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a Mother, and a Mistress of a Family
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Practical Hints to Young Females

Displaying her intellectual and literary abilities from a young age, 'Mrs Taylor of Ongar' (1757–1830) enjoyed writing all her life. She had eleven children, of whom six (four of them writers) survived to adulthood. Her published works began with advice books for her own daughters, produced when increasing deafness made ordinary conversation difficult for her. Given the difficulty of providing advice equally appropriate to girls at all levels of society, this 1815 work is addressed to 'females in the middle ranks'. It is assumed that a girl's aspiration, as well as her destiny, is to be a wife and mother: conduct towards the husband, and the rearing of children, are of prime importance. But there is also a chapter for the husband, pointing out his reciprocal duties to his wife as an equal partner in their relationship. The book offers fascinating insights into the middle-class ideal of domestic happiness.

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Practical Hints to Young Females

*On the Duties of a Wife, a Mother,
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ANN TAYLOR



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PRACTICAL HINTS
TO
Young Females,
ON
THE DUTIES OF A WIFE,
A
MOTHER,
AND A
MISTRESS OF A FAMILY.

BY MRS. TAYLOR,

Of Dngar,

AUTHOR OF 'MATERNAL SOLICITUDE FOR A
DAUGHTER'S BEST INTERESTS.'

'Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish
plucketh it down with her hands.'—SOLOMON.

SECOND EDITION.

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It is not easy to form rules, or even to suggest principles of practice, in such a manner as shall render them applicable to individuals of every class; and it will be obvious, upon a perusal of this little Work, that no attempt of the kind has here been made. Females in the middle ranks of society, in those especially which include numerous occupations and confined circumstances, are more immediately addressed; and to them many of the following observations assume to be of essential importance: but, at the same time, a hope is indulged, that readers of a different description may gain an occa-

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sional hint, by which their conduct in domestic life may be improved.

The parties more expressly in view are exempt (perhaps happily,) from that notoriety and distinction by which the family arrangements of such as move in the upper walks of life are too frequently disturbed: yet they occupy a station of sufficient eminence to render their conduct highly important to society. If it does not necessarily expose them to dissipation, much less does it degrade them into vulgarity or insignificance, as the degree of intellectual cultivation to be found among them evinces; for it is not every citizen in our days who is a *John Gilpin*; nor is every farmer a rustic. And although the influence of

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good example in the middle ranks can be but small upon those which are more elevated ; yet it descends like a kindly shower upon such as are beneath them, and gives fertility to many a spot which would otherwise have remained sterile and unsightly : so that, (to adopt the expressive language of inspiration,) instead of the brier, comes up the myrtle ; and the wilderness blossoms as the rose.

By appropriate hints to increase the respectability of this numerous class, is a design, therefore, which immediately, or remotely, affects so large a proportion of the community, that it might discourage the attempt of an humble individual. But if to promote domestic virtue, and preserve the happiness of the fireside, is

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an effectual, as well as a simple means
of increasing national prosperity; how
many are there, who have hitherto deem-
ed themselves incompetent, whose efforts
might thus contribute to the public weal!

If this were not the case, and if effects
the most beneficial were not often pro-
duced by very humble means, the present
attempt had never been made by

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