

sex, which is degraded and maltreated in modern heathen nations, as it was among many of the ancient pagan nations, is elevated, wherever the Gospel has spread, to that rank in society to which it is so justly entitled; and the civil, moral, and religious condition of women has been proportionably improved. Polygamy has been abolished, and divorce is permitted,—not to gratify levity, caprice, or profligacy of either party (for in Rome at least the women also had the power of divorce, where their licentiousness was equal to that of the men,)—but only in the case of unfaithfulness to the nuptial vow. It is true that, in certain countries of Europe, where the Christian religion has been so far corrupted as to lose nearly all its influence, illicit connections may be formed, adulterous intrigues pursued, and even crimes against nature perpetrated with but little dishonour. But it is not so in Britain and other Protestant countries, where the Gospel has had a freer course: for, though the same dispositions are discovered in great numbers of persons, yet the fear of the public frown holds most of them in awe. From the lowest degradation and oppression, the female sex has been raised to respect, cultivation, and refinement, to a rank and influence in society, which they possess only in Christian countries, where their interest and happiness are uniformly and properly consulted in every important concern in life. We have no public indecencies between the sexes, no law that requires prostitution. If any unnatural crimes be perpetrated, they are not common; much less are they tolerated by the laws, or countenanced by public opinion. On the contrary, the odium which follows such practices is sufficient to stamp the perpetrators of them with perpetual infamy in the land. Rapes, incests and adulteries, are not only punishable by law, but odious in the estimation of the public. No one can live in the known practice of fornication, lying, theft, fraud, or cruelty, and retain his character. It cannot be pleaded in excuse with us, as it is in China or Hindostan, (and as the profligate Rousseau pleaded when he sent his illegitimate offspring to the foundling hospital,) that such things are the custom of the country.

Further, the harshness of parental authority has been restrained; the barbarous practice of exposing or depriving of life weak, deformed, or helpless children (which was sanctioned by the laws of many states) has been abolished, and hospitals have been instituted for the preservation of deserted children; and what was then deemed a wise political expedient to rid the state of useless and troublesome members, is now justly considered and punished as the most atrocious of crimes. And that uncontrolled power, which was possessed by fathers and husbands, and which rendered the condition of sons worse than that of slaves, and exposed wives to the most cruel treatment, has been annihilated by the gentle spirit of Christianity. The system of domestic slavery,