

John Stuart Mill

Letters to W. J. Fox  
Unitarian minister  
1832

The condition of married women is rendered artificially desirable 3989

"Women are so brought up, as not to be able to subsist in the mere physical sense, without a man to keep them. 1832.

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WEDNESDAY

They are so brought up as not to be able to protect themselves against injury or insult without some man, on whom they have a special claim, to protect them; they are so brought up as to have no vocation or useful office to fulfil in the world remaining single."

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TUESDAY

"A single woman therefore is felt both by herself and others as a kind of excrescence on the surface of society having no use or function or office there. She is not indeed precluded from useful and honorable exertion of various kinds: but a married woman is presumed to be a useful member of society unless there is evidence to the contrary; a single woman must establish what very few either women or men do establish, an individual claim."

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MONDAY

?/ Comments to the contrary - the status of m. W's lower in law in some ways  
OCTOBER 1951

J.S.M

3989

"Surely it is wrong, wrong in every way, and in every view of morality.... that there should exist any motives to marriage except the happiness which two persons who love one another feel in associating their existence"

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WEDNESDAY

"In what concerns Man & Woman the law which is to be observed by both should surely be made by both, not, as hitherto, by the stumper only."

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TUESDAY

11

The law of marriage as it now exists has been made by sensualists and for sensualists and to bind sensualists "

"There can I think be no doubt that for a long time the indissolubility of marriage acted powerfully to elevate the social position of women "

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MONDAY

OCTOBER 1951

J. S. Mill

cont'd

3989

"When women were merely slaves, to  
grant them a permanent hold upon their  
masters was a first step towards their  
evolution."

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WEDNESDAY

J S Mill

Letters to Fosc <sup>cont'd</sup>

3989

"Something, indeed much, of a community of interest arose from the mere fact of being indissolubly united: the husband ~~took~~ an interest in the wife as being his wife, if he did not have any better feeling: it became essential to his respect-  
ably that his wife also should be  
respected."

WEDNESDAY

She obtained also what is often far more precious to her, the certainty of not being separated from the children."

"Most women ..... are generally more anxious not to peril the good they have than to go in search of a greater."

TUESDAY

"There is no natural inequality between the sexes, except perhaps in bodily strength, even that admits of doubt; and if bodily strength is to be the measure of superiority, mankind are no better than savages."

I

MONDAY

OCTOBER 1951

J.S. Mill

Letter to Fosc  
3989 cont

"If nature has not made men and women unequal, still less ought the law to make them so. . . . It may be assumed that men and women ought to be perfectly co-equal; that a woman ought not to be dependent on a man, more than a man on a woman, except in far as their affections make them so"

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WEDNESDAY

"But this perfect independence of each other for all save affection, cannot be, if there be dependence in pecuniary circumstances; a dependence which in the immense majority of cases must exist if the woman be not capable as well as the man of gaining her own subsistence"

25

TUESDAY

"The first and indispensable step, therefore, towards the enfranchisement of woman, is that she be so educated as not to be dependent either on her father or her husband for subsistence"

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MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 1951

J.S. Mill

Letter to Fosc. cont<sup>d</sup>

3989

"Women will never be what they should be, nor their social position what it should be, until women as universally as men, have the power of gaining their own livelihood."

19

WEDNESDAY

"In considering, then, what is the best law of marriage, we are to suppose that women already are, what they would be in the best state of society: no less capable of existing independently and respectably without men, than men without women."

18

TUESDAY

"Marriage, on whatever footing it might be placed (in the future) would be wholly a matter of choice, not as for a woman it now is something approaching a matter of necessity, something which every woman is under strong artificial motives to desire & which if she attain not, her life is considered to be a failure"

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MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 1951