were swamped by sensualism. The character of women had become depraved. Conjugal fidelity was disregarded; maternity was held in reproach; family and home were alike corrupted. Domestic purity no longer bound society together. France was motherless; the children broke loose; and the Revolution burst forth, "amidst the yells and the fierce violence of women."*

But the terrible lesson was disregarded, and again and again France has grievously suffered from the want of that discipline obedience, self-control, and self-respect which can only be truly learnt at home. It is said that the Third Napoleon attributed the recent powerlessness of France,

* Beaumarchais's "Figaro," which was received with such enthusiasm in France shortly before the outbreak of the Revolution, may be regarded as a typical play; it represented the average morality of the upper as well as the lower classes with respect to the relations between the sexes. "Label men how you please," says Herbert Spencer, "with titles of 'upper' and 'middle' and 'lower,' you can not prevent them from being units of the same society, acted upon by the same spirit of the age, moulded after the same type of character. The mechanical law, that action and reaction are equal, has its moral analogue. The deed of one man to another tends ultimately to produce a like effect upon both, be the deed good or bad. Do but put them in relationship, and no division into castes, no differences of wealth, can prevent men from assimilating. . . . . The same influences which rapidly adapt the individual to his society, insure, though by a slower process, the general uniformity of a national character. . . . . And so long as the assimilating influences productive of it continue at work, it is folly to suppose any one grade of a community can be morally different from the rest. In whichever rank you see corruption, be assured it equally pervades all ranks—be assured it is the symptom of a bad social diathesis. While the virus of depravity exists in one part of the body-politic, no other part can remain healthy."—*Social Statics*, chap. xx., § 7.



which left her helpless and bleeding at the feet of her conquerors, to the frivolity and lack of principle of the people, as well as to their love of pleasure—which, however, it must be confessed, he himself did not a little to foster. It would thus seem that the discipline which France still needs to learn, if she would be good and great, is that indicated by the First Napoleon—home education by good mothers.

The influence of woman is the same everywhere. Her condition influences the morals, manners, and character of the people in all countries. Where she is debased, society is debased; where she is morally pure and enlightened, society will be proportionately elevated.

Hence, to instruct woman is to instruct man; to elevate her character is to raise his own; to enlarge her mental freedom is to extend and secure that of the whole community. For nations are but the outcomes of homes, and peoples of mothers.

But while it is certain that the character of a nation will be elevated by the enlightment and refinement of woman, it is much more than doubtful whether any advantage is to be derived from her entering into competition with man in the rough work of business and politics. Women can no more do men's special work in the world than men can do women's. And wherever woman has been withdrawn from her home and family to enter upon other work, the result has been socially disastrous. Indeed, the efforts of some of the best philanthropists have of late years been devoted to withdrawing women from toiling alongside of men in coal-pits, factories, nail-shops, and brick-yards.

It is still not uncommon in the North for the husbands to be idle at home, while the mothers and daughters are working in the factory; the result being, in many cases, an entire

subversion of family order, of domestic discipline, and of home rule.* And for many years past, in Paris, that state of things has been reached which some women desire to effect among ourselves. The women there mainly attend to business—serving the *boutique*, or presiding at the *comptoir*—while the men lounge about the Boulevards. But the result has only been homelessness, degeneracy, and family and social decay.

* Some twenty-eight years since, the author wrote and published the following passage, not without practical knowledge of the subject; and notwithstanding the great amelioration in the lot of factory-workers, effected mainly through the noble efforts of Lord Shaftesbury, the description is still to a large extent true:

"The factory system, however much it may have added to the wealth of the country, has had a most deleterious effect on the domestic condition of the people. It has invaded the sanctuary of home, and broken up families and social ties. It has taken the wife from the husband, and the children from their parents. Especially has its tendency been to lower the character of women. The performance of domestic duties is her proper office—the management of her household, the rearing of her family, the economizing of the family means, the supplying of the family wants. But the factory takes her from all these duties. Homes become no longer homes. Children grow up uneducated and neglected. The finer affections become blunted. Woman is no more the gentle wife, companion, and friend of man, but his fellow-laborer and fellow-drudge. She is exposed to influences which too often efface that modesty of thought and conduct which is one of the best safeguards of virtue. Without judgment or sound principles to guide them, factory-girls early acquire the feeling of independence. Ready to throw off the constraint imposed on them by their parents, they leave their homes, and speedily become initiated in the vices of their associates. The atmosphere, physical as well as moral, in which they live stimulates their animal appetites; the influence of bad example becomes contagious among them; and mischief is propagated far and wide."—*The Union* (January, 1843).



Nor is there any reason to believe that the elevation and improvement of women are to be secured by investing them with political power. There are, however, in these days, many believers in the potentiality of "votes,"* who anticipate some indefinite good from the "enfranchisement" of woman. It is not necessary here to enter upon the discussion of this question. But it may be sufficient to state that the power which women do not possess politically is far more than compensated by that which they exercise in private life—by their training in the home those who, whether as men or as women, do all the manly as well as womanly work of the world. The Radical Bentham has said that man, even if he would, cannot keep power from woman; for that she already governs the world "with the whole power of a deposit," † though the power that she mainly governs by is love. And to form the character of the whole human race, is certainly a power far greater than that which women could ever hope to exercise as voters for members of Parliament, or even as law-makers.

* A French satirist, pointing to the repeated *plebiscites* and perpetual voting of late years, and to the growing want of faith in anything but votes, said, in 1870, that we seemed to be rapidly approaching the period when the only prayer of man and woman would be, "Give us this day our daily vote!"

† "Of primeval and necessary and absolute superiority, the relation of the mother to the child is far more complete, though less seldom quoted as an example, than that of father and son. . . . . By Sir Robert Filmer, the supposed necessary as well as absolute power of the father over his children was taken as the foundation and origin, and thence justifying cause, of the power of the monarch in every political state. With more propriety he might have stated the absolute dominion of a woman as the only legitimate form of government."—*Deontology*, ii., 181.

There is, however, one special department of woman's work demanding the earnest attention of all true female reformers, though it is one which has hitherto been unaccountably neglected. We mean the better economizing and preparation of human food, the waste of which at present, for want of the most ordinary culinary knowledge, is little short of scandalous. If that man is to be regarded as a benefactor of his species who makes two stalks of corn to grow where only one grew before, not less is she to be regarded as a public benefactor who economizes and turns to the best practical account the food-products of human skill and labor. The improved use of even our existing supply would be equivalent to an immediate extension of the cultivable acreage of our country—not to speak of the increase in health, economy, and domestic comfort. Were our female reformers only to turn their energies in this direction with effect, they would earn the gratitude of all households, and be esteemed as among the greatest of all practical philanthropists.

## CHAPTER III.

### COMPANIONSHIP AND EXAMPLE.

"Keep good company, and you shall be of the number."—GEORGE HERBERT.

"For mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of noble men."—SHAKSPEARE.

"Examples preach to th' eye—care, then, mine says,
Not how you end, but how you spend your days."
HENRY MARTYN, "*Last Thoughts.*"

"Dis moi qui t'admire, et je dirai qui tu es."—SAINTE-BEUVE.

"He that means to be a good limner will be sure to draw after the most excellent copies, and guide every stroke of his pencil by the better pattern that lays before him; so he that desires that the table of his life may be fair will be careful to propose the best examples, and will never be content till he equals or excels them."—OWEN FELTHAM.

THE natural education of the Home is prolonged far into life—indeed it never entirely ceases. But the time arrives, in the progress of years, when the home ceases to exercise an exclusive influence on the formation of character; and it is succeeded by the more artificial education of the school, and the companionship of friends and comrades, which continue to mould the character by the powerful influence of example.

Men, young and old—but the young more than the old—can not help imitating those with whom they associate.