members of their household. And parents can delegate such a portion of their authority to teachers and employers, as the interests of their children require.

In most other cases, in a truly democratic state, each individual is allowed to choose for himself, who shall take the position of his superior. No woman is forced to obey any husband but the one she chooses for herself; nor is she obliged to take a husband, if she prefers to remain single. So
every domestic, and every artisan or laborer, after passing from parental control, can choose the employer to whom he is to accord obedience, or, if he prefers to relinquish certain advantages, he can remain without taking a subordinate place to any employer.

Each subject, also, has equal power with every other, to decide who shall be his superior as a ruler. The weakest, the poorest, the most illiterate, has the same opportunity to determine this question, as the richest, the most learned, and the most exalted.

And the various privileges that wealth secures, are equally open to all classes. Every man may aim at riches, unimpeded by any law or institution which secures peculiar privileges to a favored class, at the expense of another. Every law, and every institution, is tested by examining whether it secures equal advantages to all; and, if the people become convinced that any regulation sacrifices the good of the majority to the interests of the smaller number, they have power to abolish it.

The institutions of monarchical and aristocratic nations are based on precisely opposite principles. They secure, to certain small and favored classes, advantages, which can be maintained, only by sacrificing the interests of the great mass of the people. Thus, the throne and aristocracy of England are supported by laws and customs, which burden the lower classes with taxes, so enormous, as to deprive them of all the luxuries, and of most of the comforts, of life. Poor dwellings, scanty food, unhealthy employments, excessive labor, and entire destitution of the means and time for education, are appointed for the lower classes, that a few may live in palaces, and riot in every indulgence.

The tendencies of democratic institutions, in reference to the rights and interests of the female sex, have been fully developed in the United States; and it is in this aspect, that the subject is one of peculiar interest to American women. In this Country, it is established, both by opinion and by practice, that woman has an equal interest in all social and civil concerns; and that no domestic, civil, or political, institution, is right, which sacrifices her interest to promote that of the other sex. But in order to secure her the more firmly in all these privileges, it is decided, that, in the domestic relation, she take a subordinate station, and that, in civil and political concerns, her interests be intrusted to the other sex, without her taking any part in voting, or in making and administering laws. The result of this order of things has been fairly tested, and is thus portrayed by M. De Tocqueville, a writer, who, for intelligence, fidelity, and ability, ranks second to none.

"There are people in Europe, who, confounding together the different characteristics of the sexes, would make of man and woman, beings not only equal, but alike. They would give to both the same functions, impose on both the same duties, and grant to both the same rights. They would mix them in all things,—their business, their occupations, their pleasures. It may readily be conceived, that, by thus attempting to make one sex equal to the other, both are degraded; and, from so preposterous a medley of the works of Nature, nothing could ever result, but weak men and disorderly women.

"It is not thus that the Americans understand the species of democratic equality, which may be established between the sexes. They admit, that, as Nature has appointed such wide differences between the physical and moral constitutions of man and woman, her manifest design was, to
give a distinct employment to their various faculties; and they hold, that improvement does not consist in making beings so dissimilar do pretty nearly the same things, but in getting each of them to fulfill their respective tasks, in the best possible manner. The Americans have applied to the sexes the great principle of political economy, which governs the manufactories of our age, by carefully dividing the duties of man from those of woman, in order that the great work of society may be the better carried on.

"In no country has such constant care been taken, as in America, to trace two clearly distinct lines of action for the two sexes, and to make them keep pace one with the other, but in two pathways which are always different. American women never manage the outward concerns of the family, or conduct a business, or take a part in political life; nor are they, on the other hand, ever compelled to perform the rough labor of the fields, or to make any of those laborious exertions, which demand the exertion of physical strength. No families are so poor, as to form an exception to this rule.

"If, on the one hand, an American woman cannot escape from the quiet circle of domestic employments, on the other hand, she is never forced to go beyond it. Hence it is, that the women of America, who often exhibit a masculine strength of understanding, and a manly energy, generally preserve great delicacy of personal appearance, and always retain the manners of women, although they sometimes show that they have the hearts and minds of men.

"Nor have the Americans ever supposed, that one consequence of democratic principles, is, the subversion of marital power, or the confusion of the natural authorities in families. They hold, that every association must have a head, in order to accomplish its object; and that the natural head of the conjugal association is man. They do not, therefore, deny him the right of directing his partner; and they maintain, that, in the smaller association of husband and wife, as well as in the great social community, the object of democracy is, to regulate and legalize the powers which are necessary, not to subvert all power.

"This opinion is not peculiar to one sex, and contested by the other. I never observed, that the women of America considered conjugal authority as a fortunate usurpation of their rights, nor that they thought themselves degraded by submitting to it. It appears to me, on the contrary, that they attach a sort of pride to the voluntary surrender of their own will, and make it their boast to bend themselves to the yoke, not to shake it off. Such, at least, is the feeling expressed by the most virtuous of their sex; the others are silent; and in the United States it is not the practice for a guilty wife to clamor for the rights of woman, while she is trampling on her holiest duties."

"Although the travellers, who have visited North America, differ on a great number of points, they agree in remarking, that morals are far more strict, there, than elsewhere. It is evident that, on this point, the Americans are very superior to their progenitors, the English." "In England, as in all other Countries of Europe, public malice is constantly attacking the frailties of women. Philosophers and statesmen are heard to deplore, that morals are not sufficiently strict; and the literary productions of the Country constantly lead one to suppose so. In America, all books, novels not excepted, suppose women to be chaste; and no one thinks of relating affairs of gallantry."
"It has often been remarked, that, in Europe, a certain degree of contempt lurks, even in the flattery which men lavish upon women. Although a European frequently affects to be the slave of woman, it may be seen, that he never sincerely thinks her his equal. In the United States, men seldom compliment women, but they daily show how much they esteem them. They constantly display an entire confidence in the understanding of a wife, and a profound respect for her freedom."

They have decided that her mind is just as fitted as that of a man to discover the plain truth, and her heart as firm to embrace it, and they have never sought to place her virtue, any more than his, under the shelter of prejudice, ignorance, and fear.

"It would seem, that in Europe, where man so easily submits to the despotic sway of woman, they are nevertheless curtailed of some of the greatest qualities of the human species, and considered as seductive, but imperfect beings, and (what may well provoke astonishment) women ultimately look upon themselves in the same light, and almost consider it as a privilege that they are entitled to show themselves futile, feeble, and timid. The women of America claim no such privileges."

"It is true, that the Americans rarely lavish upon women those eager attentions which are commonly paid them in Europe. But their conduct to women always implies, that they suppose them to be virtuous and refined; and such is the respect entertained for the moral freedom of the sex, that, in the presence of a woman, the most guarded language is used, lest her ear should be offended by an expression. In America, a young unmarried woman may, alone, and without fear, undertake a long journey."

"Thus the Americans do not think that man and woman have either the duty, or the right, to perform the same offices, but they show an equal regard for both their respective parts; and, though their lot is different, they consider both of them, as beings of equal value. They do not give to the courage of woman the same form, or the same direction, as to that of man; but they never doubt her courage: and if they hold that man and his partner ought not always to exercise their intellect and understanding in the same manner, they at least believe the understanding of the one to be as sound as that of the other, and her intellect to be as clear. Thus, then, while they have allowed the social inferiority of woman to subsist, they have done all they could to raise her, morally and intellectually, to the level of man; and, in this respect, they appear to me to have excellently understood the true principle of democratic improvement.

"As for myself, I do not hesitate to avow, that, although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is, in some respects, one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked, now I am drawing to the close of this work, in which I have spoken of so many important things done by the Americans, to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply,—to the superiority of their women."

This testimony of a foreigner, who has had abundant opportunities of making a comparison, is sanctioned by the assent of all candid and intelligent men, who have enjoyed similar opportunities.
It appears, then, that it is in America, alone, that women are raised to an equality with the other sex; and that, both in theory and practice, their interests are regarded as of equal value. They are made subordinate in station, only where a regard to their best interests demands it, while, as if in compensation for this, by custom and courtesy, they are always treated as superiors. Universally, in this Country, through every class of society, precedence is given to woman, in all the comforts, conveniences, and courtesies, of life.

In civil and political affairs, American women take no interest or concern, except so far as they sympathize with their family and personal friends; but in all cases, in which they do feel a concern, their opinions and feelings have a consideration, equal, or even superior, to that of the other sex.

In matters pertaining to the education of their children, in the selection and support of a clergyman, in all benevolent enterprises, and in all questions relating to morals or manners, they have a superior influence. In such concerns, it would be impossible to carry a point, contrary to their judgment and feelings; while an enterprise, sustained by them, will seldom fail of success.

If those who are bewailing themselves over the fancied wrongs and injuries of women in this Nation, could only see things as they are, they would know, that, whatever remnants of a barbarous or aristocratic age may remain in our civil institutions, in reference to the interests of women, it is only because they are ignorant of them, or do not use their influence to have them rectified; for it is very certain that there is nothing reasonable, which American women would unite in asking, that would not readily be bestowed.

The preceding remarks, then, illustrate the position, that the democratic institutions of this Country are in reality no other than the principles of Christianity carried into operation, and that they tend to place woman in her true position in society, as having equal rights with the other sex; and that, in fact, they have secured to American women a lofty and fortunate position, which, as yet, has been attained by the women of no other nation.

There is another topic, presented in the work of the above author, which demands the profound attention of American women.

The following is taken from that part of the Introduction to the work, illustrating the position, that, for ages, there has been a constant progress, in all civilized nations, towards the democratic equality attained in this Country.

"The various occurrences of national existence have everywhere turned to the advantage of democracy; all men have aided it by their exertions; those who have intentionally labored in its cause, and those who have served it unwittingly; those who have fought for it, and those who have declared themselves its opponents, have all been driven along in the same track, have all labored to one end;" "all have been blind instruments in the hands of God."
"The gradual developement of the equality of conditions, is, therefore, a Providential fact; and it possesses all the characteristics of a Divine decree: it is universal, it is durable, it constantly eludes all human interference, and all events, as well as all men, contribute to its progress."

"The whole book, which is here offered to the public, has been written under the impression of a kind of religious dread, produced in the author's mind, by the contemplation of so irresistible a revolution, which has advanced for centuries, in spite of such amazing obstacles, and which is still proceeding in the midst of the ruins it has made.

"It is not necessary that God Himself should speak, in order to disclose to us the unquestionable signs of His will. We can discern them in the habitual course of Nature, and in the invariable tendency of events."

"If the men of our time were led, by attentive observation, and by sincere reflection, to acknowledge that the gradual and progressive developement of social equality is at once the past and future of their history, this solitary truth would confer the sacred character of a Divine decree upon the change. To attempt to check democracy, would be, in that case, to resist the will of God; and the nations would then be constrained to make the best of the social lot awarded to them by Providence."

"It is not, then, merely to satisfy a legitimate curiosity, that I have examined America; my wish has been to find instruction by which we may ourselves profit." "I have not even affected to discuss whether the social revolution, which I believe to be irresistible, is advantageous or prejudicial to mankind. I have acknowledged this revolution, as a fact already accomplished, or on the eve of its accomplishment; and I have selected the nation, from among those which have undergone it, in which its developement has been the most peaceful and the most complete, in order to discern its natural consequences, and, if it be possible, to distinguish the means by which it may be rendered profitable. I confess, that in America I saw more than America; I sought the image of democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions, in order to learn what we have to fear, or to hope, from its progress."

It thus appears, that the sublime and elevating anticipations which have filled the mind and heart of the religious world, have become so far developed, that philosophers and statesmen are perceiving the signs, and are predicting the approach, of the same grand consummation. There is a day advancing, "by seers predicted, and by poets sung," when the curse of selfishness shall be removed; when "scenes surpassing fable, and yet true," shall be realized; when all nations shall rejoice and be made blessed, under those benevolent influences, which the Messiah came to establish on earth.

And this is the Country, which the Disposer of events designs shall go forth as the cynosure of nations, to guide them to the light and blessedness of that day. To us is committed the grand, the responsible privilege, of exhibiting to the world, the beneficent influences of Christianity, when carried into every social, civil, and political institution; and, though we have, as yet, made such imperfect advances, already the light is streaming into the dark prison-house of despotic lands, while startled kings and sages, philosophers and statesmen, are watching us with that interest, which a career so illustrious, and so involving their own destiny, is calculated to excite. They are
studying our institutions, scrutinizing our experience, and watching for our mistakes, that they may learn whether "a social revolution, so irresistible, be advantageous or prejudicial to mankind."

There are persons, who regard these interesting truths merely as food for national vanity; but every reflecting and Christian mind, must consider it as an occasion for solemn and anxious reflection. Are we, then, a spectacle to the world? Has the Eternal Lawgiver appointed us to work out a problem, involving the destiny of the whole earth? Are such momentous interests to be advanced or retarded, just in proportion as we are faithful to our high trust? "What manner of persons, then, ought we to be," in attempting to sustain so solemn, so glorious a responsibility?

But the part to be enacted by American women, in this great moral enterprise, is the point to which special attention should here be directed.

The success of democratic institutions, as is conceded by all, depends upon the intellectual and moral character of the mass of the people. If they are intelligent and virtuous, democracy is a blessing; but if they are ignorant and wicked, it is only a curse, and as much more dreadful than any other form of civil government, as a thousand tyrants are more to be dreaded than one. It is equally conceded, that the formation of the moral and intellectual character of the young is committed mainly to the female hand. The mother forms the character of the future man; the sister bends the fibres that are hereafter to be the forest tree; the wife sways the heart, whose energies may turn for good or for evil the destinies of a nation. Let the women of a country be made virtuous and intelligent, and the men will certainly be the same. The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman, and the interests of a whole family are secured.

If this be so, as none will deny, then to American women, more than to any others on earth, is committed the exalted privilege of extending over the world those blessed influences, which are to renovate degraded man, and "clothe all climes with beauty."

No American woman, then, has any occasion for feeling that hers is an humble or insignificant lot. The value of what an individual accomplishes, is to be estimated by the importance of the enterprise achieved, and not by the particular position of the laborer. The drops of heaven which freshen the earth, are each of equal value, whether they fall in the lowland meadow, or the princely parterre. The builders of a temple are of equal importance, whether they labor on the foundations, or toil upon the dome.

Thus, also, with those labors which are to be made effectual in the regeneration of the Earth. And it is by forming a habit of regarding the apparently insignificant efforts of each isolated laborer, in a comprehensive manner, as indispensable portions of a grand result, that the minds of all, however humble their sphere of service, can be invigorated and cheered. The woman, who is rearing a family of children; the woman, who labors in the schoolroom; the woman, who, in her retired chamber, earns, with her needle, the mite, which contributes to the intellectual and moral elevation of her Country; even the humble domestic, whose example and influence may be moulding and forming young minds, while her faithful services sustain a prosperous domestic state;—each and all may be animated by the consciousness, that they are agents in accomplishing
the greatest work that ever was committed to human responsibility. It is the building of a
glorious temple, whose base shall be coextensive with the bounds of the earth, whose summit
shall pierce the skies, whose splendor shall beam on all lands; and those who hew the lowliest
stone, as much as those who carve the highest capital, will be equally honored, when its top-
stone shall be laid, with new rejoicings of the morning stars, and shoutings of the sons of God.

FOOTNOTE:
[A] Miss Martineau is a singular exception to this remark. After receiving unexampled
hospitalities and kindnecess, she gives the following picture of her entertainers. Having in other
places spoken of the American woman as having "her intellect confined," and "her morals
crushed," and as deficient in education, because she has "none of the objects in life for which an
enlarged education is considered requisite," she says,—"It is assumed, in America, particularly in
New England, that the morals of society there are peculiarly pure. I am grieved to doubt the fact;
but I do doubt it." "The Auld-Robin-Gray story is a frequently-enacted tragedy here; and one of
the worst symptoms that struck me, was, that there was usually a demand upon my sympathy in
such cases."—"The unavoidable consequence of such a mode of marrying, is, that the sanctity of
marriage is impaired, and that vice succeeds. There are sad tales in country villages, here and
there, that attest this; and yet more in towns, in a rank of society where such things are seldom or
never heard of in England."—"I unavoidably knew of more cases of lapse in highly respectable
families in one State, than ever came to my knowledge at home; and they were got over with a
dishgrace far more temporary and superficial than they could have been visited with in
England."—"The vacuity of mind of many women, is, I conclude, the cause of a vice, which it is
painful to allude to, but which cannot honestly be passed over.—It is no secret on the spot, that
the habit of intemperance is not infrequent among women of station and education in the most
enlightened parts of the Country. I witnessed some instances, and heard of more. It does not
seem to me to be regarded with all the dismay which such a symptom ought to excite. To the
stranger, a novelty so horrible, a spectacle so fearful, suggests wide and deep subjects of
investigation."

It is not possible for language to give representations more false in every item. In evidence of
this, the writer would mention, that, within the last few years, she has travelled almost the entire
route taken by Miss Martineau, except the lower tier of the Southern States; and, though not
meeting the same individuals, has mingled in the very same circles. Moreover, she has resided
from several months to several years in eight of the different Northern and Western States, and
spent several weeks at a time in five other States. She has also had pupils from every State in the
Union, but two, and has visited extensively at their houses. But in her whole life, and in all these
different positions, the writer has never, to her knowledge, seen even one woman, of the classes
with which she has associated, who had lapsed in the manner indicated by Miss Martineau; nor
does she believe that such a woman could find admission in such circles any where in the
Country. As to intemperate women, five cases are all of whom the writer has ever heard, in such
circles, and two of these many believed to be unwarrantably suspected. After following in Miss
Martineau's track, and discovering all the falsehood, twaddle, gossip, old saws, and almanac
stories, which have been strung together in her books, no charitable mode of accounting for the
medley remains, but to suppose her the pitiable dupe of that love of hoaxing so often found in
our Country.
Again, Miss Martineau says, "We passed an unshaded meadow, where the grass had caught fire, every day, at eleven o'clock, the preceding Summer. This demonstrates the necessity of shade"!
A woman, with so little common sense, as to swallow such an absurdity for truth, and then tack to it such an astute deduction, must be a tempting subject for the abovementioned mischievous propensity.

CHAPTER II.
DIFFICULTIES PECULIAR TO AMERICAN WOMEN.
In the preceding chapter, were presented those views, which are calculated to inspire American women with a sense of their high responsibilities to their Country, and to the world; and of the excellence and grandeur of the object to which their energies may be consecrated.

But it will be found to be the law of moral action, that whatever involves great results and great benefits, is always attended with great hazards and difficulties. And as it has been shown, that American women have a loftier position, and a more elevated object of enterprise, than the females of any other nation, so it will appear, that they have greater trials and difficulties to overcome, than any other women are called to encounter.

Properly to appreciate the nature of these trials, it must be borne in mind, that the estimate of evils and privations depends, not so much on their positive nature, as on the character and habits of the person who meets them. A woman, educated in the savage state, finds it no trial to be destitute of many conveniences, which a woman, even of the lowest condition, in this Country, would deem indispensable to existence. So a woman, educated with the tastes and habits of the best New England or Virginia housekeepers, would encounter many deprivations and trials, which would never occur to one reared in the log cabin of a new settlement. So, also, a woman, who has been accustomed to carry forward her arrangements with well-trained domestics, would meet a thousand trials to her feelings and temper, by the substitution of ignorant foreigners, or shiftless slaves, which would be of little account to one who had never enjoyed any better service.

Now, the larger portion of American women are the descendants of English progenitors, who, as a nation, are distinguished for systematic housekeeping, and for a great love of order, cleanliness, and comfort. And American women, to a greater or less extent, have inherited similar tastes and habits. But the prosperity and democratic tendencies of this Country produce results, materially affecting the comfort of housekeepers, which the females of monarchical and aristocratic lands are not called to meet. In such countries, all ranks and classes are fixed in a given position, and each person is educated for a particular sphere and style of living. And the dwellings, conveniences, and customs of life, remain very nearly the same, from generation to generation. This secures the preparation of all classes for their particular station, and makes the lower orders more dependent, and more subservient to employers.

But how different is the state of things in this Country. Every thing is moving and changing. Persons in poverty, are rising to opulence, and persons of wealth, are sinking to poverty. The children of common laborers, by their talents and enterprise, are becoming nobles in intellect, or wealth, or office; while the children of the wealthy, enervated by indulgence, are sinking to humbler stations. The sons of the wealthy are leaving the rich mansions of their fathers, to dwell...
in the log cabins of the forest, where very soon they bear away the daughters of ease and refinement, to share the privations of a new settlement. Meantime, even in the more stationary portions of the community, there is a mingling of all grades of wealth, intellect, and education. There are no distinct classes, as in aristocratic lands, whose bounds are protected by distinct and impassable lines, but all are thrown into promiscuous masses. Thus, persons of humble means are brought into contact with those of vast wealth, while all intervening grades are placed side by side. Thus, too, there is a constant comparison of conditions, among equals, and a constant temptation presented to imitate the customs, and to strive for the enjoyments, of those who possess larger means.

In addition to this, the flow of wealth, among all classes, is constantly increasing the number of those who live in a style demanding much hired service, while the number of those, who are compelled to go to service, is constantly diminishing. Our manufactories, also, are making increased demands for female labor, and offering larger compensation. In consequence of these things, there is such a disproportion between those who wish to hire, and those who are willing to go to domestic service, that, in the non-slaveholding States, were it not for the supply of poverty-stricken foreigners, there would not be a domestic for each family who demands one. And this resort to foreigners, poor as it is, scarcely meets the demand; while the disproportion must every year increase, especially if our prosperity increases. For, just in proportion as wealth rolls in upon us, the number of those, who will give up their own independent homes to serve strangers, will be diminished.

The difficulties and sufferings, which have accrued to American women, from this cause, are almost incalculable. There is nothing, which so much demands system and regularity, as the affairs of a housekeeper, made up, as they are, of ten thousand desultory and minute items; and yet, this perpetually fluctuating state of society seems forever to bar any such system and regularity. The anxieties, vexations, perplexities, and even hard labor, which come upon American women, from this state of domestic service, are endless; and many a woman has, in consequence, been disheartened, discouraged, and ruined in health. The only wonder is, that, amid so many real difficulties, American women are still able to maintain such a character for energy, fortitude, and amiableness, as is universally allowed to be their due.

But the second, and still greater difficulty, peculiar to American women, is, a delicacy of constitution, which renders them early victims to disease and decay.

The fact that the women of this Country are unusually subject to disease, and that their beauty and youthfulness are of shorter continuance than those of the women of other nations, is one which always attracts the attention of foreigners; while medical men and philanthropists are constantly giving fearful monitions as to the extent and alarming increase of this evil. Investigations make it evident, that a large proportion of young ladies, from the wealthier classes, have the incipient stages of curvature of the spine, one of the most sure and fruitful causes of future disease and decay. The writer has heard medical men, who have made extensive inquiries, say, that a very large proportion of the young women at boarding schools, are affected in this way, while many other indications of disease and debility exist, in cases where this particular evil cannot be detected.
In consequence of this enfeebled state of their constitutions, induced by a neglect of their physical education, as soon as they are called to the responsibilities and trials of domestic life, their constitution fails, and their whole existence is rendered a burden. For no woman can enjoy existence, when disease throws a dark cloud over the mind, and incapacitates her for the proper discharge of every duty.

The writer, who for some ten years has had the charge of an institution, consisting of young ladies from almost every State in the Union, since relinquishing that charge, has travelled and visited extensively in most of the non-slaveholding States. In these circuits, she has learned the domestic history, not merely of her pupils, but of many other young wives and mothers, whose sorrowful experience has come to her knowledge. And the impression, produced by the dreadful extent of this evil, has at times been almost overwhelming.

It would seem as if the primeval curse, which has written the doom of pain and sorrow on one period of a young mother's life, in this Country had been extended over all; so that the hour seldom arrives, when "she forgetteth her sorrow for joy that a man is born into the world." Many a mother will testify, with shuddering, that the most exquisite sufferings she ever endured, were not those appointed by Nature, but those, which, for week after week, have worn down health and spirits, when nourishing her child. And medical men teach us, that this, in most cases, results from a debility of constitution, consequent on the mismanagement of early life. And so frequent and so mournful are these, and the other distresses that result from the delicacy of the female constitution, that the writer has repeatedly heard mothers say, that they had wept tears of bitterness over their infant daughters, at the thought of the sufferings which they were destined to undergo; while they cherished the decided wish, that these daughters should never marry. At the same time, many a reflecting young woman is looking to her future prospects, with very different feelings and hopes from those which Providence designed.

A perfectly healthy woman, especially a perfectly healthy mother, is so unfrequent, in some of the wealthier classes, that those, who are so, may be regarded as the exceptions, and not as the general rule. The writer has heard some of her friends declare, that they would ride fifty miles, to see a perfectly healthy and vigorous woman, out of the laboring classes. This, although somewhat jocose, was not an entirely unfair picture of the true state of female health in the wealthier classes.

There are many causes operating, which serve to perpetuate and increase this evil. It is a well-known fact, that mental excitement tends to weaken the physical system, unless it is counterbalanced by a corresponding increase of exercise and fresh air. Now, the people of this Country are under the influence of high commercial, political, and religious stimulus, altogether greater than was ever known by any other nation; and in all this, women are made the sympathizing companions of the other sex. At the same time, young girls, in pursuing an education, have ten times greater an amount of intellectual taxation demanded, than was ever before exacted. Let any daughter, educated in our best schools at this day, compare the course of her study with that pursued in her mother's early life, and it will be seen that this estimate of the increase of mental taxation probably falls below the truth. Though, in some countries, there are small classes of females, in the higher circles, who pursue literature and science to a far greater extent than in any corresponding circles in this Country, yet, in no nation in the world are the
advantages of a good intellectual education enjoyed, by so large a proportion of the females. And this education has consisted far less of accomplishments, and far more of those solid studies which demand the exercise of the various powers of mind, than the education of the women of other lands.

And when American women are called to the responsibilities of domestic life, the degree in which their minds and feelings are taxed, is altogether greater than it is in any other nation.

No women on earth have a higher sense of their moral and religious responsibilities, or better understand, not only what is demanded of them, as housekeepers, but all the claims that rest upon them as wives, mothers, and members of a social community. An American woman, who is the mistress of a family, feels her obligations, in reference to her influence over her husband, and a still greater responsibility in rearing and educating her children. She feels, too, the claims which the moral interests of her domestics have on her watchful care. In social life, she recognises the claims of hospitality, and the demands of friendly visiting. Her responsibility, in reference to the institutions of benevolence and religion, is deeply realized. The regular worship of the Lord's day, and all the various religious meetings and benevolent societies which place so much dependence on female influence and example, she feels obligated to sustain. Add to these multiplied responsibilities, the perplexities and evils which have been pointed out, resulting from the fluctuating state of society, and the deficiency of domestic service, and no one can deny that American women are exposed to a far greater amount of intellectual and moral excitement, than those of any other land. Of course, in order to escape the danger resulting from this, a greater amount of exercise in the fresh air, and all those methods which strengthen the constitution, are imperiously required.

But, instead of this, it will be found, that, owing to the climate and customs of this Nation, there are no women who secure so little of this healthful and protecting regimen, as ours. Walking and riding and gardening, in the open air, are practised by the women of other lands, to a far greater extent, than by American females. Most English women, in the wealthier classes, are able to walk six and eight miles, without oppressive fatigue; and when they visit this Country, always express their surprise at the inactive habits of American females. In England, regular exercise, in the open air, is very commonly required by the mother, as a part of daily duty, and is sought by young women, as an enjoyment. In consequence of a different physical training, English women, in those circles which enjoy competency, present an appearance which always strikes American gentlemen as a contrast to what they see at home. An English mother, at thirty, or thirty-five, is in the full bloom of perfected womanhood; as fresh and healthful as her daughters. But where are the American mothers, who can reach this period unfaded and unworn? In America, young ladies of the wealthier classes are sent to school from early childhood; and neither parents nor teachers make it a definite object to secure a proper amount of fresh air and exercise, to counterbalance this intellectual taxation. As soon as their school days are over, dressing, visiting, evening parties, and stimulating amusements, take the place of study, while the most unhealthful modes of dress add to the physical exposures. To make morning calls, or do a little shopping, is all that can be termed their exercise in the fresh air; and this, compared to what is needed, is absolutely nothing, and on some accounts is worse than nothing. [B] In consequence of these, and other evils, which will be pointed out more at large in the following pages, the young women of America grow up with such a delicacy of constitution, that probably eight out of ten become
subjects of disease, either before or as soon as they are called to the responsibilities of domestic life.

But there is one peculiarity of situation, in regard to American women, which makes this delicacy of constitution still more disastrous. It is the liability to the exposures and hardships of a newly-settled country.

One more extract from De Tocqueville will give a view of this part of the subject, which any one, familiar with Western life, will admire for its verisimilitude.

"The same strength of purpose which the young wives of America display in bending themselves, at once, and without repining, to the austere duties of their new condition, is no less manifest in all the great trials of their lives. In no country in the world, are private fortunes more precarious, than in the United States. It is not uncommon for the same man, in the course of his life, to rise and sink again through all the grades which lead from opulence to poverty. American women support these vicissitudes with a calm and unquenchable energy. It would seem that their desires contract, as easily as they expand, with their fortunes. The greater part of the adventurers, who migrate, every year, to people the Western wilds, belong to the old Anglo-American race of the Northern States. Many of these men, who rush so boldly onward in pursuit of wealth, were already in the enjoyment of a competency in their own part of the Country. They take their wives along with them, and make them share the countless perils and privations, which always attend the commencement of these expeditions. I have often met, even on the verge of the wilderness, with young women, who, after having been brought up amid all the comforts of the large towns of New England, had passed, almost without any intermediate stage, from the wealthy abode of their parents, to a comfortless hovel in a forest. Fever, solitude, and a tedious life, had not broken the springs of their courage. Their features were impaired and faded, but their looks were firm: they appeared to be, at once, sad and resolute."

In another passage, he gives this picturesque sketch: "By the side of the hearth, sits a woman, with a baby on her lap. She nods to us, without disturbing herself. Like the pioneer, this woman is in the prime of life; her appearance would seem superior to her condition: and her apparel even betrays a lingering taste for dress. But her delicate limbs appear shrunken; her features are drawn in; her eye is mild and melancholy; her whole physiognomy bears marks of a degree of religious resignation, a deep quiet of all passion, and some sort of natural and tranquil firmness, ready to meet all the ills of life, without fearing and without braving them. Her children cluster about her, full of health, turbulence, and energy; they are true children of the wilderness: their mother watches them, from time to time, with mingled melancholy and joy. To look at their strength, and her languor, one might imagine that the life she had given them had exhausted her own; and still she regrets not what they have cost her. The house, inhabited by these emigrants, has no internal partition or loft. In the one chamber of which it consists, the whole family is gathered for the night. The dwelling is itself a little world; an ark of civilization amid an ocean of foliage. A hundred steps beyond it, the primeval forest spreads its shades, and solitude resumes its sway."

Such scenes, and such women, the writer has met, and few persons realize how many refined and lovely women are scattered over the broad prairies and deep forests of the West; and none, but the Father above, appreciates the extent of those sacrifices and sufferings, and the value of that
firm faith and religious hope, which live, in perennial bloom, amid those vast solitudes. If the American women of the East merit the palm, for their skill and success as accomplished housekeepers, still more is due to the heroines of the West, who, with such unyielding fortitude and cheerful endurance, attempt similar duties, amid so many disadvantages and deprivations.

But, though American women have those elevated principles and feelings, which enable them to meet such trials in so exemplary a manner, their physical energies are not equal to the exertions demanded. Though the mind may be bright and firm, the casket is shivered; though the spirit may be willing, the flesh is weak. A woman of firm health, with the hope and elasticity of youth, may be envied rather than pitied, as she shares with her young husband the hopes and enterprises of pioneer life. But, when the body fails, then the eye of hope grows dim, the heart sickens, the courage dies; and, in solitude, weariness, and suffering, the wanderer pines for the dear voices and the tender sympathies of a far distant home. Then it is, that the darkest shade is presented, which marks the peculiar trials and liabilities of American women, and which exhibits still more forcibly the disastrous results of that delicacy of constitution which has been pointed out. For, though all American women, or even the greater part of them, are not called to encounter such trials, yet no mother, who rears a family of daughters, can say, that such a lot will not fall to one of her flock; nor can she know which will escape. The reverses of fortune, and the chances of matrimony, expose every woman in the Nation to such liabilities, for which she needs to be prepared.

FOOTNOTE:
[B] So little idea have most ladies, in the wealthier classes, of what is a proper amount of exercise, that, if they should succeed in walking a mile or so, at a moderate pace, three or four times a week, they would call it taking a great deal of exercise.