

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA,  
NO. XXXIX.

AND  
AMERICAN BIBLICAL REPOSITORY,  
NO. XCI.

---

JULY, 1853.

---

ARTICLE I.

CHARACTERISTICS, DUTIES AND CULTURE OF WOMAN.

By Barnas Sears, D. D., Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

It is our object in this essay to present some observations upon woman; her intellectual characteristics, her sphere of duty, and her proper culture. The attempt, we are aware, is a delicate and hazardous one. It is a topic on which so many trivialities have been uttered that it were indeed a pity to add to their number. At the same time, it is a subject that reaches to the very foundations of society; and, in its philosophical treatment, can be fathomed only by the profoundest intellect, and embraced in all its details only by the most comprehensive knowledge. Though we shall despair of attaining to that eminent point of observation whence all the complicated relations of woman to our social well-being can be seen in their beautiful order and harmony, our object will not be lost, if we shall be able from a lower point of view to catch here and there a glimpse of what is true and beautiful in the ordinations of Heaven in respect to woman, and, in the light thus afforded, to make some useful suggestions to persons having the education and training of young females in charge.

It were an easy, but useless task to portray woman's gentle nature, to present striking examples of female submission, endurance or heroism, and to speak in general of her charms and of her benefi-

cent influence in domestic and social life. It would be equally grateful, and more pertinent, perhaps, to exhibit brilliant specimens of female genius and culture in the more graceful walks of literature, science and art, in which, however, we can indulge but for a single moment. These gay flowers of humanity lie scattered over the whole field of history. In the literary annals of ancient Greece, we read of *Aesara Lucana*, deeply versed in the philosophy of Pythagoras, on which she wrote a treatise; of *Arete*, the daughter of *Aristippus*, who was public instructress at Athens, and wrote a life of *Socrates*, and a treatise on the "Miseries of Women;" of *Hipparchia*, also a writer on philosophy; of *Sappho*, who composed poetry of inimitable sweetness; of *Corinna*, who in five poetic contests bore away the palm even from *Pindar*; and of *Agnocide*, who is said to have put on man's attire for the sake of studying medicine, and to have practised the art for the benefit of her sex, and even to have succeeded, though not without a severe public contest, in procuring for other females the liberty of doing the same, which, if true, entitles her to the special regards of a certain class of living philanthropists.

In Christian times, among the same people, we could speak of *Macrina*, the distinguished sister of *Basil the Great*, who adorned her sex by her talents, piety and learning; of *Eudoxia*, the Greek empress, who was carefully educated at Athens, and was herself an accomplished scholar and writer, as well as patron of learning; and of *Catharine*, the Alexandrine martyr, who by her learning and persuasive eloquence is said to have converted many a philosopher to Christianity.

Were we to speak of the monastic women of the Middle Ages, who studied philosophy and theology, read the Church Fathers, taught in the monasteries, and wrote moral epistles and treatises in Latin, the space allotted to this essay would not suffice to bring distinctly to view even the most prominent among them.

But the period most distinguished for learned women is that which immediately followed the revival of learning, near the beginning of the sixteenth century. In England, it commenced with the royal family, with *Mary* and *Elizabeth*, the daughters of *Henry VIII.*, from the former of whom letters are preserved written in Latin, French and Spanish, while the latter was not only a proficient in these languages and the Italian, but "understood Greek better than the canons of Windsor." Every one is familiar with what *Ascham* says of *Lady Jane Gray's* studies in *Plato*, and with the account of

the interesting scene just before her death, when reading her Greek Testament and writing her last epistle to her sister, in Latin. Not inferior to these in classic lore were Mary, Countess Arundel, Lady Joanna Lumley, and Mary, Duchess of Norfolk. Who has not heard of the two Margarets in the family of Sir Thomas More, of whom the one afterwards became Mrs. Clement, and the other Mrs. Roper; or of the three sisters, Mildred, Anne and Catherine Cooke, subsequently the wives of Lord Burleigh, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and Sir Henry Killigrew? To some of these ladies the Greek and even the Hebrew were scarcely less familiar than the French and the Italian.

In Italy were Catharine of Siena, the rival of Petrarch in Italian prose, and the oracle of the Papal court at Avignon and Rome; the five illustrious Nogarolas, Angelica, and Antonia, and her three granddaughters, Isotta, Genevieve and Laura, equally distinguished for their personal beauty, for their spotless virtue, and for their literary and classical attainments, especially for the elegance of their Latin compositions; Tarquinia Molza of Modena, of whose learning, extending to the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, as well as to the sciences, Tasso speaks in high praise, and for the honor of possessing whom her native city and Rome were rival claimants; Modesta Pozzo of Venice, who to her other great achievements as a Latin scholar and poetess, added that of writing a book on the Merits of Women as compared with men. Peace to her ashes! Fidela Cassandra of Venice, versed in the ancient languages, philosophy, theology, music and poetry, said by Politian "to equal the first women of antiquity," a Latin orator to whom learned societies listened with admiration, and whom Isabella of Spain endeavored to attach to her court, but was prevented by the refusal on the part of Venice to relinquish her; Blanca Borromæa of Padua, whose learning procured her an honorable place among the teachers of the university; Dorothea Bucca, who received the doctorate from the university of Bologna, and publicly taught there; Cornelia of Venice, who could speak five or six languages, ancient and modern, was skilled in music, philosophy, mathematics and theology, received the doctor's degree at Padua, was made a member of many learned academies; and was accustomed to deliver before them discourses in Latin. These are only a few of the Italian women, mostly of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whose names are known wherever the literary annals of that period are read.

In the seventeenth century and a little later, France seems to have been the most prolific in female genius. Among the women most

distinguished as scholars and writers at that time in France, may be mentioned the names of Marie Madeleine Fayette, educated under Menage and Father Rapin, the friend of La Fontaine and Rouche-foucauld, and one of the best writers of romance in that age; of Marie Madeleine Rochechouant, who had mastered the ancient and modern languages, was well versed in the Church Fathers and in philosophy and theology, promoted both classical and theological studies in the monastery of which she was abbess, and left translations of Greek authors with learned comments and dissertations; of Antoinette Deshonlieres, called, the tenth muse, the French Calliope, pronounced by Voltaire the best poetess of the age, and enjoying in her day a celebrity, especially as a writer of Idyls, not inferior to that of Madame Sevigné, as an epistolary writer; of Anne Therese Lambert, an elegant, pure-minded intellectual woman, whose society was highly prized by Fenelon, and Fontenelle, and all of whose writings are remarkable for purity of style and the high moral tone which pervades them; of Elizabeth Sophie Cheron, afterwards Madame Leahy, who "possessed an assemblage of talents, any one of which would have given her renown;" — a linguist, a poetess, but most of all an artist, whose portraits and other paintings are characterized by great truthfulness, vigor and grace; of Marie Jeanne Heritear de Vilandon, a poetess to whom many learned societies awarded the prize for the best poetry, an historical writer, and translator of the Annals of Grotius, displaying so much merit as to secure the honor of membership in different academies of literature and art; of Emilie Chatelet, who understood Latin as well as Madame Dacier, and was, moreover, a philosopher and mathematician, and wrote a treatise on the philosophy of Leibnitz, and translated Newton's Principia into French, adding an algebraic commentary of her own; but was withal too much the friend of Voltaire.

Though Germany produced fewer female authors during this period than France, those few were fully equal to their Gallic sisters in the severer sciences, and in ancient learning. We may here name as examples, Maria Cunitz, who understood not only Polish, French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and more than one of the fine arts, but excelled particularly in mathematics and astronomy; Elizabeth Kiel, who was an adept in chemistry and medicine, and wrote a work on a branch of medical science relating to her own sex; Maria Kirch, an eminent mathematician and astronomer, who wrote learned treatises on astronomy, and constructed almanacs that were used in different cities of Germany; Maria Aurora Königsmark, who visited

many countries, and spoke the languages of more, but whose printed works, in verse and prose, were composed in German and French; Anna Maria Shurmann, a woman of unusual celebrity, who early excelled in music, painting, sculpture and engraving, and afterwards studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Ethiopic (of which last she wrote a grammar), receiving high praise from such oriental scholars as Vorst and Spanheim, and being a personal acquaintance and friend of William Penn, whom she saw in Holland; Maria Clara Müller, a linguist, artist and astronomer, who herself made astronomical observations, and aided both her father and her husband, who were astronomers, in executing drawings illustrative of the science; Maria Sibylle Merian, who was a distinguished entomologist, having made two journeys to Surinam to make collections of insects, the drawings of which, executed by her own hand, surpassed anything known in that age, and are still admired both by scientific men and by artists.

The female writers who have distinguished themselves since the latter part of the last century have, in certain branches of literature, certainly elevated not only themselves but their sex in the estimation in which they are held for their intellectual powers. In conversation, and in some species of composition, there are, at this day, English and American ladies, who use the English language with a skill and grace unsurpassed by the other sex.

But it is time to pass to our main topic, the nature, social position and proper education of woman. Here, at the very outset, we are met with a great diversity of opinions. While some few would make her a mere domestic, with strong and robust frame, and plain, primitive manners, others, claiming to be more enlightened, see in her little but a being of sensibility and refinement, delicate and frail, both in body and mind, her very weakness being her best defence; and others still, regard her as a being of commanding intelligence, whose capacities want nothing but favorable opportunities for development, to render her in all respects the equal of man, and, of course, adapted by nature to occupy the same place with him not only in science, literature and art, but in the turmoils of business, in the marts of trade, the courts of justice, and the halls of legislation. There is some truth mixed with much error in all these views; and by excluding the latter it will not be difficult to harmonize the former.

Anatomists tell us that in the embryo skeleton there is a marked difference of general conformation in the two sexes; that in the male there is a larger chest and breathing apparatus, which affects the whole organization, forming a more powerful muscular system and

producing a physical constitution which predestines him to bold enterprise and daring exploits. However this may be, the fact is indisputable that the sterner sex and the gentler are by nature so. This is as apparent in the sports of the child as in the pursuits of maturer age. The female mind is rather quiet and timid than fiery and daring, and rather admires than covets the great exploits of the other sex. To command a ship in its voyage round the world, or to explore the arctic seas; to ascend the Alps, the Andes or the Himalaya mountains and measure their heights; to fell the trees of the forest and build new cities; or to descend into the caverns of the earth and disembowel them of their treasures, are feats as unnatural to woman as they are natural to man. She is better adapted to the countless little assiduities by which she administers to the every-day wants of others than to those great and perilous undertakings which require a lion's strength and courage. No; rude savage nature is not to be subdued by her toils and exhausting fatigues. To her belong the gentler arts of quiet life and retirement, where she has power to soften and refine the heart of him who is accustomed to battle with the elements and the forces of external nature.

One ground of distinction in the organization of the sexes is the different proportions in which the understanding and the sensibilities are combined. The female intellect is impregnated with the qualities of her sensitive nature. It acts rather through a chain of electricity than of reasoning. Its perceptions of truth come, as it were, by intuition. It is under the influence of a heart that has deep and unfathomable wells of feeling; and truth is felt in every pulse rather than reasoned out and demonstrated. A woman's whole policy lies in her heart. In her, too, the fancy and imagination have such a lively play that the homeliest principles assume forms of beauty. A female mathematician is at the same time a kind of poetess, and views the subject artistically under its varied forms of beauty.

In intellectual pursuits, she is destined to excel by her fine sensibilities, her nice observation and exquisite taste, while man is appointed to investigate the laws of abstruse science, and perform in literature and art the bolder flights of genius. She may surpass him in representing life and manners, in the composition of letters, memoirs, moral tales, in descriptive poetry, and in executing certain styles of music, painting, and even sculpture. But she will never write an Iliad, or a Paradise Lost, or tragedies like those of Aeschylus or Shakspeare. She will not produce political orations like those of Demosthenes or Chatham, nor massive philosophic history like that

of Thucydides. She will not paint a *Madonna* of Raphael, nor chisel an *Apollo* Belvidere. The logic of Aristotle, the polemics of Augustine, the sentences of Aquinas, the prodigious onsets of a Luther, the Institutes of Calvin, the Provincial Letters of Pascal, the deep speculations of Leibnitz, the *Novum Organon* of Bacon, the *Principia* of Newton, the *Mécanique Céleste* of La Place, and the *Cosmos* of Humbolt, — the like of these she will never achieve; nor is it desirable that she should.

Now this peculiarity of her essential nature, instead of being overlooked, ought to be chiefly regarded in her education. Call it what you may, call it better or worse than that of the other sex; or say it is different without being either better or worse; or so that both are the better for it, still we are brought to the same conclusion, that difference of nature requires a corresponding difference in education. We admit that intellect is intellect, whether in man or in woman, and that truth is truth everywhere. The principles of science must, therefore, always appeal to the same faculties. But the mental faculties in the two sexes may be essentially the same, and yet very different in their proportions. So far as they are the same, they have a common aim and require a common discipline; but in whatever respects they naturally differ, there is therein a clear indication that they require a different treatment in order to their most perfect development.

When the female, therefore, studies the objects of nature, whether in one or another branch of natural science, it should be with main reference to their living forms, where her nice observation and delicate perception of beauty, will give her peculiar advantages. Let others speculate upon theories and upon systems of classification. In the whole course of her training, the concrete forms of things ought to be predominant over the abstract. To observe the objects of nature as they address themselves to the senses, and to associate them on principles of taste, and to fill the imagination with true pictures of natural and moral beauty, is far better for her than all the abstractions of science and metaphysics. In her mind, we wish to see the delicate hue of the rose, as well as its anatomical structure. Artists affirm that when the same designs are given to be drawn by gentlemen and ladies, they can distinguish them by the character of their execution; that, in drawings of flowers and other beautiful objects by the hand of a lady, there will be a softness and grace of outline peculiar to her; while in geometric figures, and drafts for machinery, and architecture, the gentleman executes with superior skill.



For the same reason that the beautiful forms which everywhere exist in nature, should be impressed upon the female mind, should the treasures of elegant literature be opened to her in no stinted measure. With all that is pure and lofty in literature, perhaps even more than with what is attractive in science, should it be made so familiar as always to breathe the fragrance of their choice sentiments. A woman of mere intellect, without imagination and sentiment, is like a vine in winter without clusters or foliage. A well-disciplined and a well-stored mind she does indeed require; but a heart of pure affections, a lively imagination and quick sensibilities to give depth, and form, and beauty, and vivacity to the character of her mind, are so peculiarly feminine accomplishments, that without them a woman of the greatest intellect is, as it were, unsexed, and disrobed of her loveliest charms. She may be a Queen Elizabeth, and conquer a Spanish Armada, but she will never conquer the heart, nor be recognized as a model of female character.

Besides all this, though in perfect harmony with it, the fact that, by a great and irreconcilable law of nature, it is decreed that women are to be the mothers of our race, fixes the sphere of their duty. The wife and mother is never more appropriately in her own sphere than when at home as the mistress of a household. Without her presence there, the idea of home could not exist. She is by nature the nurse and the teacher of the young, and the companion of man both at home and abroad. With her, considered as an isolated and independent being, going forth solitary to make her own way in the world, we have nothing to do now. The individual cases which occur, are the exception and not the rule; and of the many ways of mitigating this incidental evil, the best is that which aims at removing the cause. It is of no use to provide employment and the means of support for great sisterhoods or brotherhoods in society. The deleterious consequences of such artificial modes of life to the character and happiness of both sexes, and to the interests of mankind, will, wherever the experiment is tried, multiply more and more till there is a return to the condition ordained by Heaven.

The general rule, then, must always be, that the female is to be trained for domestic life and for the companionship of man. She must have knowledge enough in common with him to be able, in her conversation, both to interest and to influence him. Intelligent and refined conversation between the sexes constitutes the chief charm of private and social life. A man does not wish ordinarily to converse with a weak and childish woman merely because of her sex; and

still less with a masculine woman who is of no sex. Two things are necessary for the highest enjoyment of social intercourse, the natural diversity of the male and female mind, and enough of knowledge and cultivated taste in common for mutual comprehension and sympathy. A perfect similarity of mind and feeling between them would probably destroy that silken chord which now gently links heart to heart. The intelligence of the lady, though always feminine in its character, must, if she is to be respected, bear a certain proportion to that of the gentlemen whom she meets in society. As a wife, she needs an intelligent view of her husband's pursuits and associations, in order to understand and relish his conversation, to sympathize with him, and gently to administer or insinuate whatever counsel or correctives his character or their mutual happiness may require.

We have spoken in general of the condition and duties of womanhood in its normal state. It remains to say a word of the appropriate occupations of those who have not reached that state. For the young lady, they should undoubtedly be such as are preparatory to the duties of married life; for those who, from whatever cause, remain in a state of maidenhood, occupations should be chosen which are most congenial to the female sex, and which are least remote from their ordinary sphere of duty.

But, it may be said, that, while there are some duties so marked by the hand of nature as to be clearly referable to one of the sexes rather than to the other, there are those that constitute a sort of border territory, and are common to the two. Such duties undoubtedly there are; and some of them equally exist in all ages, while others are constantly changing from new states of society and from improvements in the arts. Nothing is more ridiculous than the prating of certain self-constituted oracles, who, to make the world wiser and better, deal out their antediluvian notions about the distaff and spinning wheel. Things are constantly changing, and we must change with them. There are new modes of employment ever springing up, in which either sex may engage, and nothing but experience and a careful notice of results, immediate and remote, can assign them to one sex in preference to the other. To this category belong the lighter work connected with various useful arts, the sale of certain classes of articles of trade, and the business of instruction in the schools. The question to be solved is not merely, what kind of service can the female perform as well as the male, and may therefore be called on to perform from views of economy, but what is its effect upon her health, upon her mind, her condition and prospects. A

young lady, wishing to be useful and at the same time to obtain the means of subsistence and personal independence, although she might gladly live with a relative or friend and participate in household cares, would not consent to go out to service, but would rather find some respectable employment common to both sexes, than have a servile occupation though strictly feminine and preparatory to future life. Were she to engage in teaching the young, she might, in addition to other desirable objects, improve her mind and develop her character, and acquire that knowledge of the nature and management of children, which must always be one of the most important parts of a practical education for females. How different the influence of such an occupation from that of being a shop-keeper, where, indeed, a thorough knowledge of human nature and of business is acquired, but where, instead of having to do with the young affections of children, forming them to virtue, one is in perpetual contact with adult selfishness and mature depravity, adapted to blunt the finer sensibilities and destroy the softer graces of the female character, and form a keen-sighted, shrewd, independent woman, whom one could easily respect, but not so easily love.

But, in opposition to all we have said, we may be reminded of the alleged equality of the sexes, and of the rights of woman growing out of that equality. There is much sublime nonsense uttered on this subject, and with most persons it passes for just what it is worth. A few women, who, by the way, ought to have been men, and a few men, who ought to have been women, have been strenuously endeavoring, of late, to alter the structure of society, and to accommodate it to their own unnatural tastes. It seems never to have occurred to these abnormal specimens of humanity, that one of the highest of woman's rights is the right to be a woman. Have women the right to hold the plough, to harvest the fields, to quarry granite, to drift lumber down the eastern rivers, to be masons and carpenters, to drive cattle to the market, to be employed on rail-ways and in river navigation, and even to go before the mast? While the sexes keep within their respective spheres, a spirit of gallantry will give to woman more of ease, of honor and of privilege, than she could claim on the ground of equality.

This may not, however, be what these gentle reformers mean. They wish to see women holding public offices, and equal sharers with the other sex in the honors of political life. How delightful it would be, to see either a spinster or a tender mother sitting the live-long day in courts of justice, listening to the details of crime and cor-

ruption of every form, hearing the sophistry, the wrangling, and the Billingsgate of pettifogging lawyers, and pronouncing, at last, the inexorable sentence! How refreshing it would be, in social intercourse, to enjoy the delicate conversation of such blushing ladies, those angels of charity and innocence to which the heart of man is in such willing bondage! And, during a political campaign, when rival female candidates should, as the leaders of faction, harangue the multitude, how fine it would be, as Addison somewhere observes, "to see a pretty bosom heaving with party rage, and a pair of stays ready to burst with sedition!"

The history of woman's condition in the successive ages of the world exhibits the same laws of progress as we observe in civilization in general. A rapid glance at that history will form a proper close to this discussion. We need not stop to remark upon the servitude of females in pagan times. That was the natural result of the first crude efforts to organize society, when physical strength alone was enough to give priority of rank. Christianity was the true deliverer of the sex from this thralldom. The age of chivalry was one in which the light of Christianity was veiled in obscurity, when a spirit of romance awarded to the female a fantastical position, and her once barbarous lord now voluntarily became her suppliant slave. Still, this step was one of progress. It was but the recurring motion of a pendulum tending to a central point of repose. It was the rough hammering of a block of marble out of which a perfect statue was to be ultimately chiselled.

The next change was to give to the imbecile object of chivalrous adoration some intellectual accomplishments, something to fill the void of mental inanity, and render woman companionable and entertaining, when the employments of men introduced into society other topics of conversation than those of warlike adventure. The condition of mankind in Europe was then such that nothing but a conventional and artificial education was possible; and in promoting this France took the lead. Society was divided into two classes, the nobility and the peasantry. The middling class was then scarcely in existence.

In France, during the most flourishing period of the old *régime*, woman held a high and imposing rank in society. Home, as a place of retirement and the seat of her influence, did not exist. To a domestic life, devoted to her husband and children, she was a total stranger. Children were put out from infancy to be nursed, reared and educated abroad. The lady passed her time on her estate or at

court, with or without her husband, as best pleased her fancy. She glittered in the public assembly, gave tone to conversation in the *soirée*, discussed, in literary circles with scholars and statesmen, questions of literature and politics, and exerted by means of her connection with the court an important influence upon the State. With a studied regard to all the outward forms of propriety, she was a being of questionable virtue. Such was the well-bred lady of the age of Louis XIV.

Among the English of that period it was quite otherwise. With them in general, except at court, were to be found good wives, good mothers and happy homes. Intellectually and socially, woman's place was lower in England than in France. She was openly treated as an inferior. In society, literary and intellectual conversation rarely obtruded itself, frivolity and wit being regarded as the chief passports to favor. The same cause that operated to render social life less improving and intellectual than in France, rendered the home of the Englishman rather a physical than an intellectual paradise.

The women of Germany were less domestic than those of England, and less influential, brilliant and coquettish than those of France. The circle of home influence was wider with them than with the English, the duties of the wife extending to many matters that are appropriated to the other sex in England, and less public than in France, where all one's time was passed in society. In their education, chief attention was given to the formation of the heart and the sentiments. Their love was cordial and sincere, and yet their moral principles were not so clear and so sound as those of the women of England.

In Italy, woman was an accomplished and fascinating creature of sense, ardent, imaginative, beautiful, and fond of graceful ornament. When pleased, she was a loving angel; when offended, a vindictive spirit of evil. Climate and religion combined with education to give her this character.

While such were the education and character of the female of rank in countries where the feudal spirit prevailed, the education of the lower classes, of the peasantry, was almost wholly neglected. But the growth of the commonality in Holland, England and Scotland, began early to introduce a new order of things, which demanded a sound practical education for the daughters of the middling classes. Females trained under these influences for their important situation, as holding a central position of society, have proved to the world, that no such wide extremes exist between the mental constitution of

the sexes as was once supposed. Still, the deleterious effect of a powerful aristocracy in repressing the energies of the common female mind, rendered a further experiment highly desirable, not to say necessary. The theory of government, and the structure of society in our own country, furnish ample means for that experiment. Here, where the artificial distinctions which exist in English society are unknown; where there is no aristocracy of rank, and scarcely one of wealth; where no superiority obtains but that of talent, of acquisition and personal merit, here, if anywhere, it would seem that society might become natural, that human life in its true Christian significance might be understood and exemplified, and that woman should at length find her true position, and open to others of her sex the path that leads to it.

But in order to this, there must be an enlarged and liberal culture of the female mind. There is great danger of substituting one partial system for another, instead of rising to that universality which unites in itself all the elements of true progress, whether American or European, that have hitherto been developed. The results of universal experience, so far as they are independent of local causes, should be made the starting point of a higher and more perfect civilization.

Cut asunder, as we have been in our previous history, from close intimacy with European nations, and throwing off all the shackles and restraints of feudal institutions, it is very natural that the American female, being in a state of society where nothing is known either of ladies of titled rank or of peasant women, should occupy a middle station between these two extremes, and rely more on the culture of the understanding and the reason than on that of the sentiments, the imagination and the taste. That this is a better state of society than that where the female, if she belong to the higher classes, is a being of feeling, of impulse, and of taste exclusively, or of mere sinew and muscle, if she belong to the lower, will not be questioned. The attempt here made to educate the whole sex has already been so far successful as to prove that it is capable of an intellectual culture which it does not receive in the Old World. There, it is not her mental constitution, as the case of many an individual shows, but the organization of society that renders it incapable of becoming what it is here. But this very peculiarity of American female education may be carried to excess; and there are certain circumstances which tend to remove American females too far from the spirit of European culture. The defect lies not so much in what they acquire

as in what they fail to acquire. The European female has some advantages which the American has not. When she enjoys the benefit of intellectual society, it is of the first order. The great number of distinguished literary and scientific gentlemen with whom she associates, gives an intellectual cast to society. It not only makes social intercourse a perpetual school for culture, where the whole life may be employed for maturing knowledge, but it banishes all sciolism from society, and takes away all occasion for that foolish vanity, which we sometimes see in American ladies, of introducing literary or scientific topics, not for the purpose of learning, but of showing what they know.

Another source of refinement to the female in Europe, is the facility with which she becomes conversant with works of art. Galleries are thrown open to her in every large town. Her eye is accustomed to the productions of the great masters of statuary and painting. She visits them from early childhood, and acquires unconsciously an artistic taste. These places she often visits in the company of those who know how to point out what is peculiarly excellent; and these productions of genius become the topics of conversation in the social circle. The result of such familiarity with works of art is the formation of a correct and delicate taste which extends its bland influence over the whole character, and makes the individual herself a model of all the proprieties and elegances of life.

Again, the European lady, though she may receive a defective education, rarely receives a factitious education. She is practically educated, at least for that sphere which is assigned her in life. Her sentiments and feelings are systematically formed by education. We speak more particularly now of the German female character. The books which she reads in school, abound in pure and lofty sentiments, such as give nourishment to the mind, and form it to virtue. The reading-book is a manual of practical wisdom, and its lessons are studied not merely for the beauty of their composition, or for purposes of elocution, but for fixing immovably in the heart and in the memory truths and impressions best adapted to form the female character.

The period of girlhood which with us is narrowed down to an imaginary line, drawn between the child and the young lady, is there protracted for the sake of giving to woman, in due time, a more perfect maturity of character; and during that period a thousand nameless things are learned in respect to household matters and domestic economy, which in this country are too often postponed till after

marriage, and it is well if the requisite skill and knowledge be acquired then.

The uncertain lot of females, who ally themselves with others, in this country, where the station and social position of a man is so liable to change, only increases the importance of a female education and training which will enable a lady to be a school-mistress or a president's wife, just as her fortune may require. There is no station so low, or so high, but that she may be called to occupy it. As the partner of man, she must have the power of accommodating herself to all the vicissitudes to which he is subject. Nothing but an enlarged system of education, securing various, and at the same time, practical attainments, will fully answer the demands of our age and country. Whatever diversity there may be in other respects, one thing we may affirm that, in all instances, her culture should be religious. Female virtues and female charms naturally cluster around religion. A woman that is a sceptic, is a sinner against nature. If her heart is wrong, all is wrong. Morally it is the same with both sexes. But this blight upon human character carries with it a more obvious desolation when it falls upon woman. Religious sentiment gives the key-note to the female heart. It is the all-adorning grace, which imparts to other minor graces their highest charm. How sadly imperfect is every female virtue without religion! Patient toil, resignation, fidelity in every relation, devoted love, and perseverance in kind offices, all take their root in the sentiment of piety.