

The Victorian Woman

(the ideal woman of the 1800's modeled after Queen Victoria of England)

Ideal #1: The Woman belongs in the Home!

1. Thomas Hill's Manual of Social and Business Forms (1888):

If there be a difference either way [in social position], let the husband be superior to the wife. If is difficult for a wife to love and honor a person whom she is compelled to look down upon.

2. The Manners That Win, Compiled from the Latest Authorities, 1880

Boys are expected to have more or less of the bear in their natures but girls are born and bred to modest and lady-like behavior; and a saucy, pert and selfish girl is simply beyond endurance.

Whatever have been the cares of the day, greet your husband with a smile when he returns. Make your personal appearance just as beautiful as possible. Let him enter rooms so attractive and sunny...

3. Doctors, Monfort Allen and Amelia McGregor, in their book, The Glory of Woman, 1896, reminded women that sexual intimacy had a higher purpose...

And it is also to be observed that the natural period for sexual union is when it is demanded for the purpose of procreation (making babies), and that the use of marriage or the sexual act for mere pleasure, and using any means to avoid impregnation, are unnatural.

4. In 1848 George W Burnap wrote in his book, The Sphere and Duties of Women (an instructional manual):

We come in the next place to speak of woman in the most important and responsible relation which she sustains, as the mother. In this relation Providence [God] fully makes up to her the inferiority of her physical powers, the narrowness of her sphere of action and the alleged inferiority of her intellectual endowments.

5. Collier's Cyclopedia of Social and Commercial Information, an all-purpose home manual, told readers in 1883:

Not the least useful piece of advice ...that we can offer to newly-married ladies, is to remind them that husbands are men, and that men must eat. ...she should acquire some practical knowledge of cookery....

Ideal #2: The Woman should not be involved in voting and government

6. Grace Duffield Goodwin, The Westfield Leader, Wednesday, February 18 1914. Issued by the Plainfield Branch N. J. Assn. Opposed to Woman Suffrage (women voting)

"We do not need women to "mother" the government. We do not need to see the "mother spirit" in the Supreme Court. We need mothers where mothering counts - in personal contact with the lives of individual children."

7. From a letter to Mrs. Robert Garrett of Baltimore, April 22, 1913.

"The insistence on a right of participation in active political life is undoubtedly calculated to rob women of all that is amiable (friendly) and gentle, tender and attractive..."

8. Attorney General of the U.S., George W. Wickersham, under President Taft (1909-1913)

"In my opinion, the effect of injecting women into politics is bound to be injurious upon society as a whole and to result in the destruction of the family organization as it has been known in the past."

9. Right Rev. Daniel Sylvester Tuttle, Presiding Episcopal Bishop of the United States(1903)

"It is not fair to women to give them the ballot (right to vote). Already women are doing more than half the world's work.... Many of the women who would vote are degraded (immoral) women, who could be influenced by the prejudice and money..."