

The woman who soothes anxiety by her presence, who charms and allays irritability by her sweetness of temper, is a consoler as well as a true helper. Niebuhr always spoke of his wife as a fellow-worker with him in this sense. Without the peace and consolation which he found in her society, his nature would have fretted in comparative uselessness. "Her sweetness of temper and her love," said he, "raise me above the earth, and in a manner separate me from this life." But she was a helper in another and more direct way. Niebuhr was accustomed to discuss with his wife every historical discovery, every political event, every novelty in literature; and it was mainly for her pleasure and approbation, in the first instance, that he labored while preparing himself for the instruction of the world at large.

The wife of John Stuart Mill was another worthy helper of her husband, though in a more abstruse department of study, as we learn from his touching dedication of the treatise "On Liberty:" "To the beloved and deplored memory of her who was the inspirer, and in part the author, of all

læ—that are still preserved, is perfectly marvellous. Every thing that was sent to the press, and all the courses of lectures, were written by her, either to dictation or from a copy. This work she did in the truest spirit of love and devotion. She had a power, moreover, of keeping her husband up to what he had to do. She contended wisely against a sort of energetic indolence which characterized him, and which, while he was always laboring, made him apt to put aside the task actually before him—sometimes diverted by subjects of inquiry suggested in the course of study on the matter in hand, sometimes discouraged by the difficulty of reducing to order the immense mass of materials he had accumulated in connection with it. Then her resolution and cheerful disposition sustained and refreshed him, and never more so than when, during the last twelve years of his life, his bodily strength was broken, and his spirit, though languid, yet ceased

that is best in my writings—the friend and wife, whose exalted sense of truth and right was my strongest incitement, and whose approbation was my chief reward, I dedicate this volume."

Not less touching is the testimony borne by another great living writer to the character of his wife, in the inscription upon the tombstone of Mrs. Carlyle, in Haddington Churchyard, where are inscribed these words: "In her bright existence she had more sorrows than are common, but also a soft amiability, a capacity of discernment, and a noble loyalty of heart, which are rare. For forty years she was the true and loving helpmate of her husband, and by act and word unweariedly forwarded him as none else could in all of worthy that he did or attempted."

The married life of Faraday was eminently happy. In his wife he found, at the same time, a true helpmate and soul-mate. She supported, cheered, and strengthened him on his way through life, giving him "the clear contentment of a heart at ease." In his diary he speaks of his marriage as "a source of honor and happiness far exceeding all the

not from mental toil. The truth is, that Sir William's marriage, his comparatively limited circumstances, and the character of his wife, supplied to a nature that would have been contented to spend its mighty energies in work that brought no reward but in the doing of it, and that might never have been made publicly known or available, the practical force and impulse which enabled him to accomplish what he actually did in literature and philosophy. It was this influence, without doubt, which saved him from utter absorption in his world of rare, noble, and elevated, but ever-increasingly unattainable ideas. But for it, the serene sea of abstract thought might have held him becalmed for life; and in the absence of all utterance of definite knowledge of his conclusions, the world might have been left to an ignorant and mysterious wonder about the unprofitable scholar."

rest." After twenty-eight years' experience, he spoke of it as "an event which, more than any other, had contributed to his earthly happiness and healthy state of mind. . . . The union (said he) has in nowise changed, except only in the depth and strength of its character." And for six-and-forty years did the union continue unbroken—the love of the old man remaining as fresh, as earnest, as heart-whole, as in the days of his impetuous youth. In this case marriage was

"A golden chain let down from heaven,  
Whose links are bright and even;  
That falls like sleep on lovers, and combines  
The soft and sweetest minds  
In equal knots."

Besides being a helper, woman is emphatically a consoler. Her sympathy is unailing. She soothes, cheers, and comforts. Never was this more true than in the case of the wife of Tom Hood, whose tender devotion to him, during a life that was a prolonged illness, is one of the most affecting things in biography. A woman of excellent good sense, she appreciated her husband's genius, and, by encouragement and sympathy, cheered and heartened him to renewed effort in many a weary struggle for life. She created about him an atmosphere of hope and cheerfulness, and nowhere did the sunshine of her love seem so bright as when lighting up the couch of her invalid husband.

Nor was he unconscious of her worth. In one of his letters to her, when absent from his side, Hood said: "I never was any thing, dearest, till I knew you; and I have been a better, happier, and more prosperous man ever since. Lay by that truth in lavender, sweetest, and remind me of it when I fail. I am writing warmly and fondly, but not

without good cause. First, your own affectionate letter, lately received; next, the remembrance of our dear children, pledges—what darling ones!—of our old familiar love; then, a delicious impulse to pour out the overflowings of my heart into yours; and last, not least, the knowledge that your dear eyes will read what my hand is now writing. Perhaps there is an after-thought that, whatever may befall me, the wife of my bosom will have the acknowledgment of her tenderness, worth, excellence—all that is wifely or womanly—from my pen." In another letter, also written to his wife during a brief absence, there is a natural touch, showing his deep affection for her: "I went and retraced our walk in the park, and sat down on the same seat, and felt happier and better."

But not only was Mrs. Hood a consoler, she was also a helper of her husband in his special work. He had such confidence in her judgment, that he read, and re-read, and corrected, with her assistance, all that he wrote. Many of his pieces were first dedicated to her; and her ready memory often supplied him with the necessary references and quotations. Thus, in the roll of noble wives of men of genius, Mrs. Hood will always be entitled to take a foremost place.

Not less effective as a literary helper was Lady Napier, the wife of Sir William Napier, historian of the Peninsular War. She encouraged him to undertake the work; and without her help he would have experienced great difficulty in completing it. She translated and epitomized the immense mass of original documents, many of them in cipher, on which it was in a great measure founded. When the Duke of Wellington was told of the art and industry she had displayed in deciphering King Joseph's portfolio, and the immense mass of correspondence taken at Vittoria,

he at first would hardly believe it, adding—"I would have given £20,000 to any person who could have done this for me in the Peninsula." Sir William Napier's handwriting being almost illegible, Lady Napier made out his rough interlined manuscript, which he himself could scarcely read, and wrote out a full fair copy for the printer; and all this vast labor she undertook and accomplished, according to the testimony of her husband, without having for a moment neglected the care and education of a large family. When Sir William lay on his death-bed, Lady Napier was at the same time dangerously ill; but she was wheeled into his room on a sofa, and the two took their silent farewell of each other. The husband died first; in a few weeks the wife followed him, and they sleep side by side in the same grave.

Many other similar true-hearted wives rise up in the memory, to recite whose praises would more than fill up our remaining space—such as Flaxman's wife, Ann Denham, who cheered and encouraged her husband through life in the prosecution of his art, accompanying him to Rome, sharing in his labors and anxieties, and finally in his triumphs, and to whom Flaxman, in the fortieth year of their married life, dedicated his beautiful designs illustrative of Faith, Hope, and Charity, in token of his deep and undimmed affection; such as Katherine Boutcher, "dark-eyed Kate," the wife of William Blake, who believed her husband to be the first genius on earth, worked off the impressions of his plates and colored them beautifully with her own hand, bore with him in all his erratic ways, sympathized with him in his sorrows and joys for forty-five years, and comforted him until his dying hour—his last sketch, made in his seventy-first year, being a likeness of himself, before making which, seeing his

wife crying by his side, he said, "Stay, Kate! just keep as you are; I will draw your portrait, for you have ever been an angel to me;"—such, again, as Lady Franklin, the true and noble woman, who never rested in her endeavors to penetrate the secret of the Polar Sea and prosecute the search for her long-lost husband—undaunted by failure, and persevering in her determination with a devotion and singleness of purpose altogether unparalleled;—or such, again, as the wife of Zimmermann, whose intense melancholy she strove in vain to assuage, sympathising with him, listening to him, and endeavoring to understand him—and to whom, when on her death-bed, about to leave him forever, she addressed the touching words, "My poor Zimmermann! who will now understand thee?"

Wives have actively helped their husbands in other ways. Before Weinsberg surrendered to its besiegers, the women of the place asked permission of the captors to remove their valuables. The permission was granted, and shortly after, the women were seen issuing from the gates carrying their husbands on their shoulders. Lord Nithsdale owed his escape from prison to the address of his wife, who changed garments with him, sending him forth in her stead, and herself remaining prisoner—an example which was successfully repeated by Madame de Lavalette.

But the most remarkable instance of the release of a husband through the devotion of a wife was that of the celebrated Grotius. He had lain for nearly twenty months in the strong fortress of Loevestein, near Gorcum, having been condemned by the Government of the United Provinces to perpetual imprisonment. His wife, having been allowed to share his cell, greatly relieved his solitude. She was permitted to go into the town twice a week and bring her hus-

band books, of which he required a large number to enable him to prosecute his studies. At length a large chest was required to hold them. This the sentries at first examined with great strictness, but, finding that it only contained books (among others Arminian books) and linen, they at length gave up the search, and it was allowed to pass out and in as a matter of course. This led Grotius's wife to conceive the idea of releasing him; and she persuaded him one day to deposit himself in the chest instead of the outgoing books. When the two soldiers appointed to remove it took it up, they felt it to be considerably heavier than usual, and one of them asked, jestingly, "Have we got the Arminian himself here?" to which the ready-witted wife replied, "Yes, perhaps some Arminian books." The chest reached Gorcum in safety; the captive was released; and Grotius escaped across the frontier into Brabant, and afterwards into France, where he was rejoined by his wife.

Trial and suffering are the tests of married life. They bring out the real character, and often tend to produce the closest union. They may even be the spring of the purest happiness. Uninterrupted joy, like uninterrupted success, is not good for either man or woman. When Heine's wife died, he began to reflect upon the loss he had sustained. They had both known poverty, and struggled through it hand-in-hand; and it was his greatest sorrow that she was taken from him at the moment when fortune was beginning to smile upon him, but too late for her to share in his prosperity. "Alas!" said he, "among my griefs must I reckon even her love—the strongest, truest, that ever inspired the heart of woman—which made me the happiest of mortals, and yet was to me a fountain of a thousand distresses, inquietudes, and cares? To entire cheerfulness, per-

haps, she never attained; but for what unspeakable sweetness, what exalted enrapturing joys, is not love indebted to sorrow! Amidst growing anxieties, with the torture of anguish at my heart, I have been made, even by the loss which caused me this anguish and these anxieties, inexpressibly happy! When tears flowed over our cheeks, did not a nameless, seldom-felt delight stream through my breast, oppressed equally by joy and sorrow!"

There is a degree of sentiment in German love which seems strange to English readers—such as we find depicted in the lives of Novalis, Jung Stilling, Fichte, Jean Paul, and others that might be named. The German betrothal is a ceremony of almost equal importance to the marriage itself; and in that state the sentiments are allowed free play, while English lovers are restrained, shy, and as if ashamed of their feelings. Take, for instance, the case of Herder, whom his future wife first saw in the pulpit. "I heard," she says, "the voice of an angel, and soul's words such as I had never heard before. In the afternoon I saw him, and stammered out my thanks to him; from this time forth our souls were one." They were betrothed long before their means would permit them to marry; but at length they were united. "We were married," says Caroline, the wife, "by the rose-light of a beautiful evening. We were one heart, one soul." Herder was equally ecstatic in his language. "I have a wife," he wrote to Jacobi, "that is the tree, the consolation, and the happiness of my life. Even in flying, transient thoughts (which often surprise us), we are one!"

Take, again, the case of Fichte, in whose history his courtship and marriage form a beautiful episode. He was a poor German student, living with a family at Zurich in the capacity of tutor, when he first made the acquaintance

of Johanna Maria Rahn, a niece of Klopstock. Her position in life was higher than that of Fichte; nevertheless, she regarded him with sincere admiration. When Fichte was about to leave Zurich, his troth plighted to her, she, knowing him to be very poor, offered him a gift of money before setting out. He was inexpressibly hurt by the offer, and, at first, even doubted whether she could really love him; but, on second thoughts, he wrote to her, expressing his deep thanks, but at the same time, the impossibility of his accepting such a gift from her. He succeeded in reaching his destination, though entirely destitute of means. After a long and hard struggle with the world, extending over many years, Fichte was at length earning money enough to enable him to marry. In one of his charming letters to his betrothed he said: "And so, dearest, I solemnly devote myself to thee, and thank thee that thou hast thought me not unworthy to be thy companion on the journey of life. . . . There is no land of happiness here below—I know it now—but a land of toil, where every joy but strengthens us for greater labor. Hand-in-hand we shall traverse it, and encourage and strengthen each other, until our spirits—oh, may it be together!—shall rise to the eternal fountain of all peace."

The married life of Fichte was very happy. His wife proved a true and high-minded helpmate. During the War of Liberation she was assiduous in her attention to the wounded in the hospitals, where she caught a malignant fever which nearly carried her off. Fichte himself caught the same disease, and was for a time completely prostrated; but he lived for a few more years, and died at the early age of fifty-two, consumed by his own fire.

What a contrast does the courtship and married life of the blunt and practical William Cobbett present to the æsthetical and sentimental love of these highly refined Germans! Not less honest, not less true, but, as some would think, comparatively coarse and vulgar. When he first set eyes upon the girl that was afterwards to become his wife, she was only thirteen years old, and he was twenty-one—a sergeant-major in a foot regiment stationed at St. John's, in New Brunswick. He was passing the door of her father's house one day in winter, and saw the girl out in the snow, scrubbing a washing-tub. He said at once to himself, "That's the girl for me." He made her acquaintance, and resolved that she should be his wife so soon as he could get discharged from the army.

On the eve of the girl's return to Woolwich with her father, who was a sergeant-major in the artillery, Cobbett sent her a hundred and fifty guineas which he had saved, in order that she might be able to live without hard work until his return to England. The girl departed, taking with her the money; and five years later Cobbett obtained his discharge. On reaching London, he made haste to call upon the sergeant-major's daughter. "I found, he says, "my little girl a servant-of-all-work (and hard work it was), at five pounds a year, in the house of a Captain Brisac; and, without hardly saying a word about the matter, she put into my hands the whole of my hundred and fifty guineas, unbroken." Admiration of her conduct was now added to love of her person, and Cobbett shortly after married the girl, who proved an excellent wife. He was, indeed, never tired of speaking her praises, and it was his pride to attribute to her all the comfort and much of the success of his after-life.

Though Cobbett was regarded by many in his life-time as a coarse, hard, practical man, full of prejudices, there was yet a strong undercurrent of poetry in his nature; and, while he declaimed against sentiment, there were few men more thoroughly imbued with sentiment of the best kind. He had the tenderest regard for the character of woman. He respected her purity and her virtue, and in his "Advice to Young Men" he has painted the true womanly woman—the helpful, cheerful, affectionate wife—with a vividness and brightness, and, at the same time, a force of good sense, that has never been surpassed by any English writer. Cobbett was any thing but refined, in the conventional sense of the word; but he was pure, temperate, self-denying, industrious, vigorous, and energetic, in an eminent degree. Many of his views were, no doubt, wrong, but they were his own, for he insisted on thinking for himself in every thing. Though few men took a firmer grasp of the real than he did, perhaps still fewer were more swayed by the ideal. In word-pictures of his own emotions he is unsurpassed. Indeed, Cobbett might almost be regarded as one of the greatest prose poets of English real life.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE DISCIPLINE OF EXPERIENCE.

"I would the great would grow like thee  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity."—TENNYSON.

"Not to be unhappy is unhappiness,  
And misery not t' have known miserie;  
For the best way unto discretion is  
The way that leads us by adversitie;  
And men are better shew'd what is amisse,  
By th' expert finger of calamitie,  
Than they can be with all that fortune brings,  
Who never shewes them the true face of things."

DANIEL.

"A lump of woe affliction is,  
Yet thence I borrow lumps of bliss;  
Though few can see a blessing in 't,  
It is my furnace and my mint."

ERSKINE'S *Gospel Sonnets*.

"Crosses grow anchors, bear as thou shouldst so  
Thy cross, and that cross grows an anchor too."

DONNE.

"Be the day weary, or be the day long,  
At length it ringeth to Evensong."—*Ancient Couplet*.

PRACTICAL wisdom is only to be learned in the school of experience. Precepts and instructions are useful so far as they go, but without the discipline of real life, they remain of the nature of theory only. The hard facts of ex-