

is the woman, the mother; "the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." How beautifully Sienkiewicz expresses this idea in one of his numerous pen pictures. The Romans placed woman on a level with the beast of the field, as the author shows, when he represents Petronius "taking part in a diatribe as to whether woman has a soul" "I agree that woman has three or four souls but none of them a reasoning one;" Christians know that woman has that most priceless of all gifts—an immortal soul made to the image and likeness of God Himself. The pagan married woman was a play toy to be cast aside at will; the inviolability of christian marriage was the touchstone of womanly dignity and liberty. Pagan women were the slaves of their husbands; christian women, their partners and peers. Pagan women were the tenants of their husbands' houses; christian women the mistresses of their household. The pagan woman was always in fear of a rival; the christian woman dreads no usurper, she is the empress of her court.

No wonder, then, that all Sienkiewicz's pagan women play a most immoral and despicable role at home, at the banquet and in the orgies at the banks of the lake. Infidelity to the marriage bond was so common, that Petronius characterizes Pomponia—a christian woman,— "as a real cypress. She is a *one-man* woman;" hence, "among our ladies of four and five divorces, she is straightway a phoenix."

Immorality has infected the royal palace, the empress herself is a divorced, abandoned woman, even the vestal virgins are not impervious to the plague that is fast sucking the life-blood from Roman society. What an encomium, Vinicius, the hero of

*Quo Vadis*, bestows upon a christian home, when he declares, "In that house where all, beginning with the masters and ending with the poultry in the hen-house, are virtuous." And again "I saw that suffering in it (the Christian Pomponia's house) was more to be wished for than delight in another place, that sickness there was better than health in another place." Behold the wondering astonishment of Petronius, the past grand-master of lewd luxury, as he enters for the first time a home wherein Christ reigns: "This is a wonderful house. Of course it is known to thee that Pomponia is suspected of entertaining that Eastern superstition which consists in honoring a certain Chrestos. A one-man woman! To-day, in Rome, it is easier to get a half-plate of fresh mushrooms from Noricum than to find such." "Oh general," said Petronius, "permit us to listen from near by to that glad laughter which is of a kind heard so rarely in those days. Life deserves laughter, hence people laugh at it; but laughter here has another sound." "In the people, in the trees, in the whole garden there reigned an evening calm. That calm struck Petronius and struck him especially in the people. In the faces of Pomponia, old Aulus, their son, and Lygia there was something such as he had not seen in those faces which surrounded him every day or rather every night. There was a certain light, a certain repose, a certain serenity flowing directly from the life which all lived there. And with a species of astonishment, he thought that a beauty and sweetness might exist, which he who chased after beauty and sweetness continually had not known. He could not hide the thought in himself and said, turning to Pomponia. "I am considering in my soul how dif-