

MAN'S INSPIRATION

In all ages woman has been the source of all that is pure, unselfish, and heroic in the spirit and life of man. It was for love that Antony lost a world. It was for love that Jacob worked seven long years, and for seven more; and I have often wondered what must have been his emotions when on the morning of the eighth year he awoke and found the homely, scrawny, bony Leah instead of the lovely and beautiful presence of his beloved Rachel. Helen conquered Troy, plunged all the nations of antiquity into war, and gave that earliest, as it is still, the grandest epic which has come down through all time. Poetry and fiction are based upon woman's love, and the movements of history are mainly due to the sentiments or ambitions she inspired. Semiramis, Zenobia, Queen Elizabeth claim a cold and distant admiration; they do not touch the heart. But when Florence Nightingale, or Grace Darling, or Ida Lewis unselfish and unheralded, peril all to succor and to save, the profoundest and holiest emotions of our nature render them tribute and homage.

There is no aspiration which any man entertains, no great and honorable ambition he desires to gratify, no achievement he seeks to accomplish, which is not directly related to either or both a mother or a wife. From the heartstone around which lingers the recollection of our mother, from the fireside where our wife awaits us, come all the purity, all the hope, and all the courage with which we fight the battle of life. The man who is not thus inspired, who labors not so much to secure the applause of the world as the solid and more precious approval of his home, accomplishes little of good for others or of honor for himself. I hope that each of us will always find near us:

“A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.”