

in the history of the world. Before the advent of Christianity woman's lot was verily most degraded and deplorable. Among the ancient Egyptians her condition was somewhat better, as they had a high respect for womanhood. Also among the Jewish people, who, enlightened by divine revelation, showed to woman a respect unknown to pre-Christian heathendom. The ancient records exhibit woman as degraded in India, China, and Japan. The classical nations of Greece and Rome treated her with slightly greater deference, but her equality was not recognised. Mohammed and the Koran established yet greater feminine degradations. Against this treatment the Church has ever protested, and has strenuously endeavored to set woman in her true and honored position. Let us recall some unquestionable principles concerning the position of woman, Catholic education, and justice.

Almighty God Himself created both male and female—each an individual, each equal in His sight as created for Heaven. This is God-given equality in the spiritual order, which transcends every other consideration, and compared with which social, economic, and intellectual qualities are as chaff to the wheat. Woman's position ought to be such that each individual of her sex may attain her perfection in the moral order, which is the main purpose of her creation.

Almighty God also made a difference in the sexes, by which one completes the other, and by which one man and one woman represent entirely human nature. This difference naturally gives rise to different duties, both domestic and social. Any revolutionary changes, any calling of woman to public life, to fill positions, and discharge duties, must not fail to recognise the God-made difference of the sexes and of their respective duties, in accordance with right reason, revealed truth, and the teaching of Christ's Church. In the physical order woman's strength and endurance are not equal to man's. She has no business to allow herself, and employers have no business to require her, to overtax her strength in a manner likely to incapacitate her fulfilment of the duties of her sex. There are limitations set by Nature and sanctioned by grace. These limitations necessarily affect the industrial, domestic, and social orders. The transgressions of these natural limitations is justly condemned by many, because they induce bad health and delay or unfit woman for motherhood in the married state. As the Catholic Church adores the majesty of God, and acknowledges His Supreme Dominion, she does not limit her condemnation to merely natural reasons. She sanctions every law of Nature and inculcates respect for the performance of every duty in compliance with Nature's laws, or in accordance with any restrictions which Almighty God Himself has placed. We are bound to respect Nature's laws, because they come from God, the Creator of Nature. Grace and the supernatural do not destroy Nature, but elevate and perfect it. The Church has ever required that woman should so behave, and so serve society and religion, as she has been fitted to do by her sex, her qualifications and perfections, either in the state of blessed virginity, holy celibacy, or the married state.

The Catholic Church holds up the state of virginity as excelling that of married life for men as well as women. She does not urge all to embrace it, but only those who, from the highest motives, wish to give their best attentions to God and the things of God, for their own and their neighbor's sanctification. In days such as ours, when expediency, false appearances, and erroneous principles and teaching prevail, surely the doctrine of the Church on the excellence and preference of virginity, for women consecrating themselves to God, either in the religious state or in a life of single blessedness, prompted and governed by the highest supernatural motives, is light shining out of darkness. Calculate, if you can, the work wrought by the Church for civilisation, for the poor and the aged, for the orphan, for the sick and suffering and dying, for the cause of education, for the benefit of the State and the Church, by an army of noble, selfless women—virgins consecrated to God—in a great variety of religious

Orders. Every country has these noble women in great numbers. In the United States of America, for instance, there are over 60,000; and, before the war, 50,000 nuns of all nations were engaged as civilising influences in the foreign pagan field. Who will say that the work they have done could be as well done, if they were not in a state of single blessedness, and directed by the highest supernatural motives? Again, the work of the celibate clergy throughout the world commands the respect and receives the commendation of honest thinking men not of the Catholic faith. A matter-of-fact, pleasure-seeking world, little concerned with God, religion, and the supernatural, can have practically no appreciation of the teaching of the Church on virginity and a life of continency for its moral advantages as a purchasing value of an eternal future life.

Never before in the history of the Christian world has there been more urgent necessity of inculcating the doctrine of the indissoluble and sacramental character of matrimony, by which one man and one woman are united in holy wedlock until death. We are but suffering to-day the full consequences of Manichean, Albigensian, and Lutheran attacks on the Catholic Church's teaching of marriage, which Christ raised to the supernatural order, giving it the dignity of a Sacrament. We need as never before every agency for good in the Catholic Church to work against the evils of divorce. Catholic women—especially Catholic women of education and culture—must exercise their influence to the utmost. There can be no hesitation as to their duty, no uncertainty as to the doctrine. They should speak out courageously whenever opportunity occurs. The evil of divorce works greater hardship on women than on men. Women should determine that this social pestilence and moral degeneracy shall be ended. They have the power to do it. By agitation and organisation they can take the initiative and begin the work of putting an end to a national shame—divorce—which is in reality only legalised sexual crime. Catholic women, owing to their association, conversations, and reading of ephemeral literature, are in imminent danger of imbibing false, unchristian, and pagan principles regarding marriage. Catholic women must know, and be true to, the sacred obligations of the married state. They must be shining examples to the whole world. There is no obligation of entering the married state, but when one assumes its obligations she must be true to the discharge of its sacred duties. She is not at liberty to regulate, according to her pleasure or judgment, the duties of this state in which she becomes a public official of civil and religious society, in the divine institution of the home. As a public official of the State and of the Church she must follow the code that Christ gave, governing the Sacrament of Matrimony and the state of marriage. To-day when divorce is so common—in the United States for instance, one of every nine marriages is brought to the divorce court—when unnumbered women are untrue to Christ and untrue to the principles binding them in an indissoluble life—long contract in the married state, it behoves young Catholic marriageable women to reflect seriously on all the onerous duties of marriage. They must not allow fascination, nor social position, nor worldly gain to hurry them into this blessed state, and then shirk its responsibilities, claiming either exemption because of their unpreparedness and ignorance, or justification according to the unholy and pagan conduct of divorce court women, or the secret—crime women of the married state. With fervent and persevering prayer, with counsel of parents and trusted friends of holy lives, with unalterable resolution, not to yield to the opinions and judgment of married women who have no conscience, and with determination not to be influenced by their example, with unchangeable purpose to follow the mandate of Christ and the laws of the Church, should women bind themselves in the Sacrament of marriage, and be true to its life-long obligations.

We may inquire why it is that the Church is not more generous and ready to give advice by official pro-

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