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Woman

By

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I scorn the chivalry that kisses the hand of woman, and then denies that hand the reins with which she might guide the rolling world along; I would not bow to her as being more than man, yet I would give her every right I claim for myself. Still, I cannot think of her without a feeling of reverence that amounts to worship, and that which I worship in her I would also worship in man if he had not banished it from his life.

Great is the hand of man. He smites the mountain ranges, and they smoothe out into plains; he strokes the ocean, and it carries his craft in safety; he shakes his fist at the night, and creatures of steel come forth to do his bidding. But if the hand of man is strong to do, the hand of woman is greater still, because it is softened and skilled to comfort and heal. If the hand of man is magical with ac-

complishment, the small white hand of woman has even greater magic, in that it soothes and blesses ever. With the touch of her gentle fingers she changes the hard sick-bed into down and dreams. With the stroke of her tender palm she banishes the tears of childhood and gives smiles for sobs.

If man, the Titan, makes the world great, woman, the enchantress, makes it beautiful. If man finds the food, it is woman that brings the babe through paths she sets with roses; and it is she who makes shining and sweet the gateway when the soul fares forth to the unknown land.

Man may make the nation, but woman does more—she makes the home.

When I think of what the world would be without the inspiring influence of woman, I am ashamed of what the world has done with her. She has done everything for the world, and man has done everything evil to her. He has filled her delicate hands with weights she could not bear, and laid upon her shoulders burdens that crushed her to the earth; and though she stumbled on uncomplainingly, kissing the hand that smote her, he

has taunted her as an inferior and ruled her as if she were a slave.

Still is the woman guardian of the sacred fire. Should she fail, earth would return to the stone age, and man become again a naked barbarian. It was woman who invented all the arts, from agriculture to weaving, from architecture to music.

It is woman's voice that bears the soul in prayer and hymn toward higher things.

In a world that God made beautiful, there is nothing so beautiful as woman, and without her divine ministrations, all things would speedily lose their charm. It is woman that bears the future in her body, and on her sweet and sacred bosom she nurses life into higher forms and nobler ways.

There is nothing so wonderful as motherhood. There is nothing more sacred, more divine, than womanhood charged with the future destiny of the race, which means the weal or woe of all that breathe.

No true man can think of his mother other than as perfect. No husband who is still a lover—as every husband ought to be—can believe that his wife is less beautiful or feel that she is less dear

than when in the bloom of beauty she first won his heart.

I have a vision of woman that is loftier, nobler and diviner than the mothers and wives, the sisters and daughters, have been in the dark days of the past and are still in the dawning days of the present. In the full-orbed day of the world to come woman shall be free. In that hour woman shall have opportunity; and because her day has come at last, everything that lives shall rise and unfold and share in the common blessings that shall come to the race. Love shall reign instead of hate; beauty shall take the place of deformity, peace of war, plenty of poverty; and all the world, under her unfettered ministry, shall be a home, safe and sweet and satisfying.

