

society and to help man, and especially in the pro-creation of the race, and that which is involved therein, companionship, sympathy, education of children. Thirdly, she was made subordinate to man; for a state of innocence does not exclude inequality. There is the subjection of house or state in which the superior uses the subjects for their advantage; and this was the subjection in accordance with which man was, in the beginning, made the 'head of the woman.' Else human society would lack good order, if the wiser did not govern. To still more emphasise the nature of this subordination, bear in mind that the order followed in the creation of the other animals was not followed here. In them there was simultaneous creation of the sexes; but not so in man. Adam was created alone, and from him Eve, his help, was taken. First, says St. Thomas, in order that man, like God, might be the beginning of all his species, as God is the beginning of the universe. Secondly, that his affection might be perfect, and the union inseparable, when he saw that woman was formed from himself. Thirdly, because, beyond the ordinary sexual tie, there is in man the society of domestic life, in which each has distinct works, but in which the leadership belongs to man. And fourthly, because of the great sacrament hidden under this formation (St. Thos. Summa I. q. 92 a 2). Further, she was formed not from the head of man, for in the social union with him she was not to rule; nor yet from his feet, because her part is not servile subjection; but from his side nearest his heart. 'He built up,' says the golden-tongued Saint, 'not He moulded; but He took a portion of what was already moulded, and built up a perfect creature, able by community of nature and of reason to support him for whose comfort she was made.' (St. Chrys. Hom. xv. in Gen., p. 118). And when the Divine Architect brought the last and best of His gifts to man, that man spoke words which, as the greatest authority tells us, were the words of God Himself. They completed the union of man and woman by bestowing upon it three qualities, indissolubility, unity, and inviolable sacredness.

The original relation of woman to man consisted in these seven points. It was the fount of the race, and so the starting-point of human society; it was made for man's help and support in society; it consisted in subordination to him, but a subordination tempered and exalted by perfect affection; it was a union indissoluble; a union between two only; a union to be respected and maintained by both alike, because it was not founded in mutual compact, but originated and consecrated by the act of God Himself.

Such is the perfect picture of the primary human relation as given in the most ancient of all existing books. You will search in vain among the wisest men of Greece, or Rome, or Persia, or India, or Egypt, or China, or any other nation, for any teaching comparable to what the great Hebrew prophet has conveyed in a dozen lines. Yet in these nations, and the more distinctly the farther back we go, you will find institutions maintained with more or less purity, but bearing witness, even in their debased and fragmentary state, that such nations once possessed the doctrine here set forth, inasmuch as their civil life in its very origin was based upon it. As an instance may be cited, the sacred marriage of the Romans, 'per confarreationem,' a patriarchal inheritance from the cradle of the human race, and a qualification for the highest priesthoods.

Thus God, the author of human society, established it upon a perfect law of marriage. As Adam is the Father and Head of the race, so Eve is its Mother and Nurse. This is the key to her position among all the nations, their descendants. Therein lay a rich gift for the present, and a richer prophecy for the future; for this relation is not merely an institution founding society, but a secret picture and pledge of the dealing of the Creator with the race created. From the beginning the natural covers and includes the supernatural, and what is last executed is first intended.

2. Now pass over an interval of several thousand years, and take a short view of the actual state of woman in the various countries of the Western World during the last years of the Emperor Augustus, on the very eve of the Christian era.

In Greek life woman held an honorable position—the companion, not the slave of man, as in Eastern Asia. The Greeks possessed a sound and well-ordered political life, because they had a true family life grounded on monogamy. Polygamy was foreign to them; bigamy extremely rare. Polygamy was practised by the Macedonian monarchs as infected with Eastern customs. The Greeks did not keep woman under lock and key in harems; still less guarded by eunuchs. Within her home she had defined rights secured by law and custom; she ruled as mistress over slaves and children.

But there was a dark reverse side of the picture. The wife was looked upon, not as the human creature, man's like and companion, but as a means to an end, as an evil which could not be escaped, in order that there might be house and children. Her intellectual education was disregarded, and hence her influence over husband and children was slight; even the rich were not taught the accomplishments which form the charm of home. Hence Socrates admits that the society of the wife was the last

thing sought after by the husband. If he invited a guest, his wife did not dine with him. She was left to the solitude of her apartments, never entered by a stranger. There were accomplished women at Athens, whose society statesmen sought; but remember that they had lost the first ornament of their sex. Aspasia and Phryne play a great part in Grecian history, and lower prodigiously the standard of domestic life. With these the relation was free and intermittent; but marriage in Athens had to be made compulsory, as a duty to the State, for the propagation of its citizens, a duty which, as Plato admits, was most unwillingly performed. Voluntary virginity was unknown; but, if involuntary, was considered a great calamity. At Sparta marriage was a mere breeding institution for the supply of healthy and vigorous citizens. Wives were lent. The State was a breeding-place for human cattle. Then, moreover, the domestic life of the Greeks was eaten up by the fearful miasma of unnatural morality, which seemed like the curse of the Hellenic race. While the extent of this evil cannot be exaggerated, it cannot be detailed.

Further, after the Peloponnesian war, a great moral deterioration set in, which continued unbroken down to the time of Plutarch. Families became extinct through the desire to have no children. This was a result deplored by Polybius a hundred and fifty years earlier. Speaking of the beginning of the Roman dominion over them, he says: 'It is the accordant opinion of all that Greece now enjoys the greatest comfort of life, and yet there is want of men, desolation of cities, so that the land begins to lose its fruitfulness through want of cultivation. The reason is, out of softness, love of comfort and of ease, men, even if they live in the state of marriage, will bring up no children, or only one or two, in order to have a good inheritance. Thus the evil becomes even greater, as, if war or sickness takes away the one child, the family dies out.' (Polybius, Exc. Vatic. ed. Geel., p. 105).

Now, considering the widespread dislike of marriage and of children from marriage, the slave population with their number, condition and influence; considering, also, the terrible prevalence of unnatural immorality, we may safely conclude that no people in history labored more effectually for its extinction than the Greeks.

Originally the Romans had a far higher standard of domestic life than the Greeks. Monogamy prevailed, marriage had a certain sanctity, and the wife was taken into the life-long communion of joys and sorrows. If what is said be true, that even for 500 years Rome had not a single instance of divorce, then the Romans in their estimation of wedlock stood above any nation of antiquity. On the virtues of the family their civil policy was founded. They were noble husbands and fathers before they became conquerors. But from the second Punic war, a great deterioration ensued. It advanced with the progress of conquest. In the time of Augustus the very mention of ancient Roman family virtues would seem a bitter satire upon the actual corruption. Slavery had wrought its dire work in every relation of the family. The vices of all nations had invaded Rome, and the characteristic Grecian vice reigned supreme. In short, when the Roman Empire had reached its height, as the virtues of women were never so rare, so the respect for women had sunk to its lowest point.

Among the Persians marriage had been debased by polygamy. The desire for numerous children was general, and the law, too, enjoined them. To attain this end the intrinsic dignity and worth of woman were utterly disregarded. The Persian would have as many concubines as his means allowed, and abhorred nothing as much as voluntary celibacy. A maiden of eighteen years who remained unmarried was threatened with the heaviest punishments after death. Their domestic life was full of abominations.

Among the Israelites, who possessed the then true religion, woman as well as man was recognised as made after the image of God, intended for man's companion, destined to eternal life, and, therefore, needing a moral freedom for the practice of virtue. In their language the word expressing woman did not, like the Greek and Roman name, mean a 'bearer of children,' but another self identical in nature, but varied in sex. She was honored, with the father, as the mother, and had to instruct her children in the fear of the Lord. In common with man, she was to hear the public reading, and so to learn the spirit of the sacred doctrine. These great privileges made her social position higher than in any ancient nation except the Germans.

But there were great drawbacks also. When the Law was given, polygamy and divorce were already customs, and while the former was tacitly allowed, the latter was expressly regulated by the Law. Thus, on account of the hardheartedness of the people, the pure idea of marriage was defaced. In the ages preceding the Advent of Christ, and at the time of His ministry, the unlimited abuse of divorce had become the scourge of domestic life, and threatened even the existence of the nation. Of course, there was no place for the higher meaning and rank of voluntary virginity.

In all other nations of the East and South the degradation of woman was universal. Only in the far North was there a streak of light, fitful indeed as a sunbeam in