

IDEALS OF EVERY-DAY LIFE. No. II.

HOME

"And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."—JOHN XI.

BEAUTIFUL and blessed was that house, the simple home of Mary and of Martha! more blessed in its unostentatious welcome of that divine pattern of humility, who went to sit and talk with them as a familiar friend, and whose kindling of heavenly thoughts remind them that heaven is Heaven, than in any thrift or splendor! More beautiful because of the simple and true hearts that dwelt together there, than it could be made by any adornment of fortune! Sublime in history and never to be forgotten is that obscure home, that one from among so many which share the common oblivion of dulness! And it does not borrow all its fame from its illustrious guest. It is probable that Jesus entered many houses, and was familiar with many circles of which we shall never hear. It is the life that was lived there that makes that home beautiful. The beautiful life of its inmates illumined that obscure abode, and invested it with an importance more lasting than any that ever lingered about a monarch's palace. The truest riches and comfort were theirs; for thoughts of heaven, sublime anticipations of the soul's destiny, and consciousness of God, were daily bread to them. There was the true abundance, the generosity which afforded more than economy thinks it possible to provide. Economy murmured; but sentiment poured out the precious ointment. Yes! Blessed was that home, in which more was expended upon sentiment than upon mere world's economy; in which a hint of the heart was listened to as readily as one of prudence or utility. There enthusiastic veneration could afford its offering, though it is probable that poverty had to provide. And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment which the affectionate Mary poured upon the feet of Jesus. It was but the emblem of the more lasting odor of the heavenly sentiment which inspired that act. We see what feeling

found a world in that house, what love, what faith, what veneration dwelt there and sanctified all things, and gilded with a holy sunlight of new associations those dull walls. The memory of that house is sweet with the fragrance of the virtues which there grew and blossomed. In the odor of that ointment it is embalmed forevermore. I would that more of that odor filled our comfortable dwellings, so that we might with more sincerity repeat the old saying; "Home is home, were it never so homely." I would that more of the true philosophy of indoor life were felt and practised; that more generous and far-seeing views of life might control the economy of the household; and that home might be the blessed meeting-place of happy and enlightened spirits, each a kingdom in itself, each made unspeakably richer in the love of the other, instead of a mere refuge of necessity, or a dull haunt of habit, or a whited sepulchre of show and fashion. Home should be heaven,—a consummation not entirely to be despaired of by any who are willing to be wise; and which fortune has less power to further or prevent than we are apt to think.

In attempting to show, therefore, how a higher beauty and interest may be added to life, in all its daily forms, home becomes an object more worthy of our study than any other. All reform begins at home. What a man's home is, his whole life will be, as a general rule. And the principles, the ideas, the plans, the motives, the hopes, and fears which govern him there, and constitute the atmosphere of his dwelling, will go out with him into all his intercourse and business. If all is well at home, we need not watch him in the market. If he is a true man there, he is a true man every where. If wise and prudent there, he will not need to be made any more a "man of the world." If he can succeed in redeeming life's most familiar scenes from dulness and unprofitableness, the world abroad will be all fresh and full of entertainment. If he be not a dull familiar stranger in his home, he will find himself at home wherever he goes. If there be independence of physical comforts, and abundance of mental, moral, and social resources in one's dwelling, there will be no unnecessary anxiety, no feverish hurry, no narrow drudgery in one's business abroad. One will work cheerfully for small profits, if he be rich in the love and society

of his home. If discontented there, he will be discontented everywhere. So long as the fire of love burns brightly on the domestic altar, he will not be frozen by the selfishness of the world.

Is there not room for great improvement in domestic economy, meaning by economy the law of the house, the art of living at home, (for that is the original and literal meaning of the term)? Such economy should be the beautiful harmony of all the interests of life, not the mere art of husbanding the physical means of life. It should be the wise controlling and moulding of circumstances to the higher and ultimate purposes and wants of the soul, not a system of petty shifts to provide against necessity. It should think much of living wisely, as of getting a living. It guards against ignorance, dulness, drudgery, waste of time, waste of social opportunities, no less than against waste of money, flour, or fuel. Its object is, a happy home, — the realizing, with such resources as we have of our conception of highest good in actual familiar life.

Thus far I have been but dimly hinting and sketching by way of introduction a thought, which I will now endeavor to unfold more orderly. Our theme is Home; and our problem, how to make the most of Home in a rational, far-seeing, spiritual view of life. The subject is one of exceeding difficulty, more so than the inviting sound of the word would lead one to suspect. In attempting to hold up an ideal of a home; to explore the prevailing wants and mistakes, the overlooked or abused resources of home; and to correct the popular economy; it becomes more difficult to speak with all diffidence, as wanting experience which many of my readers have. To suggest a perfect scheme and guard it against all little practical difficulties, all frictions, which might attend its operation, would be as idle as it is to hope to make any improvement in this life without great effort and self-sacrifice. The most that a teacher can do in any case is to suggest thoughts, provoke aspirations, and awake energy in others; he can no more think out their life-plan for them, than he can live their life. For a moment he can start men out of the dull lethargy of habit, it is something. If he can remind them of their deepest, truest wants, it is a great deal! What one clearly wants, he will contrive to have.

The happiness and charm of Home of course depends upon the character of its inmates. Personal improvement is the secret of all social bliss. Without heavenly-mindedness there can be no heaven. That which sanctifies the temple, must bless the house. The house must be a temple. In proportion as the spirit of Christ has come to dwell within us, in the same proportion there will be light and beauty in our outward dwellings. The world is what we make it, glorious and inspiring, or empty and discouraging, according as motives, purposes, and views are spiritual or selfish; and home to every one is but the world in miniature. If you know a man's habitual view of life, you will find his home in every point unconsciously corresponding to it. If he believes the world is governed more by arbitrary power than by love, you will find him a petty tyrant among his own. If he have no faith, if he have never roused himself and learned to triumph over circumstances inwardly or outwardly, but in his habitual moods does practically acknowledge the supremacy of chance or fate, you will find his home a dull haunt of habit, where everything is passively governed by circumstance, and mind and character, the nobler aspirations, the enlightened will, have no control; you will find a house full of easiness without energy to help itself, alternating with intervals of dulness or tameness, not calmness, and hovering over all with gloomy outspread wing the genii of the place, necessity and want; for these ideas do virtually make men poor in the midst of fortune's abundance. But if he have often felt the glow of Love, the strength and safety of Duty, and the rapture of world-piercing Faith, till he believes in a kingdom of heaven, in an infinite world unseen, some beams from that bright home will light upon the walls of this his earthly house, will play upon the happy faces gathered round the daily meal, will surround them with windows opening out upon most inviting infinite prospects, through which Father shall seem to smile in upon them, if he do not rather seem to sit at table with them. Wherever they turn they will meet God, and the mere earthly form will be transfigured, reflecting light from his invisible presence. If Beauty be the aspect under which he is most fond of contemplating the world; if to see and to make others see and to create beauty be one of his

habitual purposes, the Graces will hide themselves in his house, will leave tokens of their love in every corner, replenishing the vessels with fresh flowers, presiding silently and skilfully over every little arrangement, prompting and finding room for a free exercise of soul in every little shift of necessity, suffering nothing to grow old by familiarity, nothing to disturb by incongruity, lending fairy grace to the turbulent sports of children, softening noise into music, raising economy to the dignity of Art, and rounding the details of each day into a poem. Some certainly have approached near enough to this to see that it is not absurd; and fancy has its truth as well as worldly wisdom. Such, then, is the power of an idea, when inwardly cherished, to modify and temper the whole atmosphere of one's life.

Let us now consider in order, beginning with the lowest, some of the ruling ideas which possess men, and mark the conformity of each one's home to his idea. This will disclose to us the true secret of domestic happiness.

I. The fault in most homes is the absence of all purpose, of any ideal conception of what life should be. Home with many is the mere result of habit, imitated from others, or dictated by circumstances, without the question ever being asked whether others were all-wise, and circumstances all-powerful, and whether it would not be worth the while to try to bend circumstances to our mind, and to improve the talent which we have received. The household economy and intercourse go on from day to day, without much thought or effort more than is prompted by the wants of nature. The wants of nature are their springs of action, which keep them from going to sleep; custom their rule which keeps all in a sort of order. These wants must be consulted, and the labor which they exact is in any case a blessing. And it is well that there should be customs, to do things for us by the force of habit, when we have no force of study and of will ourselves. But it is a scanty, barren life, which knows no other law, and explores no other resources. While we do everything from habit, we know not why; living together just so because we find ourselves together just so; doing things to-day because they were done yesterday; drudging without a purpose; sitting together with nothing to say; hurrying

through the work in hope of the meal, and hurrying through the meal in fear of the work, which is only preliminary to the next meal; toiling busily full of care to lay up an hour of quiet, — of quiet which, what with the weariness of past, what with the anxiety of coming care, dwindles away to nothing; letting little economies draw the mind wholly off from the contemplation of anything interesting and inspiring; neglecting the culture which alone can ensure to the mind the habit of self-occupying activity, to the senses their power of seeing and admiring the glories with which God has surrounded us; — while we limit ourselves to the cares of this world, solacing ourselves in view of the end with the dull creed of habit, to which we wistfully look with a vague expectation of deliverance when we shall get “the other side of flesh,” but seeking no deliverance here, allowing ourselves no chance to realize that the kingdom of heaven is within us; — while our homes are but abiding-places, which it costs all our care to keep well warmed, well stored, well lighted, but otherwise barren of interest, homes for the body, not the mind, with the Bible on the shelf, regularly taken down and perused perhaps, not read, and the glorious earth and skies out at the window still with heavenly perseverance inviting us to a glorious feast of beauty, from which we turn senselessly away, and the whole spiritual world hidden in us and in our neighbors, but not revealed, because we dwell together familiarly, not intimately, and do not quicken each other into life; while this is all of it, what is home to us but a mere whereabouts, a more or less convenient retreat from life, instead of a retreat into life out of a noisy bustling world? While this is all the account to be given of home, who can say that he has even begun to make the most of life, or that in such a way of living there is much to choose between poverty and abundance, since neither can impart any clear, bracing quality to the dull atmosphere which we carry about with us? Let us not forget the natural ties which do not leave the feeblest, dullest child of want quite uninstructed in love, and therefore in the true idea of heaven. Let us respect the regular household economy, to which we all have grown up debtors, and which moreover teaches patience, prudence, industry; and imparts to the character the dig-

nity of responsibility. But is it not the principal charm of these natural ties, and the natural dependencies and kind offices and grateful memories which they call forth, that they reveal a spiritual end of life, that they animate the mind with the prospect of a higher good, of an unseen world of reality, as real as this outward world, and present with it so long as we seek to live in it? They suggest an end, a something to live for, beyond our present actual attainment, and prompt us to make trial of enlightened methods suited to higher conceptions of the end to be reached by life instead of trusting wholly to the habit into which we fall by accident or early training. Does the business of serving one another, and seeking one another's comfort in all the little familiar ways of home, end there and look no farther forward? Does it not suggest the idea of mutual and of self-improvement, the adding of new worth to each other's lives, as well as the helping each other to live? The natural relations and affections are well; they leave no home without some charm; but they cannot be left to habit; they will not save and renovate a purposeless existence. And that wholesome economy without which no home can prosper, or even exist;—to what purpose does it train us to habits of order, if it be not to cherish in us a reverence for the heavenly order, obeying which our individual life unites itself in conscious harmony with all nature and all spirits and transcends its narrow limits of place and time? To what purpose does it teach us industry if it make us so pressingly busy, that our noblest faculties find nothing to do? Or why does it habituate us to the feeling of responsibility, if it never tell us why we are responsible, and what makes all these cares important? Are we responsible for nothing but the regular performance of our daily chores? Is nothing more intrusted to us? The cares of home, its laborious duties and confinements, its patient economies, are all good and necessary, and ought to cause no murmur. Let no one seek comfort in escape from care and toil. These, in themselves, are not what make so many homes unhappy. The evil is in difference, and dulness of the mind; tame acquiescence to mere want or habit, from a dull sense of necessity, and not from an enlightened, hopeful spirit of resignation. One toils only

because he must, still inwardly murmuring, or tamed to stupid submission; another toils, not only because he must, but also because he has a worthy and inspiring object of life in view, to the attainment of which he finds such labor indispensable;—the end dignifies the means, and he goes cheerfully about it. And this shall create a difference heaven-wide between two families, equal in outward means, equally restricted to economy and toil. It is the want of a life-plan, the want of a high purpose, the want of the spirit of improvement, the failure to put to one's self the first question; "What do we live for?" It is this which lets the stream of life creep on so sluggishly and turbidly in so many families. How many are keeping house with no purpose in the world, but because that is the way all the world do. It is this want of purpose, which makes economy a tyrant, toil weariness and drudgery, rest stupid, and meals unsocial. From this dulness of mind, this purposeless way of existing, economy has degenerated from a high and generous philosophy into a narrow and bigoted habit, and the word received its popular false and unworthy sense. A great deal of our economy, so called, defeats its own end. It saves money by wasting time, whereas time is life, and money only one of the means of life. In its dread of extravagance it makes most extravagant sacrifices; it throws away the germs of our truest happiness; it declines all aids to the culture of our noblest powers; it saves up the means of living, and forgets to learn the art of living; it piles up its bales and boxes right against the windows which let in the light of life; it professes to be preparing a place for us, while it occupies the whole of it itself with its own bricks and mortar, or tubs and brooms; it makes room for us by thrusting itself in the way; it provides what is necessary to live, but does not make it at all clear that it is necessary to live, unless life contain higher objects than economy conceives of; it is saving and bountiful in the matter of food, but if one chance to hunger and thirst after righteousness, knowledge, beauty, it has no time for such a thought and lets him starve. In its art of making a little go a great way, it only draws out the metal of life into a meagre wiry length, it does not increase its weight, it adds no value to its substance. It is afraid of anything which

can be called living. It grudges an hour of pleasure which it would waste in unedifying, fruitless formalities of duty. It cannot afford books, schools, refinements of many kinds; but it can afford food enough, bustle, and fretting more than enough, and whole winter evenings full of dulness. Thus in many people's system of life, economy and education, as well as economy and true enjoyment, are set against each other as natural opposites. All this for want of an end in life, of an idea of some perfection of living to which every experience should be made to contribute. Our list of indispensables is greatly changed by a new and better idea of the object of life; and the old blind economy of custom then betrays many inconsistencies and much sad waste.

Again. Such economy creates rebels against itself. So cheerless is its aspect, that some reject it altogether and grow shiftless. Often, too, it forgets itself, and loses the run of its own operations in the dulness of mind which it engenders. Drudgery or shiftlessness, one or the other, sometimes both, are the unending inmates and lawgivers in a family inspired by no idea of personal improvement.

But this is the least part. These effects are only negative. This is only neglecting to live well. Indifference, whether seen in the regular machine-work of economy, or in the slovenliness of the want thereof, is only indifference. But still we are by nature active beings; and the activity of the hands, and the stupor of idleness cannot wholly suppress the stirrings of deeper wants, the yearnings for nobler occupation! The pent-up restlessness of the soul, denied its exercise in our common-place, narrow forms of life, will still leak out, as it were, in innumerable petty vexations, angers, jealousies, and an ever-running sore of discontent. Much of your admirable economy, for instance, costs a great deal of scolding; and domestic order seems to be at the expense of domestic peace and love, and to drive out many a sunny smile.

Consider, too, when there is no spirit of improvement in domestic life, how the passions riot. The mind uncultured, unfurnished with intellectual resources, is poorly armed against little daily disappointments. Escaped from the regular restraint of custom and economy, which only tame but do not educate, the appetites rush to excess. If home

be not a sphere for moral self-improvement, if it be not a school, a temple, as well as a retreat and shelter, it will be made miserable by all the evil spirits of ignorance and self-love. It needs all the wealth of mind and heart and imagination, all the energies of will, all the sensibilities of taste, all the arts and all the muses, all the wisdom of sages, all the visions of faith, above all, the spirit of Jesus, and the hourly offering up of a life to the Invisible Perfect One, to make a happy home. It needs these more than it needs fortune. If it be not a kingdom of heaven, it will be a kingdom of hell. Home is home only when it is the home of blessed spirits, like the home of Mary and of Martha, where the riches of the spirit made good the want of other riches; where a sentiment of the heart was revered more deeply than pedantic rules of household thrift; and where it was counted good economy to pour out costly ointment upon the Saviour's feet.

II. Not much better will his home be, who, not contented with merely getting along, thinks chiefly of getting up. With him the ruling idea is prosperity, success, comfort; and his maxim is utility, or "strive and thrive." Very well, as far as it goes. But the elements of sure and lasting happiness are not found in this system. It needs a better spirit, to make home a heaven. Here is indeed, some spirit of improvement, which is better than shiftless acquiescence to mere necessity or custom. Here is the will to better one's condition, to increase one's resources, to make home a more comfortable place. But it overlooks the first requisites of happiness, in bestowing all this care upon the outward estate. Such a man commits the capital mistake of seeking only to improve the condition of his family, when he should seek their own improvement; of increasing their outward resources, when he should think more of unfolding the inward resources of the mind and heart; of securing comfort in the house, when perhaps character is much more wanting. He prays for blessings, and not for blessedness. He becomes absorbed in the love of gain. The toils and calculations of business occupy almost the whole of him, so that his own mind suffers, and his heart too, and his whole inward man, for want of profitable leisure and opportunities of free exercise of all his higher powers; his intellect gets disciplined in only

one very partial way, conversing only with one narrow range of subjects; his feelings soured or deadened by the anxieties, the severities, the questionable morals of a selfish system of trade into which he has let himself be hurried, blinding his eyes and steeling his heart; and he goes daily to his home, unfurnished for the task of instructing his children by his conversation, with no inspiration which he can impart to them; feeling that he has no time to attend to their minds and morals, and accustomed by his own pursuits to underrate, and either despise, or put off for want of time, all higher culture. Behold a prosperous, a comfortable home, but filled with most uncomfortable spirits. The dinner is most punctually and copiously and skilfully provided; but not the cheerfulness, the love, the peace of mind, the activity of thought, the readiness of observation and reply which alone can lend a relish. Alas! there is no good dinner without good spirits; no feast without some flow of soul; no pleasure in each others' society without love. No wonder that the meal is hurried off, despatched in sullen silence, if not in a storm of petty irritations, complaints, and disputes. The evenings too are dull at home; or home is often deserted for the poor excitements of empty fashionable amusement. Business is overdriven with the prospect of prosperous leisure; and the occupation of leisure is the consumption thereof in any readiest and most senseless way. For what is time but so much life? and those who know not how to live must kill time. The habitual anxiety of this man's mind carries gloom into his home. He lets the goodly garden run to weeds, and all those flowers of paradise, the natural affections, droop as in a frost; the rainbow-colored beams of thought, the quick play of intellect and fancy, are wanting there. Such is too apt to be the home of the enterprising man of the world. Were it not, that there is sometimes a faithful angel there, whose heavenly patience, whose devoted love, whose pure forgetfulness of self in the thought of her children's welfare, whose piety and trust in God, with all the clearness of mind and energy of will with which such sentiments inspire the feeblest, whose whole influence sweetly pervading every part and every arrangement, creates a spell and a charm in the domestic sanctuary, which compels him, in spite of himself, to shake off the dust of world-

liness from his shoes when he enters,—there would be little comfort there, there would be little hope for those who are learning their earliest and most permanent habits and impressions there!

The passion for gain, I repeat it, is the poison of domestic happiness; and that too, when it often starts with the laudable desire of getting the means of making a happy home, with the feeling of obligation, imposed by conscience and by love, to support and elevate one's family, and place them in a favored and respectable relation with the world. All that trade and enterprise can manufacture or produce, all that wealth can buy, can never make good the want of inward, moral, and intellectual resources.

III. From the best home which worldly enterprise can make, turn now to another, less favored with fortune's abundance, but supplied with rich resources of a higher, surer, and more satisfactory kind. See what education can do. See the treasures of the mind brought out. See how the poor in this world's goods are sometimes rich in one another. The house and furniture are plain, but marked by taste and happy invention and arrangement; revealing many a token of the pleasant walk, the deep enjoyment of nature, while calm enthusiasm lifts the jaded soul out of the ruts and holes of daily care, and puts it in possession of itself, of its own freedom and immortal life. The space is small; but by the magic of great thoughts, of noble, quickening sentiments, read and conversed about and mused upon in the midst of busy duties, expanded to a boundless fairy-land. There may not be great store of luxuries, but there are books, wells of pleasure inexhaustible. There may not be excitements and gayeties, with which the great endeavor to forget themselves; but there are habits of mental activity, which never lets society grow dull, or the most familiar friends grow weary of one another. They draw upon the treasures of the mind, and find what worlds of wonders lie within them. They may not own the splendid decorations, the proud architecture, the costly works of Art which another's wealth can purchase; but they may have a cultivated taste, a sensibility to the charms of earth and sky, which they have only to step to the door or the window to see; or they are in the possession of some beautiful art,

like music or drawing, which gives them the key to all the glorious invisible, but no less real, halls and galleries of Beauty; and they can be delighted and inspired at home as if the rapids of Niagara were leaping around them, or the glaciers of the Alps sparkling beneath them. They are without the advantages of colleges and of business which lies in the same direction with learning. But they are determined that scholars and professional characters shall not monopolize the treasures of the mind. The materials of the sublimest thoughts are open to them. Nature and the soul and God are never beyond their reach; but are always inviting them to angelic meditation and communion, if they are duly willing, and have the energy to put down the disturbing voices of appetite and passion, and to slip the reins of grovelling habit. The Bible is with them; and to them it is not a book occupying so many cubic inches of space on a shelf, and so many minutes of the day in the formal reading; but it is another world into which they enter, transported on the wings of thoughts and heavenly passions quickened by its words; it is a talisman in their midst which sheds a sweet, holy light around it, and making all the place and all their forms transfigured. The daily meal will be frugal, but seasoned to an exquisite zest by happy affections, happy thoughts, and endless variety of intellectual entertainment; not that there need be any pedantry or effort to talk wise; it only needs active minds which know how to feel free from care, free from jealousies, suspicions, and low fears, abundance of good feeling, sensibilities alive, and tastes refined,—and let them take care of themselves; they will without much forcing provide abundant entertainment and make the meal an hour of sweet society, a truly intellectual repast. Every new power which is cultivated, every new talent which is encouraged and kept in requisition in the bosom of a family, is so much reduction of the huge clouds of common-place and dulness which settle down upon us. Such a home is a fond retreat in the midst of a most interesting world, whither all minds from their own eager adventures, or enthusiastic walks with nature, or fruitful lessons of labor, or failure, or silent studies in the search of truth, resort to contribute all they have, and feel their treasures increased an hundred fold, like the loaves and fishes in the miracle,

by bringing them together. Multiply inward resources then, and you put the sense of poverty to flight; you reduce worldly desires to a reasonable moderation, and endow yourself with skill to compass any reasonable end, or turn any ordinary failure to good account. Home is not merely a place; nor is it enough that it be a comfortable place; it should be a school, a sphere for the exercise of our whole nature. If we want the true spirit of Home, then home is not a place any more than Heaven is. We are at home where we are most in possession of ourselves; where we are most; where the activity of all our powers is best ensured. And ought not every one to be most in his home; shall he reserve his dullest and worst moods for that sacred place; shall he go out into the world for excitement, and make no provision for the mild and never-failing and satisfying excitement of conversation, of useful studies and employments, of refining arts and amusements, in his home? Shall he drown himself in business or politics all day abroad, only to drown himself in sleep at home? Shall he be worth less in the midst of his family than he is anywhere else? Shall the ignis-fatuuus of money-making or of professional ambition withdraw, if not his affections, yet the presence of his affections from home, and leave the family altar desolate and cold?

I cannot but think that the progress of light and education in the world is to show one of its great results in this; to transport the theatre of ambition from the field of battle, from the senate and popular assembly, from the mart of commerce, to the humbler sphere of home, and that heroism, more modest and unpretending, will find ample scope for enterprise in the daily duties, in warring with the hourly petty enemies, which try one's virtue and temper, and whose name is legion, and in making one spot truly blest, instead of covering a nation with glory, instead of real blessings, like most heroes of renown. Reforming one's own little world is the way to reform the great world quickest. Then a man will feel that it is greater to surround himself with an intelligent and happy family, than to get rich and build a palace; that the education and love of his children is worth the sum total of all the fame of all the famous; and that the still influence of the Christian

mother is more sublime, more deeply felt, than that of the most courting and courted politician.

IV. But still we have not reached, except by way of chance allusions, the first and last condition, the key to all the other conditions, of a happy home. It is not shelter, it is not comfort, it is not prosperity, it is not knowledge, taste, refinement, which can make a happy home. It is not fortune, it is not education, which hold the keys to that kingdom of heaven. There is a greater than the merchant, the artist, or the scholar. The idea of necessity produces dulness. The idea of enterprise or of worldly success does not much more. The idea of self-improvement or refinement, if merely intellectual, creates more wants than it satisfies. Besides, neither of these ideas furnishes motive enough to keep the whole in action. Neither of these principles is so high, that all the faculties of the mind, all the plans and purposes of life, can serve it, and work harmoniously under it. We need Principle, in the broad sense of the term, which admits no plural number. We need the idea of Moral Perfection, of Right, of Duty, of God. Home must be not only a retreat, not only a school, but a temple. The worship of the Perfect Essence of Love, Truth, and Holiness, must pervade the economy and all the intercourse of home. The family must remember that they are God's children, and must look for light from above, for peace in obedience to the perfect rule of right, for society and union with one another in the love of that Being whom all can love, and yet feel nearer one another.

"Out of the heart are the issues of life." The currents of life flow into all our faculties, and revive all our drooping sensibilities and aspirations, only from the Source of Life, to which we have access only through the Moral. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Light from above must bathe our senses to keep them fresh and vigorous and cheerful. Knowledge and Science pall, and we dismiss them as empty things, unless they be inspired by Piety. Religion alone can exercise a genial fostering influence over mind and heart and imagination. She only can keep thought free and clear, imagination healthy; she alone can warm the feelings and nerve the will. She only can put us in possession of ourselves.

She only can make frank intercourse possible between us and our nearest friends. Our plan of life must be disinterested, or it will somewhere soon begin to thwart itself. Our highest interest must be beyond and above ourselves, or we cannot trust its leadings. The thought of moral perfection alone can give consistency and peace to our manifold strivings and feelings,—can bind up in beauty the petty or contradictory details of daily experience. It requires a love of something more than the world, to make us at home in the world.

D.
