
**CHAPTER I.**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND.**

EVERY country has its peculiar characteristics, not only of climate and scenery, of public institutions, government, and laws; but every country has also its *moral characteristics*, upon which is founded its true title to a station, either high or low, in the scale of nations. The national characteristics of England are the perpetual boast of her patriotic sons; and there is one especially, which it behoves all British subjects not only to exult in, but to cherish and maintain. Leaving the justice of her laws, the extent of her commerce, and the amount of her resources, to the orator, the statesman, and the political economist, there yet remains one of the noblest features in her national character, which may not improperly be regarded as within the compass of a woman's understandings and the province of a woman's pen. It is the domestic character of England—the home comforts, and fireside virtues for which she is so justly celebrated. These I hope to be able to speak of without presumption, as intimately associated with, and dependent upon, the moral feelings and habits of the women of this favoured country.

It is therefore in reference to these alone that I shall endeavour to treat the subject of England's nationality; and in order to do this with more precision, it is necessary to draw the line of observation within a narrower circle, and to describe what are the characteristics of the women of England. I ought, perhaps, in strict propriety, to say what *were* their characteristics; because I would justify the obtrusiveness of a work like this, by first premising that the women of England are deteriorating in their moral character, and that false notions of refinement are rendering them less influential, less useful, and less happy than they were.

In speaking of what English women were, I would not be understood to refer to what they were a century ago. Facilities in the way of mental improvement have greatly increased during this period. In connexion with moral discipline, these facilities are invaluable; but I consider the two excellencies as having been combined in the greatest perfection in the general average of women who have now attained to middle, or rather advanced age. When the cultivation of the mental faculties had so far advanced as to take precedence of the moral, by leaving no time for domestic usefulness, and the practice of personal exertion in the way of promoting general happiness, the character of the women of England assumed a different aspect, which is now beginning to tell upon society in the sickly sensibilities, the feeble frames, and the useless habits of the rising generation.

In stating this humiliating fact, I must be blind indeed to the most cheering aspect of modern society, not to perceive that there are signal instances of women who carry about with them into every sphere of domestic duty, even the most humble and obscure, the accomplishments and refinements of modern education; and who deem it rather an honour than a degradation to be permitted to add to the sum of human happiness, by diffusing the embellishments of mind and manners over the homely and familiar aspect of every-day existence.

Such, however, do not constitute the majority of the female population of Great Britain. By far the greater portion of the young ladies (for they are no longer *women*) of the present day, are distinguished by a morbid listlessness of mind and body, except when under the influence of stimulus, a constant pining for excitement, and an eagerness to escape from every thing like practical and individual duty. Of course, I speak of those whose minds are not under the influence of religious principle. Would that the exception could extend to all who *profess* to be governed by this principle!
Gentle, inoffensive, delicate, and passively amiable as many young ladies are, it seems an ungracious task to attempt to rouse them from their summer dream; and were it not that wintry days will come, and the surface of life be ruffled, and the mariner, even she who steers the smallest bark, be put upon the inquiry for what port she is really bound—were it not that the cry of utter helplessness is of no avail in rescuing from the waters of affliction, and the plea of ignorance unheard upon the far-extending and deep ocean of experience, and the question of accountability perpetually sounding, like the voice of a warning spirit, above the storms and the billows of this lower world—I would be one of the very last to call the dreamer back to a consciousness of present things. But this state of listless indifference, my sisters, must not be. You have deep responsibilities, you have urgent claims; a nation's moral wealth is in your keeping. Let us inquire then in what way it may be best preserved. Let us consider what you are, and have been, and by what peculiarities of feeling and habit you have been able to throw so much additional weight into the scale of your country's worth.

In order to speak with precision of the characteristics of any class of people, it is necessary to confine our attention as much as possible to that portion of the class where such characteristics are most prominent; and, avoiding the two extremes where circumstances not peculiar to that class are supposed to operate, to take the middle or intervening portion as a specimen of the whole.

Napoleon Buonaparte was accustomed to speak of the English nation as a “nation of shopkeepers;” and when we consider the number, the influence, and the respectability of that portion of the inhabitants who are, directly or indirectly, connected with our trade and merchandise, it does indeed appear to constitute the mass of English society, and may justly be considered as exhibiting the most striking and unequivocal proofs of what are the peculiar characteristics of the people of England. It is not therefore from the aristocracy of the land that the characteristics of English women should be taken; because the higher the rank, and the greater the facilities of communication with other countries, the more prevalent are foreign manners, and modes of thinking and acting common to that class of society in other countries. Neither is it entirely amongst the indigent and most laborious of the community, that we can with propriety look for those strong features of nationality which stamp the moral character of different nations; because the urgency of mere physical wants, and the pressure of constant and necessary labour, naturally induce a certain degree of resemblance in social feelings and domestic habits, amongst people similarly circumstanced, to whatever country they may belong.

In looking around, then, upon our “nation of shopkeepers,” we readily perceive that by dividing society into three classes, as regards what is commonly called rank, the middle class must include so vast a portion of the intelligence and moral power of the country at large, that it may not improperly be designated the pillar of our nation's strength, its base being the important class of the laborious poor, and its rich and highly ornamental capital, the ancient nobility of the land. In no other country is society thus beautifully proportioned, and England should beware of any deviation from the order and symmetry of her national column.

There never was a more short-sighted view of society, than that by which the women of our country have lately learned to look with envious eyes upon their superiors in rank, to rival their attainments, to imitate their manners, and to pine for the luxuries they enjoy; and consequently to look down with contempt upon the appliances and means of humbler happiness. The women of England were once better satisfied with any deviation from the order and symmetry of her national column.

A system of philosophy was once promulgated in France, by which it was attempted to be proved that so much of the power and the cleverness of man was attributable to his hand, that,
but for a slight difference in the formation of this organ in some of the inferior animals, they would have been entitled to rank in the same class with him. Whatever may be said of the capabilities of man's hand, I believe the feminine qualification of being able to use the hand willingly and well, has a great deal to do with the moral influence of woman. The personal services she is thus enabled to render, enhance her value in the domestic circle, and when such services are performed with the energy of a sound understanding, and the grace of an accomplished mind,—above all, with the disinterested kindness of a generous heart—they not only dignify the performer, but confer happiness, as well as obligation. Indeed, so great is the charm of personal attentions arising spontaneously from the heart, that women of the highest rank in society, and far removed from the necessity of individual exertion, are frequently observed to adopt habits of personal kindness towards others, not only as the surest means of giving pleasure, but as a natural and grateful relief to the overflowing of their own affections. There is a principle in woman's love, that renders it impossible for her to be satisfied without actually doing something for the object of her regard. I speak only of woman in her refined and elevated character. Vanity can satiate itself with admiration, and selfishness can feed upon services received; but woman's love is an ever-flowing and inexhaustible fountain, that must be perpetually imparting from the source of its own blessedness. It needs but slight experience to know, that the mere act of loving our fellow-creatures does little towards the promotion of their happiness. The human heart is not so credulous as to continue to believe in affection without practical proof. Thus the interchange of mutual kind offices begets a confidence which cannot be made to grow out of any other foundation; and while gratitude is added to the connecting link, the character on each side is strengthened by the personal energy required for the performance of every duty.

There may exist great sympathy, kindness, and benevolence of feeling, without the power of bringing any of these emotions into exercise for the benefit of others. They exist as emotions only. And thus the means, which appear to us as the most gracious and benignant of any that could have been adopted by our heavenly Father, for rousing us into necessary exertion, are permitted to die away, fruitless and unproductive, in the breast where they ought to have operated as a blessing and a means of happiness to others.

It is not uncommon to find negatively amiable individuals, who sink under a weight of indolence, and suffer from innate selfishness a gradual contraction of mind, perpetually lamenting their own inability to do good. It would be ungenerous to doubt their sincerity in these regrets. We can therefore only conclude, that the want of habits of personal usefulness has rendered them mentally imbecile, and physically inert; whereas, had the same individuals been early accustomed to bodily exertion, promptly and cheerfully performed on the spur of the moment, without waiting to question whether it was agreeable or not, the very act of exertion would have become a pleasure, and the benevolent purposes to which such exertions might be applied, a source of the highest enjoyment.

Time was when the women of England were accustomed, almost from their childhood, to the constant employment of their hands. It might be sometimes in elaborate works of fancy, now ridiculed for their want of taste, and still more frequently in household avocations, now fallen into disuse from their incompatibility with modern refinement. I cannot speak with unqualified praise of all the objects on which they bestowed their attention, but, if it were possible, I would write in characters of gold the indisputable fact, that the habits of industry and personal exertion thus acquired, gave them a strength and dignity of character, a power of usefulness, and a capability of doing good, which the higher theories of modern education fail to impart. They were in some instances less qualified for travelling on the con- continent without an interpreter; but the women of whom I am speaking seldom went abroad. Their sphere of action was at their own firesides, and the world in which they moved was one where
pleasure of the highest, purest order, naturally and necessarily arises out of acts of duty faithfully performed.

Perhaps it may be necessary to be more specific in describing the class of women to which this work relates. It is, then, strictly speaking, to those who belong to that great mass of the population of England which is connected with trade and manufactures, as well as to the wives and daughters of professional men of limited incomes; or, in order to make the application more direct, to that portion of it who are restricted to the services of from one to four domestics,—who, on the one hand, enjoy the advantages of a liberal education, and, on the other, have no pretension to family rank. It is, however, impossible but that many deviations from these lines of demarcation must occur, in consequence of the great change in their pecuniary circumstances, which many families during a short period experience, and the indefinite order of rank and station in which the elegances of life are enjoyed, or its privations endured. There is also this peculiarity to be taken into account, in our view of English society, that the acquisition of wealth, with the advantages it procures, is all that is necessary for advancement to aristocratic dignity; while, on the other hand, so completely is the nation dependent upon her commercial resources, that it is no uncommon thing to see individuals who lately ranked amongst the aristocracy, suddenly driven, by the failure of some bank or some mercantile speculation, into the lowest walks of life, and compelled to mingle with the laborious poor.

These facts are strong evidence in favour of a system of conduct that would enable all women to sink gracefully, and without murmuring against providence, into a lower grade of society. It is easy to learn to enjoy, but it is not easy to learn to suffer. Any woman of respectable education, possessing a well-regulated mind, might move with ease and dignity into a higher sphere than that to which she had been accustomed; but few women whose hands have been idle all their lives, can feel themselves compelled to do the necessary labour of a household, without a feeling of indescribable hardship, too frequently productive of a secret murmuring against the instrumentality by which she was reduced to such a lot.

It is from the class of females above described, that we naturally look for the highest tone of moral feeling, because they are at the same time removed from the pressing necessities of absolute poverty, and admitted to the intellectual privileges of the great; and thus, while they enjoy every facility in the way of acquiring knowledge, it is their still higher privilege not to be exempt from the domestic duties which call forth the best energies of the female character. Where domestics abound, and there is a hired hand for every kindly office, it would be a work of supererogation for the mistress of the house to step forward, and assist with her own; but where domestics are few, and the individuals who compose the household are thrown upon the consideration of the mothers, wives, and daughters for their daily comfort, innumerable channels are opened for the overflow of those floods of human kindness, which it is one of the happiest and most ennobling duties of woman to administer to the weary frame, and to pour into the wounded mind.

It is perhaps the nearest approach we can make towards any thing like a definition of what is most striking in the characteristics of the women of England, to say, that the nature of their domestic circumstances is such as to invest their characters with the threefold recommendation of promptitude in action, energy of thought, and benevolence of feeling. With all the responsibilities of family comfort and social enjoyment resting upon them, and unaided by those troops of menials who throng the halls of the affluent and the great, they are kept alive to the necessity of making their own personal exertions conducive to the great end of promoting the happiness of those around them. They cannot sink into supineness, or suffer any of their daily duties to be neglected, but some beloved member of the household is made to feel the consequences, by enduring inconveniences which it is alike their pride and their
pleasure to remove. The frequently recurring avocations of domestic life admit of no delay. When the performance of any kindly office has to be asked for, solicited, and re-solicited, it loses more than half its charm. It is therefore strictly in keeping with the fine tone of an elevated character, to be beforehand with expectation, and thus to show, by the most delicate yet most effectual of all human means, that the object of attention, even when unheard and unseen, has been the subject of kind and affectionate solicitude.

By experience in these apparently minute affairs, a woman of kindly feeling and properly disciplined mind, soon learns to regulate her actions also according to the principles of true wisdom, and hence arises that energy of thought for which the women of England are so peculiarly distinguished. Every passing event, however insignificant to the eye of the world, has its crisis, every occurrence its emergency, every cause its effect; and upon these she has to calculate with precision, or the machinery of household comfort is arrested in its movements, and thrown into disorder.

Woman, however, would but ill supply the place appointed her by providence, were she endowed with no other faculties than those of promptitude in action, and energy of thought. Valuable as these may be, they would render her but a cold and cheerless companion, without the kindly affections and tender offices that sweeten human life. It is a high privilege, then, which the women of England enjoy, to be necessarily, and by the force of circumstances, thrown upon their affections, for the rule of their conduct in daily life. “What shall I do to gratify myself—to be admired—or to vary the tenor of my existence?” are not the questions which a woman of right feeling asks on first awaking to the avocations of the day. Much more congenial to the highest attributes of woman's character, are inquiries such as these: “How shall I endeavour through this day to turn the time, the health, and the means permitted me to enjoy, to the best account? Is any one sick, I must visit their chamber without delay, and try to give their apartment an air of comfort, by arranging such things as the wearied nurse may not have thought of. Is any one about to set off on a journey, I must see that the early meal is spread, or prepare it with my own hands, in order that the servant, who was working late last night, may profit by unbroken rest. Did I fail in what was kind or considerate to any of the family yesterday; I will meet them this morning with a cordial welcome, and show, in the most delicate way I can, that I am anxious to atone for the past. Was any one exhausted by the last day's exertion, I will be an hour before them this morning, and let them see that their labour is so much in advance. Or, if nothing extraordinary occurs to claim my attention, I will meet the family with a consciousness that, being the least engaged of any member of it, I am consequently the most at liberty to devote myself to the general good of the whole, by cultivating cheerful conversation, adapting myself to the prevailing tone of feeling, and leading those who are least happy, to think and speak of what will make them more so.”

Who can believe that days, months, and years spent in a continual course of thought and action similar to this, will not produce a powerful effect upon the character; and not upon the individual who thinks, and acts, alone, but upon all to whom her influence extends? In short, the customs of English society have so constituted women the guardians of the comfort of their homes, that, like the Vestals of old, they cannot allow the lamp they cherish to be extinguished, or to fail for want of oil, without an equal share of degradation attaching to their names.

In other countries, where the domestic lamp is voluntarily put out, in order to allow the women to resort to the opera, or the public festival, they are not only careless about their home comforts, but necessarily ignorant of the high degree of excellence to which they might be raised. In England there is a kind of science of good household management, which, if it consisted merely in keeping the house respectable in its physical character, might be left to the effectual working out of hired hands; but, happily for the women of England, there is a philosophy in this science, by which all their highest and best feelings are called into exercise.
Not only must the house be neat and clean, but it must be so ordered as to suit the tastes of all, as far as may be, without annoyance or offence to any. Not only must a constant system of activity be established, but peace must be preserved, or happiness will be destroyed. Not only must elegance be called in, to adorn and beautify the whole, but strict integrity must be maintained by the minutest calculation as to lawful means, and self, and self-gratification, must be made the yielding point in every disputed case. Not only must an appearance of outward order and comfort be kept up, but around every domestic scene there must be a strong wall of confidence, which no internal suspicion can undermine, no external enemy break through.

Good household management, conducted on this plan, is indeed a science well worthy of attention. It comprises so much, as to invest it with an air of difficulty on the first view; but no woman can reasonably complain of incapability, because nature has endowed the sex with perceptions so lively and acute, that where benevolence is the impulse, and principle the foundation upon which they act, experience will soon teach them by what means they may best accomplish the end they have in view.

They will soon learn by experience, that selfishness produces selfishness, that indolence increases with every hour of indulgence, that what is left undone because it is difficult to-day, will be doubly difficult to-morrow; that kindness and compassion, to answer any desirable end, must one be practical, the other delicate, in its nature; that affection must be kept alive by ministering to its necessities; and, above all, that religion must be recommended by consistency of character and conduct.

It is the strong evidence of truths like these, wrought out of their daily experience, and forced upon them as principles of action, which renders the women of England what they are, or rather were, and which fits them for becoming able instruments in the promotion of public and private good; for all must allow, that it is to the indefatigable exertions and faithful labours of women of this class, that England chiefly owes the support of some of her noblest and most benevolent institutions; while it is to their unobtrusive and untiring efforts, that the unfortunate and afflicted often are indebted for the only sympathy—the only kind attention that ever reaches their obscure abodes, or diffuses cheerfulness and comfort through the solitary chambers of suffering and sickness—the only aid that relieves the victims of penury and want—the only consolation that ever visits the desolate and degraded in their wretchedness and despair.

I acknowledge there are noble instances in the annals of English history, and perhaps never more than at the present day, of women of the highest rank devoting their time and their property to objects of benevolence; but from the very nature of their early habits and domestic circumstances, they are upon the whole less fitted for practical usefulness, than those who move within a lower sphere. I am also fully sensible of the charities which abound amongst the poor; and often have I been led to compare the actual merit of the magnificent bestowments of those who know not one comfort the less, with that of the poor man's offering and the widow's mite. Still my opinion remains the same, that in the situation of the middle class of women in England, are combined advantages in the formation of character, to which they owe much of their distinction, and their country much of her moral worth.

The true English woman, accustomed to bear about with her, her energies for daily use, her affections for daily happiness, and her delicate perceptions for hourly aids in the discovery of what is best to do or to leave undone, by this means obtains an insight into human nature, a power of adaptation, and a readiness of application of the right means to the desired end, which not only render her the most valuable friend, but the most delightful of fireside companions, because she is thus enabled to point the plainest moral, and adorn the simplest tale, with all those freshly-formed ideas which arise out of actual experience, and the contemplation of unvarnished truth.
Amongst their other characteristics, the women of England are frequently spoken of as plebeian in their manners, and cold in their affections; but their unpolished and occasionally embarrassed manner, as frequently conceals a delicacy that imparts the most refined and elevated sentiment to their familiar acts of duty and regard; and those who know them best are compelled to acknowledge, that all the noblest passions, the deepest feelings, and the highest aspirations of humanity, may be found within the brooding quiet of an English woman's heart. There are flowers that burst upon us, and startle the eye with the splendour of their beauty; we gaze until we are dazzled, and then turn away, remembering nothing but their gorgeous hues. There are others that refresh the traveller by the sweetness they diffuse—but he has to search for the source of his delight. He finds it embedded amongst green leaves; it may be less lovely than he had anticipated, in its form and colour, but, oh! how welcome is the memory of that flower, when the evening breeze is again made fragrant with its perfume.

It is thus that the unpretending virtues of the female character force themselves upon our regard, so that the woman herself is nothing in comparison with her attributes; and we remember less the celebrated belle, than her who made us happy.

Nor is it by their frequent and faithful services alone, that English women are distinguished. The greater proportion of them were diligent and thoughtful readers. It was not with them a point of importance to devour every book that was written as soon as it came out. They were satisfied to single out the best, and, making themselves familiar with every page, conversed with the writer as with a friend, and felt that, with minds superior, but yet congenial to their own, they could make friends indeed. In this manner their solitude was cheered, their hours of labour sweetened, and their conversation rendered at once piquant and instructive. This was preserved from the technicalities of common-place by the peculiar nature of their social and mental habits. They were accustomed to think for themselves; and, deprived in some measure of access to what might be esteemed the highest authorities in matters of sentiment and taste, they drew their conclusions from reasoning, and their reasoning from actual observation. It is true, their sphere of observation was microscopic, compared with that of the individual who enjoys the means of travelling from court to court, and of mixing with the polished society of every nation; but an acute vision directed to immediate objects, whatever they may be, will often discover as much of the wonders of creation, and supply the intelligent mind with food for reflection as valuable, as that which is the result of a widely extended view, where the objects, though more numerous, are consequently less distinct.

Thus the domestic woman, moving in a comparatively limited circle, is not necessarily confined to a limited number of ideas, but can often expatiate upon subjects of mere local interest with a vigour of intellect, a freshness of feeling, and a liveliness of fancy, which create in the mind of the uninitiated stranger, a perfect longing to be admitted into the home associations from whence are derived such a world of amusement, and so unfailing a relief from the severer duties of life.

It is not from the acquisition of ideas, but from the application of them, that conversation derives its greatest charm. Thus an exceedingly well-informed talker may be indescribably tedious; while one who is comparatively ignorant, as regards mere facts, having brought to bear, upon every subject contemplated, a lively imagination combined with a sound judgment, and a memory stored, not only with dates and historical events, but with strong and clear impressions of familiar things, may rivet the attention of his hearers, and startle them, for the time, into a distinctness of impression which imparts a degree of delightful complacency both to those who listen, and to the entertainer himself.

In the exercise of this kind of tact, the women of England, when they can be induced to cast off their shyness and reserve, are peculiarly excellent, and there is consequently an originality in their humour, a firmness in their reasoning, and a tone of delicacy in their perceptions, scarcely to be found elsewhere in the same degree, and combined in the same manner; nor
should it ever be forgotten, in speaking of their peculiar merits, that the freshness and the
charm of their conversation is reserved for their own firesides, for moments when the wearied
framed is most in need of exhilaration, when the mind is thrown upon its own resources for
the restoration of its exhausted powers, and when home associations and home affections are
the balm which the wounded spirit needs.
But above all other characteristics of the women of England, the strong moral feeling
pervading even their most trifling and familiar actions, ought to be mentioned as most
conducive to the maintenance of that high place which they so justly claim in the society of
their native land. The apparent coldness and reserve of English women ought only to be
regarded as a means adopted for the preservation of their purity of mind,—an evil, if you
choose to call it so, but an evil of so mild a nature, in comparison with that which it wards off,
that it may with truth be said to “lean to virtue's side.”
I have said before, that the sphere of a domestic woman's observation is microscopic. She is
therefore sensible of defects within that sphere, which, to a more extended vision, would be
imperceptible. If she looked abroad for her happiness, she would be less disturbed by any
falling off at home. If her interest and her energies were diffused through a wider range, she
would be less alive to the minuter claims upon her attention. It is possible she may sometimes
attach too much importance to the minutiae of her own domestic world, especially when her
mind is imperfectly cultivated and informed: but, on the other hand, there arises, from the
same cause, a scrupulous exactness, a studious observance, of the means of happiness, a
delicacy of perception, a purity of mind, and a dignified correctness of manner, for which the
women of England are unrivalled by those of any other nation.
By a certain class of individuals, their general conduct may possibly be regarded as too
prudish to be strictly in keeping with enlarged and liberal views of human life. These are such
as object to find the strict principles of female action carried out towards themselves. But let
every man who disputes the right foundation of this system of conduct, imagine in the place
of the woman whose retiring shyness provokes his contempt, his sister or his friend; and,
while he substitutes another being, similarly constituted, for himself, he will immediately
perceive that the boundary-line of safety, beyond which no true friend of woman ever tempted
her to pass, is drawn many degrees within that which he had marked out for his own
intercourse with the female sex. Nor is it in the small and separate deviations from this strict
line of propriety, that any great degree of culpability exists. Each individual act may be simple in itself, and almost too insignificant for remark; it is habit that
stamps the character, and custom that renders common. Who then can guard too scrupulously
against the first opening, the almost imperceptible chance of manners, by which the whole
aspect of domestic life would be altered? And who would not rather that English women
should be guarded by a wall of scruples, than allowed to degenerate into less worthy, and less
efficient supporters of their country's moral worth?
Were it only in their intercourse with mixed society that English women were distinguished
by this strict regard to the proprieties of life, it might with some justice fall under the ban of
prudery; but happily for them, it extends to every sphere of action in which they move,
discountenancing vice in every form, and investing social duty with that true moral
dignity which it ought ever to possess.
I am not ignorant that this can only be consistently carried out under the influence of personal
religion. I must, therefore, be understood to speak with limitations, and as comparing my own
countrywomen with those of other nations—as acknowledging melancholy exceptions, and
not only fervently desiring that every one professed a religion capable of leading them in a
more excellent way, but that all who do profess that religion were studiously careful in these
minor points. Still I do believe that the women of England are not surpassed by those of any
other country for their clear perception of the right and the wrong of common and familiar
things, for their reference to principle in the ordinary affairs of life, and for their united maintenance of that social order, sound integrity, and domestic peace, which constitute the foundation of all that is most valuable in the society of our native land.

Much as I have said of the influence of the domestic habits of my countrywomen, it is, after all, to the prevalence of religious instruction, and the operation of religious principle upon the heart, that the consistent maintenance of their high tone of moral character is to be attributed. Amongst families in the middle class of society in this country, those who live without regard to religion are exceptions to the general rule; while the great proportion of individuals thus circumstanced are not only accustomed to give their time and attention to religious observances, but, there is every reason to believe, are materially affected in their lives and conduct by the operation of Christian principles upon their own minds. Women are said to be more easily brought under this influence than men; and we consequently see, in places of public worship, and on all occasions in which a religious object is the motive for exertion, a greater proportion of women than of men. The same proportion may possibly be observed in places of amusement, and where objects less desirable claim the attention of the public; but this ought not to render us insensible to the high privileges of our favoured country, where there is so much to interest, to please, and to instruct, in what is connected with the highest and holiest uses to which we can devote the talents committed to our trust.