

give to beggars, encouraging indiscriminate alms-giving, habits of improvidence, admiration for poverty, and antipathy to labor.

"The Monastic movement," Gibbon tells us, "was not less rapid or universal than that of Christianity itself." One small Egyptian city devoted itself almost wholly to ascetic life, and in its monasteries lived ten thousand monks and twenty thousand virgins. At the close of the fourth century, the monastic population of Egypt equalled the entire population of its cities.

The Empire swarmed with men whose only business was to wander from place to place, asking alms and collecting stories of miracles and peculiarities of the saints for the benefit of the Church. "A hideous, sordid, and emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghastly phantoms of his delirious brain, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero and the lives of Socrates and Cato" (Lecky's "Morals," ii. p. 107). To separate from his family if he had one, and to show no regard to the mother that bore him, were thought by the hermit as the most acceptable offering he could make to God.

The feeling that prevailed toward woman is illustrated by the story of a monk who was travelling with his mother, and coming to a stream which he had to cross, he wrapped his hands in cloth, lest in conveying her across the water, he should touch his mother, and thereby disturb the equilibrium of his saintly nature.

A law of Justinian prohibited parents from restraining their children from entering monasteries. Exhorted by the fathers, multitudes of women adopted the ascetic life. Some of the Fathers wrote treatises to show that those who entered monasteries contrary to the wishes of their parents were more worthy than those who did so unopposed by parental authority. St. Chrysostom said damnation awaited those who should attempt to prevent their children entering the institutions.

Practised with no object except to make sure of a place in heaven, the effects of this asceticism must have been very injurious on the general character of its devotees.

The estimate of woman was very low in the Christian Empire. "Woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed of the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in continual penance on account of the curses she had brought upon the world. She should be ashamed of her dress, for it is the memorial of her fall. She should especially be ashamed of her beauty, for it is the most potent instrument of the demon. . . . Women were even forbidden by a provincial council, in the sixth century, on account of their impurity, to receive the eucharist in their naked hands. Their essentially subordinate position was continually maintained.

"It is probable that this teaching had its part in determining the principles of legislation concerning the sex. The pagan laws during the

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