

ELA READING

From the LEARN Lesson "Freedom and Restraint"

Our Department, or, the Manners, Conduct, and Dress of the Refined Society

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Excerpt from Chapter XVIII

HOME LIFE AND ETIQUETTE

- (1) Home is the woman's kingdom, and there she reigns supreme. To embellish¹ that home, to make happy the lives of her husband and the dear ones committed to her trust, is the honored task which it is the wife's province² to perform. All praise be to her who so rules and governs in that kingdom, that those reared beneath her roof "shall rise up and call her blessed." [...];

THE WIFE A HELPMATE

- (2) A wife should act openly and honorably in regard to money matters, keeping an exact account of her expenditures,³ and carefully guarding against any extravagances;⁴ and while her husband is industriously⁵ at work, she should seek to encourage him, by her own frugality,⁶ to be economical, thrifty, enterprising and prosperous⁷ in his business, that he may be better enabled, as years go by and family cares press more heavily on each, to afford all the comforts and perhaps some of the luxuries of a happy home. No condition is hopeless when the wife possesses firmness, decision and economy, and no outward prosperity can counteract indolence,⁸ folly and extravagance at home. She should consult the disposition and tastes of her husband, and endeavor to lead him to high and noble thoughts, lofty aims, and temporal⁹ comfort; be ever ready to welcome him home, and in his companionship draw his thoughts from business and lead him to the enjoyment of home comforts and happiness. The influence of a good wife over her husband may be very great, if she exerts it in the right direction. She should, above all things, study to learn the disposition of her husband, and if, perchance, she finds herself united to a man of quick and violent temper, the utmost discretion¹⁰, as well as perfect equanimity¹¹ on her own part is required, for she should have such perfect control over herself as to calm his perturbed spirits.

A HUSBAND'S DUTIES.

- (3) It must not be supposed that it devolves upon the wife alone to make married life and home happy. She must be seconded in her noble efforts by him who took her from her own parental fireside and kind

¹ Embellish (verb): to make something attractive; to add detail in order to beautify

² Province (noun): an area of special interest

³ Expenditure (noun): act of spending money

⁴ Extravagance (noun): lack of restraint in spending money

⁵ Industriously (adverb): hard working

⁶ Frugality (noun): cautiousness in spending money

⁷ Prosperous (adjective): flourishing in making money; successful

⁸ Indolence (noun): laziness

⁹ Temporal (adjective): timely

¹⁰ Discretion (noun): avoiding causing offense

¹¹ Equanimity (noun): mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, especially in a difficult situation.

friends, to be his companion through life's pilgrimage. He has placed her in a new home, provided with such comforts as his means permit, and the whole current of both their lives have been changed. His constant duty to his wife is to be ever kind and attentive, to love her as he loves himself, even sacrificing his own personal comfort for her happiness. From his affection for her, there should grow out a friendship and fellowship, such as is possessed for no other person. His evenings and spare moments should be devoted to her, and these should be used for their intellectual, moral and social advancement.

- (4) The cares and anxieties of business should not exclude the attentions due to wife and family, while he should carefully keep her informed of the condition of his business affairs. Many a wife is capable of giving her husband important advice about various details of his business, and if she knows the condition of his pecuniary¹² affairs, she will be able to govern her expenditures¹³ accordingly.
- (5) It is the husband's duty to join with his wife in all her endeavors to instruct her children, to defer all matters pertaining to their discipline to her, aiding her in this respect as she requires it. In household matters the wife rules predominant, and he should never interfere with her authority and government in this sphere. It is his duty and should be his pleasure to accompany her to church, to social gatherings, to lectures and such places of entertainment as they both mutually enjoy and appreciate. In fact he ought not to attend a social gathering unless accompanied by his wife, nor go to an evening entertainment without her. If it is not a fit place for his wife to attend, neither is it fit for him.
- (6) While he should give his wife his perfect confidence in her faithfulness, trusting implicitly to her honor at all times and in all places, he should, on his part, remain faithful and constant to her, and give her no cause of complaint. He should pass by unnoticed any disagreeable peculiarities¹⁴ and mistakes, taking care at the proper time, and without giving offense, to remind her of them, with the idea of having her correct them. He should never seek to break her of any disagreeable habits or peculiarities she may possess, by ridiculing them. He should encourage her in all her schemes for promoting the welfare of her household, or in laudable¹⁵ endeavors to promote the happiness of others, by engaging in such works of benevolence and charity as the duties of her home will allow her to perform.
- (7) The husband, in fact, should act toward his wife as becomes a perfect gentleman, regarding her as the "best lady in the land," to whom, above all other earthly beings, he owes paramount allegiance. If he so endeavors to act, his good sense and judgment will dictate to him the many little courtesies which are due her, and which every good wife cannot fail to appreciate. The observance of the rules of politeness are nowhere more desirable than in the domestic circle, between husband and wife, parents and children.

¹² Pecuniary (adjective): concerning money

¹³ Expenditure (noun): the act of spending money

¹⁴ Peculiarity (Noun): an odd habit

¹⁵ Laudable (noun): deserving praise

Young, J. H. (1882). *Our deportment, or, the manners, conduct and dress of the most refined society: Including forms for letters, invitations, etc., etc. Also, valuable suggestions on home culture and training.* FB Dickerson & Company.

