

Such is her language. But he who does not know what it is to have his whole soul turned heavenward, and feels not the love of the "Immortal Bridegroom who binds the soul with more than "bridal ties" knows not what this virtue is. He cannot understand how a chaste life is possible.

Grace is a pure and divine excitement, tending to draw and unite the soul to God, and when once it has penetrated the roots of man's passions, and gained the mastery of his affections, it withdraws him from all sensual and human pleasure to find the purest and highest source of love in God. Hence, it finds the purest of all delights in the abnegation of sensual enjoyments and material pleasures. There are souls who have felt this, even among those who are ignorant of the true faith,—one writer beautifully says: "Happy, inexpressibly happy, is the will that gives itself as a bride to the Eternal." Even Milton, whom one would least suspect of extolling chastity, after his advocacy of the dissolution of the marriage tie, says:

"So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liv'ried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and gullt,
And in clear stream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants,
Begins to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unspotted temple of the mind,
And turn it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal."

And a writer of our own day, Margaret Fuller, tells us in one of our journals, that "we shall not decline celibacy as the great fact of the time."

Do you wish to know from whence springs that spiritual might by which men like St. Bernard, when called from his solitude by the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church, made the whole earth tremble with his voice, and enkindled in the hearts of men, for succeeding generations, the fire of divine love? It was from Chastity.—"Thy heart has been strengthened because thou hast loved chastity." Judith XV. Would you wish to know from whence springs the devotion of the Catholic priesthood in times of great calamities and epidemics, their fearlessness in attending the sick bed of the poorest and humblest at a moment's warning, and at the risk of contagion? It springs from the chaste soul, where burns uninterruptedly that fire which Christ came on earth to kindle, the fire of divine love.

But not only do we speak of the priesthood when we speak of this virtue, but we must speak of the thousand and ten thousand virgins, of both sexes, devoted to God, and the good of their fellow-men.

"Who angel-wise have chosen
And kept, like Paul, a virgin course, content
To go where Jesus went."

Lyra Apostolica.

As the Brothers of St. John of God, Christian Brothers, Sisters of Charity, of Mary, etc., who never would or could be so without this holy vow; for this exempts them from the yoke and burden of matrimony. They have no spouse to please but God, no children to take care of but humanity; oh! is not this a noble destiny, to give one's virgin strength to Heaven and to gentle deeds of love! Let one of our great modern reformers have as much devotion for his world-happiness schemes, as a simple Sister of Charity, and we should have some fear of his success.

Oh, is not this a great religion which inspires the timid maiden with the boldness to pretend to have God alone for her spouse, and all humanity for her sympathies! Such is the nobility of the soul when inspired by Catholic faith, and true to her vocation she says: No love will serve that is not eternal, and as extensive as the universe." Here is woman's dignity, and as a modern thinker has said, "No married woman can represent the female world, for she belongs to her husband. The idea of women must be represented by a Virgin."

Deprived, as many are, of the graces and the spiritual strength imparted through the channels of the Sacraments, we are not surprised that they cannot understand how one can practice such heroic virtue; nor can we, for the same reason, blame them that they are likewise unable to conceive the possibility of rejecting the basis and limits of common life, and gaining a permanent and divine basis of action. But this has been done. How can they refuse to believe in the fact that the greatest saints have professed such a life; a Vincent de Paul, a De Sales, a Francis, a Bernard, a Gregory, an Augustine, and Ambrose, a Jerome; and that the precursor or our Lord, His blessed Mother, and He Himself, have practised this virtue, and what is more, have encouraged others to do so too, this is what surprises us! Yes, it is