

Commencement Thesis.

"Woman's Character and Advancement in Different Countries."

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June 10, 1897.

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Outline. —

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 2. Respect paid her now.
- II. Woman in Africa.
 1. The Zulus.
 2. The Duala.
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"Hail, Thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou of woman." - Luke 1:28.

If we were to travel this wide world over, we would find women in the very lowest degree of intelligence, indeed, we would find those to whom such words as intelligence or civilization would in no way apply.

It has been said that the best indication of the progress of civilization in different nations is the condition and treatment of their women. And I think this is very true: if a nation is civilized, the women are treated, at least, as on a level with the men. Respected and shielded by the men, as they should be: and not used as slaves, brutes almost. And when they are not treated well, it surely may be said that the nation is not civilized. I think woman was created for a companion, helper, and guide for her husband, and not for a slave.

What would a nation be without a home, and what is home - without a woman.

"Who creates a home:

Creates a potent spirit, which, in turn,
Doth fashion him that fashioned."

We may truly say the home not only fashions the fashioner but all that dwell therein. Place woman at the head of the home and better nations would result. It is in the domestic line that woman has and ought to have her "say so," and it is here she exerts her influence. It is

to be hoped that not many will strive for political parts, for this is surely going to lower the standard of womanhood and in time ruin the nation. I think woman has no business in politics, so far as voting goes, she does her part in influencing the husband and preserving the home. She is the one that makes the home and if she leaves it, as she must if she enters politics, the home and nation are gone.

While in some places we should find women in very low state, I think we should find her in other places very highly developed. She can stand upon as high a plain as any man, in regard to intellect, and she has proved it. In every country she ought to rank as high as man, and be respected and protected by them. But if we look at the different nations we see all grades occupied by woman.

Among African tribes women have to suffer greatly on account of their natural want of strength; and polygamy adds much to the degradation of the weaker sex.

The women here possess the same affection for children that among civilized people tend to raise woman to a higher position. The women of the barbarous African tribes can and do exert quite an influence. The mother and sisters of an African chief often influence him so greatly, that they are almost the real rulers.

The Bushman is the lowest African tribe and the

women of this tribe are only slaves and beasts of burden. For during their travels the women must carry all the baggage, and if any one must do without food it is surely the women. And when she becomes old and feeble or in any way unfit for a slave, she is left behind to be devoured by wild beasts. A woman in this tribe is treated very differently from those of the genuine negro, for here the men and women toil together in the necessary work. Though if the husband chooses to beat his wife no one will interfere, and the wife has the same privilege.

The Julius are a patriarchal race, the father is ruler of the whole house. The women are lowest in the higher ranks, the wives of a chief may only move about on their knees in his presence. The reason of this degradation is due to the buying and selling of women.

The Duala women have no rights in the least, she is sold, lent or given away as suits her master.

Women occupy a lower position in Germany than any other country of Europe. The Empress Frederic made great efforts to raise the position of women in the upper classes, and in regard to their higher education, her see has born some fruit. Even in the upper classes the wives are simply upper servants to look after the comforts of their lord; and are not regarded as equal

companions, and the husband seeks enjoyment elsewhere. In the lower classes women do the men's work, indeed, she does what the beasts do in civilized countries. In the middle class, even the bond of union which makes a house is wanting: but how can it be otherwise, when she who should be the presiding genius of the house, the wife and mother, occupies a position of inferiority to her own sons and husband.

During the Restoration the French women were both refined and witty, but they placed intellect before every thing else. And we all know it is impossible to cultivate the heart and the brain equally, and as they spent all their time and energy in the latter, they were evidently lacking in the first. The French woman is a good business manager, and she is by nature the first housekeeper in the world. American women have done their share in altering this type of French woman.

Italian women do not have strong feeling, or a strong will. At the age when girls of America are just beginning her youthful experiences, just beginning in life, you might say, an Italian girl is a woman. At the age of twenty-five she has settled down and become a "matter-of-fact person", and what we would call an old maid. The men have monopolized the trade of book-

making, as they have the notion that women ought not to cause public gaze or notoriety. And that all their accomplishments should be kept to enlighten the domestic circle of which she is a member. Female authorship is looked upon in disdain. "Woman is invariably such as man wishes her to be: the female mind and heart is molded according to the ideas prevailing in the society in which she is brought up."

While the American girl goes about by herself and manages her own affairs, largely, the Italian girl is brought up in her parents' presence. She does not read or talk to anyone without first having the consent of her guardian. The mother teaches her daughter so far as she is capable, and then if a teacher is necessary the mother is in constant attendance. Mother and daughter being so much together are on very intimate terms. Religion is considered very necessary to feminine gentleness. The mother takes great pride in giving her daughter to a lord, she herself has chosen. An Italian woman thinks much of her home.

The Jamaica woman, if she has wealth, lives in comparative luxury and ease, but the poor peasant woman has a hard lot, it is one of toil and exposure. Her house cares are not many, as her house is very small and nothing more than a shed. She has no such thing as a cook stove, but makes a fire and cooks

out of doors. Many of the women break stone for the government road. But most of them carry bananas, oranges, limes, etc. to market on Saturdays, walking in single file, after the line reaches for miles. They carry these baskets, filled with fruit, upon their head, and many times they are so heavy they cannot load and unload them without help, and they must ford rivers on their way. The peasant women evidently have very well developed figures to stand such strain and work. But they do not have an oversupply of clothing; they have short skirts, simple waists and bright colored turbans. These women are straight as an arrow and walk with a peculiar graceful, swinging motion, which is due to the custom of carrying heavy loads upon their heads. Their clothing is usually clean but their houses are not very inviting, but who can blame them. "Poor Woman, her lot is indeed harder than she deserves."

Women of Japan are treated with more respect and consideration than the women of any other country of Asia. They are allowed greater freedom and so they possess more dignity and self confidence, and the daughters receive quite good education. Nearly all leading Japanese bestow due honor and respect upon their wives. In the Christian churches

father, mother, and children sit together; something unusual in Asia. The progress of a nation truly depends as much upon the condition of the women as upon the men. Of one hundred and twenty-three Japanese sovereigns, nine have been women. In comparing all other nations of Asia, Japan is believed to lead them all, in respect and honor to women. They do not like to be called Asiatics, as they have no use for Asiatic religion (Buddhism). The only religion worthy of note in Japan is Buddhism, and this gives no hope for women. A Japanese woman is odder than her books. While we dress in black for mourning, they dress in white; they carefully cover the upper part of their body and show their feet, while we are not so anxious to show ours. They are well dressed until they are fifteen or sixteen years old. Filial obedience and Polygamy block the advance of Christianity in China.

A Japanese girl who is as pure as any of our Christian girls, would at the command of her father enter a life that she loathes, yet through it all there is no murmur. A Japanese has but one legal, but he may have as many women as he likes. So long as such exist there can be no approach to a home of purity and dignity, as we possess in our civilized

country. No women excel the Japanese women in that innate love of beauty, order, neatness and household adornment. They carefully lay down the following rules: - Obedience to father when a child. Obedience to husband when a wife, and obedience to eldest son when a widow. Their biography of a good woman is written in one word "obedience". A Japanese girl is bright, intelligent, modest and lady-like. What the American girl is to Europe, the Japanese girl is to Asia. But as has been said, the leaders are becoming convinced of the honor and respect due to women and of the necessity of educating them. The American lady has done a large part in showing the Japanese girl the ideals, associations, and ordering of a Christian home; and too the ideals of womanhood.

No nation has given more freedom to their women than Burma. The women here, stand in every way equal to the men, in law, religion, and customs. Girls share equally with the boys in all inheritance. There are no trustees between a woman and her property. Though they have been allowed to go free from their childhood, and have the freedom to find their own place in a real world; yet of all women there is none more womanly than the Burmese woman. It seems to me any nation might be justly proud if such could be said of their women. It speaks well of

that nation, and the nation as a whole deserves credit, for the women as well as the men help to bring this about. But the Burmese woman is not one that the world calls beautiful, for she has a fair sized waist and wears a loose jacket. The complexion is rather fair, and the eyes large and brown. Their manners are quiet and their voices soft and sweet. They have no accomplishments such as playing, singing or dancing; but they are thoroughly acquainted with all household duties. They so live that they know something of the world about them, and they have good common sense. The girls have very little of what we call amusements. Boat races and festivals of different sorts and many friends with whom to talk, constitute their sports. They have no games; but they seem satisfied. Almost every girl has some household duty to perform, even the rich. The rich girl has for her duty to carry water from the village well morning and evening; and this is the gossiping place of the town. They do not marry young, but when they do marry they are free to make their own choice. All that is necessary for marriage ceremonies is that the two should come together before witnesses and eat from the same bowl. The girl does not change her name for they do not have family names, but every woman, girl or child has the prefix "Mā" or "Mi" so there is no way of telling whether a woman is married or not so far as the name goes.

One thing that is so nice is that the girl from seventeen years, as long as she likes, has some special work beside her household duties. The Bazar, a place where many of their work, lasts two or three months out of the year, and the hours occupied are from six to ten in the morning, so they have time for their household cares beside. But she never slight her home work for this is the center of her life. To have a certain work of her own has a good influence; it broadens her views, teaches her to manage, and shows her the world about her. The Bazar is a place where nearly every thing is sold but the women sell the silks and such things.

As I said before, the best indications of the progress of civilization of a nation, is the position of their women. And in America the position of woman is acknowledged to be more exalted than elsewhere, and hence our civilization is more humane and more christian like than that of any other nation. It seems a little strange too, that in our devotion to politics, that the women of America could command so much respect as is given them. This fact is acknowledged by foreigners who find no other custom worthy of comment. In no other nation has woman more influence; and it is exerted chiefly within the quiet sphere, called in our country "home". The moral position of women in the United States

is undoubtedly superior to that of any other nation; and their religious influence is one of their ennobling characteristics. But when we come to the question of their physical condition, we are forced to acknowledge that women of some other nations step higher than do our own. But in this respect the women can blame no one but themselves. It has been said, there is one valuable improvement to be made among us, and that is a custom that will protect American ladies health and preserve their beauty also. But it seems to me if we get the first, the second will follow. That is, if we get a costume that will not injure a ladies health, one that is simple, comfortable and neat, then we will get health and next will follow beauty.

Some one has said also, that there are three dispositions that do and ought always to distinguish an American lady. The first, is devout interest in the religion of the land, the Protestant faith. She should prize and promote its influence. Second, is a hearty national sentiment, a love for their country. Third, every woman ought to appreciate the sphere of her sex. It is to be earnestly hoped there are but very few who wish a place in the tumult of politics.

Every delicate sentiment of womanhood must revolt at this idea. A woman's husband and her children act according to the impulses of her tranquil but effective power, and the aim of every woman should be to be a woman in the truest sense of the word.