

**THE SOCIAL DUTY OF OUR
DAUGHTERS: A MOTHER'S
TALK WITH MOTHERS AND
THEIR GROWN DAUGHTERS**

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The Social Duty of Our Daughters: A Mother's Talk with Mothers and Their Grown Daughters
by Mrs. Adolphe Hoffmann

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BY
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The Social Duty of Our Daughters.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
—Levit. xix, 18.

The social duty is that which we have to fulfil towards all our fellow-creatures.

Is there any justification for our title? Does such a thing as a social duty incumbent on our daughters really exist? Have they, too, a serious responsibility with respect to the great humanitarian problems which, up till now, in their brothers' opinion at least, almost exclusively concerned these brothers?

Further, should this question receive an affirmative reply, in what should this social duty of our daughters consist?



And lastly, how are we mothers to inculcate this feeling in them? These are the points which require elucidation.

We are Christians, and for Christian mothers we write. Let the Bible, then, and the spirit of the Bible, that book at once divine and human, be the guide of our studies.

On the very first page of the Bible, where our sex is the theme, we read:—
“And God said, it is not good for man to be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

“It is not good for man to be alone!” Was there then something, and that an essential something, wanting to him from the moment when he sprang forth from the Creative hand. Assuredly so, since God affirms it, and completes His work by the creation of woman. In her He creates a being like and yet unlike Adam;

a dissimilarity of divine purpose, and necessarily different. In woman God has brought forth not a duplicate of Adam, but a different being. And it is just this difference which justifies this later creation, by means of which the divine work attained its final completion.

From this alone there results the undeniable fact of a special vocation for woman, a vocation fore-ordained, pre-determined, and decreed in the purposes of God. In a word, His premeditated design. She was created for the highest welfare of humanity, which is in need of her.

Moreover, God has proclaimed this social duty of the woman in these words:—"I will make him an help meet for him." Already, at the creation of the first human being, God had revealed His intentions, when He said:—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And now

He completes His work. He shows by what means it may be possible for man, for humanity in its entirety to live in His image: namely, by the aid of a being without whom in His estimation the world ought not to exist. In order that man should become what his Creator intended him to be, woman was indispensable—charged with a mission wholly maternal. This noble task of living as creatures resembling their Creator is entrusted, then, not merely to Adam, but also to his helpmate, who was specially created with a view to realizing this magnificent design.

Is not this Bible account instructive, and well calculated to awaken in every woman the desire to grasp the divine plan, and awaken an anxiety to secure its accomplishment?

But there is still more. Is not the very name given to the first woman, Eve, the “mother of all living,”—

“mother of the human race”—full of significance; is it not a prophetic forecast of woman’s duties?

This name, the means for recalling to Eve her destiny, should serve as a reminder to all her daughters. It is vain to deny it, it is ever this old Bible of ours, which, carefully interpreted in its own proper meaning, shows us in its true light the significance of our life. In one brief sentence, in a single word, it supplies the illumination which in our darkness we need.

Let us now see if the path marked out for our first mother is not also the right one for us to follow; and whether we, by bravely walking in her footsteps, may not succeed in contributing to the highest welfare of those who are dependent upon us.

Our lot, our principal office is, then, maternity. This no one has ever