

Nothing different can be expected of women if it is borne in mind that the most eminent of the whole sex have never accomplished anything in the fine arts that is really great, genuine, and original, or given to the world any kind of work of permanent value. This is most striking in regard to painting, the technique of which is as much within their reach as within ours; this is why they pursue it so industriously. Still, they have not a single great painting to show, for the simple reason that they lack that objectivity of mind which is precisely what is so directly necessary in painting. They always stick to what is subjective. For this reason, ordinary women have no susceptibility for painting at all: for *_natura non facit saltum_*. And Huarte, in his book which has been famous for three hundred years, *_Examen de ingenios para las ciencias_*, contends that women do not possess the higher capacities. Individual and partial exceptions do not alter the matter; women are and remain, taken altogether, the most thorough and incurable philistines; and because of the extremely absurd arrangement which allows them to share the position and title of their husbands they are a constant stimulus to his *_ignoble_* ambitions. And further, it is because they are philistines that modern society, to which they give the tone and where they have sway, has become corrupted. As regards their position, one should be guided by Napoleon's maxim, *_Les femmes n'ont pas de rang_*; and regarding them in other things, Chamfort says very truly: *_Elles sont faites pour commercer avec nos faiblesses avec notre folie, mais non avec notre raison. Il existe entre elles et les hommes des sympathies d'épiderme et très-peu de sympathies d'esprit d'âme et de caractère_*. They are the *_sexus sequior_*, the second sex in every

respect, therefore their weaknesses should be spared, but to treat women with extreme reverence is ridiculous, and lowers us in their own eyes. When nature divided the human race into two parts, she did not cut it exactly through the middle! The difference between the positive and negative poles, according to polarity, is not merely qualitative but also quantitative. And it was in this light that the ancients and people of the East regarded woman; they recognised her true position better than we, with our old French ideas of gallantry and absurd veneration, that highest product of Christian-Teutonic stupidity. These ideas have only served to make them arrogant and imperious, to such an extent as to remind one at times of the holy apes in Benares, who, in the consciousness of their holiness and inviolability, think they can do anything and everything they please.