

In ancient Greece the position of woman was radically different from both that in Egypt and in the Orient; she did not have the same educational privileges, the free circulation in commerce, the equal position before the law accorded her in Egypt, but the Greek elevated motherhood to a civic duty far beyond that in any other country. According to the Greek theory, the bearing and rearing of strong and beautiful children was the supreme duty a woman owed to the state. They put their theory much more clearly and scientifically than Mr. Roosevelt does. Indeed, if Mr. Roosevelt's exhortation to increase and multiply had been couched in the terms of the ancient Greek he would have had a more serious hearing perhaps than he has. The Greek said to the woman: "You are the citizen on whom the perpetuation of the race depends. It is a great and noble task. You must bear children as a public duty, as a soldier bears arms in war and you must rear them so that they will be strong and beautiful." This duty was considered so paramount that in Sparta the woman was asked even to sacrifice her maternal instincts and give up her child that it might be reared for the special task which the state assigned to it. Now where any task is elevated to such a point of importance as motherhood was in Greece, it elevates the person performing it, and we have some of the greatest types of women in history produced under this system; Penelope, Sappho and Aspasia.

In Rome this Greek idea of the dignity and civic importance of motherhood was retained, but the Romans accorded to their girls practically the same education that they did to boys. It is true that women had no part in the professions or in commerce in ancient Rome, but it must be remembered that under the Roman system the freemen took little part in the professions or in commerce; medicine for instance, was entirely practiced by

slaves. In Rome too the idea of the family as a civic institution was more fully developed than in Greece.

The growth of Christianity put women on a much higher level however than they had ever occupied in any country except in perhaps Egypt, for Christianity insisted on her equality with men before God. It also extended the idea that a chief duty of woman in the social system is that of looking after the poor, the sick and the old; that she really is the chief minister of charity and relief. The Middle Ages saw an enormous development of woman's place in convents and various religious institutions. The deaconesses and abbesses of the Middle Age took prominent and influential places in the church and in the state; many of them obtained great distinction and it is largely through their distinguished efforts that the idea of service as one of women's special civic duties was carried to the high point where it is no recognized.

In the seventh and eighteenth centuries especially we have the development of a new duty for women, that is the social duty.