

of great credit for their superhuman achievements. But, oh dear, how I have longed sometimes, when I have been a "prisoner within their gates," to see things left to take care of themselves, that the tired and care-worn mistress might enjoy "life, liberty and happiness" with the rest of mankind. And I have observed that the husband of the model housekeeper is not very fond of home; he seems to feel more at ease away from the house than in it. Not that he does not enjoy the prompt meals, the excellent cooking, the well cared-for garments. He does. He is proud of his wife, and very likely brags about her abilities to his friends and cronies. But, nevertheless, he is a homeless man, in the true sense of the word. He is never comfortable in his—I should have said in *her*—well-ordered rooms. He feels almost a culprit, if by chance he should happen to disarrange any of the tidy arrangements about him, and is never wholly and completely at ease among his household gods. It seems to him that his wife's mind is altogether taken up by cares and worries that, to him, seem trivial and petty, and although he sympathizes with her, in so far as his masculine mind comprehends the situation, he can not, for the life of him, see why she is not entirely comfortable and happy. He can not see that a poor, overworked mortal, who is trying to be wife, mother, mistress, nurse, housekeeper, seamstress and servant, all in one, can not, by any known possibility, be the comrade and companion, the happy house-mother, that she should be. It is utterly impossible that one mortal woman should properly fill so many different posts of duty, and it is in consequence of her effort to do so, that we have the domestic martyr.

Did you ever know a model housekeeper, who did not consider herself a martyr? And no wonder. She is always weary, full of aches and pains and worries, she laments and resents that no one appreciates the situation, that her trials are not comprehended, and that no one knows how much she undergoes every day of the three hundred and sixty-five in the yearly round. She declares, often, that she is "working herself to death," yet abates no jot of her daily toil. The work must be done, "though the heavens fall." Her children do not sympathize with her to any great extent, because they are so accustomed to hearing her complaints, that they pay them little heed. Like their father, they are likely to seek their associates and confidential friends outside the home circle, because that home lacks the charm that would bind them to it.

Mrs. Stowe says—and she never uttered truer words—that "It is a hateful dogma, that love is to be taken for granted, without daily proof between those who love." And again, "How many live a stingy and niggardly life, in regard to their richest inward treasures. They live with those they love dearly, whom a few more words and deeds expressive of this love, would make so much happier, richer, and better; and they can not, will not, turn the key and let it out. People who really do love, esteem, reverence, almost worship, each other, live a barren, chilly life side by side, busy, anxious, preoccupied, letting their love go by as a matter of course, a last year's growth, with no present buds and blossoms. Are there not husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, in whom the material for a beautiful life lies locked away in unfruitful silence—who give time to everything but the cultivation and expression of mutual love?"

How much more we might make of our family life, of our friendships, of our social intercourse, of the mental powers with which God has endowed us, if only we would not sacrifice ourselves to this Moloch of house work. I affirm that there is much useless labor done by women, who, being in moderate circumstances, think they can not afford to hire help, or, being able to afford it, can not obtain that which is satisfactory. I agree with the modern essayist, who asks for "plain living and high thinking." Would it not be better to live upon this plane, to plan our lives so that we may have time to be companion to husband and children, to establish that comradeship in the family circle that makes home the most delightful spot on earth? Would it not be better that the house should be filled with jollity, love, cheerfulness, and unselfishness, than that there should be pies for dinner? That plans for mutual improvement and enjoyment should occupy more space in the scheme of life, and plans for superfine housekeeping less? I believe that a mother should be the joyous companion of her growing sons, and the sympathizing confident of her young daughters. She should be, actually and truly, a companion and a comrade. Her wider experience and more mature mind would render her invaluable to the young souls entrusted to her care, as counsellor and guide. With such a mother, the children will imbibe higher ideals of the dignity and beauty of life, than through association with a woman whose mind and whose energies are so absorbed in house-keeping duties, that all other matters are kept in subordination, and regarded as side issues.