

This makes them incapable of taking a purely objective interest in anything, and the reason for it is, I fancy, as follows. A man strives to get direct mastery over things either by understanding them or by compulsion. But a woman is always and everywhere driven to indirect mastery, namely through a man; all her direct mastery being limited to him alone. Therefore it lies in woman's nature to look upon everything only as a means for winning man, and her interest in anything else is always a simulated one, a mere roundabout way to gain her ends, consisting of coquetry and pretence. Hence Rousseau said, Les femmes, en général, n'aiment aucun art, ne se connoissent à aucun et n'ont aucun génie (Lettre à d'Alembert, note xx.). Every one who can see through a sham must have found this to be the case. One need only watch the way they behave at a concert, the opera, or the play; the childish simplicity, for instance, with which they keep on chattering during the finest passages in the greatest masterpieces. If it is true that the Greeks forbade women to go to the play, they acted in a right way; for they would at any rate be able to hear something. In our day it would be more appropriate to substitute taceat mulier in theatro for taceat mulier in ecclesia; and this might perhaps be put up in big letters on the curtain.