

## TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

### *The Virtues of the 19th Century American Housewife* *From Ginny Viteri*

Grades –8

Length of class period – Two class periods: 45 minutes each.

Inquiry –

- ❖ How did instruction manuals and advice books published in the early part of the 19th century help to define the roles and attitudes of women in a rapidly changing American Society?

Objectives:

- ❖ Students will examine different instruction manuals and/or advice books published between 1800-1850 in order to draw conclusions about the skills and dispositions valued in women in 19th Century America.
- ❖ Students will create written work that expresses their opinion on the issue utilizing relevant evidence from these primary sources.

Materials: Note:

- ❖ The American Frugal Housewife by Mrs. Child (1833) excerpts attached
- ❖ Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School by Miss Catherine E. Beecher (1845) excerpts attached.
- ❖ "Advice on Choosing a Wife" from The Young Man's Guide by William A. Alcott (1839). (excerpt attached)
- ❖ "Accepting a Marriage Proposal" by Mary Pease (1840) (attached)

## Activities:

### Day 1:

- ❖ Teacher will introduce the topic with a discussion of the shifting roles of men and women in the early 19th century. Technological advances (railroads, telegraph, steam engine, factories) led to a change in the perception of time and efficiency. Families no longer had to make everything they needed to survive. Men could work in jobs that produced goods and services and this led to a change in women's roles as well.
- ❖ Teacher will distribute primary sources to each group. Options include having each group work with one source only or having each group work with excerpts from all of the sources. You may want to divide the resources into sample chapters by topic i.e.: raising children or marriage. Note the investigation sheet assumes that each group will focus on one source and the class will then share in jigsaw fashion.
- ❖ Students will work in their groups to examine their sources for 20 minutes. They will complete the investigation sheet.
- ❖ Students will share their findings and the class will brainstorm a list of skills and dispositions valued in women in the 19th Century.

### Day 2:

- ❖ Students will work with their group members or individually to create one of the following:
  - A political cartoon on the Virtues of the 19th Century American Housewife.
  - A resume or advertisement for a 19th Century American Housewife.

## Assessment:

- ❖ Teacher will assess learning based on shared responses on day 1
- ❖ Teacher will review and evaluate political cartoons and resumes/advertisements to assess understanding.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- ❖ 1.1.2 Describe the influences that contributed to American social reform movements.
- ❖ 1.1.4: Explain how specific individuals and their ideas and beliefs influenced U.S. History
- ❖ 2.3.7: Create written work that expresses a personal opinion on a historical event or social studies issue and support it with relevant evidence.
- ❖ 2.4.9: Orally present information on social studies events of issues and support with primary and secondary evidence.

Handouts on following pages

Virtues of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Housewife  
Investigation Sheet

Name of Source:

Author:

Date:

1. What segment of the population do you think this source was created for? Why do you think so?

2. What viewpoint does the author of this text have toward women's roles? Consider the following: Provide evidence from the text to support your conclusions.

Courtship:

Marriage:

Family:

Working:

Education:

Religion:

Politics:

3. What virtues were valued in women during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century? How would you describe the model American Housewife?

## Transcription of Primary Source: Accepting a Marriage Proposal

[Postmarked Boston, May, 1840]

Mr. Freeman Dear Sir

I did not receive your letter until the 23rd of may and was happy to hear that your bodily health was good. My health is as good as it was when I left. I am sorry to hear that Augusta is so unwell. It makes it unpleasant for you but hope her Thomsonian medercine will relieve her.

You have give me an Invitation to your castle for a home and am happy of the Invitation as I know you are a man of honour. I shall throw myself upon your care and protection and according to your Invitation I will meet you at Brookfield the 5th day of June.

My respects to Augusta and except the same yourself.

Your sincere friend and well-wisher Mary Pease

### Curator Notes

Type: Manuscript

Exact Title:

Periodical:

Volume:

Page(s):

Year: 1840

Probable Date: May 1840

Description: Edited by Old Sturbridge Village.

Author/Creator: Pease, Mary

## *Female Qualifications for Marriage.*

### *1. Moral Excellence.*

The highest as well as noblest trait in female character, is love to God... Indeed there are very few men to be found... who do not prefer pious companions of the other sex...

### *2. Common Sense.*

Next on the list of particular qualifications in a female, for matrimonial life, I place COMMON SENSE... By *common sense*, as used in this place, I mean the faculty by means of which we see things *as they* really are. It implies judgement and discrimination, and a proper sense in regard to the common concerns of life... It is very different from genius or talent, as they are commonly defined; but much better than either. It never blazes forth with the splendor of noon, but shines with a constant and useful light. To the housewife—but, above all, to the mother—it is indispensable...

### *3. Desire for Improvement.*

Whatever other recommendations a lady may possess, she should have an inextinguishable thirst for improvement. No sensible person can be truly happy in the world, without this; much less qualified to make others happy. But the genuine spirit of improvement, wherever it exists, atones for the absence of many qualities which would otherwise be indispensable... with it, every thing else is rendered doubly valuable... *With* the fond, the ardent, the never failing desire to improve, physically, intellectually, and morally, there are few females who may not make tolerable companions for a man of sense;— *without* it, though a young lady were beautiful and otherwise lovely beyond comparison, wealthy as the Indies, surrounded by thousands of the most worthy friends, and even talented, let him beware!...

### *4. Fondness for Children.*

Few traits of female character are more important than this... A dislike of children, even in men, is an unfavorable omen; in woman it is insupportable; for it is grossly unnatural... Wo[e] to the female who is doomed to drag out a miserable existence with a husband who 'can't bear children;' but thrice miserable is the doom of him who has a wife and a family of children, but whose children have no *mother!*... No home can ever be a happy one to any of its inmates, where there is no maternal love, nor any desire for mental or moral improvement. But where these exist, in any considerable degree, and the original attachment was founded on correct principles, there is always hope of brighter days, even though clouds at present obscure the horizon. No woman who loves her husband, and desires to make continual improvement, will long consent to render those around her unhappy.

### *5. Love of Domestic Concerns.*

Without the knowledge and the love of domestic concerns, even the wife of a peer, is but a poor affair... I am, however, addressing myself, in this work, to persons in the middle ranks of life; and here a knowledge of domestic affairs is so necessary in every wife, that

the lover ought to have it continually in his eye. Not only a knowledge of these affairs—not only to know how things *ought to be done*, but how to *do them*; not only to know what ingredients ought to be put into a pie or a pudding, but to be able *to make* the pie or the pudding... If a young farmer or mechanic *marry* a girl, who has been brought up only to '*play music*;' to *draw*, to *sing*, to waste paper, pen and ink in writing long and half romantic letters, and to see shows, and plays, and read novels—if a young man do marry such an unfortunate young creature, let him bear the consequences with temper... It is cold comfort for a hungry man, to tell him how delightfully his wife plays and sings. *Lovers* may live on very aerial diet, but husbands stand in need of something more solid; and young women may take my word for it, that a constantly clean table, well cooked victuals, a house in order, and a cheerful fire will do more towards preserving a husband's heart, than all the 'accomplishments' taught in all the 'establishments' in the world without them.

#### 6. *Sobriety.*

...By *sobriety*, I do not mean a habit which is opposed to *intoxication*, for if that be hateful in a man, what must it be in a woman?...By the word SOBRIETY in a young woman, I mean a great deal more than even a rigid abstinence from a love of drink...I mean sobriety of conduct. The word *sober* and its derivatives mean *steadiness*, *seriousness*, *carefulness*, *scrupulous propriety of conduct*. Now this kind of sobriety is of great importance in the person with whom we are to live constantly...When they [girls] are arrived at an age which turns their thoughts toward a situation for life; when they begin to think of having the command of a house, however small or poor, it is time to cast away, not the cheerfulness or the simplicity, but the *levity* of a child... This sobriety is a title to trustworthiness; and this, young man, is the treasure that you ought to prize above all others. Miserable is the husband who, when he crosses the threshold of his house, carries with him doubts, and fears, and suspicions. I do not mean suspicions of the *fidelity* of his wife; but of her care, frugality, attention to his interests, and to the health and morals of his children...He is the happy husband who can go away at a moment's warning...no more fearing to find, on his return, any thing wrong, than he would fear a discontinuance of the rising and setting of the sun... But in order to possess this precious *trustworthiness*, you must, if you can, exercise your reason in the choice of your partner...

#### 7. *Industry.*

Let not the individual whose eye catches the word *industry*, at the beginning of this division of my subject, condemn me as degrading females to the condition of mere wheels in a machine for money-making; for I mean no such thing... Still if woman is intended to be a 'help meet,' for the other sex, I know of no reason why she should not be so in physical concerns, as well as mental and moral...The woman who does not actually prefer action to inaction—industry to idleness—labor to ease—and who does not resolve to labor moderately as long as she lives, whatever her circumstances, is unfit for life, social or domestic...It is not for me to say, in what *form* her labor shall be applied, except in rearing the young... But, who is to tell whether a girl will make an industrious woman?...There are...certain *rules*, which, if attended to with care, will serve as pretty sure guides. And, first, if you find the tongue lazy, you may be nearly certain that the

hands and feet are not very industrious...The pronunciation of an industrious person is generally *quick*, and *distinct*; the voice, if not strong, *firm* at the least... Another mark of industry is, *a quick step*, and a somewhat *heavy tread*, showing that the foot comes down with a *hearty good will*. If the body lean a little forward, and the eyes keep steadily in the same direction, while the feet are going, so much the better, for these discover earnestness to arrive at the intended point...

#### 8. *Early Rising.*

*Early rising* is another mark of industry... Where a living and a provision for children is to be sought by labor of some sort or other, late rising in the wife is certain ruin; and rarely will you find an early-rising wife, who had been a late-rising girl...

#### 9. *Frugality.*

This means the contrary of extravagance. It does not mean *stinginess*; it does not mean *pinching*; but it means an abstaining from all unnecessary expenditure, and all unnecessary use of goods of any and of every sort. It is a quality of great importance, whether the rank in life be high or low... Some of the indications of extravagance in a lady are ear-rings, broaches, bracelets, buckles, necklaces, diamonds, (real or mock,) and nearly all the ornaments which women put upon their persons... To marry a girl of this disposition is really self-destruction. You never can have either property or peace...

#### 10. *Personal Neatness.*

... There never can exist, for any length of time, ardent *affection*, in any man towards a woman who neglects neatness, either in her person, or in her house affairs... How much do women lose by inattention to these matters!... Beauty is valuable; it is one of the *ties*, and a *strong* one too; but it cannot last to old age; whereas the charm of cleanliness never ends but with life itself... So the most beautiful woman, if found with an uncleansed skin, is, in my estimation, the most disagreeable.

#### 11. *A Good Temper*

...By 'good temper,' I do not mean an easy temper, a serenity which nothing disturbs; for that is a mark of laziness. Sullenness, if you be not too blind to perceive it, is a temper to be avoided by all means... *Querulousness* is a great fault... An everlasting complaining, without rhyme or reason, is a bad sign. It shows want of patience, and indeed, want of sense. But the contrary of this, a cold *indifference*, is still worse... *Pertinacity* is a very bad thing in anybody, and especially in a young woman; and it is sure to increase in force with the age of the party. To have the last word, is a poor triumph; but with some people it is a species of disease of the mind... A fierce *disputer* is a most disagreeable companion... Still, of all the faults as to *temper*, your melancholy ladies have the worst, unless you have the same mental disease yourself...

#### 12. *Accomplishments.*

By accomplishments, I mean those things, which are usually comprehended in what is termed a useful and polite education... Mental cultivation, and even what is called *polite* learning... are a most valuable acquisition, and make every female, as well as all her associates, doubly happy. It is only when books, and music, and a taste for the fire arts

are substituted for other and more important things, that they should be allowed to change love or respect to disgust...

## Curator Notes

Type: Book

Exact Title: The Young Man's Guide

Periodical:

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Page(s): 263–265, 268, 273, 279–282, 288–289, 291–295, 297–298, 301–305

Year: 1839

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Publisher: Perkins and Marvin

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Child*

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AMERICAN FRUGAL HOUSEWIFE\*\*\*

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{1}  
*THE AMERICAN FRUGAL HOUSEWIFE.*

*DEDICATED TO*

*THOSE WHO ARE NOT ASHAMED OF ECONOMY.*

---

*BY MRS. CHILD,*

*AUTHOR OF "HOBOMOK," "THE MOTHER'S BOOK,"  
EDITOR OF THE "JUVENILE MISCELLANY," &c.*

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A fat kitchen maketh a lean will.—FRANKLIN.  
"Economy is a poor man's revenue; extravagance a rich man's  
ruin."

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*TWELFTH EDITION.*

*ENLARGED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.*

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*1832.*

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## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

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The true economy of housekeeping is simply the art of gathering up all the fragments, so that nothing be lost. I mean fragments of *time*, as well as *materials*. Nothing should be thrown away so long as it is possible to make any use of it, however trifling that use may be; and whatever be the size of a family, every member should be employed either in earning or saving money.

'Time is money.' For this reason, cheap as stockings are, it is good economy to knit them. Cotton and woollen yarn are both cheap; hose that are knit wear twice as long as woven ones; and they can be done at odd minutes of time, which would not be otherwise employed. Where there are children, or aged people, it is sufficient to recommend knitting, that it is an *employment*.

In this point of view, patchwork is good economy. It is indeed a foolish waste of time to tear cloth into bits for the sake of arranging it anew in fantastic figures; but a large family may be kept out of idleness, and a few shillings saved, by thus using scraps of gowns, curtains, &c.

In the country, where grain is raised, it is a good plan to teach children to prepare and braid straw for their own bonnets, and their brothers' hats.

Where turkeys and geese are kept, handsome feather fans may as well be made by the younger members of a family, as to be bought. The sooner children are taught to turn their faculties to some account, the better for them and for their parents.

In this country, we are apt to let children romp away their existence, till they get to be thirteen or fourteen. This is not well. It is not well for the purses and {4} patience of parents; and it has a still worse effect on the morals and habits of the children. *Begin early* is the great maxim for everything in education. A child of six years old can be made useful; and should be taught to consider every day lost in which some little thing has not been done to assist others.

Children can very early be taught to take all the care of their own clothes.

They can knit garters, suspenders, and stockings; they can make patchwork and braid straw; they can make mats for the table, and mats for the floor; they can weed the garden, and pick cranberries from the meadow, to be carried to market.

Provided brothers and sisters go together, and are not allowed to go with bad children, it is a great deal better for the boys and girls on a farm to be picking blackberries at six cents a quart, than to be wearing out their clothes in useless play. They enjoy themselves just as well; and they are earning something to buy clothes, at the same time they are tearing them.

It is wise to keep an exact account of all you expend—even of a paper of pins. This answers two purposes; it makes you more careful in spending money, and it enables your husband to judge precisely whether his family live within his income. No false pride, or foolish ambition to appear as well as others, should ever induce a person to live one cent beyond the income of which he is certain. If you have two dollars a day, let nothing but sickness induce you to spend more than nine shillings; if you have one dollar a day, do not spend but seventy-five cents; if you have half a dollar a day, be satisfied to spend forty cents.

To associate with influential and genteel people with an appearance of equality, unquestionably has its advantages; particularly where there is a family of sons and daughters just coming upon the theatre of life; but, like all other external advantages, these have their proper price, and may be bought too dearly. They who never reserve a cent of their income, with which to meet any {s} unforeseen calamity, 'pay too dear for the whistle,' whatever temporary benefits they may derive from society. Self-denial, in proportion to the narrowness of your income, will eventually be the happiest and most respectable course for you and yours. If you are prosperous, perseverance and industry will not fail to place you in such a situation as your ambition covets; and if you are not prosperous, it will be well for your children that they have not been educated to higher hopes than they will ever realize.

If you are about to furnish a house, do not spend all your money, be it much or little. Do not let the beauty of this thing, and the cheapness of that, tempt you to buy unnecessary articles. Doctor Franklin's maxim was a wise one, 'Nothing is cheap that we do not want.' Buy merely enough to get along with at first. It is only by experience that you can tell what will be the wants of your family. If you spend all your money, you will find you have purchased many things you do not want, and have no means left to get many things which you do want. If you have enough, and more than enough, to get everything suitable to your situation, do not think you must spend it all, merely because you happen to have it. Begin humbly. As riches increase, it is easy and pleasant to increase in hospitality and splendour; but it is always painful and inconvenient to decrease. After all, these things are viewed in their proper light by the truly judicious and respectable. Neatness, tastefulness, and good sense, may be shown in the management of a small household, and the arrangement of a little furniture, as well as upon a larger scale; and these qualities are always praised, and always treated

with respect and attention. The consideration which many purchase by living beyond their income, and of course living upon others, is not worth the trouble it costs. The glare there is about this false and wicked parade is deceptive; it does not in fact procure a man valuable friends, or extensive influence. More than that, it is wrong—morally wrong, so far as the individual is concerned; and injurious beyond calculation to the interests {6} of our country. To what are the increasing beggary and discouraged exertions of the present period owing? A multitude of causes have no doubt tended to increase the evil; but the root of the whole matter is the extravagance of all classes of people. We never shall be prosperous till we make pride and vanity yield to the dictates of honesty and prudence! We never shall be free from embarrassment until we cease to be ashamed of industry and economy. Let women do their share towards reformation—Let their fathers and husbands see them happy without finery; and if their husbands and fathers have (as is often the case) a foolish pride in seeing them decorated, let them gently and gradually check this feeling, by showing that they have better and surer means of commanding respect—Let them prove, by the exertion of ingenuity and economy, that neatness, good taste, and gentility, are attainable without great expense.

The writer has no apology to offer for this cheap little book of economical hints, except her deep conviction that such a book is needed. In this case, renown is out of the question, and ridicule is a matter of indifference.

The information conveyed is of a common kind; but it is such as the majority of young housekeepers do not possess, and such as they cannot obtain from cookery books. Books of this kind have usually been written for the wealthy: I have written for the poor. I have said nothing about *rich* cooking; those who can afford to be epicures will find the best of information in the 'Seventy-five Receipts.' I have attempted to teach how money can be *saved*, not how it can be *enjoyed*. If any persons think some of the maxims too rigidly economical, let them inquire how the largest fortunes among us have been made. They will find thousands and millions have been accumulated by a scrupulous attention to sums 'infinitely more minute than sixty cents.'

In early childhood, you lay the foundation of poverty or riches, in the habits you give your children. Teach them to save everything,—not for their *own* use, for that would make them

selfish—but for *some* use. Teach them {7} to *share* everything with their playmates; but never allow them to *destroy* anything.

I once visited a family where the most exact economy was observed; yet nothing was mean or uncomfortable. It is the character of true economy to be as comfortable and genteel with a little, as others can be with much. In this family, when the father brought home a package, the older children would, of their own accord, put away the paper and twine neatly, instead of throwing them in the fire, or tearing them to pieces. If the little ones wanted a piece of twine to play scratch-cradle, or spin a top, there it was, in readiness; and when they threw it upon the floor, the older children had no need to be told to put it again in its place.

The other day, I heard a mechanic say, 'I have a wife and two little children; we live in a very small house; but, to save my life, I cannot spend less than twelve hundred a year.' Another replied, 'You are not economical; I spend but eight hundred.' I thought to myself,—'Neither of you pick up your twine and paper.' A third one, who was present, was silent; but after they were gone, he said, 'I keep house, and comfortably too, with a wife and children, for six hundred a year; but I suppose they would have thought me mean, if I had told them so.' I did not think him mean; it merely occurred to me that his wife and children were in the habit of picking up paper and twine.

Economy is generally despised as a low virtue, tending to make people ungenerous and selfish. This is true of avarice; but it is not so of economy. The man who is economical, is laying up for himself the permanent power of being useful and generous. He who thoughtlessly gives away ten dollars, when he owes a hundred more than he can pay, deserves no praise,—he obeys a sudden impulse, more like instinct than reason: it would be real charity to check this feeling; because the good he does maybe doubtful, while the injury he does his family and creditors is certain. True economy is a careful treasurer in the service of benevolence; and where they are united respectability, prosperity and peace will follow.

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A  
TREATISE  
ON  
*DOMESTIC  
ECONOMY,*

FOR THE USE OF

YOUNG LADIES AT HOME,

AND

AT SCHOOL.

---

BY MISS CATHERINE E. BEECHER.

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REVISED EDITION,  
WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS AND ILLUSTRATIVE  
ENGRAVINGS.

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NEW-YORK:  
HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF STREET.

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1845.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1842, by  
THOMAS H. WEBB, & CO.,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

TO  
AMERICAN MOTHERS,

whose intelligence and virtues have inspired admiration and respect, whose experience has furnished many valuable suggestions, in this work, whose approbation will be highly valued, and whose influence, in promoting the object aimed at, is respectfully solicited, this work is dedicated, by their friend and countrywoman,

THE AUTHOR.

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[Pg 5]

**PREFACE**  
**TO THE THIRD EDITION.**

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The author of this work was led to attempt it, by discovering, in her extensive travels, the deplorable sufferings of multitudes of young wives and mothers, from the combined influence of *poor health, poor domestics, and a defective domestic education*. The number of young women whose health is crushed, ere the first few years of married life are past, would seem incredible to one who has not investigated this subject, and it would be vain

to attempt to depict the sorrow, discouragement, and distress experienced in most families where the wife and mother is a perpetual invalid.

The writer became early convinced that this evil results mainly from the fact, that young girls, especially in the more wealthy classes, *are not trained for their profession*. In early life, they go through a course of school training which results in great debility of constitution, while, at the same time, their physical and domestic education is almost wholly neglected. Thus they enter on their most arduous and sacred duties so inexperienced and uninformed, and with so little muscular and nervous strength, that probably there is not *one chance in ten*, that young women of the present day, will pass through the first years of married life without such prostration of health and spirits as makes life a burden to themselves, and, it is to be feared, such as seriously interrupts the confidence and happiness of married life.

The measure which, more than any other, would tend to remedy this evil, [Pg 6] would be to place *domestic economy* on an equality with the other sciences in female schools. This should be done because it *can* be properly and systematically taught (not *practically*, but as a *science*), as much so as *political economy* or *moral science*, or any other branch of study; because it embraces knowledge, which will be needed by young women at all times and in all places; because this science can never be *properly* taught until it is made a branch of *study*; and because this method will secure a dignity and importance in the estimation of young girls, which can never be accorded while

they perceive their teachers and parents practically attaching more value to every other department of science than this. When young ladies are taught the construction of their own bodies, and all the causes in domestic life which tend to weaken the constitution; when they are taught rightly to appreciate and learn the most convenient and economical modes of performing all family duties, and of employing time and money; and when they perceive the true estimate accorded to these things by teachers and friends, the grand cause of this evil will be removed. Women will be trained to secure, as of first importance, a strong and healthy constitution, and all those rules of thrift and economy that will make domestic duty easy and pleasant.

## **DOMESTIC ECONOMY.**

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### **CHAPTER I.**

#### **THE PECULIAR RESPONSIBILITIES OF AMERICAN WOMEN.**

There are some reasons, why American women should feel an interest in the support of the democratic institutions of their Country, which it is important that they should consider. The great maxim, which is the basis of all our civil and political institutions, is, that "all men are created equal," and that they are equally entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

But it can readily be seen, that this is only another mode of expressing the fundamental principle which the Great Ruler of the Universe has established, as the law of His eternal government. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," are the Scripture forms, by which the Supreme Lawgiver requires that each individual of our race shall regard the happiness of others, as of the same value as his own; and which forbid any institution, in private or civil life, which secures advantages to one class, by sacrificing the interests of another.

The principles of democracy, then, are identical with the principles of Christianity.

But, in order that each individual may pursue and secure the highest degree of happiness within his reach, unimpeded by the selfish interests of others, a system of laws must be established, which sustain certain relations and dependencies in social and civil life. What these relations and their attending obligations shall be, are to [Pg 26]be determined, not with reference to the wishes and interests of a few, but solely with reference to the general good of all; so that each individual shall have his own interest, as well as the public benefit, secured by them.

For this purpose, it is needful that certain relations be sustained, which involve the duties of subordination. There must be the magistrate and the subject, one of whom is the superior, and the other the inferior. There must be the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, teacher and

pupil, employer and employed, each involving the relative duties of subordination. The superior, in certain particulars, is to direct, and the inferior is to yield obedience. Society could never go forward, harmoniously, nor could any craft or profession be successfully pursued, unless these superior and subordinate relations be instituted and sustained.

But who shall take the higher, and who the subordinate, stations in social and civil life? This matter, in the case of parents and children, is decided by the Creator. He has given children to the control of parents, as their superiors, and to them they remain subordinate, to a certain age, or so long as they are members of their household. And parents can delegate such a portion of their authority to teachers and employers, as the interests of their children require.

In most other cases, in a truly democratic state, each individual is allowed to choose for himself, who shall take the position of his superior. No woman is forced to obey any husband but the one she chooses for herself; nor is she obliged to take a husband, if she prefers to remain single. So every domestic, and every artisan or laborer, after passing from parental control, can choose the employer to whom he is to accord obedience, or, if he prefers to relinquish certain advantages, he can remain without taking a subordinate place to any employer.

Each subject, also, has equal power with every other, to decide who shall be his superior as a ruler. The weakest, the poorest, the most illiterate, has the same [Pg 27]opportunity to determine this

question, as the richest, the most learned, and the most exalted.