

# THE VOCATION OF WOMAN



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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
NEW YORK . BOSTON . CHICAGO  
DALLAS . SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.  
TORONTO

# THE VOCATION OF WOMAN

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MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1913

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The woman's cause is man's ; they rise or sink

Together . . . . .

TENNYSON, "The Princess."



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# THE VOCATION OF WOMAN

## INTRODUCTION

It is practically certain that every discussion on the vocation of woman, whether among feminists or their opponents, will ultimately lead to the following problem. Woman was obviously intended by nature to become a mother ; modern social requirements make it obligatory that she should be legally married before doing so ; there are not enough husbands to go round. What do you propose to do with the women who are left over ?

It is, of course, undeniable that the woman problem in the form in which it now meets us in our own country is quite different from that of other ages, simply because of the present disproportion of the sexes and our marriage laws. In Asia, where there are civilisations much older than our own, the problem has never arisen because it has been avoided by female infanticide and polygamy, but as our civilisation progresses various factors are called into play which seem destined to perpetuate this inequality of the

sexes. Women have to pay for the privilege of monogamy, and for the assurance that they will not be murdered at birth except by ignorance or carelessness. What we have to consider, therefore, is the fact of a surplus of female energy divorced from the possibility of wifehood and maternity. Nevertheless, speaking for the British race, this disproportion is not actually at present as great as it seems. The excess of one and a quarter million in the British Isles is partly made up of widows ; women, as pension statistics prove, being more long-lived than men. Then there is the counterbalancing disproportion of men in the British Dominions beyond the seas, which is a condition not beyond remedy, and finally there is the possibility, by reducing the number of deaths among infants, of saving a large proportion of the extra boys provided by thoughtful nature to balance matters, since boy babies are more difficult to rear than girls. The education of mothers might increase the chances of survival of baby boys, and by this means alone something might be done to reduce the excess of females.

Half a century ago this problem presented itself to the pioneers of woman's education. Female training had rested on the certitude that all women would be called upon to perform certain specialised duties which now appear only as an alternative. No one at that time denied, what is now beginning to be doubted, that wifehood and motherhood offered woman the sphere not only of the greatest usefulness but also of the

greatest happiness. The question then was how to prepare her so that she could, if necessary, do without them, and this is still the attitude, only more forcibly expressed, of the vast majority of mothers and teachers to-day. Unfortunately for women the crisis in their educational history synchronised with a very general overvaluation of book-learning. It also coincided with a movement to achieve for women certain legal and political rights. All these different streams were merged together into one, and it is only now that it is becoming possible to distinguish between them. The solvent which originally fused them was no new element ; it was the natural result of half a century of comparative peace and social development. Under such circumstances woman comes ever to the fore, and makes demands on man for various forms of increased privilege. Her claim in this case was for "equality," and she backed it with a new argument ; that, being no longer able to count on man for support, and being herself forced into the labour market, she occupied socially a similar footing to man and was entitled to the recognition, in various ways, of her new position and attainments. Educationally she was to a great extent successful. The outposts of the situation, such as admission to the older University degrees and to the profession of law, still remain to be won, but the main position—that woman has as much right to intellectual training as man—was soon achieved, and we have to-day a generation educated by those brought up in this tradition.

This, however, is not an entirely new condition. Women in the middle ages had more education than men.

With the aims and aspirations of the pioneers of female education no thoughtful woman will find fault. It was to their credit that they realised the quagmire of uselessness into which, under modern conditions, the "middle class" portion of their sex was beginning to sink. But it is much to be regretted that they adopted the theory of the "equality" of man and woman as something to be reached only through the closer intellectual approximation of the sexes, instead of by attempting to attain a greater perfection of womanhood.

"We cannot believe," writes T. Roscoe in the *National Review* for 1858, "*what is now so broadly asserted*, that the difference between the male and female intellect is due entirely to difference of education and circumstance."

Curiously enough the latest German feminist book<sup>1</sup> is devoted to the propagation of the doctrine to which Roscoe referred more than half a century ago, and the latest English book of any pretension to a scientific analysis<sup>2</sup> is inclined to the same view of woman's mentality.

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of women over the experiment of making their sex independent of marriage, has gradually obscured the main issue. It is now becoming a fixed idea that there is something finer and nobler than the prosaic duties usually associated with typical womanhood, which

<sup>1</sup> "A Survey of the Woman Problem" (Rosa Mayreder).

<sup>2</sup> "The Truth about Woman" (C. Gasquoine Hartley.)

indeed, are regarded as positive clogs to the development of an "unfettered personality." It is well that we have ceased to regard spinsterhood as a joke but it is unwise to elevate it to a pedestal of heroism. So far as it is involuntary it is largely the result of social conditions. Are we sure that we are not encouraging, stereotyping or even extending those conditions? If this is the case, we are deliberately enlarging the range of our problem instead of focussing it. Moreover, by stimulating the development of a type of woman to whom marriage may be difficult or distasteful, we tend to create a prejudice against matrimony as a vocation, because of the fact that the trained intellects of the sex may be among the voluntary celibates. No one is prepared to suggest that women will ever cease to marry or carry on the race but there is serious danger in a tendency, of which one finds evidence in feminist writings, to regard those duties merely as an alternative which the best type of woman may very well refuse.

It appears to the writer as though feminists for the last fifty years have been regarding the world, with eyes sorrowful or angry as the case may be, and saying "It is no place for woman! What we must do," they seem to say, "since we cannot change this unfavourable environment, is to change woman to fit it. It is the work of man and suits him and he is not likely to change it. Let us make woman as much like man as possible, and then she will fit into the environment as he does."

It is chiefly with the theory of the approxima-

tion of the sexes in intellect and function as a key to the higher development of the race and to the solution of woman's peculiar problems, that this book deals. An attempt will be made to go a little further than destructive criticism. It is not difficult to adduce abundant proof that far from being on the highway to the achievement of their hopes women are plunging downwards into a morass of confused aims and lost ideals. "The female sex is in a dangerous state of disturbance," says C. Gasquoine Hartley ("The Truth about Woman") "New and strange urgencies are at work among us, forces for which the word 'revolution' is only too faithfully appropriate."

"What is the cause," asks Dr. J. L. Tayler ("The Nature of Woman," p. 38) "of woman's discontent with modern womanly opportunities? The desire on the part of some women for franchise changes, of others for increased occupational facilities, of others for a wider domestic horizon and yet others for the more or less complete abandonment of home life and the subordination or even rejection of maternal claims: these are but superficial expressions of a deeper feeling, and until we can understand this governing feeling we cannot legislate without the gravest possibility of disaster."

"The American woman of the better class," says W. L. Thomas (Sex and Society, p. 240) "Has superior rights and no duties and yet she is worrying herself to death, not over specific troubles, but because she has lost her connection with reality."

Here we have question and answer. Why are educated women dissatisfied? Because they have lost touch with reality. It must be clearly understood that discontent, as a sex feeling, is really confined to the educated woman. In other social spheres discontent is a question of class and not of sex. The educated woman who imagines she can enlist in her battle for the "equality" of the sexes her less sophisticated sister will very soon find that sex solidarity is impossible between two persons of such different cultural levels. Apart from grievances, which she is the first to forget at any crisis in their mutual lives, the woman of the people stands by her man, and for them the problem is not one of sex warfare but of the eternal struggle to re-adjust the balance which is weighted by wealth and power. It is significant in this connection that support for the woman's suffrage movement among the working classes is almost invariably identified with socialism.

It is not possible to dissociate the higher education of woman from the unrest and discoordination which are marked features of the modern woman's life, and it is principally to the theory (which has affected that education in such a marked degree) of the possibility of the approximation of the sexes by a similarity of intellectual training, that the writer is inclined to look for a key to the situation.

What would have been the position of woman to-day if the revolution in woman's education, which began seriously in the third quarter of last century, had had as its *motif* not the essential

sameness of men and women but their essential difference ; if it had aimed, not at making women take up the burdens of men, but at cultivating in them qualities and aptitudes calculated to make them more efficiently womanly ? The assumption that there were too many women for the purely womanly side of social organisation seems to have precluded the idea of the development both of woman and of society on lines best adapted for feminine activity. The result may be studied in the relative market value say, of an average University graduate and a skilled children's nurse —not to mention that autocrat of the feminine sphere the really good cook ! The money standard, however favourable to the cook, is not everything ; we have also the ideal of her whose price is above rubies. Are we nearer to or farther from that incomparable woman of the Proverbs ?

That so difficult and complex a subject can be treated in detail within the limits of one book of moderate length is not pretended, and, moreover, an attempt will be made in this study to avoid the snares and pitfalls spread for those who think to reach their goal solely by the study of biology or historical analogy. The really great scientific authorities are by no means dogmatic on many of the fundamental problems of sex, and the sociological student must take his material from sources often biassed and frequently ill-informed. It is because the realm of psychology is still any man's land that the writer feels free to indulge in observations and speculations of whose truth an accumulation of experience is the only test, and



in this connection she is prepared to allow great weight to what are called by most feminists conventional ideals. It has been thought possible to demonstrate that there are no distinctively feminine temperamental characteristics, but the existence of a popular theory to the contrary is, in itself, evidence that in the experience of the majority of persons women do exhibit some such distinctive traits. Why should it be assumed that such differentiation is necessarily degrading to woman, or that it limits her development? After all, there is considerable tolerance of variety even within the bounds of convention or in theories of manliness and womanliness. It is from things as they are, from the standpoint of the normal woman, that the subject will be viewed, and an attempt will be made to avoid those obscurities which are sometimes the result of too lofty generalisation.

The woman's movement of to-day needs to be focussed. It is spreading itself over aims which are, in some cases, mutually destructive. In order to substantiate these assertions the recent writings of several women must be compared and criticised, not only where it is possible to point out a false perspective but to give the reader an opportunity of judging the feminist movement by the doctrines of its most talented exponents. It is not without diffidence that this task is undertaken, for the feminist writers whose opinions may be challenged set forth their case with great pomp and circumstance, and with parade of a scientific equipment to which the writer can lay no claim. What

emboldened her in her effort was the conviction that we need, in this question of the Vocation of Woman, rather less theory about the part to be played in the future by a glorified type of woman and rather more about the actual facts of life, the bearing of social and political conditions on the relations of the sexes, the tastes and habits of the woman of to-day and those modifications of her relations with man which are now in process. In short, this book aims at being practical, and, while many controversial points must be but lightly touched, it is hoped that even those who disagree on such points or with the main purpose will realise that the writer is inspired by a genuine enthusiasm for the interests of her sex.

It has been suggested that a book which is so largely an expression of personal opinion might be of more interest to readers if they had any material to enable them to frame an estimate of the experience or knowledge of life of the writer. The following brief autobiographical note is therefore inserted with an apology for the apparent egoism.

The writer of this book has had rather unusual opportunities for contact with different types of women. Her girlhood, after schooldays, was spent in London studios among those who were learning or practising various vocations, and later, when working in the east and south of London, among others whose interests were of a social and philanthropic character. A home circle in an old-fashioned country town provided yet another outlook on life, by no means the least

instructive, and, after marriage, travel in many parts of the world led to a wide acquaintance among people chiefly interested in politics and world affairs. Of recent years her opposition to the woman suffrage movement has brought her into conflict with feminism, and led to the study on which this book is founded, for it is evident to women who know their own sex that the demand for the parliamentary franchise is symptomatic of a far deeper and more fundamental discontent than can be met by the mere granting of votes to women.

The many friendships this varied life has brought encourages the hope that the views expressed in this book will find an echo in the hearts of some of the women who are puzzled and distressed over the peculiar life problems of their sex.

ETHEL COLQUHOUN.

*25 Bedford Gdns., W.*

“ They fed her theories in and out of place,  
Maintaining that, with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harped on this . . . knowledge, my daughter held  
Was all in all.”

Tennyson, “The Princess.”

“ Be not ashamed, women, your privilege includes the rest . . .  
You are the gates of the body, you are the gates of the soul.  
. . . And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man.  
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.”  
Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself, &c.”

“ A natural superiority such as this, however, does not serve to secure to woman that social predominance of which some have dreamed for them. For the direct superiority which must be allowed to them in reference to the true end of all human existence is combined with a no less certain inferiority in respect of the various means for attaining that end . . . man must command in spite of his inferior morality.”—Comte, “Politique Positive.”

“ The compulsion of woman to perform the duties of nature places her under a natural disadvantage. . . . The price which is paid is nothing less than spiritual freedom and equality of birth.”—Rosa Mayreder, “Survey of the Woman Problem.”

“ I do not advocate celibacy except for persons whom it suits, but . . . I am inclined to think they are more numerous than is commonly supposed, and I will admit frankly that I am glad that it seems, in these latter days, to suit so many women.”  
—Cicely Hamilton, “Marriage as a Trade.”

“ The birth rate [in 1910] was 25·1 per 1,000 . . . again the lowest on record. The provisional rate in 1911 shows a further fall of ·07 per 1,000.”—Registrar General’s Report.

## CHAPTER I

### THE REVOLT OF WOMAN

A VERY brief study of philosophy is sufficient to convince the student that in the use of language each man is a law unto himself, and that it would be practically impossible to compile a glossary of terms which would serve as a key to the meaning of any save, perhaps, a particular school. The ultimate difficulty lies in the fact that, in trying to disentangle the aims, influences and motives which compose the complex human personality we are continually confronted with an element which we can neither define, weigh nor measure. The conception of the spirit as typified on Greek vases by a small figure leaving the open mouth of the corporate body at the moment of death, appears foolish to many people, but is, of course, only a crude representation of the accepted religious belief in a something supernatural which inhabits our earthly body for a time but will survive it. Until scientists can tell us the origin of life we are not likely, at their bidding, to depart from this deep rooted theory. In the study of psychology

one can refer a vast number of characteristics and qualities to physiological causes and to the effect of environment, just as we can explain chemically the building up of the body and its ultimate dissolution into gases, but at some stage of this investigation we are bound to come to a gap in the evidence, to a mystery which is as yet unravelled. Similarly the moral nature of man may be built up of ethical impulses and controls but that is not the whole story of his spiritual evolution. Behind all this elaborate fabric lurks the eternal question, to the comprehension of which man has ever bent all the forces of a finite intellect.

In the most primitive communities there are evidences of a desire, on the part of man, to explain his existence; what we do not know is why he is conscious of the need for any explanation. So long as the question remains unanswered it is impossible to make an exact science of psychology, and at the outset of this study of the nature of woman it must be made clear that the words spirit and spiritual are arbitrarily intended to convey the assumption that man is composed of two distinct yet closely related entities, natural and supernatural. The term supernatural, after all, only means that there is something we cannot explain through the knowledge we already possess, but an appreciation of these hidden springs, and of values not to be expressed in material terms, will prevent us from falling into errors.

The importance of this appreciation for present purposes lies in the stress laid, in the modern woman's movement, on what is called "spiritual

development." The word spirit is frequently on the lips of those who plead for a wider sphere of bodily action for women. They claim for woman that she should be free, but not, in truth, in the sense in which W. E. Henley expressed the essential freedom of great spirits

“ Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever Gods there be  
For my unconquerable soul.  
It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul ! ”

Obviously, freedom of bodily action was not a condition in which these splendid lines were conceived, and in tamer but equally memorable phrase another poet has told us

“ Stone walls do not a prison make  
Nor iron bars a cage.”

Yet no one who has taken any serious interest in the modern woman movement can doubt that some women are striving with a sensation of imprisonment which has really little to do with material conditions. It is something more than the normal growing-pains of a new generation which is affecting them. In many cases there are no compelling circumstances which might be conceived as confining the energies of the sufferer. A woman of forty, healthy, vigorous, clever and artistic, whose gift of speech has assured her a foremost place in one of the organisations for promoting woman suffrage, was heard not long

ago to declare that she felt chained and bound—stifled by her lack of liberty. Yet, with the income derived from her father, and with the sympathy and acquiescence of her mother, this woman had from the age of nineteen done exactly what was pleasing in her own eyes. Few human beings could enjoy more real liberty of action than is accorded to a woman in such a position as hers. Her spiritual development could not possibly have suffered for lack of the mental air and sunlight of which less fortunately placed persons of both sexes are too often robbed by hard and uncongenial surroundings. The feeling of impotence in the face of human suffering seizes all of us at times, but this was certainly not all that she intended to convey. Yet this woman is only a type, and her words have been echoed by women, with more or less sincerity, on thousands of platforms in the last five years.

The confusion of thought between bodily licence and spiritual freedom is a very real evil in the propaganda which is now affecting women. For whatever may be the motive which prompts women to demand an extension of political or social rights, their spiritual development has nothing to do with it. Of course, they will argue that they hope, through political rights, to achieve economic and social conditions more favourable to their sex, but this is not the point. Obviously the same end—the amelioration of social and economic conditions—might be achieved by other means. We have already done a good deal towards this achievement, but what proof have we



of a greater degree of "spiritual freedom" among women—what evidence of nobler personality, or more original and forceful character?

Obviously, also, those women, like the one quoted, who are not adversely affected by economic and social conditions are already more "free," in the sense of possessing liberty of action, than the majority of men, yet they do not admit, as a rule, that their suffering is vicarious. This may seem an attempt at hair-splitting, but those who have entered into the political side of the woman's movement in the last few years will know that a very real danger exists lest the means should replace the end in the minds of women. Political or any other rights are fanatically regarded not only as the key but as the badge of freedom. Yet "it is not the act of a voting which emancipates a people. They qualify themselves for voting by remaining free."<sup>1</sup> Similarly the claim for a "free personality," which colours so large a proportion of feminist writings, is a contradiction in itself. Personality, free or un-free, is not granted to us by others; they cannot dictate or limit it. The most they can do is to warp it in early youth. In this respect woman, who has the main charge of young children, is often the chief offender, and both sexes suffer equally at her hands.

One is, of course, aware that to a great extent the revolt of woman against imaginary spiritual bonds is really directed against something more tangible. But it is not only that limitations are

<sup>1</sup> "Essays in Fallacy," Andrew Macphail, p. 72.

set upon her physical or sexual activities by law and custom; she is also aware of a standard of "womanliness," to which she must conform, and against which she is now taught to rebel. No side of the feminist controversy is more keenly canvassed than the question as to whether there is really any typical form of femininity or whether these standards and conventions are not merely the subjective images of woman set up by man. Frau Rosa Mayreder, who is firmly of the latter belief, exhorts her progressive sisters to escape from the bondage imposed on them by an attempt to live up to these images, and she examines in detail every quality supposed to be distinctively or typically feminine and says that it is also to be found among males, and that certain males of one region may possess it even more than certain females of another. Thus she considers the small, plump, lively men to be found in the Austrian army far more typically "feminine" than such women as are found in Northern Prussia, who are large, raw-boned, flat-chested and sombre in their character and appearance. Such biological observations are inconclusive. Needless to say, the differences of environment which operate on the structure of the human race will certainly exaggerate certain traits at the expense of others, but the comparison must in that case be made not between men in one environment and women in another, but of males and females similarly circumstanced.

There is no need, moreover, to labour a point which is conceded by all serious writers on the

subject of sex-psychology, namely, that maleness and femaleness are equally inherited by every person, but that the preponderance of one or the other determines the sex. The point at issue is not whether women may show manly qualities, or the reverse, but whether the exercise of sex functions, which is undeniable, affects the rest of the body, not excluding the mind.

The possibility of a re-action of the bodily function on the mind is fully recognised by Frau Mayreder, but she considers that the mind can be released from what she calls "a heavy incumbrance" by conscious efforts which will gradually ensure "the autonomy of the brain." While finding ridiculous the conception of an immortal soul inhabiting a mortal body the German feminist sets up a distinct entity—the brain—as something which can rise above bodily conditions and reduce sex-functions to a sort of automatic process. This gospel of intellectual asceticism has a distinct difference from the spiritual asceticism of earlier ages. The latter conceived of the body as the mortal habitation of the soul, and inasmuch as the soul had to look forward to an eternity of existence divorced from the more primitive pleasures of the senses, it was in its interests that the body should be chastened. This is, of course, intended, not as an epitome of the psychology of asceticism, which is very interesting and complicated, but to point a difference. The intellectual ascetic has no supernatural influence behind him, no vista of eternity before him, for whatever state of perfection he may induce in his

brain it will perish with his body. Yet there is no doubt that, consciously or sub-consciously, we connect the thinking part of us, rather than the feeling part of us, with that supernatural element, the spirit. The idea that thought is eternal found expression long before Maeterlinck. We have to reckon therefore with the growth of a feminist philosophy which will certainly try to identify intellectual with spiritual development, and this is, undoubtedly, the root of their insistence on "the rights of personality," "a free unfettered personality," "free spiritual evolution," which is found in all writings on the woman movement, and which is not infrequently described as the gospel of individualism.

The paper which, published first as a weekly, achieved the distinction of being banned from bookstalls, and is now holding the fort of advanced feminism in a bi-weekly form, claimed to be "the only journal of recognised standing expounding a doctrine of philosophical individualism," and promised "to lay bare the individualist basis of all that is most significant in modern movements including feminism." The moderate Swedish feminist Ellen Key in her latest book<sup>1</sup> declares :

"To-day young girls *live to apply* the principle or the woman movement—individualism. The older women's rights advocates desired, it is true, that woman should be allowed to 'develop her gifts,' but she should 'administer' them for the benefit of others; they desired that she should seek always in law and custom support and security for her action. The young women's rights

<sup>1</sup> "Woman Movement," p. 103, *et seq.*

advocates, on the other hand, believe that their own growth, just as that of animals and trees, is intended above all for self development . . . and that they have not the right to confine themselves by circumstances. . . . The conflict is thus solved by some feminists: everything called family ties and family feeling is referred to the 'impersonal' *instinctive* life, while our personality expresses itself in *intellectual activity*, in study, in creation, . . . It follows from this idea that the liberated personality must place the obligations of the intellectual life above those of the family life. In a word the earlier definition of womanliness ignored the universal human element, the present definition of personality ignores the womanly element in woman's being. The last solution of the problem is quite as one-sided as the first."

The importance of this definition is that it comes from one who was not only a pioneer of feminism, but is one of its most widely read exponents. The distance between Ellen Key and Frau Mayreder marks significantly the path on which the woman movement is travelling. Special attention must be drawn to the antithesis, clearly indicated in the passage quoted, between the "instinctive" and the "intellectual" life of woman.<sup>1</sup>

Midway between Frau Mayreder and Ellen Key comes the English writer, C. Gasquoine Hartley, whose book "The Truth About Woman" (already quoted) is the only serious attempt yet made, by one of our countrywomen, to give form and coherence to the confused aspirations of modern feminism. Mrs. Hartley confirms, by a description of her own earlier

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II.

outlook on the question, Ellen Key's picture of the "young women's rights advocates," but the passage of years, and more mature views of life generally, have modified her opinions and she now devotes many eloquent pages to the thesis that it is through her sex function, and not in despite of it, that woman must conquer. It will be necessary to quote Mrs. Hartley from time to time, for she gives valuable illustrations of the lines on which women are approaching their peculiar problems. Her main thesis is the possibility, given social conditions which make woman economically independent of man, of evolving not only a "higher type" of sex union but a woman who will be "free"—in short, the ideal is identical with that of Frau Mayreder but the means by which this end is to be gained are radically different, involving no denial of sex-function but a far more general insistence on motherhood, not as the duty but as the right of woman. The important fact about Mrs. Hartley's book for the purposes of this chapter is that, although a believer in the dignity and importance of woman's chief function, she insists on the dependent and inferior character of modern woman. "It is only in obedience to man that woman has gained her power of life. She has borne children at his will and for his pleasure. She has received her very consciousness from man: This has been her womanhood—to feel herself under another's will. . . . Let us have done with this absurd catch phrase of 'Woman's Influence.' No influence worth naming as such can be

exercised save by an *independent mind.*” Again she speaks of “woman’s modern character with all its acknowledged faults—all its separation from the human qualities of man. . . . If the larger social virtues are wanting in her may it not be because they have not been called for in parasitic life?” Later on the same writer speaks of woman’s state of “mental and physical inferiority.”

Such expressions from one who tries to approach the subject in a scientific spirit, and whose experience as a teacher must have brought her into contact with many women of a cultivated type, cannot be lightly discounted. They indicate a frame of mind which accounts for much of the discontent we are witnessing. Mrs. Hartley pleads passionately that woman’s inferiority is her misfortune and not her fault; she devotes many chapters to the possibilities of her sex, but it does not appear to her that there is any doubt of the relative “inferiority” of women to men, and, *mirabile dictu*, she even considers them men’s physical inferiors.

There is nothing in the whole range of the “woman problem” more depressing than this perpetual comparison of the sexes and the attempt to weigh them one against another, not as complementary factors in nature’s scheme but as rivals for social supremacy. The enquirer who begins on that path will never arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, and unfortunately for Mrs. Hartley’s book she is dogged by this obsession, so that her standard of success for woman is always her “equality” in a strictly legal sense with man.

Whether real "equality" is to be secured by legal equality she does not stop to ask. It is, however, the crux of the whole question.

Is there any justification for the feeling, which appears to be influencing a large number of women, that their sex is despised and occupies an inferior position? There is certainly one elementary cause for such a feeling. While woman is not "physically inferior" to man her physique is adapted for a function which renders her inferior for some important social purposes. In the earliest ages of man she could not hunt wild animals or fight foes as effectively as man, and as society gradually became more complex her limitation became even more obvious. For some social purposes, therefore, she may be said to be man's inferior, though her hypothetical inferiority is balanced by the fact of her immense importance in the history of the race.<sup>1</sup> The school which teaches the superiority of social service and "intellectual" work over the more "instinctive" functions of the female sex, therefore, does not appear to be going the right way to establish woman in a more honourable place. Apart from the philosophic side of the argument, however, is it actually true in practice that women must always occupy a despised position? In asking this question it is not necessary to go back to ancient history for an answer. Evidence as to past ages is not always very reliable

<sup>1</sup> The theory of Mrs. Hartley that women were the predominant social factors at the earliest stage of civilisation, and that man has therefore usurped the place intended for woman by Nature, is discussed in the next chapter.



on points which depend less on the view of the individual than on the general tone of society. Still we have evidence of a kind, in the position of women of the Renaissance, the leaders of culture in the middle ages, the queens and great ladies who helped to make history, and the burgesses' wives who played a humbler but equally active part in their own sphere. There have been ups and downs in woman's history, but coming to our own day, and looking at a society whose active members' lives cover a period of great social changes, is it true that women are placed under a perpetual ban?

The head of a large school for girls of the well-to-do middle class has answered this question in the negative. Parents, she says, visit her about their girls and appear to be quite as anxious and eager about them as about their boys. She cannot believe they place one above the other. It is true that a tendency still lingers to spend more on the boy's education, but this is an economic question. The girls may or may not have to be wage-earners—for the boys it is a certainty. The feminist may say, "Here, at once, is the badge of inferiority, since it is not taken for granted that women must be made economically independent." If girls were denied any education this would be valid, but so long as marriage and motherhood are possible vocations a large number of girls will not want to specialise in professions, and an ordinary school life, such as is now given to all middle-class girls, may suit them best, both physically and mentally. The test of equality is not that the parents should

do the same thing for boy and girl, but that they should do what they honestly believe to be the best for both, not sacrificing either to the other.

In most homes in middle-class society, with its ever growing standards of pleasure and refinement, one finds girls attending schools modelled as far as possible on those for boys, enjoying great liberty, making their own social arrangements, paying visits alone, and using the parental dwelling in an increasingly casual manner. It is possible that they have not yet reached the complete liberty accorded to their brothers at this stage, and that they are still required to account for themselves more or less, while there may also be a certain amount of *corvée* exacted from them in the shape of social duties. But, although the modern mother may hope for some companionship in her own duties and pleasures from her daughters when they leave school, and though many girls will give it gladly, yet no one who is acquainted with the young woman of the period will maintain that she is now usually sacrificed on the altar of home duties. If she adopts a professional career her emancipation is complete. Is there any indication in these conditions of a badge of inferiority attached to the female sex?

Next we come to married life, the psychology of which is more fully treated in another part of this book, and here it must be allowed that, whatever may be the law of nature, society and convention have done all they can to glorify the condition of the young wife. She is the centre

of the picture at the wedding and for many months afterwards, in the dignity of her young matronhood. After this comes a period when artificial advantages on either side wear off, and nature decides which of the pair shall be the predominant partner. Is it true that, as a rule, the intercourse between middle-class married folk betrays the "inferiority" of the wife? Is it not the case that the vast majority of husbands of this class respect their wives, and do not the conventions of society express that respect in a thousand ways? Most women are so accustomed to the amenities and privileges accorded to their sex that they accept them as a matter of course.

Among the working classes, according to some feminist writers, woman is nothing but a slave, and certainly her task is harder under conditions which put a premium on muscular development. It is, however, of conditions among people known as "educated" that this book mainly deals, and the belief has already been expressed that the discontent of women is almost, if not entirely, confined to that class; still it must be said here that even in the class whose capital is physical force woman holds her own. As a sex she is neither down-trodden nor oppressed, and the hardships of her life are due to other causes. Moreover, the general softening of manners and customs due to education and civilisation are, of course, favourable to the sex whose claim for consideration rests on weakness, not on strength. The bad man may ill-treat his wife, but public

opinion does not now condone such action, and although it is true, as one feminist writer pointed out as a sign of the subjection of woman, that she generally refers to her husband as "the master," yet it is equally true that he almost invariably speaks of her as "my missus<sup>1</sup>!"

A favourite grievance among some educated women is that men do not admit them to intellectual comradeship. W. L. Thomas, in "Sex and Society," is apparently of the opinion that women have only recently been admitted to any form of mental exercise and are therefore amateurs, quite outside the close corporation of male brain-workers. This is, of course, historically untrue. In the palmy days of Greece there were women professors, and Aspasia had a *salon*; the medical school at Salerno in the early middle ages had women professors as well as practitioners; and throughout the Renaissance period, down to the days of the *salons*, woman was often man's superior in culture, and it was a privilege much coveted by men to be admitted to the circle of some intellectual lady. One fancies that the modern male shyness of female erudition may have begun when, in the first flights of the higher education, the female pedant began to try her new wings. Men

<sup>1</sup> The grievances of working women in relation to their husbands are not so much a matter of defective law as of defective administration. The law of maintenance, for instance, is very difficult of enforcement, and a woman must go into the workhouse before she can sue for maintenance—a source of much trouble and injustice. The reason for this provision is, of course, that it enables the Guardians to bring an action against the husband.

enjoy clever women but they are often afraid of learned ones.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, an exaggerated self-consciousness which sees in the preference of man for his own sex when he wants intellectual comradeship a conviction that woman is his inferior. It may be that sex will prove less and less of a barrier to free intercourse on a mental plane, but the conditions of life, the modes of thought, the experiences and the aims of the two sexes must have points of divergence, and it is unlikely that one can ever have the same freedom in a mixed assembly that is found in a gathering of men or women alone.

Women are now trying to develop the clubbable spirit among themselves, combining for social or intellectual purposes, and enjoying among themselves the pleasures of discussion and comradeship. They have even begun to eat together—the sacrament of fellowship! To one who has taken part in many such feminine gatherings it appears desirable that we should not

<sup>1</sup> “Those modern Amazons who insist upon setting up their sex as a separate class of beings, naturally at enmity with man, and by him unjustly subjugated and ignorantly tyrannised over, are fond of speaking of us as if we either followed a Machiavellian policy in keeping our wives and daughters ignorant, or as if, as a matter of taste we preferred to associate with ignorant females that we may rejoice in our own superiority. That is a mistake. No doubt Lieutenant Jones, skilled only in horses, does dislike a young lady to mention Dante, and Smith, who has contracted all he ever knew into a familiarity with the prices and qualities of cotton, trembles to be asked what Kepler’s laws are; but it is an error to suppose that educated men prefer the society of uninformed women.”—Roscoe, *National Review*, 1858.

follow too closely the male model. The genius of women does not run to after-dinner speeches, which should be brief, and (in appearance at all events) impromptu. Women are admirable platform speakers; but the vision, at one end of the table, of a lady with a small voice and a sheaf of typed MSS. which she is preparing to read, is a bad digestive to the best dinner. As diners, and *convives* generally, women are still amateurs, and one cannot help wishing that they could evolve some new and congenial form of meeting, in which the awful formality of a set dinner and the chances which may place one between two uncongenial or shy people might be eliminated. This is no reflection on some of the cheery gatherings which all women who join in the social life of their sex have enjoyed, but simply a plea for the abolition of the non-essential side of such gatherings—a set meal and set speeches, neither of which make any special appeal to women.

In discussing the approximation of woman's forms of amusement to the typically male we have wandered slightly from the subject of her supposed inferiority. Every attempt to imitate man, however, conveys an implicit belief in this inferiority and a lack of confidence by woman in her own tastes and powers. But, if women collectively betray this feeling, it is not because of any individual humility. Middle-class society to-day is peopled by well dressed, self-possessed, self-centred, busy and important women, very different in calibre from their self-effacing mothers, and if any one of them subscribes to the theory of

woman's inferiority or subjection she usually does so with the mental reservation that she is, of course, thinking of other women!

Education is largely responsible for this growth of a feeling of self-confidence among women, though we must not forget that Mrs. Poyser and Mrs. Proudie belonged to the pre-female-education era. The younger generation is omniscient in every period, but the levelling up of the standard of book learning between the sexes has deprived the masculine prerogative of a very sure refuge. It is no longer possible to crush an aspiring sister with classical or scientific references—as likely as not she will correct an inaccuracy or challenge an authority. Such intellectual duels, however, have little real place in the sentiment of one sex for another. A light hand on the horse's mouth has won more admiration and respect for woman from man than any appreciation of the nature of the differential calculus. Intellect has never been, and never will be, the standard of value in our country, and for this reason too great stress need not be laid on that side of man's attitude to woman which is concerned with her mental capacity. From the very beginning of the battle for the higher education of women there were men who favoured and women who opposed it—which illustrates the fact that it was not solely sex-prejudice which had to be encountered.

The evidence as to modern man's opinion of female inferiority falls into three main categories. The first consists chiefly of apocrypha—stories

which, however, not only grow but propagate their kind. One hears them from every feminist platform. They consist largely of things reported to have been said by distinguished persons whose names the reciters of the tales are not at liberty to mention. Stories of indignities and affronts put upon women ("just because they are women") almost always fall into this category or else resolve themselves into the second one, which is made up of true anecdotes of arrogant behaviour on the part of individual males. The attitude of an arrogant male, be it noted, is almost always due to a bad bringing up at the hands of some woman, often an adoring but injudicious mother. Young men are prone to this type of ill-bred conduct, but it is by no means a sex characteristic. Young women betray exactly the same form of contempt for the judgment of their elders, and arrogance, in all its forms, is by no means confined to the male sex. In the marked preference of women for male employers and overseers we find no proof that arrogance marks the relationship of the average man with the other sex. Very many men will recognise themselves in W. H. Beveridge's witty parable of "John and Irene":

"It is only fair to John's family to say that his views on the sorrows and subjection of women were not derived from personal experience. John's mother ruled her husband's house and all its inhabitants with a sway as absolute as it was beneficent, extending even to the number of cups of coffee to be drunk or pipes to be smoked each day. John's sisters used him freely for all purposes for which brothers are useful. John's landladies invariably described him as 'very good natured.'



. . . John, so far as could be judged from appearances, inevitably did at once what any woman, old or young, good-looking or bad-looking, told him to do. Since he was no more without vanity than the rest of his sex, it pleased him to be assured, and to assure his friends, that these appearances of subordination were deceptive, and that he was, in reality, by his mere sex, a member of a dominant minority among a population of female helots. He probably rather liked to look upon himself as a Hereditary Grand Oppressor."

The third and final section of the evidence as to woman's inferiority is of a more tangible character, and relates to the handicap of her sex in economic competition with man. Since this subject will be dealt with later on it need not be considered in detail here. Probably the sense of her inferior equipment for the battle of life on equal terms with man is really at the bottom of the whole feeling we are trying to diagnose. Because their sex debars them from many wealth-producing industries, and limits their output in others, women as a sex are inferior to men as economic units, though the same does not hold true between individual men and women. It is when we remember the latter fact that we are bound to modify the view put forward by some feminists that woman's work is handicapped simply because of sex-prejudice. Women writers, artists, and professionals of all classes are paid for their work on exactly the same terms as men, the public alone setting the standard of value. It is, as a rule, when woman sells her time, not her work, that the difference becomes most apparent, and even then it is by no means invariable that

men get higher wages. The skilled domestic servant may be better paid than her male relatives who are agricultural labourers or operatives. There is no real evidence, therefore, of sex-prejudice, or that women and their work are handicapped by a theoretic belief in the inferiority of everything female.<sup>1</sup>

It must not be supposed that, in trying to discover wherein lies the alleged inferior position of the modern woman, any attempt is being made to prove that she has never been constrained, or oppressed, or despised by man. Men themselves, from Plato to Napoleon, have asserted their belief in male superiority, and other men, from Montaigne to Mazzini or Meredith, have asserted the contrary. Opinion on the subject is divided among women themselves. It is undeniable that at certain periods of social evolution the subjection of woman has been greater than at others—at all events in appearance. But appearances are sometimes deceptive. No country could place a lower face-value on woman than China, and yet the position of the mother of a son is one of inexpugnable strength. A woman is the ruler *de facto*, if not *de jure*, in the vast majority of Chinese households, and a woman was notoriously the despotic ruler of the empire for a long period in recent years, as well as in at least two earlier

<sup>1</sup> "Where the inferiority of earnings exists it is almost always co-existent with an inferiority of work, and the general inferiority of women's work seems to influence their wages in industries where no such inferiority exists."—Sidney Webb, *Economic Journal*, 1891

periods of Chinese history. People unacquainted with the East are apt to under-estimate the power wielded by the *pardah* women—often a very unwholesome influence because of their ignorance.

In estimating the effect on woman's social prestige of her preoccupation with maternal duties it must not be forgotten that, round those duties, have grown up the ethical conceptions on which her present position in society largely rests. Civilisation itself and conditions of progress favourable to the development of a high type of the human race owe much to the specialisation of the human mother. It appears as if we were interfering nowadays with that specialising process, for certainly the educated woman has increasing trouble with the maternal function, and to this point reference must be made later on. But to assert that woman's relative inferiority as a social factor, due to sexual conditions, is a sign of positive inferiority, and to assume that the social virtues she has developed as a mother are necessarily less admirable than those of man—less "human"—is about as sensible as to say that the earth would have done better by being the sky! The only standard test of value is to be found in the fitness or unfitness of either sex for the functions nature intended them to perform. By this test it is possible that woman to-day is not all that she might be, but one fancies that this is the last thing feminists mean when they insist on her "inferior" position. A society which divorces woman from nature, and places her in competition with man, necessarily reveals her

inferiority for some social purposes, but it is altogether arbitrary to suppose that by rendering her more fit for these purposes we can make her either a higher type of woman or the social equal of man.

The process of improving woman's legal status is a conscious one, and by expressing the views of the best type of male in statute form we may help to level up the ideals of the whole sex. Little, however, remains to be done in this respect so far as the equality of the sexes is concerned. The laws of property now give to man but two advantages—that of primogeniture, which is no harder on the daughters than on the younger sons, and that of intestacy, whereby the property of a man dying without a will goes to his heirs—his children and his wife—while that of an intestate woman goes to her husband. It does not seem to be a grievance which need trouble anyone who has wit enough to make a will.

The main points of grievance urged against the English statute law on behalf of women are the inequalities in divorce—dealt with elsewhere, and likely to be altered—and the law concerning the custody of children. The English law embodies much of the old Roman jurisprudence whereby the authority of the father was very strongly affirmed. Until 1886 a man could do practically what he liked with his children. By the Guardianship of Infants Act of that year his authority was checked by the provision that, if the mother applies to the Court on any dispute as to infant children, the question will be decided in

the interests of the child and having regard to the wishes of both parents. Such cases, it may be mentioned, are not heard in public. It is asserted that an expression in law of the equality of parents would be far more effective. As to this it is certain that in cases where disputes arise the stronger-minded partner (man or woman) will have his or her way, but so long as a man is held legally responsible for his family's support he is certainly entitled to a casting vote, where conditions are equal. The equal custody of children, it may be mentioned, was secured in the State of New York at the desire of women who are not enfranchised, and is said to work well.

It is quite possible, however, that the position of the man as the head of the family does contribute in the minds of some women to the theory that they are forced to take a secondary place. A choir of factory girls was to be instructed in a cantata, and as it was their first experience of part singing the teacher explained the meaning of "firsts" and "seconds." At the beginning all the good singers wanted to be "firsts," but it was pointed out that the more difficult part, equally important to the harmony, was the accompaniment to the melody which filled it out and at times even rose above it in significance. This musical analogy is one which many women might take to heart.

On no ground whatever should we be prepared to affirm the monstrous theory of a positive spiritual inferiority of woman. Feminists are never tired of quoting the dicta of ancient authorities and churchmen, who identified woman

with the sins of the flesh. Every now and then statesmen broke into a similar form of panic action and brought out laws aimed at reducing the power and authority of women, or curtailing their extravagance. Poets and philosophers have railed at them, novelists have depicted them in every undesirable shape, but for the most part these ebullitions are not signs of man's belief in woman's inferiority—they are evidences of his uneasy consciousness that she is getting the better of him rather too openly. "All men rule all women," wrote Cicero, "We Romans rule the world—and our wives rule us!"

Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that woman has been too much limited hitherto by the demands of the race, that she has voluntarily sacrificed on that altar some possibilities of a wider social significance, and has therefore come to be regarded with less respect as a social factor than man, we return to the argument set forth at the beginning of this chapter. Is it possible for man or woman to make that distinction between the instinctive and the intellectual life which modern feminism demands? Let us, however, leave man out of the question. He interests us for the moment only in his relation to woman. Is it possible for *her* to achieve the detachment which seems necessary for the "development of personality" without, in her triumphant progress, sacrificing the race? Bound up with this question is the one raised still earlier in this chapter as to whether, outside the primary functions of sex, there is any typical womanliness.

Obviously if "personality" is to be "free" it must know no such limitations as the term "womanliness" implies. Is sex a mere external attribute or is man, as Havelock Ellis says, a man to his very thumbs and a woman a woman to her toes? If it can be established that there is nothing in a woman's mental or psychological make-up which differentiates her from man we shall have advanced the first step towards the *ultima Thule* of "equality."

The next step is that she must develop her personality on intellectual, and not instinctive lines (for instinct is bound up with sex and must be distrusted) and having at length ceased, save in certain unimportant structural and functional respects, to exhibit any characteristic differences from man, woman, we are told, will approach him on his own level and will be greeted by him with joy as the mate for whom, down through the ages, he has waited. Unless that is to be the end of the story altogether, however, woman must remember at intervals the inconvenient fact that, after all, she is not just like man. Is it possible to regard this "difference" as a matter of externals only? <sup>1</sup>

It will be seen that in this fundamental question of the differentiation of the sexes lies the key to a whole range of the problems which now affect woman. Track backward to their source all the

<sup>1</sup> ". . . It men in general are reluctant to admit that under modern conditions of life they *no longer differ from women fundamentally, but only in externals.*"—"A Survey of the Woman Problem," Rosa Mayreder, p. 115.

different currents of the woman's movement and they will be found to have their rise in the revolt of woman against what she is being told is the inequality imposed on her either by man or by Nature. The claims of the race have always been felt to be stronger and more insistent on woman than on man, and out of this natural condition has arisen a whole range of more or less artificial limitations on woman's freedom. It is not enough for modern feminists to work for the reduction of those limitations; they revolt against nature herself. "Nature is unjust" declares Frau Mayreder, and a host of modern women who have never heard her name or read her book are equally rebels in their hearts and often in their lives.

The mid-Victorian mother used to tell her daughters that certain physical phenomena were "the curse of Eve," and she inculcated the view that it was the duty of women to bear all their disadvantages meekly. It is not difficult to realise the advance from this point of view to that which finds nothing but a maddening handicap and injustice in the limitations imposed on women by sex-conditions. Young women no longer see the finger of divine providence in their affairs, or recognise the value of subjection to a Higher Will as part of spiritual evolution. The revolt against nature is behind the revolt against man, and both together combine to complete that state of discoordination with her environment which Olive Schreiner so graphically describes as a condition of modern woman.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Woman and Labour."



## CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMAN

“No production in philosophy, science or art, entitled to the first rank, has been the work of a woman. High originality of conception is . . . what is chiefly wanted . . . When women have had the preparation which all men now require to be eminently original, it will be time enough to begin judging by experience of their capacity for originality.”—J. S. Mill, “The Subjection of Woman,” 1829.

“Genius consists in an infinite capacity for doing things without taking pains.”—Sir H. Beerbohm Tree, 1913.

“Intellect in woman should not be supreme. When the intellect in woman becometh the master, the heart is starved, and the Angel in the woman perisheth. Therefore let the heart be supreme and the intellect its handmaid.”—Sheikh Haji Ibrahim of Kerbela.

“Though our list of notable women is a long one, the fact remains that all the great geniuses of the world have been men. This should not be specially discouraging to women. The world does not need many geniuses.”—“Ideas of a plain Countrywoman.”

“Genius is more common among men [than among women] by virtue of the same general tendency by which idiocy is more common among men. The two facts are but aspects of a larger zoological fact—the greater variability of the male.”—Havelock Ellis, “Man and Woman.”

“The woman must be talented as a woman, and it will not much matter although she is talented in nothing else. She must know her *métier de femme*. . . .”—R. L. Stevenson, “Virginibus Puerisque.”

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMAN

IN the consideration, from various points of view, of the relations between men and women we have so far passed somewhat lightly over the question of the relative mentality of the sexes. No question in the whole range of feminism has been debated more keenly or with more wearisome reiteration of inessential facts. At the present time the controversy, so far as feminism is concerned, has reached a stage in which the self-constituted champions of woman are prepared to concede her relative paucity of intellectual output, declaring it, however, to have been due not to any natural disability but to the overwhelming demands of family and domestic duties and to the prejudices of man, who has confined her, somewhat tyrannically, to the performance of those duties. It is urged, moreover, that the extension of education and the release of a surplus of female energy from non-intellectual tasks cannot fail to develop among

women mental qualities of the same order as men's. It is usual among writers of this school to speak of woman as having come late into the intellectual arena,<sup>1</sup> and into the specialised regions of scientific research, and it is assumed that the prejudice which denied her education is responsible for this late entry.

It has already been said that this is not historically accurate. There have been periods in which woman enjoyed not merely equal opportunities with man for such education as the times afforded, but when education was actually the prerogative of women and churchmen. There are signs of the persistence of the idea that women needed book learning as much as men in many of our ancient scholastic foundations, such as that of Christ's Hospital, which were endowed for the benefit of both sexes but have gradually been absorbed by one. Those who care for a picture of feminine erudition can find it in a series of studies of Mediæval women by Mrs. Kemp Welch, or if they read their Montaigne with the respect he deserves they will remember his address to Madame Diane de Foix. He exhorts her not to neglect the education in science of her children, "who yourself have tasted of its sweetness," and to Madame de Duras he says, "I should not have dared to be so bold with the mysteries of physic, considering the esteem that you and many others have of it." Also of his adopted daughter, Marie de Gournay le Jars, he writes "And if a man may presage from her youth her soul will one day be capable of very

<sup>1</sup> W. L. Thomas, "Sex and Society."

great things." Marie was herself a writer and a Latinist, her friendship with Montaigne being the result of a perusal of his essays when she was only eighteen.

Another woman of the Renaissance whose learning (although she herself says it was unusual for women to have such tastes) won her a place at court and many friends and admirers was Olimpia Morata,<sup>1</sup> daughter of a poor professor of Mantua. At sixteen she lectured in Greek and Latin and composed verses in those languages, which, however, do not seem to have had any particular merit.

In the sixteenth century in our own country we find the great ladies and princesses, such as Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth, enjoying exactly the same form of classical education as their brothers.

In estimating the educational opportunities of women in past ages it is, of course, necessary to remember that only a small number of persons in each period had any such advantages. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century education on a democratic basis had not been seriously considered. Periods of special intellectual activity, like the sixteenth century, sometimes gave a stimulus to thought which reached below the ranks of the aristocracy, and the ancient universities were open to the poor student (on humiliating terms) but the only hope for the literary man was to secure a patron or patroness among the well-born and wealthy.

The sister arts were pursued under conditions

<sup>1</sup> See Article in *Englishwoman* for July, 1913.

of equal difficulty, as the readers of Benvenuto Cellini's memoirs will realise, for the artist-craftsman was essentially the servant of the rich, usually dependent on the caprice of some noble master and often obliged to prostitute his talent for the glorification of his paymaster. The "dignity" of art or of literature were phrases not yet invented,<sup>1</sup> though the passion for truth and beauty which inspired artists of all kinds was at its zenith when these commercial conditions obtained. Rewards were small—one remembers Milton's bargain with Mr. Samuel Simmons for "Paradise Lost": £5 in hand, £5 on the sale of 1,300 copies of the first edition, and two similar sums on the sale of a like number of the second and third editions!

Whatever, therefore, may have been the cause of the comparative literary and artistic sterility of the women of the middle ages, it was not because these professions were honourable and lucrative ones from which, by male prejudice, they were debarred. Nor were the upper class ladies denied opportunities for instruction which might have stimulated in them the desire for literary or artistic creation. Yet we cannot escape from the conclusion that the contribution of the sex to imaginative work has been practically a negligible quality. Both in artistic achievement and in scientific discovery the results achieved by the male sex have often been in inverse ratio to the advantages enjoyed—a rule which applies to genius

<sup>1</sup> Or they had been forgotten. The civilisation of Greece must not be included in this rapid generalisation.

in almost every direction. The peasant boy who drew on stones and ultimately became one of the world's greatest painters ; the mechanic's son who pondered over natural science and one day discovered the principle of steam power ; the Puritan tinker ; the "inspired charity boy"—these are a few of the figures which will flash into the memory of everyone in this connection. Why are there no women in this category ? Why is there not one single great imaginative work of any kind to the credit of the sex—if we except the possibly feminine Sapphic fragments ? Women of ability in other directions have not been wanting. We have had great queens, great courtesans, great saints and mystics, and in later days great interpreters. It is long since the doors of music and painting were opened to women on equal terms with men, yet only those of us who are keenly interested in modern art could mention the names of women painters or composers whose work, if not outstanding, is well up to the average. But the names of those who as singers and instrumentalists interpret to us the masters of music are legion—a fact which seems to indicate a special though limited quality in the artistic endowment of women.

Literature has always offered a fair field, even if social prejudice for a time made women shy of using their own names. Yet the greatest female names in literature belong to a past epoch—a pre-feminine—education epoch. Where nowadays shall we match Madame de Sévigné, Georges Sand, Jane Austen, George Eliot,

the Brontë sisters, Mrs. Oliphant, Mrs. Gaskell, Christina Rossetti or Mrs. Browning? The complex causes which led to so great an outburst of feminine talent in the despised Victorian era cannot be discussed here, but the last six names are specially interesting as a refutation of the theory that female genius was stifled by male repression. Great as these names are, however, no one will claim for them first rank among the immortals, and we are still left with the conviction that if woman has not delivered herself of any great message it has not been only for lack of opportunity.

A rather more complicated condition arises when we consider the record of woman in science. If it is true that women were the earliest doctors, herbalists and chemists, they never carried their researches beyond the compounding of febrifuges, love philtres or poisons; they dabbled in astrology but never further than a curiosity about the black art would take them,<sup>1</sup> and their love of flowers and gardens did not lead to a study of botany nor their early care of domesticated animals to the science of natural history. In short not one of the sciences which might naturally have arisen out of the normal occupations of women from primitive down to mediæval times has been enriched through the independent study and discoveries of the female sex. No woman in these times ever blazed a trail through the jungles of natural science. Yet in the service of science probably

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Herschell assisted her brother. It is not clear that she did independent work.



lies the sphere in which they may do most to prove that this intellectual sterility is only relative. A great deal of the spade work of science has been accomplished and we now have a vast body of evidence of all kinds which needs comparison, verification by careful observation, and synthesis. The collection of evidence itself, now that the machinery for doing it has been so much improved, may well prove an occupation to which woman's quick power of observation may incline her. Already women are beginning to win their spurs in this field, witness a woman president of the Botanical Section of the British Association and the work of Madame Curie.

There is, in reality, no reflection whatever on woman conveyed by the argument that she has not done creative work in intellectual spheres. The reason is too obvious. The inventiveness, restless imagination and activity of man are marked characteristics of his sex, whereas (and this is the point to be made here, which feminists contest) womanhood—not motherhood as an incident of womanhood—conditions the activity, if not the quality, of the female brain.

Nevertheless, while we find no proof in history that the brain of woman may have been equally adapted with that of man for artistic and scientific work, but was deprived of all chance of development on those lines, it must be agreed that the setting free of a surplus of feminine energy from the actual physical tasks of maternity and home-making may lead to the evolution of a more inductive and less instinctive type of woman.

It is also possible, moreover, that between this type of woman and man there may spring up a relationship devoid of sex-consciousness. Only it must be clearly understood that such a relationship will not be "marriage."<sup>1</sup>

Admitting the desirability of the goal—the comradeship of the sexes on an intellectual plane—we are still left to wonder at the means adopted for its achievement. The keynote of the feminist movement has always been found in the word—the blessed shibboleth—"equality," but no one ever paused to consider whether equality necessarily involved "sameness." Given the facts of woman's life for centuries and the specialisation for certain purposes which have been necessary for the evolution of the human race, it was practically certain that she would have to retrace some of her steps in order to begin at the same point as man—if indeed she could ever reach it. Yet neither in Great Britain nor in the United States (where an excellent opportunity offered itself) was there any attempt to set up a type of higher education for woman founded on her distinctive psychological and physiological needs.<sup>2</sup> Everywhere, instead, the effort has been to approximate girls' schools and colleges as far as possible to the traditional male type, and, though there are welcome signs of

<sup>1</sup> "Marriage is the result of children, not children of marriage."—Westermarck, "History of Marriage."

<sup>2</sup> The obvious theory was that the world wanted a less womanly type of woman. It is not to be wondered that women educated on such a principle believe in the inferiority of their sex.

reaction, considerable mischief has already been done. This subject must be dealt with more particularly later on, but it is necessary before going any further to define the principal reasons for believing that there is a differentiation of character, or mentality, between the sexes, a difference which ought to be recognised in all education and vocational training.

As has already been said, this is an extremely controversial point, and a whole library of books has been written round it. The main line followed by the controversy is whether or no there are any secondary characteristics constant in the two sexes, and it is assumed that a difference of temperament—that is of habits and methods due to the peculiar constitution of the brain or nervous system of either sex—may be of the same nature as a structural secondary characteristic.

But before dealing with temperamental differences it is necessary to explain away more obvious physical characteristics of the two sexes. Thus it is argued that because some women grow beards and some men do not, we are justified in saying that hair on the face is not inevitably a secondary male characteristic. It is possible by this method to eliminate a whole range of attributes which we are accustomed to regard as typically feminine or typically masculine, and as a result we are asked to arrive at the conclusion that these assumed typical characteristics are artificially imposed on men and women, or are merely the result of selection, and may be variable, and that the standard set up by them is empirical.

But while no thoughtful person would be prepared to deny that the standard of sex-temperamental characteristics is largely fixed by ideals which have been coloured by ethical influences, as a rule, when tracked to their source, these ethical influences themselves are seen to arise from natural conditions. The strongest of all such influences, the foundation of altruism, is the desire to appear well in the eyes of others, which is a direct outcome of the sex impulse. For biological reasons this desire for approbation is specially strong in woman,<sup>1</sup> and, in fact, very largely conditions her mental and social activities. In its refined form it makes her specially impersonal and unselfish, so that the ethical conception of self-devotion (which so largely colours the accepted theory of "womanliness") is not a "subjective image" of man, his ideal of what woman should be, to which image she has hitherto tried to conform in order to please him; it arises from the law of her own being and is intimately connected with her most primitive function. Environment may minimise or exaggerate the effects of this influence, and spiritual conceptions or ethical ideals may deeply affect it. Some types of women may express it quite differently from others, but it appears to the writer (who is venturing boldly into what may be far too great depths) that it is erroneous to place

<sup>1</sup> A little side light is cast here on a feminine characteristic which often puzzles men. They cannot understand why their wives like to be assured, over and over again, of their love and admiration.

structural secondary sexual variations on the same level as those instinctive temperamental characteristics which have their origin in the sex-function.<sup>1</sup>

The sex condition which makes it necessary that the female shall stimulate the male before she can obtain from him the power to reproduce underlies not only her physiological but her temperamental evolution, and differentiates both from those of man. It is not possible to dispose of this elementary difference in the physical organisation of the two sexes by an examination of the outward appearance of men and women in different climes, nor can we arrive at a completely satisfactory conclusion by testing, however scientifically, the reactions of men and women to certain stimuli. The particular reaction with which we are concerned may, of course, be studied in animals, but among human beings it is affected by conscious thought and ethical impulse, and is far more difficult to dissect.

It is not without significance that the cult of "individualism" which is closely identified with the modern woman's movement, is antagonistic to the ties and claims of family life, and that it finds a large number of its supporters among women

<sup>1</sup> It is not contended here that there may be no connection between structural variation and temperamental variation. The apparent lack of connection may be due to insufficient data. The writer does not profess to judge. But even if she were presented with proofs that secondary sex characteristics are not consistently revealed in structure, she would still reserve her opinion as to temperamental differentiation, which she believes to be even more fundamental.

who have either missed or refused marriage. What would have been the rate of progress of ethical conceptions of altruism, which are the moral foundations of society, had woman, earlier in our race history, decided for an individualistic scheme of evolution instead of idealising her maternal function and setting a universal standard of impersonal devotion? Could she, on the terms she now proposes, have built up any form of family or social life, and can she, on the same terms, secure the coherence and stability necessary for the family ideal and for true social progress?

In the close connection between the sex-function and those ethical conceptions which most people believe to be of purely intellectual origin, lies the true key to the differentiation of sex-character apart from the physical attributes of sex, and this book is chiefly undertaken to demonstrate some of the fundamental features of that differentiation and its truly beneficent effect on the history of the human race. View in the light of the elementary sex-condition above stated the following opinions of two women—both pioneers in the field of feminine psychology.

“Woman has no destiny apart from man. Man is essential to make her realise herself. . . She is anxious to avoid subjection, also motherhood, and the dependence and impersonality of an ordinary woman’s life, but in doing so she unconsciously deprives herself of her *womanliness*.”<sup>1</sup>

“The women, *womanly* in their innermost depths, who *really feel free only when they give*

<sup>1</sup> Laura Hansson, Preface to “Modern Woman.”

*themselves* are becoming continually more rare, but where such a wholly devoted woman exists she is the highest type which any country has produced."<sup>1</sup>

Note the conviction, implicit in both these utterances, that self-devotion and womanliness are synonymous terms. It is this conviction which modern feminism seeks to combat. Yet Nature has laid upon woman the obligation of winning man and of giving herself in the interests of the race. In its lowest form her instinct may lead to nothing more than sex-seduction : in its highest it is the root not only of the gentle dependence on man and desire for his love and protection, which have always been conventionally feminine attributes, but of that power of self-realisation through abnegation and self-devotion which are indissolubly bound up with human motherhood and with the progress of society from its rude inchoate state up to a highly organised one with ethical conceptions.

By a paradox which can only be understood in the light of the essential connection of sexual and maternal instincts in woman, she feels for the man she loves a kind of maternal devotion quite apart from passion. Her own physical dependence on a being who is larger, stronger, and more self-reliant, will not prevent the gentlest woman from regarding him with something of the fierce, protective love which the she-bear bestows on her cubs. The civilised woman, it seems, extends to her mate and to all whom she

<sup>1</sup> Ellen Key, "The Woman Movement," p. 7.

loves some measure of the maternal protective feeling, and this is the true origin of her power of selfless devotion.

This attempt to carry the question of a distinctive feminine psychology into the realms of biology must necessarily suffer, both in expression and illustration, from the fact that the author of it is not a biologist, and indeed has no scientific equipment of any kind. But it must stand as an instinctive groping after truth, and since none of the writers who are usually quoted as authorities on sex differences have attacked the question precisely from this point of view there is no need to quote from them either for or against the theory of sex differentiation.

In setting up a standard of womanliness, or rather in recognising what public opinion acclaims as that standard, it may very well be necessary to get rid of characteristics which are really secondary, and often quite inessential to true womanliness. The test to be applied to such characteristics is the relation they bear to the sex-function. Viewed in this light many traits may be essential at one period of history but non-essential at others. Some of the more ephemeral are like the scent of flowers—calculated to attract the roving male. Others are exaggerated fashions, like crinolines or immense head-dresses, which had little real relation to the ostensible function of clothing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The psychology of dress is too complicated a subject to be treated here. Exaggerations in dress remind us that the ostensible function—to conceal—is in truth but a perversion of the original idea, which was to draw attention to the part clothed.



Such femininities as blushing, fainting, giggling, the exaggerated sensibility of one period and the assumption of callousness in another, are all secondary psychological characteristics ; they may disappear without touching the fundamental one because it is obvious that they have no vital connection with the function of maternity. The conventionally masculine qualities of courage, humour or originality may be more useful, in connection with the maternal function, than timidity, fragility or exaggerated sensibility, and, as a matter of fact, women have always been more richly endowed in these former respects than men suppose. The law of the attraction of opposites has compelled women to simulate certain qualities in order to draw to them the type of male who, being at the opposite pole from these artificial femininities, was exactly the type of husband to be desired. It is a healthy, normal instinct which makes females seek the male who seems to possess strength of mind and body. He will best be able to protect her and her family. Men simulate virility (often in its less pleasing aspects) for the same reason that women have cultivated excessive femininity.

But beneath this surface froth of real and artificially acquired characteristics, which have always been influenced by time, place, and class, the quality which has coloured the conception of the eternal feminine has always been that of devotion to some outside object—an impersonality which is the negation of individualism. The practical value of this quality to the race is too obvious to be dwelt on here, for, as has been said already, the speciali-

sation of the human mother and her self-surrender to her maternal function cannot fail to be of inestimable benefit to the helpless child. The growth of the human brain itself is facilitated by such surrender, and who shall say that by the same means its evolution has not been stimulated? And yet it is precisely the evolution of the brain—the feminine brain—on which is now based the claim that such specialisation has been unfavourable to woman.<sup>1</sup>

Feminists are united in their contention that woman, as an individual, has been sacrificed to the claims of the race. But the point is that modern woman, as an individual, would never have existed without the recognition of those claims. She is the result of them.

The more this question is studied the more certain it appears that the vast majority of writers on feminine psychology have never got beyond the elementary conception of woman as “undeveloped man” which influenced even Huxley’s estimate of the sex. They think of her as a potential male weighted down with the cares and pre-occupations of maternity. Every student of modern feminism should re-read “The Prin-

<sup>1</sup> “The characteristic helplessness of the child, which at first thought appears to be a disadvantage, is in fact the source of human superiority, since the design of nature in providing this condition of helplessness is to afford a lapse of time sufficient for the growth of the very complex mechanism, the human brain . . . that species in which growth is slow are at an advantage if, to the care and nourishment of the female are added the providence and protection of the male.”—Thomas, “Sex and Society,” p. 227.

cess" in order to realise how little advance in constructive theory has been made in half a century of feminist thought and work. The synopsis of Lady Psyche's lecture reads like a gentle parody of many modern woman's rights books. Even Mrs. Hartley, who lays such stress on the importance and dignity of the maternal function, cannot quite escape the taint. She thinks motherhood has kept woman from the more "broadly human" aspect of life and has confined her in a narrow prison of sex; and yet, what can be more "broadly human" than bearing and rearing children of either sex to take their places in the world. Frau Mayreder, of course, goes much further.

"The compulsion of woman to perform the duties of propagation places her under a natural disadvantage. The same . . . peculiarities which in one direction equip woman for the duties of propagation . . . in another direction bring woman to the state in which she is the mere tool of sex . . . The teleological peculiarities which dispose woman to motherhood create at the same time an impediment in her mental development . . . The higher the individual life rises in the scale of worth, and the more complete it becomes . . . the more easily does it lose a proportionate interest in the duties of propagation."

With all these harpings on an ancient string the leaders of the true woman's movement must now have done. If her sex-function makes woman "inferior" to man for some social purposes, it makes her vastly superior for others, and whether

it weights her down or not it is certain that with it she must sink or swim. A certain number of women may succeed in reducing what is typically feminine in them to a minimum, chiefly, as Frau Mayreder points out, through intellectual asceticism. Following these lines a few may reach heights of intellectual achievement not hitherto scaled by their sex, but they will not be able to hand on the victories they have won, and their progress—if it really is progress—will be individual, quite apart from that of their sex as a whole.

To turn now to the more practical and obvious effects of sex differentiation. Whether physical maternity is absolutely necessary to develop the typically feminine or not, a vast range of social aptitudes is by no means incompatible with typical femininity—may indeed grow out of it. Women may be essentially feminine at heart, while their natural powers may be to some extent atrophied ; still the test remains constant and certain. As one rings a coin to find out if it is base or good metal so you can test a woman's character by this criterion—is she, or is she not, of the mother type? If she is not she is not truly womanly. How can she be? The fact of physical womanhood connotes a physiological progress in cycles which begin in girlhood and last till late middle life, when a woman's character often alters in accordance with the physical change which then takes place. Married or single she is subject for all these years to a continual manifestation of a capacity for reproductive activity, which influences

her every action, and to imagine that this has relatively little effect on her psychology is to overlook the most elementary principles of biology. Her sex-characteristics are not, perhaps, more marked in their own way than those of man, but they certainly make a greater demand on her nervous energy, and are far more constant and regular in their manifestations. The vast majority of feminists seem to shirk these facts, or to wilfully minimise them, by attempting to relegate woman's sex-life merely to her relations with man or to the comparatively short periods of actual bearing and rearing of children. Potential motherhood, however, gives every woman a share not only in the sex-burden but in the sex-heritage. It is futile to go back to the more primitive forms of life for the key to modern woman. She is the heir of the ages, just as man is, and on her is laid the obligation, which is also her privilege, to utilise that heritage and not to sell it for a mess of pottage.

What therefore are the mental characteristics of the typically feminine woman? In a striking essay published in the *National Review* for 1858 and reprinted by Dr. J. L. Tayler in his recent book on "The Nature of Woman," W. D. Roscoe analyses the mind which he believes to be typically feminine.

"Are the minds of women, however, different from those of men? The indignation with which this is often denied seems to indicate a deeply fixed impression that the male type of mind, or what passes for such, is the higher in order and

more deeply to be desired. We are not quite sure that this is so. . . . The most obvious characteristics of the feminine mind are delicacy of perceptive power and rapidity of movement. A woman sees a thousand things which escape a man! . . . Mentally she takes more impressions in the same time than a man does . . . with not less swiftness of movement they work out results. . . . It is not as deductive reasoners that women have advanced the conquests of thought. . . . The female mind . . . is valuable not so much in conducting deductive operations as in furnishing and suggesting the materials for deductive thought . . . either they have a marvellous lightning-like faculty of induction or a perhaps still more inexplicable one of direct insight. Whatever range we may ascribe to this latter faculty, it still remains certain that women are incessant and rapid generalisers, and also often hasty and rash ones. . . . If we were called upon to indicate the most marked and deep-seated distinction between the minds of men and women, we should say that the minds of men rested in generals and were stored with particulars, and that the minds of women rested in particulars and were prolific in general facts. . . . And the mind of woman is more fluid, as it were, than that of a man; it moves more easily, and its operations have a less cohesive and permanent character. A woman thinks transiently and in a hand to mouth sort of way; she makes a new observation and a new deduction for each case and constantly also a new general idea. A man, less quick and less fertile, accumulates facts,

collects them in classes and combines them by principles ; a woman's mind is a running stream, ever emptying itself and ever freshly supplied. She takes a bucketful when she wants it. A man's mind is a reservoir arranged to work a water-wheel . . . connected with these distinctions is the fact that . . . they differ from man in having far more varied, subtle and numerous inlets to knowledge ; and they rely upon these and do not care to remember and arrange previous experience, as a man does."

To a woman who has had, perhaps, rather unusual opportunities of testing her own mentality by that of different types of men, this appears as a lucid and illuminating description of a woman's brain and its inherent truth can be tested in relation to the essentially womanly function. Quickness of intuition, sympathy, attention to detail, emotionalism — all these are qualities developed by and essential to the performance of maternal duties. Freshness of perception and that constant re-valuation of facts which Mr. Roscoe notes are exactly what are needed in relation to immature and growing minds, and make women by far the best educators of young children.<sup>1</sup>

Very few women who have had much opportunity of measuring their own mentality by that of men can fail to have realised a difference in quality very closely corresponding to that

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the work of Dr. Maria Montessori, which is a new note in education, or at any rate the first successful application of a new theory.

indicated by Roscoe—if they have so failed it is probably because a defective education has eradicated their feminine advantages without removing their feminine handicap. But few men or women, fortunately, are conscious of their own mental processes; on such a subject candour is perhaps difficult. Each observer can, of course, only vouch for his or her own experience, but there is no reason, especially when it confirms a very generally accepted view, to believe it exceptional.<sup>1</sup> It would be interesting to collect the views of representative women on the subject, and doubtless there would be great variation—from Mrs. Poyser to Amelia Osborne; but, whatever may be the opinions of women as to their own mental processes, few would care to deny that they are accustomed to trust to their instincts rather than their reason, and if they have cause to regret this it is usually because their instincts have been dulled or thwarted in early life.

If, however, we are prepared to recognise a difference in mental processes which constitute a characteristically feminine or masculine type of mind we are faced by two feminist assumptions. The first is that this characteristic difference is to

<sup>1</sup> Occasion offered of reading this part of this book to a young friend, educated at high school and college, and now engaged on a branch of scientific work rarely taken up by women. She acquiesced in every word as representing her own experience, and enquiry among a number of women professionally employed (chiefly in journalism) has confirmed the belief that the most able are usually the first to recognise a difference both in point of view and in mental processes between themselves and the men with whom they work.



be deplored, because it makes competition with man in an open field difficult for woman, and the second is that the difference is not really characteristic but is the result of training and specialisation. These two assumptions have coloured the vocational training of women in the last fifty years and are vital factors to-day. The theory of a natural dividing line between the sexes has always been assumed by feminists to imply a vocational handicap for women.

So long as no doubt existed as to woman's vocation the question of her education was a comparatively simple one, and to those who criticise the upbringing of the women of the early Victorian and preceding period no better answer can be found than the books, letters, and diaries which depict domestic life of those times. Notwithstanding the contempt with which the younger generation is apt to regard the Victorian woman, there is reason to believe that she, living under conditions of law and custom apparently less favourable to her as an individual, was really more in touch with her environment, had a fuller and more satisfying life than her great-granddaughter. The mothers and grandmothers of the middle-aged people of to-day live in one's memory as persons of character, whose faces bore witness to a life full of incident, and perhaps of care, but by no means devoid of spiritual fulfilment. The writer remembers, in a small provincial town, a group of such middle-class house-mothers, with incomes small by modern ideas, and large families. Mrs. Gaskell, Mrs. Oliphant and Anthony

Trollope have drawn such groups best, perhaps, of all last century novelists. The striking fact about the lives of these women was the vital character of their interests and the energy with which they pursued them. Their daughters and granddaughters are "killing time" with afternoon bridge and morning golf. These women undoubtedly had the defects of their qualities, but they were certainly industrious over things that mattered—they were producers and organisers, not merely spenders, like the typical young wife in H. G. Wells's "Marriage."<sup>1</sup> Who shall dare to say that they were not "educated," in the true sense, or that their personality and individuality were not developed quite as fully as those of many a modern girl who has not taken to heart Bacon's saying that we should use knowledge to give ourselves repose and contentment, and not distaste or repining.

In taking up the cudgels on behalf of a generation to which our mothers and grandmothers belonged there may be a suspicion of sentiment. It is true one's recollection of this generation is limited to those who had reached maturity before their character impressed itself on the youthful mind, but no one who has had many friends and relations of the mid-Victorian type can fail to ask themselves whether the younger generation will

<sup>1</sup> Of course, they all had what would now be considered "large families." "Apart from the fact that four children to each fertile marriage is the least that will maintain the number and quality of the race unaltered, a woman who has given birth to only two children is very obviously a person of insufficient occupation."—Whetham, "Heredity and Society."

mellow as finely, or create on their descendants the same benign impression. Apart from the secret of repose, which seems to have been entirely lost somewhere towards the end of the nineteenth century, it is difficult to believe that the typical modern young woman, whose mind has been crammed, and who has never a moment free from study or pleasure, can possibly develop the true independence and originality of thought and character which, underneath all her little proprieties and conventions, has marked the woman of a more leisurely and self-communing age. Bitten with the craze for *doing* few women have time for *being* but it was exactly in *being*, in a cultivation of their minds for their own sakes, and not for shop window or mercantile purposes, that lay the distinctive feature of the intellectual and spiritual life of the despised Victorian woman.

Yet another point before we leave the "uneducated woman" of the pre-higher education days. We have spoken of the group of women writers of the nineteenth century (Jane Austen, of course, belongs to the late eighteenth). An even more interesting group for present purposes can be formed of the letter writers whose family budgets are now being given to the world. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu we have known for long, and Frances, Lady Shelley, Lady Ann Barnard, Lady Elizabeth Coke, Sarah, Lady Lyttleton, and Lady Dorothy Nevill—to mention a few of the better known letter writers and diarists—between them cover more than a century. They were not blue stockings but women of fashion who had

had the ordinary polite education of their day. They lived, of course, in a society which was educative in itself, but that would not be sufficient to account for the breadth of interest, the genuine power of criticism and the discrimination which they display. Moreover, the lives of these ladies, though some were country dames to whom London for a few weeks was a wild dissipation, were neither vapid, empty, nor marked with discontent. An immense zest for living seems to breathe through their most homely communications. These ladies are, perhaps, the "pick of the bunch," but their letters, real letters to friends and family, cannot have been exceptional in the society in which they lived. De Quincey writing in 1840 (*Essay on Style*) says "So far as concerns idiomatic English we are satisfied, from the many beautiful letters which we have heard, upon chance occasions, from every quarter of the empire, that they, the *educated women* of Great Britain, are the true and best depositaries of the old mother-idiom." "Women are our superiors, and are necessarily so," says Legouv e (*Histoire morale des femmes*, 1818), "in the art of letter writing and in conversation." . . . "Nor is there any purer or more graceful English than that which accomplished women now speak and write"—thus writes Macaulay in 1848.

It appears, therefore, that had it not been for their unfortunate obsession by the idea of "equality" the pioneers might have found, already existing, a foundation on which to lay their edifice of female education. The power of expressing

oneself in pure and idiomatic English, and the gift of having some personality to express (which must be the case with successful letter writers) is a not-to-be-despised equipment for anyone. The consciousness of knowing anything thoroughly and the satisfaction of doing anything really well—if it is only to know one's native literature and to use the mother tongue instead of misusing it—these are surely signs of a not illiberal education.

But, while in many respects we may feel that an earlier generation of women were not so far wrong as their successors suppose either in their theory of education or their philosophy of life, we are bound to admit that the changed conditions of social and industrial organisation called for corresponding changes in the habits of women. And here the feminist pioneers were quite right in diverging from the masculine view. The vast majority of men were ready to accept the task of supporting in idleness a number of healthy women, whose work had been taken away, and so long as those women were satisfied to eke out a meagre existence as poor relations, when their principal supporter was withdrawn, their male belongings might be reckoned on to uphold them in their false standard of gentility. It is all to the good that we have departed for ever from the theory of "ladyhood" as divorced from all kinds of manual work, but it is not to the good that we have adopted the theory that woman's work, to be worth doing, must be the same kind of work, and done in the same way and for the same reward as man's.

“Love is the life history of women, it is an episode for men. Reputation, honour, dignity all depend on a woman’s behaviour in this one respect.”

—“De l’influence des passions,” Madame de Staël.

“I wish I could impress upon women some understanding of many things they are taught to discard. In their passion for refinement they lose the very essence of life, and in doing so they often fling man back upon immorality in his seeking for the primitive. Man instinctively reaches out for the primal mate—and too often she isn’t there.”

“Ideas of a Plain Countrywoman,” p. 94.

“Poor Janet has been sadly taken in, and yet there was nothing improper on her side; she did not rush into the match inconsiderately; there was no lack of foresight. She took three days to consider his proposals and . . . asked the advice of everybody connected with her whose opinion was worth having. . . . This seems as if nothing were a security for matrimonial comfort.”—“Mansfield Park,” Jane Austen.

“It is not the hasty love marriages that most women fear now for their daughters, but the worldly-wise marriage without love.”—Ellen Key, “Woman Movement,” p. 147.

“Profit by the joy of love which God has given you, without forgetting that it *is* love; that is, the desire of well-being not of yourself but of another. . . . Love cannot be harmful so long as it *is* love, and not the wolf of egoism in the sheep’s coat of love.”—Tolstoy.

## CHAPTER III.

### MARRIAGE : PASSION AND AFFECTION.

IN discussing a question of such wide and varied aspects as marriage the writer must disclaim any pretension to treat it authoritatively. Whether from the historical, the legal, the sociological or the psychological point of view, human marriage is a subject which needs for its discussion not only prolonged study, but a power of scientific analysis of the evidence presented which are quite beyond her powers. But since marriage must always occupy a foremost place in any study of the vocation of woman it was necessary to discuss some of the more fundamental aspects of it, and the tendencies which affect it, before attempting an estimate of the part it plays in the lives of modern women.

When we speak of marriage we usually mean the legal form recognised in our own country by the State. Until recent years the sanction of the Church and some form of religious ceremony were also deemed essential, but outside the Catholic community there are many people nowadays who

consider the civil ceremony as sufficient for all practical purposes, and the number of people who "would not feel properly married" without a church service is undoubtedly diminishing. When we consider how large a part the influence of the Church has had in determining the present form of marriage this fact is not without significance. In any case by marriage we still mean that form of public mating which presumes an intention on the part of the contractors to remain together for the rest of their lives. The Church services emphasise this aspect; the legal form required by the State does not do so, but the fact that it is difficult and expensive to dissolve the contract, once made, is proof of the desire that it shall be, if possible, permanent. The idea of permanent or life-long mating is, therefore, a part of our conception of "marriage," and although most educated persons are aware that different conditions obtain in certain civilised countries, we are also inclined to assume that marriage necessarily means a life-long union with one mate.

In his monumental work "The History of Human Marriage," Westermarck, of course, does not accept this definition. Marriage to him is the relationship which keeps the male and female together until after the birth of the offspring, and the prolongation of this relationship, with the assumption of parental duties by the male, is merely part of the evolution of marriage. Of the various causes which played a part in this evolution the most important, in the writer's belief, is to be



found in the desire of woman for a more permanent relationship with the father of her child. At what stage the State stepped in and set the seal of some form of legal recognition, with corresponding obligations, on the union, seems difficult to determine, but what is certain is that the recognition of the family as a social unit was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, attempt of man at social organisation.<sup>1</sup> Nor can there be any doubt that one reason for this was the fact that the family, with its more or less constant relationship between parents, afforded the best chance for the offspring—a consideration which the maternal instinct would also appreciate.

At the same time it is instructive to find that monogamy, which to an ordinary observer is the last word of civilisation, and hardly to be expected of primitive man, is not only strictly observed in some communities on a much lower plane than our own<sup>2</sup>, but is actually practised by some of the lower animals and especially by certain birds, who mate absolutely for life. Westermarck believes monogamy to have characterised a primitive stage of human development. With growing civilisation came inequalities of social status, and the possession of more than one wife was a form of luxury. Later on, he says, the tendency to monogamy re-asserted itself as part of a more refined conception of the marriage relation, and in deference to the desires and sensibilities of woman.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck, Chapter III.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Chapter XIII.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Chapter XII.

It is perhaps presumptuous to criticise so learned an authority, but a great deal depends on the interpretation of this last statement. Is it true that man is becoming more truly monogamous with advancing civilisation, or is it merely that, in deference to the sensibilities of women, he has permitted the monogamous ideal to prevail in law while reserving by custom the right to a very different form of life? It is obvious that the loose definition of the word "marriage" adopted by Westermarck makes confusion inevitable. The monogamous union of primitive man and woman was, as a rule, easily and often terminated. As soon as he became civilised and woman as a kind of property formed part of his wealth, the marriage tie became more binding—otherwise his property could not be safe, but at this stage monogamy was not always the ideal, the possession of only one wife being sometimes a sign of social inferiority.

The evolution of the legal form of monogamous marriage was undoubtedly influenced by two main forces—the desire of man to secure his property and the sensibilities of women, reinforced by ethical considerations put forward by the Christian Church. But as this evolution proceeded it is obvious that the term "marriage" only covers a part of those relations with the other sex which were and are the normal experience of the majority of men. It is only by the introduction of the most powerful ethical stimulus, such as was provided by the teaching of the Christian church, that the true monogamous ideal becomes possible,

and while it is undoubtedly cherished and sought after by some of the highest types of men, and while modern civilisation has certainly refined, in many respects, the closest of human relationships, yet it seems open to question whether Westermarck is right in assuming that the recognition of monogamy, as the legal form of marriage, necessarily coincides with an increasingly monogamous habit among males. In discussions on the subject of human marriage, such as are to be found in "The Truth about Woman" and elsewhere, no attention seems to be paid to this striking antithesis between the sexual desires of man and the form of marriage which, under various influences, he consented to establish. Mrs. Hartley is particularly illogical, because she devotes considerable space to both sides of the subject treated separately. Yet she can see in monogamous marriage nothing but the "patriarchal idea of woman as property."

The subject, however distasteful it may be to many men and women, is one that needs to be clearly faced, because, whether we like it or not, our social relationships are now in the melting-pot, and upon our understanding of these fundamental problems depends not, of course, our own happiness, for the dispensation under which we were born and bred has already marked us too deeply, but the welfare of a generation still plastic. The women of the generation to which the writer belongs were brought up in a tradition of reticence in sex matters which is now generally condemned. Even from the point of view of hygiene it

certainly had great disadvantages. It was possible, under this system, for a girl of the upper classes to grow up and even marry without understanding the simplest physiological facts. From the point of view of feminine psychology this is extremely interesting, and since it may be doubted by some students of the question the writer can vouch for it absolutely in cases of which she has had personal knowledge. The fact has a bearing on the question of marriage which must be brought out later, for the present it is only introduced to point a contrast in female education.

During the last few months the White Slave traffic has not only been publicly discussed, written about in books exposed on station and other bookstalls, and made the subject of a wide propaganda, but as a topic of conversation it has ceased to cause the slightest discomposure among young women and girls, either in public, in private or in mixed assemblies.<sup>1</sup> This, too, is a matter of personal observation. Moreover the writer's attention has been drawn to literature on sex questions publicly exposed for sale by certain

<sup>1</sup> The passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act in 1913 was prefaced by a campaign in which the principal feature was the relation of stories of the "trapping" of innocent girls. In an article in the *Englishwoman* for July, 1913, Mrs. Billington Greig asserts that, having taken up a systematic investigation of such stories, she was unable to find one authentic case. Commissioner Bullock, speaking at the International Congress on the White Slave Traffic, also spoke of the exaggeration of this special aspect of the question. Yet the writer has heard these stories repeated *ad infinitum* by young women, sometimes with fear, more often with a kind of morbid satisfaction.

Women's Suffrage Societies. Any lingering tradition of reticence, or even of modesty, must have been destroyed in the minds of young women reading such works, which deal, very often, with the pathology of sex questions, and are outspoken in inverse ratio to their scientific value, but being put forward as part of a propaganda which is ostensibly concerned with the progress of woman cannot fail to have great effect on the young, ignorant and impressionable.

The happy mean between the two extremes of ignorance or precocious "knowingness," in which a sane and healthy appreciation of the facts of nature should still exclude all pathological observations, is extremely hard and (under our present system of education) appears even impossible to secure. If girls are to be brought up to a just appreciation of the facts of nature it is practically certain that the growing tendency, by which the school entirely supersedes the home, and the celibate teacher the mother, must be modified, but this must form the subject of another chapter. At the present moment the situation, succinctly put, is that the eyes of young girls of the educated classes are more or less opened, and that they are bound to view marriage in a very different light from that in which it appeared to their mothers and grandmothers. That their point of view gives them true perspective is hardly possible and it appears likely, from the discontent and mental disturbance rife among educated women, that the fruit of the tree of knowledge is bitter eating.

The truth is that in the matter of sex relations, there is little difference between the mental condition of the girls of yesterday and of to-day—both were and are equally unable to appreciate truths which are solely matters of experience and mature observation. But the girl of yesterday was spared painful thoughts and carried into her relations with the other sex a freshness and illusion which were quite as likely to ensure her happiness as the “worldly wisdom” of her modern successor. The theory of virgin innocence in sex matters seems to have been a mid-Victorian shibboleth. The women of Jane Austen, though their standard of propriety was high, were not ignorant of life’s meaning. The early letters of Lady Sarah Spencer Lyttelton, written to a sailor brother while she was still in her teens, surprise us by quoting more than one “racy” story, and in particular the description of a heterogeneous *ménage* in which, on a country house visit, her father found himself. High principle is not necessarily associated with prudishness, but at the same time a knowledge of the shady side of life need not be either the result or the accompaniment of a healthy and natural attitude towards life’s problems.

The general tendency of the day in every kind of art towards a realism which is often an euphemism for ugliness and squalor is reflected in the attitude of young women towards marriage. Sensibility and sentiment are equally out of fashion, and in this particular question of sex-relations it is urged that girls ought not only to be brought up

to understand their own physiology, but to have no illusions as to man. But what is illusion and what is truth? Truth lives ever at the bottom of the well, and we may be no nearer seeing her when we have mounted the latest scientific spectacles than when we gaze through the rosy mists of youthful idealism. In discussing the relationship of men and women the mature observer will recognise (what the youthful one can only instinctively feel if we leave her instincts alone) that it is almost impossible to say how a man or a woman will appear, or how they will act, in relation to another man or woman with whom they are mated. There is this element of the incalculable, the imponderable, about human beings in this special relationship which upsets all theories based on their conduct in other connections, and it is because this element, which may be called psychic affinity, enters into marriage in so large a degree, that that region must always remain, to a great extent, uncharted. The attempt on the part of some modern feminists to set up sign-posts (usually indicative of the depravity of man), by which woman may be guided in her choice of a mate, and their claim that woman is more likely to find happiness with her mate if she is under no illusions as to the nature of the emotion which unites them, or if her reason and not her emotions is involved, are futile efforts to chart this unknown country.

The quality of the attraction which draws men and women into the bonds of marriage varies greatly, but the nature of that attraction is funda-

mentally the same. With most people the physical attraction is paramount, and "love at first sight," even in a non-romantic age, is by no means uncommon. Most people have known personally many cases in which it has been the prelude to marriage. In such cases there is no question as to the nature of the feeling when first engendered, for although further acquaintance may reveal beauties of mind and disposition which may strengthen the first impression, yet the first emotion must have been one of strong physical attraction. It is, however, probable that the female sex, although not immune, is far less subject at any period of life to this form of attraction, and in most cases of love at first sight it is the male who is attracted, and who creates by his wooing an answering emotion in the object of his affection. Far from believing this form of attraction to be degrading, either to the adored or the adorer, the writer sees in it the possibilities of one of the most disinterested forms of love. It is true that physical gratification may be one of its aims, but it is by no means incompatible with a most unselfish devotion, and because a man feels drawn to a woman in this particular way it is still perfectly possible that, obeying ethical influences, and out of reverence and tenderness for the loved one, he may be prepared to make every possible sacrifice if her interests or inclinations seem to demand it. It is under the stress of such feelings that he justifies the contention that it is chiefly because her interests and inclinations demand a binding legal contract between him and her, before she becomes his mate, that marriage as



an institution is so deeply rooted in all civilised societies.

There is a second form of attraction which is the result of continued propinquity, and judging from the reports of young persons this is far more usual in the present day than love at first sight. Opportunities of association are, of course, more numerous for young men and maidens than they were, and the chances of selecting a mate among many friends of the other sex are greater, but at the same time it is no uncommon experience for one who has had many acquaintances and friends of the opposite sex to fall in love suddenly with a comparative stranger. Psychologically there is no doubt that strangeness is more stimulating to love than familiarity. At the same time as the reasoning powers are cultivated and rationalism affects more and more the youth of the country, there will undoubtedly be a larger percentage of marriages in which custom, friendship and mutual appreciation, rather than passion, are the compelling forces. The writer believes that the vast majority of women of the more well-to-do classes approach matrimony from this point of view, and that when they become wooers they are too often acting deliberately, and not instinctively, because the tendency of modern education is to minimise not only the sexual feelings but the sex-attractions of such women.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hartley, on the contrary, believes that woman is always the wooer, driven by the "life-force" of which she is guardian. The nearer we are to nature the more true this will be, the passivity of woman being merely the passivity of

It may be objected to this that if modern education makes sex matters clear to young girls they are more likely to understand passion and its true place in marriage than women of a previous generation, to whom the subject was wrapped in mystery. Here, however, we are groping on the edge of a subject which has its psychological as well as its material aspect. It appears to the writer that in the presence of the eternal mystery of life, which, for a woman, is indissolubly bound up with the sexual emotion, there may be more possibility of passion in a certain degree of mystery than in too intimate a knowledge or too searching an analysis, while an acquaintance with the pathology of sex relations may poison the very founts of love. The instinct of a woman for reticence and for secrecy has always enveloped her in her love-life with a certain mysticism, and she does well to preserve the veil of illusion and idealism which has been spun round marriage by the refinements of civilised and cultivated humanity.

One reason for the increase of marriages of affection as compared with marriages of passion must certainly be found in the fact that both men and women marry later, and at an age when economic considerations, mutual interests and other circumstances, naturally play a greater part in determining the choice of a mate. In such cases, however, the male will almost certainly

the magnet. But modern woman is overlaid with a crust of convention, and so far as educational influences are concerned, this crust is being added to, not broken down.

develop stronger feelings as a result of the mixture of gratitude and expectation with which he regards the woman who is prepared to join her life with his. It is, on the contrary, a well known fact that it is by no means uncommon for women to enter into the conjugal relation, and to have children, who have never experienced sexual emotion. To such, naturally, the beauty and the mystery of passion are a sealed book, and from this class in all probability are drawn some of those who believe that self-surrender and sacrifice are necessarily fatal to the highest development. Fortunately, the maternal instinct may co-exist with an entire absence of the sexual instinct, so that the interests of the race are not necessarily jeopardised. Whether genuine married happiness is possible under such unequal conditions is problematical.

A very important question in this connection is whether, in promising fidelity to one woman, a lover is really undertaking more than he can perform. When he postpones marriage to the latest possible moment man is certainly not offering to his bride that gift of a life-long devotion which is part of the ideal of true love. Women often feel more flattered by the attentions of a man who is no longer young, but if genuine love were properly understood and appreciated they would, perhaps, value more highly the honest and often clumsy love-making of the youth. Many a man has been spoilt for marriage by falling in love first with a woman who has made him despise himself for the very ardour and simplicity which

are part of a pure and sincere affection, and unless he marries early and happily there is very little chance that a man can live the life prescribed by the monogamous ideal. Even if he does marry early and happily the essential difference between the physiological needs of men and women may leave him, after years of married life, exposed to desires and temptations which have no parallel for women of the same age. Where a man is emotionally starved at home, as is the case with a large number of men of ardent and affectionate temperaments, the result is practically certain.

In many cases parental affection fills up an emotional gap, but as the family diminishes in size and family life is more and more merged in wider social ties, the claims made by children on their parents and the place they fill in the parental life must also diminish. It is a commonplace nowadays that a woman cannot find sufficient occupation in family life to fill her days—a proposition that must be considered later on, but if this is the case it is also true that the average man cannot be expected to find an emotional outlet in a family restricted to one or two children, in whose upbringing and education, moreover, his duties are by custom increasingly delegated to others. For a man, moreover, parenthood has not the intimate personal significance it bears for women, and, while the natural desire for children and the love of them is very real and powerful in many men, it is the love of woman which they primarily crave and which, to many of the most

virile and intellectual, is a positive necessity. Therefore when the marriage relation settles down into one in which love is absent, whether that result is the fault of the woman or not, the errant nature of the male will reassert itself, and can only be restrained by strong ethical influences such as are supplied by religious teaching, or by the growth of the sentiment of protection and tenderness for the wife which leads to a chivalrous determination not to betray her confidence.

It is the earnest belief of many women who recognise this difficulty that a comradeship between husband and wife, founded on a community of intellectual or vocational interests, may fill up the gap between the sexes due to the physiological differences. It seems to be assumed that man can thus be distracted from his emotional needs. No woman who has enjoyed intellectual comradeship with men will deny the bond that it creates, and between husband and wife it may co-exist with a different form of attachment and form a very perfect union. But there are men—and by no means unintellectual men—in whom the emotional nature and the brain respond to quite different types of women, and a wife may gain intellectual appreciation and comradeship at the price of a more intimate relationship. In such a case she cannot ensure that her mate will not respond to the call of nature, and if he is strong enough to resist, out of deference to her, he may merely be sacrificing his own mental and bodily health on the altar of her temperament. In short we cannot hope to solve the problem by the simple

device of distracting men's attention from their own physiological needs by our intellectual achievements.

The position of woman as regards marriage is fundamentally different from that of man. In the first place her sex needs are on a different plane. The fact, for which the writer can vouch, that it is possible for women to reach maturity without understanding their own physiology is significant in itself, and there is evidence that the modern school of female training is successful in minimising sex influence.<sup>1</sup> Sooner or later the claims of nature will be heard; often the significance of her call will not be understood, but for the vast majority of modern educated women these claims are soon satisfied, and after the birth of one or two children may never be reasserted. This does not mean that women after experiencing marriage and maternity may not fall in love again: quite a large percentage of divorces occur after the first decade of married life,<sup>2</sup> but the writer believes that for the most part the impulses which lead married women to forsake their vows have little connection with real passion. Such women may, and do inspire passion in men, and in a con-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. L. Tayler, in "The Nature of Woman," makes this assertion (p. 37), and adds that in his belief the retardation of feminine development due to education is never completely made up in after life. He considers that this unhealthy cause may be one of the reasons for woman's dissatisfaction.

<sup>2</sup> The late Lord St. Helier said that the eighth year was the most critical. With the modern small family the eighth year marks the release of the average wife from the more pressing duties of maternity.

siderable proportion of cases they indulge in intimacies which have serious results because other men offer them the homage and consideration which they no longer receive from their husbands. In many cases they seek a companionship which is lacking in their own homes, in others they indulge in a form of excitement, but if the truth could be told—and women never tell the truth about these things even to each other—it would probably be found that, apart from women who are pathologically sexual, the vast majority find full emotional completion in marriage with one man, and in bearing and rearing his children.

Woman is, in short, instinctively monogamous, whereas man is instinctively polygamous. The theory of the superior "goodness" of woman rests on this foundation. Morally speaking, man and woman are very much on a level. The really bad woman will plumb the depths of infamy to which many bad men would not descend, the really good man may reach a pinnacle of altruism and selflessness to which few women can attain. But the average man and woman react to ethical impulses in much the same proportion, and if women are what is called more "moral" than men it is, first, because their temptations are less, and second, because woman has built up a social system with severe penalties for those of her sex who transgress its laws. Monogamy, which keeps the errant male to one lawful wife, is the key to this system.

As a matter of fact, monogamy, as embodied

in the ideal of a life-long union, is threatened on many sides. The disillusionment of women is a foe to it. When a young girl from her youth up is habituated to the idea of the depravity of the male sex she is not likely to bring to matrimony that faith and confidence which are often the strongest shields a man can have against temptation.<sup>1</sup> Familiarity breeds contempt. The word divorce no longer suggests social ostracism. Marital infidelity and sex aberrations generally are now so familiarly discussed by young women that their future husbands can hardly feel any necessity for even pretending to a virtue with which they will not be credited. Literature and the stage no longer find their heroines in the young and pure, and the woman with the past is accepted as a respectable member of society. The veils are down, the illusions are gone—we may be wiser and wittier but it is doubtful if women are happier. Lancelot is a more attractive and interesting hero than Galahad—but the price paid by Guinevere was a heavy one. To-day we are inclined to condone our Guineveres, and the result is to weaken that power by which, all through the ages, woman has fought against the prejudices and selfishness of man.

The unequal division between man and woman of the penalty which is attached to transgression of the moral code has been attributed by some

<sup>1</sup> It may be added that there is no true monogamous element at all about such unions as are contracted in certain circles in the United States, where it is said that the prospect of liberal alimony is not left out of the cynical calculations of the bride!



women to the injustice of man. No more ludicrous mistake could be made. It is all in the interests of the polygamous male that there should be as few barriers as possible between his errant fancies and their gratification. Men have never outlawed women or ceased to seek their society because they were outside the social pale. It is woman herself who, in building up society on the basis of monogamy, has safeguarded the wife and mother by a sentence of outlawry on those who will grant favours to man without the sanction of law. The relaxation of this code spells the end of monogamy as an ideal, and the increasing lenience of women towards the free lances of their own sex is a step backwards in the evolution of woman as a social factor. We may yet find ourselves returning to the state prevailing at one period in Greece, in which the courtesan was more important and influential than the wife! Wives, we are told, were taken by their husbands to visit Aspasia and to learn from her! If monogamy is to be respected, and the wife and mother is to preserve her dignity, the free-lance should be penalised; but any society which facilitates a frequent change of partners by men is actually putting a premium on the qualities which make a clever courtesan and penalising instead the maternal and domestic type of woman whose essential demand is for a man of her own. It is not without significance that modern fashions in dress are returning more and more to the bizarre styles in vogue in a licentious period and court. Twenty years ago it was a mark of breeding to

“look a perfect lady ;” to-day the aim and end of fashionable dressing seems to be to make the smart woman look as *demi-mondaine* as possible. To be “lady-like” is to be dowdy.

So far monogamous marriage has been treated merely from the point of view of the man and woman, but it is, of course, essentially because it is conducive to the best interests of the family that it has become so deeply rooted. The family is woman’s chief affair, and it is for her children quite as much, if not more, than for herself that she has fought and conquered so far. But we are now entering a period in which childless marriages, or marriages in which the family is restricted to one or two, are more and more usual, owing, no doubt, very largely to the more advanced age at which unions take place, and to economic pressure, but also to the increased luxury, laziness and self-indulgence of what are known as educated women. With the diminution or (in some cases) disappearance of the family we lose an incentive to monogamous life and may very well expect that man will claim a greater freedom of action. The custom, not by any means unknown in our own country, and believed to have obtained among the Egyptians and other highly civilised peoples, of deferring the actual legal marriage until after the birth of a child has, from the man’s point of view, a good deal to recommend it. Astonishing to relate, however, this finds approval in the eyes of feminists, and even of so independent a feminist as Mrs. Hartley.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “The Truth about Woman,” p. 189.

In reality the two factors to which such a form of union were mainly due had nothing to do with the welfare of women. The first was the male desire for offspring, which the state encouraged, and the second, which influenced the first, was the actual labour value of such offspring. Neither of these influences have the same weight to-day, and no economic compensation to women would minimise the risks run by them under such conditions, while their dignity as human beings would inevitably suffer. Picture the position of the childless woman, discarded and lonely, perhaps after some years of semi-married life. This experiment may have lost her chances of other unions. Her failure may not be hopeless, it may not be her own fault. It may be said that her position would be no worse than that of the childless wife who has failed to retain her husband's affection. But the existence of a legal tie not only gives woman a sense of security—it serves to keep poachers off her preserves. No, while it must be confessed that a form of marriage which was only ratified by offspring would not be without its social advantages it can hardly be reconciled with modern conditions, and especially with that consideration for the feelings and prejudices of women which is an essential feature in modern social progress.

Nevertheless there are many signs of the times which seem to point to a change in the nature of marriage relations which is already beginning. The modification in public opinion is the first subtle indication which will probably soon be

followed by a change of law. While preserving the theory of monogamy it seems only too possible that these changes will really be in the direction of lowering the monogamic ideal, and in such a course there may be grave dangers for women as a whole. This tendency is all the more to be deplored because these changes are largely due to female influence, which was never so strong as it is now, but is emphasised through channels more open to the abnormal than to the average woman. It may appear to the reader that the monogamous system, as here presented, involves a clash of interests between the sexes which renders sex warfare inevitable, and there is little doubt that this is so. But the sex warfare consequent on the claims of woman and the family as opposed to the errant fancies of man has been operating since the earliest days of social organisation and it is never likely to cease. It can only be allayed if an environment is provided in which both sexes are primarily concerned with the duties provided by nature, and if this is impossible it is still our duty to see that the type of woman who is best fitted for natural duties—the maternal type—should be secured as far as possible from the effects of competition with the non-maternal type and from masculine caprice.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “The existence of Sex Antagonism *per se* is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that the male and female are differently organised, and that Nature has set them different tasks to perform in conjunction with one another . . . given a satisfactory environment, if the male and female concerned themselves only with the duties Nature has determined for them, sex antagonism would be latent. If one sex, for some reason or

A monogamous system, with very restricted opportunities of divorce, appears to be the best security the maternal type of woman can have. In her interests, and in the interests of the family, free-lance women must be penalised. Free-lance men cannot be penalised in the same way for obvious reasons, and women have never even attempted to use the weapon of social ostracism against them. Hedged round by penalties for any transgression of its code monogamous marriage is the strong castle of defence for the wife and mother, but there are indications that those walls are being undermined.

A few words must be interpolated here on the question of those penalties whereby the monogamous woman guards her position. Among the most striking outcomes of feminist activity in this country is the growing sentimentality on the subject of illegitimate children. The unmarried mother is by way of becoming a heroine in some circles, and her popularity reaches a climax when she murders her unhappy offspring. A pamphlet in the writer's possession, printed and circulated by one of the many leagues which profess to be working for the advancement of women, describes the sort of Home to which the modern Magdalen should be invited, and where she would be prepared for re-installation in society. It would be so much more comfortable than the vast majority of situa-

other, did not perform its duty, or because one sex required facilities to perform its duty which interfered with the convenience of the other sex, antagonism would be stimulated."—  
"Sex Antagonism," W. Heape.

tions for which, as "respectable" young persons they could qualify, that some girls might be inclined to prefer the reward of being naughty to the privilege of remaining good ! The difficulty is the same as that which meets the reformer of prison life and poor relief. If the disagreeable effects of transgression are minimised we are removing a strong stimulus to self-control. Whether a lack of self-control always constitutes a moral trespass is neither here nor there. Some of the finest natures and the most generous may err where narrower and more calculating ones will keep the straight path.

One thing is certain, that nature and law are often, apparently, at variance in individual cases ; but are they really at variance when we view the subject as a whole ? People who advocate measures which, under various specious guises, have no other end than free love, forget that as soon as man began any form of communal existence he recognised the need for a strict regulation by law and custom of sex-relations, and that the ideal of a life-long monogamous mating has grown slowly but surely out of this recognition. If that conception is in the interests of women as a whole, and of the race, it cannot be said to be antagonistic to nature, and in that case individual women must suffer in order to uphold it. The individualist side of feminism is clearly demonstrated in the claim that each one must be the judge of the conditions under which he or she will mate. The hungry man who is punished for stealing a loaf of bread may not be guilty of a

moral trespass for it may be argued that nature imposes on him the duty of keeping himself alive, but if any form of stealing was allowed to go unpunished the whole fabric of private ownership would be undermined. Similarly if we recognise the "right to motherhood" of every woman, without any legal tie to the father of her child, we are undermining marriage as a social institution. The man who steals and the woman who "goes wrong" sin primarily against society, and it is society which punishes them.

But, just as humane modern law deals gently with first offenders, so the very strongest distinction should be made between the girl who, in the ignorance or blind passion of youth has made one slip, and the older and more sophisticated transgressor. The state of affairs in the maternity wards of many workhouses, and the general lack of discrimination in this matter, are a crying reproach to women whose powers in local government might well have been used for the reform of conditions which are essentially a feminine concern. Even so, the badly needed homes which would receive and care for all youthful victims or first offenders, and to which any girl could turn for help in her hour of trouble, need not be run on sentimental lines. Perhaps the best course would be that admittance should involve a residence of a certain length of time during which, either before or after the birth of her child, the young woman should be trained in or expected to do some useful work, and under no circumstances should she be allowed to shirk

her maternal duties. Obviously the critical period is the one in which such an unmarried mother returns to take up a place in the outside world, and the difficulty of giving her help and support without making her helpless and dependent is the main one, but ought not to be insoluble to feminine tact, insight and resourcefulness. There are one or two private ventures which try to do the work on a small scale and with inadequate funds, but a very wide field is open here for the constructive ability and philanthropic zeal of women.

An element of discipline and an attempt to reinforce by religious teaching the moral controls whose breakdown has led to the transgression are essential features to any such scheme. Nothing need be said here about the "moral" aspect of the question, but it is certain that neither social laws nor abstract ethical conceptions are sufficient for the enforcement of those inhibitions which civilised man and woman must practise in the interests of the community. Religion, supplementing the social sense by an appeal to the spiritual sense, connecting bodily purity with spiritual development, and providing at once an incentive and a reward for those who surrender themselves to its influence, is a profound social influence, and, despite all that has been said to the contrary by feminists, the Christian religion offers to woman by far the truest guide and the most profound philosophy that the world has yet known.

The establishment of *government* maternity



homes, where every woman has a right to treatment, and the wholesale provision of orphanages, such as are found in Austria and are demanded by some feminists elsewhere, are really backward steps in the attempt of all true civilisation to cultivate both in men and women a sense of moral responsibility. From the point of view of modern social evolution—though this, of course, is a controversial statement—everything which weakens the family tie is retrogressive. Simply as a woman's question, however, one has no need to look further than the percentage of mortality among illegitimate children, which is so much higher than that of legitimate ones, for a proof that the traditional attitude of the "respectable matron" towards the free lance is not merely the result of prejudice or selfishness but of the deep instinct which makes woman the guardian of the race. This is the answer to those who, criticising the anti-feminist position, declare that emphasis on the function of woman as mother is incompatible with the penalising of any woman who performs that function.<sup>1</sup> Such a statement overlooks the essential feature in our case that the true maternal instinct should drive woman to secure the best possible conditions for her offspring, and that one of these conditions is that permanent connection with the father of her children which is only compatible with marriage. To swerve from this conception, even in the name of pity, is treachery to the long line of women who, often by infinite sacrifice, have built up the position of woman to

<sup>1</sup> See "The Truth about Woman," p. 355.

its present level and made far greater advances possible.

The writer has a vivid recollection of a school in Lambeth which she used to visit, and where the teacher was one of these splendid unmarried women whose maternal instinct found room for hundreds of little ones in her heart. Questioned on their neglected appearance she said, "It is not poverty that is the matter with these children, it is the immorality of their homes. Not half of their parents are married and they are always changing partners. The children hardly ever have a secure home and are usually 'step children' to one or the other of the pair they live with." So much for practical results of the connection which is based merely on inclination.

Before quitting a subject which is the most painful one in the whole gamut of the woman's problem—the penalising of women who transgress the moral code set up in the interests of the race and of their sex as a whole—it is necessary to say a few words on the great army of the lawless, who, it is said, make the position of women who remain within the law possible. The flood of light which has been shed upon the life and habits of this nameless class has dispelled much of the fear and horror with which, in our grandmothers' time they were regarded by their sheltered sisters. In the most striking part of "The Truth about Woman," which owes its value to the fact that it is the result of personal observation, the author makes it perfectly clear that in all things, save in their attitude towards their

calling, these women are like ourselves. But the exception is vital.<sup>1</sup> Moreover she adds very truly that women who marry for money cannot even pride themselves on any difference of attitude towards their sex. The panaceas suggested by enthusiastic feminist reformers are, of course, mere charlatanry. No minimum wage for women would satisfy those—and they are the vast majority of the outlaws—who desire variety, amusement or finery beyond their means. Finally if it is true that monogamous marriage is but-tressed with this institution we may be called on to choose between it and polygamy.

The author of "The Truth about Woman" comes to the conclusion that we must cling to monogamy, but open our doors, socially, to the woman outside it!<sup>2</sup> As monogamy, under her system, would be a form of marriage to be dissolved by mutual consent the prospect for the maternal type of woman must get poorer and poorer. She will again be told to visit Aspasia and learn of her how to amuse her husband! If she is not successful in the attempt she will find it difficult to resist the claim for divorce, or if she does resist it her rival will still be able to flout her openly.

Of course all pictures of the reformed relations

<sup>1</sup> The woman who is psychologically nearest to the prostitute type is the one who is sexually frigid. The woman who loves gives and does not sell. But, of course, there are women of many types among the outlawed, and there are many reasons for their way of life.

<sup>2</sup> See also a pamphlet by Laurence Housman, "Sex War and Woman Suffrage."

of the sexes under such conditions presume a very much elevated type of woman—one to whom, perhaps, such emotions as pride or jealousy will be impossible. But jealousy, after all, has always characterised both man and woman. It is almost invariably found to accompany the strong sexual love of an individual. It is not likely to decrease in woman under influences which stimulate individualism. Jealousy may indeed be converted into a potent aid to marital fidelity and is an invaluable asset of the monogamous woman. The Frau Mayreder type of new woman, who has reduced her sexual emotions to a minimum, may achieve an attitude towards her mate in which the intervention of another woman would cause as little emotion as the borrowing of a pocket handkerchief—less, considerably less, than the theft of a favourite book! But the deeply passionate, emotionally affectable woman of Mrs. Hartley would certainly not cease to love her man because he ceased, perhaps temporarily, to love her, nor would she tamely acquiesce in any transference of his affections. The proposal that the wife should forgo the social privileges of marriage by removing all barriers between her own caste and the free-lance women must be looked at, not only in the light of the welfare of the family, but of her own psychology, and except where absolutely subservient to man she could never acquiesce in such anarchy in sexual relations.

In comparing marriages contracted as the result of various forms of attraction one is at a disadvantage, because the truth about any particular

marriage is usually known only to two people, and often only to one. Turning, however, to a country like France, in which marriage is essentially a business contract, the two persons concerned being coupled up by their relations with the utmost unconcern, provided they do not feel actual antipathy, it is now generally acknowledged that the percentage of happy and successful marriages is quite as high as under our own system. In the same way if we could compare marriages of passion and marriages of affection in our own country we should probably find a very similar average of happy unions. The fact that passion is evanescent is often dwelt on as an argument that marriages of affection are more reliable, and it is true that, after a woman has passed a certain age, she will find the marriage relation more difficult except with a man whose idiosyncrasies are already known to her and on whom she can rely.

The married state, however, is so different from any form of friendship, the relation is so new and the psychological change involved in the attitude of the two who are concerned is so radical in its effect on their mutual intercourse, that no previous association is sufficient to insure that the experiment will be a success. The change of temperament and habit which takes place in people who marry, even when late in life, is notorious. Old friends complain of the loss of a lifelong sympathy and interest. The one who has married cannot, frequently, explain the change of attitude. He or she only knows that these outside relations *are* outside now, whereas formerly they were part

of his or her inmost being. The change from celibacy to married life is a genuine physiological change, and that this reacts on the character and habits is the most natural thing in the world. The result is that the average man and woman, whether they marry for passion or not, usually discover in a year or two that the mate chosen has turned into something quite different, or they may find that the very qualities which originally attracted them now appear tiresome. The change may please or displease, but it is generally assumed that a solid foundation of mutual interests will help to tide over the transition. Unfortunately, interests also vary with the passage of years. It should undoubtedly be a strong tie that the two persons who contract to live together should be more or less on a cultural level, but some of the unhappiest marriages have been between persons of this type, and everyone knows cases of devoted couples in which the intellectual advantages were most unequally divided.

There is, however, one solid advantage which the marriage of passion, contracted between persons still young, has over the more mature and reasoned unions which are now so much admired. The former usually result in a normal family, and, although there may be no scientific proof there is a strong instinctive belief among women that the children of true lovers are more likely to be healthy and beautiful. Whatever may be the result of various forms of attraction in inducing marriage there can be no doubt that happiness in married life is far more likely to be permanent

where there is the tie of a family, and the mutual interests of parenthood are stronger than any intellectual association. Passion may be evanescent, it may be the prelude to disillusionment, but it may be also the gate to a happiness and fulfilment of which cold natures have no conception. If, therefore, we are to choose as an ideal between a marriage of reason and affection, weighted by economic considerations, and a marriage of love, let us "plump" for the old-fashioned romantic conception. It is psychologically sounder. The chances of matrimonial happiness are, perhaps, equally balanced, but the lovers are listening to the voice of Nature and she is a better mother to most of us than her step-sister Convention.

The real difficulty, however, occurs when we try to gauge the truth and reality of the emotion known as love. As has been said already, many women experience only the reflection of love. Their tepid natures are only partially warmed by the passion of another. Often enough they are in love with love, not with a lover, and under such circumstances a marriage of passion on one side only may well mean disaster. In love, said the French observer, there is always one who loves and one who is loved. By a curious psychological difference in the sexes it is not infrequent for the positions to be reversed after a few years of matrimony, the ardent lover becoming the indifferent husband, while the wife strives hard to revive the emotion she once suffered as a necessary infliction. The man, on the other hand, is too apt to trust to those external

physical appeals which may have no true relation to the nature they conceal. He confuses fragility of appearance with delicacy of mind, and a robust physique with openness and generosity of character. But, as a matter of fact, whether he is deceived in his estimate of the woman or not does not much affect the question—he is certain to idealise her. The crucial test is whether she can live up to his ideal, or replace it slowly but surely with the image of herself as she wishes to appear.

This may seem to the critic to indicate a cynical belief that woman cannot afford to appear, even to the husband of her bosom, in her true colours. No such inference need be drawn. As a wife she assumes a new and untried rôle. In her relation with her husband she is not the same person that she has ever been before. In that relation and in that rôle she has to choose, as it were, new colours, and if she is to bind her man to her with bonds of sentiment which will outlive the bonds of passion, she must choose her colours accordingly. The French have an excellent expression for the business of wifehood—*métier de femme*—and the French woman, whose sense of craftsmanship is always paramount, puts into her *métier de femme* a great deal of skill. She is prepared carefully for the task. What is the result? The supremacy of the French woman in family life. She has not sacrificed her individuality; she has really secured for it the fullest play, the widest sphere of influence.

Whatever, therefore, may be the emotional significance of marriage to woman there is good



reason to believe that if the physical attraction which draws the male to her is to be refined and elevated, and finally transmuted into an enduring and tender sentiment, she must be able, in her *métier de femme*, to surround herself with some of the idealism which formed part of her original attraction. Every woman, says Dr. Andrew Macphail,<sup>1</sup> is born with a veil. Her instinct is to create an atmosphere of mysticism round her supreme function. It is her unlikeness to himself that for man is woman's strongest claim to that respect and wonder which, tempering physical attraction, combine to make the truest and most enduring form of human love.

One final word about marriages of affection and reason. They may, of course, develop into something more or they may settle down into very much the same groove as other unions which began differently. But there is a danger in them for women. Men are throughout life liable to feel a form of physical appeal which may have no meaning for some women, or may not affect them after a certain age. There is a tie between people who have been united by genuine love which does not exist in the marriage of affection. When this tie is absent—even though it is merely a memory—there is one barrier the less between man and his errant fancy. A great number of women have to mourn the break up of their happiness because they failed to realise, sufficiently early, that a man has a natural desire for certain gifts which, if he is denied at home, may be

<sup>1</sup> "Essays in Fallacy."

offered him elsewhere—and not refused. Of course this is not the whole story of man's wandering propensities but it accounts for much avoidable unhappiness.

In this discussion of marriages of passion and affection the balance of advantage seems to lie with those contracted between youngish persons, under the stress of strong physical attachment, but it does not follow that such a union is to be recommended to every young person under present conditions. On the contrary, speaking of the girls of the educated classes with whom one is acquainted, it is probable that most of them are quite unfitted to undertake the obligations of such a marriage. They should choose well-to-do, tolerant men of the world, who have plenty of experience in the ways of women and will neither give nor expect too much. With such husbands they will not reach any great pinnacle of felicity but they may avoid disaster. Unfortunately, such husbands are rare. One of the aims of this book is to consider whether by education or training it may not be possible to rear a different type of girl, one to whom the economic question will not prove so high a barrier to marriage, and who can find happiness both in giving and in receiving.

## CHAPTER IV

DANGERS AND DETERRENTS TO MONOGAMOUS  
MARRIAGE

The right to bear a child, perhaps the most sacred of all woman's rights, is not one which should have any conditions attached to it, save in the interests of race welfare. There are many women of admirable character who . . . find the concession of conjugal rights to any person under any conditions intolerable to their self respect . . . Why should the taking of a husband be imposed on these women as the price of maternity? —“Getting Married,” G. B. Shaw.

“Womanhood . . . is the Government in matters of sex. . . . Women would always rather that a woman broke the law and suffered than that the law were called in question. So would the woman herself in nine cases out of ten. A woman takes punishment as no man will. A man spends ingenuity proving that he is right to yield to temptation. A woman will tell you quite plainly that she is going to do wrong, and is prepared to suffer for it.”—“Georgiana,” Granville Barker.

“He that would learn what's seemly in each case  
Should ask of noble women; for to them  
This is their greatest interest, that all  
Should seemly be and fit . . . where  
Bold licence holds the field, they count for naught,  
So, would you ask of each their sex's law,  
Know this: *Man's aim is freedom, order woman's.*  
Goethe, Princess in “Torquato Tasso.”

“Round the fundamental facts of parenthood and the dependence of the breeding mother woman has built up the tissue of customs and conventions called ‘home,’ which, expanded in ever widening circles becomes society. With the chains, first of his affections and then of his duty, woman has partially tamed the wild animal. She has made his cage so cosy that he preferred it to the open and never knew it was a cage. But here come the feminists, whose theory is that cages of any kind are immoral and that we ought all to live in the windy open. A few blows of their hatchets on the already weakened bars and man will be free—and woman will have to begin her work all over again! Because she cannot range freely alongside man in the open. The little hands of children pull her down.”—E. Colquhoun, “Nineteenth Century,” March 1913.

## CHAPTER IV

### DANGERS AND DETERRENTS TO MONOGAMOUS MARRIAGE

AMONG the causes which operate to prejudice the chances of happy marriage among educated women we must certainly reckon the restlessness which seems inseparable from what we call education, though, as a matter of fact, if it were really education it would foster concentration rather than restlessness. It is the half-knowledge, the crude unfledged ideals, the constant craving for a new form of mental stimulus characterising a people still immature and childish, which prove that we are only in a transition stage between one era and another. Curiosity, in the intellectual sense, does not necessarily mean restlessness, and scholarship is a satisfaction in itself even to the most enquiring student. The restlessness of modern woman, too, is largely physical. Mentally she suffers from severe reactions; her temperament grows less equable. There are many causes for all this, and they must be studied elsewhere, but for the present they are to be considered

in the light of deterrents to matrimony. Many feminists, and especially Rosa Mayreder, believe the highest type of union to be found in intellectual companionship, in which, the element of sex being eliminated or reduced to a minimum, men and women meet on a footing of complete equality.

“Perhaps the only idol or ideal which in itself contains a real basis for a true understanding [between the sexes] is the ideal of the mate, the subjective idea that woman stands neither above nor below man but beside him, in human communities wherein the sexual differentiation has as little to do with intellectual as with physical superiority.” This must be read with the context to be fully appreciated, for the whole of Frau Mayreder’s book is directed to one aim, viz., to proving that outside the sex-function there is no differentiation of the sexes, and that by the abnegation of her sex-function, which is a handicap on her development, woman may achieve to the same intellectual heights as man. The practical question as to how this is compatible with the continuance of the race is left by Frau Mayreder in a mist of words, “No longer can the lives of those who have risen above the average be entirely occupied with a struggle against sex and *with combating the claims made by the race on the individual*. The reconciliation between race and personality on a higher plane of perception . . . is only possible when sex no longer acts in any way as a fetter on personality.”

It is not clear, therefore, whether the higher

union precludes the possibility of progeny, or whether babies may be produced, incidentally as it were to some more important pre-occupation. All this is transcendental nonsense. If having babies makes women inferior to men then they will always be inferior. That it handicaps them in other walks of life no sane person will doubt. Yet the marriage of true lovers, prepared to fulfil the duties nature may lay upon them, is not only a beautiful conception of human relationship but, in its recognition of the claims of others, it is a more disinterested and elevating form of union than any intentionally sterile companionship undertaken merely for cultural purposes and in the desire, so much applauded by Frau Mayreder, of "achieving a free personality." The preoccupation of feminists with their "personality" is amazing. So far, however, from finding that education is helping to solve woman's problems in this connection, it seems to be complicating them in a variety of unforeseen directions.

Whatever may be the outcome of the modern feminist apotheosis of intellectuality it is perfectly certain that the passionless type of union will not provide any incentives to monogamy. The contract will be like any other contract, a business affair, and what is not brought into the common stock can be sought outside without any breach of contract. That the emotional lives of men and women would suffer under such doctrines as those of Frau Mayreder will, perhaps, be compensated in the minds of some persons, by the reduction in the sum total of suffering due to the emotions.

One hears it said that it is better that girls should not be romantic because it saves them so much unhappiness if their love goes wrong. On the same principle one ought not to cultivate an ear for music because of the exquisite pain of hearing a singer who is out of tune—or a German band! This excess of white corpuscles in the blood is actually affecting women to a considerable extent, and is attributed, by some observers, to luxury, which seems to act as a soporific on the sensibilities of women, while it actually stimulates the emotions of men.

This development is probably already influencing the marriage prospects of a type of middle and upper class women, for the complaint heard on every side that the modern young man does not care for the clever, well educated girl of his own class, and either marries beneath him or seeks out the most fluffy-headed of his female acquaintances, is not without significance. It appears as if a thorough modern education renders the girl less attractive to men, and if this is the case there is something radically wrong. Men are not of malice prepense avoiding the best type of their own class. If these young women fail to arouse love in the breasts of their contemporary males it does not necessarily prove that the latter are vicious or have a low ideal of women. Indeed, it is quite usual to find that men who have a great admiration for their own women folk marry outside their own class, the reason being that the women of their own class fail to stimulate passion in them, and the more virile a man the more will he be affected by this



physical attraction and the less likely is he to contemplate marriage without it.

It is probable that a part of the failure of the modern middle class girl to attract men may be due to her attitude towards marriage. She believes that she knows all there is to know. Her attitude towards the other sex is one of comradeship. She recognises no necessity for any *métier de femme*. She is probably, *au fond*, far more womanly than she cares to appear, but alike in her increasingly boyish figure and carriage, her manner and her habits, she approximates as far as possible to the male type. The result is that she becomes to her male friends too familiar and obvious, and they leave her in order to seek the stimulation which another type of woman provokes. It may seem absurd to men that the vast majority of women do not recognise how far this sex attraction is involuntary on the part of men, but is it true that they believe it is deliberate wickedness which drives young men to seek mates among women obviously inferior in mental equipment, and often in real physical beauty, to their social equals? No one will deny that irregular courses have an attraction for a certain type of man, but there are a good many who would prefer marriage in their own class if they could only fall in love, or who would choose, in their own class, the finest and most intellectual types only for the fatal fact that they are not attracted sexually to these particular young women.

Of course the marriage rate is affected by many considerations, sociological and economic, but

although prudence and a love of ease and freedom may operate in parting people who are otherwise attracted to each other, real passion is a force which will over-ride in man all minor considerations. Where it is felt between two persons of the same social sphere, in whom ethical considerations have refined and strengthened the character, there is no doubt that selfishness will be swallowed up by a genuine desire on either side to promote not merely their own personal gratification but the happiness and welfare of the other. It is too often the case, nowadays, that persons drawn together by such genuine feelings are still acutely conscious that their training and habits unfit them for the task of making another happy, if it involves the denial of self and the giving up of luxuries.

A feeling that he cannot offer her the care and comfort to which she is accustomed may very well prevent a man from indulging his passion for a girl. The education of modern girls helps to heighten this artificial barrier, which would often disappear if a man could be sure that the object of his affections was capable of finding her own happiness in making that of their mutual home. He is prepared to take the brunt of the battle of life on his shoulders provided he can count on her to provide some of the tenderness and sweetness, but she often seems to expect so much more of life than the rôle of wifehood and motherhood on a moderate income can afford, that many men shrink from family responsibilities with such a partner. The protective instinct in man, the

maternal instinct in woman, are essential parts of that true love which is focussed by physical attraction. For the time being the instinct to sacrifice self on the altar of another will be paramount, and it is only by the recognition of the real purity and nobility of the sentiments thus aroused that they can be strengthened and refined into a permanent and lasting tie.

Very few people will doubt that, thus refined and strengthened, the love which unites married people is a sure rock on which to build life's happiness. It is, indeed, only in the faithful heart of another that we can find any true foothold for happiness in an existence so transitory, with material conditions so uncertain and with our own essentially variable needs and characteristics. Among all the marriages that have come under her observation the writer has known two, which, to outward seeming, were specially unfortunate. Worldly troubles of every kind assailed these two couples, yet for both there was a perpetual fountain of true joy and content in a real and deep mutual affection, and it is safe to say that both wives and husbands would not have hesitated to face all their troubles over again for the sake of that one priceless gift. But it is necessary to add that while the husbands were very ordinary men the wives were exceptionally fine women.

It is very difficult, in writing on this subject, to avoid being misunderstood. Nothing is further from the mind of the writer than to glorify a merely sensual kind of passion, or to recommend what must be really rash and imprudent unions.

It must be kept in mind, too, that the type of union under discussion is *marriage*, the legal monogamous form of mating sanctioned in our country by Church and State, and still regarded as a serious and solemn undertaking. A very general complaint among middle class women to-day is that a love of self leads men more and more to prolong their bachelor days. The same women regard passion as a form of male selfishness, and do not seem to realise that the intellectual and social companionship which they idealise as the highest type of marriage is open to men without the acceptance of legal bonds, as is also the gratification of purely animal impulses.

The two impulses which are strong enough to induce a man to forgo his bachelor freedom are the desire for children and passion for a woman. The fuss made by many middle-class women about having children must be a strong deterrent in the first case, and economic and social conditions also contribute to weaken this natural incentive to matrimony. But every man will feel passion for some woman, and if middle-class men avoid matrimony for any considerable length of time it is because the women of their own class appear to expect too much of life or else do not appeal to them with sufficient force. Very often, as a matter of fact, they find no response to their advances when young, and are thrown back on a different type of companionship. It is customary to despise the first loves of young men and to call them "calf love," but very often they are the purest emotions of which a man is capable, and the fact that they

are often bestowed on an unworthy or unsuitable object does not detract from their sincerity.

It should here be emphasised that the writer, while believing early marriage to be best, does not advocate the marriage of the mentally immature. Some men and some women remain immature far longer than others, and it is possible that present day boys and girls develop rather later than their grandparents. The youth of the great statesmen and soldiers of past ages has often been commented on, and girls were called upon equally soon to play important parts. It is not, however, a desire for mature judgment in choosing a mate which chiefly dictates the increasingly advanced age for marriage in both sexes. It is a combination of social and economic conditions in which the character of the modern woman, moulded by educational influences, plays a predominant part. If men who are in a position to marry postpone doing so until late middle life, or altogether, it is the women of their own circle who are at fault because, by neglecting their *métier de femme*, they have made it possible for those men to live without them.

It is because religion and law have insisted on monogamous marriage, and have, so far, made it difficult in our own country to dissolve a union once contracted, that women have gained any criterion by which to measure the passion they inspire. If the efforts of many well-meaning persons are successful in accustoming us to a form of marriage which is easily dissoluble, it will be increasingly difficult for women to judge whether the passion they inspire is of a genuine or a merely

transient nature. It is quite true that men do not always act up to their marriage vows, and that in the heat of passion they are often willing to undertake responsibilities which they cannot fulfil, but the ideal of a life-long union, the theory of indissoluble marriage, are bound to have a sobering effect on the most ardent of lovers, whose love, if they are prepared to undertake the duties involved, cannot be of an entirely selfish character.

It is, surely, the supreme test of the reality of love that two persons, being mentally mature enough to know what they are undertaking, should be prepared to stake not the happiness of a few months or years but of all their lives on it, and to regard it as *the* crisis in their emotional existence, the gateway of passion through which they hope to pass to a life in which mutual tenderness will smooth the rough places. That such an ideal is more or less realised by many unions can only be doubted by those with exceptionally unfortunate experiences, but that it is compatible with the conception of marriage as a business contract, dissoluble like other contracts for a variety of reasons, the writer begs leave to doubt. Where passion is strong and genuine, calculation will be absent, but where baser and more transient emotions, or economic and social considerations, are the decisive factors, there can be no doubt that the absence of the deterrent factor of comparative indissolubility will conduce to many unions which have little chance, from the outset, of permanence.

It is perfectly true that, as a test of the reality

of love, marriage is unsatisfactory, and chiefly for the reasons already given of the uncertainty and variability of human nature. It is often urged that the only satisfactory test would be a system of experimental unions, and that if the couple decided to stay together after a certain period the success of the marriage might be considered assured. A great deal has been written, often by feminists, on the degradation involved by a couple remaining together after the love which originally united them is dead, and since the social system (for which women are responsible) is harder on the errant wife than on the errant husband we are asked to contemplate with special pity the lot of one who is chained to a loveless home with no chance of consolation.

It is customary that those who advance all these theories as to the desirability of lightening woman's matrimonial burden should support their case with special and pitiful instances. Such examples of the unjust working out of human law will jump to the minds of everyone. But in shaping our theories it is to first principles and not to special cases that we must appeal, and it is certain that the only true criterion of the worth of a social custom or law is, ultimately, how it affects the race. Woman is identified with the race, and throughout the ages has followed this as her polestar. The true reason, as has been said already, why woman cannot accept experimental mating, why she cannot afford to see any loosening of the marriage bond, and why she accepts many conditions which restrict her personal freedom, is

to be found in the instinct which drives her to seek a permanent union with the father of her child.

Leaving this primary instinct out of the question, however, and meeting the feminists on their own ground, the dignity of womanhood, it is clear that it is worth some sacrifices to secure the privilege of being a monogamous wife. There is a general impression among women who have not thought the matter out (which is confirmed by a number of writers who profess to have done so) that marriage is a male institution for the safeguarding of male property. It is undeniable that many marriage laws intentionally embody this idea, though in various climes and ages woman has successfully resisted being treated as a chattel. The desire for legitimate offspring is, undoubtedly, another influence in determining marriage laws, but marriage itself, especially monogamous marriage, must be essentially due to female influence.<sup>1</sup>

After all, polygamous marriage, or a system of short contracts terminable at will, would secure a man his heir, but the long history of marriage with all the ceremonies and customs attached to it supplies striking evidence of the constant efforts of woman to secure for herself a more

<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, a highly controversial statement. Mrs. Gasquoine Hartley says, "The briefest glance at our marriage system proves it to be founded on the patriarchal idea of woman as the property of man." The only comment that need be made on this sweeping generalisation is that, if this is the whole truth, our system reflects little credit on the male intelligence, since a man is not only debarred from acquiring fresh property, but cannot discard what is valueless in his eyes.



permanent place in the family than the mere passing favour of a man could secure her. "The history of human marriage," says Westermarck, "is the history of a relation in which women have gradually been triumphing over the passions, the prejudices, and the selfish interests of man." In the course of the struggle the real point of attack was the permanence of the marriage tie. Without that security women are exposed to the inevitable fate of being supplanted when they are no longer young enough to hope for any other companionship. In polygamous countries there is usually some security of tenure for the first wife—her dignity as a wife is secured, even if her feelings as a woman are outraged. But in monogamous countries, and especially where marriage is with difficulty dissolved, woman has an immense advantage. No other woman can be brought in to share her family life, and sentiment and custom, apart from law, condemn a man who places indignity on his wife by making no secret of other attachments.

In a great many cases, moreover, the errant husband may be prepared to go on giving his wife protection and companionship, offering to her rival only what she—the wife—has probably ceased to want from him. It is perfectly possible for a man to care for two women in entirely different ways, but the legal position of the wife gives her a much needed advantage over younger and prettier rivals. This is, of course, placing the relationship on its lowest level, and

it must not be assumed that there is any intention of justifying the errant courses of man. They may be explained without being excused. It is merely pointed out that, by accepting monogamy, he is prepared, voluntarily, to restrict those courses. A woman, therefore, has no security other than her own powers for the retention of a man's love, but she may have in monogamous marriage complete security that no other woman shall take the place she occupies as a man's lawful wife and the mother of his legitimate children. The bad and selfish man can make her buy these securities at too great a price but the vast majority of men are neither bad nor wholly selfish, and the fact that the legal position of married women as regards property, maintenance and rights over children have steadily improved is a proof that men have, so far, really accepted the obligations of monogamous marriage, even though they may not always act up to its ideals.

Among the "reforms" now most actively pressed for in our divorce laws is one which would give to women the right to dissolve their marriages, as men can, for a single act of unfaithfulness. This is not the place in which to discuss so wide and difficult a subject, and, as a matter of fact, the equal divorce law of Scotland does not seem to have led to any great difference in practice to that of England. But if this "reform" is passed it is to be hoped that English women will be under wiser guidance than that which prevails in some feminist circles at present, for it is certain that otherwise many homes will be broken

up which might otherwise have remained peaceful and intact. No woman can help hoping for a union in which she can be sure that she is undisputed possessor of the heart of the man to whom she gives herself. Most women will suffer at the thought that they can be, even temporarily, supplanted. But wise and generous women will realise that, if they have secured the respect and affection of their husbands, even if the possibility of passion is over, they may without lack of dignity forgive some faults due to masculine nature for the sake of retaining a companionship which will probably grow nearer and dearer as time goes on. If there are children the matter is still clearer. We are not speaking of men who are habitually vicious but of those who may lapse temporarily and still retain their feelings for wife and home. In such a case the wife has no right to deprive her children of their father by breaking up the home.<sup>1</sup>

Reference has been made to the fact that the religious view of marriage as a sacrament is on the decline, and from the point of view of the security of wifehood this is deeply to be deplored. There is no doubt that the conviction, which formed part of religious belief, that marriage has a spiritual side has upheld many women and comforted them under trying circumstances, has even saved many homes from shipwreck.

<sup>1</sup> "The divorce reform movement, while it will not alter marriage, will act as a solvent of that sense of permanency and security which is the chief asset of marriage."—"The Immorality of the Marriage Contract," *Freewoman*, July 18, 1912.

At the risk of appearing very presumptuous it is necessary here to express a woman's opinion on a question which is notoriously giving the greatest possible anxiety to those Churches which, unlike the Roman Catholic communion, are trying to strike a balance between marriage as a sacrament and marriage as a civil contract. But is such a compromise possible? Must we not hold that the vows made in the sight of God and man and with the blessing of the Church are binding, and that transgression of them must mean excommunication from the Church, unless by penitence and retribution the sinner can atone? Or is the contract a mere civil one, in which failure on either side to comply with the terms must give the right of repudiation? After all, membership of any religious community is voluntary, and if one of the conditions of that membership is the observation of certain rules of life, the whole strength of the influence of the community surely lies in insisting that members must observe those rules or lose the advantages and consolations of membership. There can be no doubt that the rule, in this connection, will be a hard one, but the object of the churches, as organised bodies, is to strengthen those ethical controls which check the natural unruly impulses of man. All the Christian churches teach that transgression of the marriage law seriously endangers a man's chances of salvation. Is it not their business to enforce their belief with every weapon in their power, not so much by way of punishment, but in order by the penalties involved to strengthen the prohibi-

tions which man himself will set on his conduct? Moral conduct (using the words in a popular sense) is a matter of controls. Spiritual weapons can enormously strengthen these controls. But it is fatal that the bodies through whom this spiritual guidance is directed should be at variance, one with another, as to that direction.

It appears to the writer that, with a subject so difficult and complicated as divorce, to compromise is to be lost. The difficulties into which the Established Church is plunged by her connection with the State complicates the question, and if the report of the majority on the Divorce Commission is adopted the marriage service of the Church of England will become a farce. "Till death—or half a dozen other unforeseen contingencies—do us part," "in sickness (that is to say, a reasonable amount of sickness) or in health"—these are emendations of the existing office which divorce law reform will make essential.<sup>1</sup> With all the economic, hygienic and sociological arguments the Church, surely, has little concern. Its business is with the spiritual side of man's nature. Long

<sup>1</sup> In "The Truth about Woman," pp. 355 *et seq.*, we read first of "the splendid and fearless recommendations of the majority of the Divorce Law Commission." "But," the author goes on to say, "an enlightened divorce law must go much further than providing ways of escape from marriage. Such exits tend to destroy the sanctity of marriage . . . they tend to make marriage ridiculous. There must be no exits; the door of marriage must be left open to go out as it is open to enter." On reading this remarkable paragraph there came to the mind irresistibly a foolish riddle: "When is a door not a door?" Answer: "When it is ajar!"

ago it began to teach that either continence or truly monogamous marriage were the only conditions compatible with spiritual salvation, and on that foundation the idea of a life-long mating has arisen—very largely, as the writer believes, out of the sympathy which exists between feminine and religious aims. To go back now on this ideal would not lead to progress, to a wider sphere of spirituality, it would be simply—to go back. Can it be that Churchmen feel the attitude of Christianity to the question to have been too narrow and bigoted? If they really do not think it necessary to a man's spiritual welfare to be either chaste or the husband of one wife, it is, of course, only honest to say so. But spiritual causes are never really advanced by an attempt to make them popular, and if there is vitality in a spiritual conception it needs no such watering down. As a sacrament, administered in the most solemn way, and typifying the union of Christ and His Church, Christian marriage has undoubtedly proved the most binding form of union the world has seen. But indissolubly connected with it has been that principle, now threatened in all religious communities save the Roman Catholic, that those whom God has joined together man cannot put asunder.

It is not suggested that the State should necessarily take the same view. The business of the State in this connection is chiefly to provide conditions in which healthy citizens can be reared, and it is a business which needs to be approached from many points. From some of these, possibly,

the dissolution of marriages which are likely to be unfruitful, or have proved painful to one or other of the parties, may be desirable. But what women and men alike ask of their spiritual advisers is not a short cut to material happiness but rather help and guidance which will enable them to make a shining pathway of faith and self devotion across this life, which, they are taught by Christianity, is only a preparation for eternity. It may be that pain and chastening are the necessary instruments to prepare the human soul for eternal felicity. This doctrine, austere as it may seem, does not preclude the recognition of the right of every human being to secure happiness, provided he or she can do so without hurting someone else. The crux of the situation as regards marriage and divorce is that, by evading the results of our own mistakes, we may, either materially or spiritually, damage someone else. Strong in conviction of our own moral position we may yet make our weaker brother to offend. Surely, then, it is the business of the Church to keep us to that straight and narrow path which not only spiritual conviction but accumulated experience has marked out.

It is not difficult to construct arguments in favour of a broadminded tolerance as less liable to shut out from the influence of the church many who, though weak, may not be irreclaimable. In an age of fine discriminations most of us are aware that even in the same sin the degree of moral turpitude among sinners varies from jet black to pale grey. It has been expressly said,

however, that the gate of penitence, which was wide enough to admit a Magdalen, should be always open. The plea here is that all churches, as spiritual communities, should make up their minds as to the standard required of their members and uphold it, regardless of what the State may do. From the woman's point of view this is doubly essential because she needs, even more than man, that spiritual authority and direction, that support of a communal church life which can only be found under these conditions.

The decline of religious conviction among women is a sad reality (although women form the bulk of church membership) but it does not synchronise with indifference. There is a deep religious feeling in the breast of every woman and the perplexing forms in which life's problems come to her make her, even more than man, anxious for guidance and help.<sup>1</sup> Driven by the spirit of the age and her own undisciplined nature she seeks that spiritual guidance in a thousand directions, but frequently, unless she happens to have been born a Roman Catholic, she misses it altogether. The system, the tradition, the weight of experience and the fellowship afforded within the fold of a great historic church would give

<sup>1</sup> Religion, as has been pointed out by many psychologists, affords an emotional outlet for many natures. It, therefore, plays a great part in the lives of women whose sexual nature is thwarted. Apart from this aspect of it, however, there is no doubt that some of the highest types both of men and women, whose physical lives have been full and whose mental development above the average, have found life unbearable without the support of communion and fellowship in some religious body.



stability and coherence to the desires and aspirations of many women who are now tempest-tossed, but it is part of the feminine nature to distrust compromise and especially in this fundamental question of sex-relations she looks for definite and authoritative teaching. The thoughtful and educated woman is often represented as a rebel to constituted authority, but this is only a phase of her immaturity. The finest and the freest minds are often those which choose, deliberately, the path of obedience and submission to discipline. The writer speaks only for her own sex. As she writes there rise before her the faces of the finest women she has known, in whom the rare beauty of spiritual peace, gained by self-surrender, shines through and transfigures the earthly tenement of their truly emancipated souls.

Amid the distractions and temptations, the confusion of thought, the obvious injustices and inequalities which perplex and torture us, we can still re-act to the spiritual stimulus of an austere, yet beautiful ideal, and the mystic touch, the inward speaking voice, the breath of other-worldliness, have more power to lift us above ourselves than the most strenuous attempts to reconcile the real and ideal.

This generation has at length outlived the dreary Puritan conception of all joy and pleasure as the devil's work. Even in the childhood of the writer this gloomy shadow still brooded over many homes, where a certain degree of melancholy was held to be a fitting tribute to the Almighty on the day consecrated to Him. The

swing of the pendulum has undoubtedly carried us to the other extreme, with the result that we sate ourselves and our children with pleasure and achieve thereby a deeper boredom than we knew in our artificially clouded Sundays of long ago. But in upholding a high, nay an austere standard in sex relations, we need not deny the right of every human being to happiness; the limitation must be simply that in achieving that happiness we may not injure others. Is not this the root of ethical conduct which religion reinforces by an appeal to spiritual ideals?

Viewed in the light of the welfare and security of woman as a whole, and particularly of the mother and her children, there are many reasons to fear that the growing tendency to relax the stringency of the marriage tie constitutes not only a serious menace to the social position of woman, but a spiritual retrogression.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP

“I do not think that there is a more powerful enemy of Feminism than the home, an atmosphere more deadly to all ideas of freedom and equality than the rarefied, holy air of the fireside . . . I do not believe that all the girls who leave their fathers' homes to enter factories and shops do so because they want to be free . . . they are prisoners escaping to new goals, rather than conscious rebels. The position of well-to-do young women is not quite the same. They need not work to live, and the paternal hand does not lie very heavy upon them, yet many are in revolt against the futility of their lives . . . they honestly feel that they must eat their bread by the sweat of their brow. They must be taken into account for they are leading their class, preaching a new gospel . . .”—W. L. George, “Woman and To-morrow.”

“Once it was of advantage to society that the sexuo-economic relation [dependence of the wife on the husband for food] should be established. Now that it is no longer of any advantage the ‘woman's movement’ has set in.”—Mrs. Perkins Gilman, “Woman and Economics.”

“It is often said of those who lead in this attempt at the re-adaptation of woman's relation to life, that they are “New Women.” . . . But the truth is we are not new. . . . If it be to-day on no physical battlefield that we stand beside our men, and no march through no external marsh or forest that we have to lead; it is yet the old spirit. . . . Though the battlefield be now for us all, in the laboratory or workshop, in the forum or in the study, in the assembly, in the mart, or in the political arena . . . we still stand side by side with the men we love. . . .”—Olive Schreiner, “Woman and Labour.”

## CHAPTER V

### THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP

A most important feature in marriage is the economic relationship whereby, in theory, at all events, man is responsible for supplying the physical wants of his mate and offspring. A very clever feminist book<sup>1</sup> is devoted to attempting to prove that this is by no means a necessity; is in fact an artificial condition, which could with mutual advantage be changed for complete economic independence and equality of responsibility. It is pointed out that the primitive woman and those of intermediate stages of civilisation, as well as many in our own day, were and are really partners in the family economy, whether the women are wage-earners or not. Nevertheless this fact does not detract from the responsibility which, as Westermarck clearly shows, has from earliest times been vested in the man. So long as physical danger was the factor most to be feared it was man's duty to protect his family, and now that this duty is performed on a wider scale—in the

<sup>1</sup> "Women and Economics," C. P. Gilman.

defence of the state from foreign aggression—it is still man who is solely responsible for the conduct of such warfare, and he is equally bound to provide, according to his ability, for the needs of his family. In short, although society is organised on very different lines among highly civilised and primitive peoples, yet the clerk who, top-hatted and frock-coated, takes the 9 o'clock train for the city and returns in the evening to his suburban villa, is the direct descendant of the primitive man with his spear or boomerang who went out to get food for his mate and her children or to fight against the neighbouring tribe. Where the analogy often fails is on the feminine side. The modern wife, whose duties are limited to supervising in a dilatory fashion and for a short time each day the work of other women, and then amusing herself, is a distinct variation in type from her foremothers, who from primitive ages down to quite modern times had not only to prepare food and clothing with their own hands, but to perform many other duties, and, as a rule, had also considerable families. Even wealth and rank did not secure leisure for such women.

It is not suggested that women are to blame for this change. So long as the business of fighting and the struggle to subdue wild nature absorbed the energies of men, the arts, crafts and manufactures which centre round the business of daily life were left very much to women. At first they were allowed, in all probability, a monopoly of such peaceful arts as primitive agriculture and the care of domesticated animals. But as soon as

man has organised his defences he turns round and takes woman's tasks out of her hand, organising them, too, on a scale and in a manner which take them beyond her reach. This process has been actively at work under the eyes of the present generation. The poorest class of town-dwelling women to-day have practically ceased to prepare food at all; they buy it ready cooked, while the development of the tinned food industry has revolutionised conditions in an even wider area.

This question, which is introduced here because of its bearing on the psychology of the marriage relation, must be referred to again. To the thoughtful observer it must be evident that the responsibilities of the civilised man and the dependence of the civilised woman are on the increase in the class which is, intellectually speaking, the leading one in the community, and sets the standards even for those who are, socially speaking, on a different plane. It is also in this "educated" class that the diminution in the size of families, and consequently in the occupation of women is most marked, and chiefly in this class many women are undoubtedly inclined to regard marriage as a means of getting a comfortable home. The ideal of such women seems to be a life in which duties and responsibilities are reduced to a minimum, and they apparently find no difficulty in taking as husbands men who make no physical or psychological appeal to them, provided that the latter are ready to supply the economic necessities for such an existence. Were they impelled by passion they would command more sympathy when

their matrimonial experiments are unsuccessful. Passion, at all events, is Nature's voice. The man who marries unwisely or rashly under the impulse of passion is perhaps too much of an animal ; but, after all, the woman who marries for a living is merely exhibiting another side of purely animal nature. Still, it must be confessed that our present social system and theory of female education seem specially designed to degrade woman by encouraging the belief that it is man's duty to give all—even passion—and woman's business to receive.

This view of conjugal relations will appear positively grotesque to many women, who are aware of numerous households in which the rôles are apparently reversed, and who are under the impression that the desire of the modern girl for occupation outside her home is necessarily an evidence that she is prepared, in marriage, to contribute her share of work. In another chapter the writer will try to show the fallacy underlying this theory, which, moreover, only applies to a small number of educated women. One of the books which, to a woman, seems to give the most penetrating analysis of modern middle-class conjugal relations, is Mr. H. G. Wells' "Marriage," in which the young scientist sells his intellectual birthright to provide for his family, while his wife, passionately devoted to him, is fain to acknowledge that she has nothing to do save to squander money. It is a picture all of us can realise. London shops are thronged each day with such wives. It is a good thing for many women that their husbands' still vigorous materialistic views make demands, in connection



with food and clothing, which must be periodically met. That they are often inadequately met is one of the reproaches of English womanhood, among whom housewifery has ceased to be an art.

In accepting the inconveniences and limitations of the monogamous system out of deference to the sensibilities and desires of women, men for a long time imposed certain disabilities on the other sex as a *quid pro quo*. Thus wives were chattels, and in many ways their social inferiority was emphasised. But modern woman is gradually removing these disabilities. She is already secured in her possession of property and in many other respects. The latest move, typified in the demand for the omission of the word "obey" from the marriage service, stands for what is called "rights over her own person." Having in view the difference in the physiological constitution of the sexes this demand, if literally interpreted by women, would mean that the essence of the marriage contract may be repudiated at will by them. Men of sensibility do not need such treatment; those of coarser grain would probably be impervious to it, and both would be perfectly justified in wondering on what grounds women should be permitted to marry and then to act dog-in-the-manger.

Lest the writer should be thought to be too hard on those members of her sex who marry simply as a means of livelihood she must explain that, under our present social system, she sees little alternative for them. In many cases to refuse the offer of marriage of one man might mean condemnation to perpetual celibacy, and though the finest

natures may not be able to put up with anything but the real thing yet most of us are neither too fine nor too sensitive to make shift with the second best. Moreover, the craving for maternity, which is part of Nature's scheme for women, is at once an incentive to marriage even without a strong inclination for the particular man, and a guarantee against complete disappointment save in exceptional cases. With man, on the contrary, outside the small class to whom an heir is a matter of vital importance, the desire for children is often secondary—at all events before marriage. In consequence the disappointment, if there are no children, falls far more heavily on the woman.

But whatever may be a woman's motive for contracting marriage, whether she desires most a comfortable home, companionship or children, or (as is usual) hopes for the two first and not too many of the last, she ought not to forget that the man certainly expects and counts on something more than these from her. If she is not prepared to give it she must either contrive to make it up to him in some other way or to accept the situation if he gets tired of his unequal share in the bargain. The demand made by some feminists for a bond which will bind men more and women less assumes that the latter are in a position to dictate—may have monogamy on their own terms. The very reverse is true, because the surplus of women in Great Britain actually places them, from the matrimonial point of view, at a disadvantage.

It may appear as if the preceding paragraphs are

a digression from the question of the economic relationship, but it is impossible to dissociate the material from the physical and psychological demands made by man and woman on each other in this relationship, and it is necessary to emphasise this point because there is a tendency, nowadays, to encourage the view that all that is needed to improve marriage relations is to establish them on the basis of economic partnership.

There is a growing belief in many quarters that economic co-operation by educated women in the family life of a far more active kind than is now customary would solve the main difficulties of what is known as the woman problem. This theory must be considered later. It involves a certain amount of physical labour for a large number of women who at present are exempt from it. The main reason in favour of this is psychological. The health and happy development of women is impossible so long as there is, apparently, no medium for them between soul-destroying idleness and body-destroying overwork, and these two extremes are inevitable if domestic functions are more and more relegated to a class of hired workers on the one hand, while on the other women are increasingly pushed into the labour market. It is therefore in the interests of woman herself that she should take some physical part in the upkeep of the family, but one of the objects of this book is to show that she need not take this part in the manner and on the lines, suggested by some modern feminists, of open competition with man in all fields of labour.

There are a great number of men who, from the most chivalrous motives, would strenuously oppose any attempt on the part of their wives to "earn their living" even in their own homes. The helplessness and prettiness which are characteristic of some women constitute a charm in masculine eyes, and it must be frankly owned that a butterfly woman may be filling her husband's heart and satisfying a need in his life as no housewife could do. As to this it must be premised that, while a taste for fragile women is a morbid one, to be sternly discouraged, it is not unusual for even the most unobservant man to be quite aware that the delicate beauty is not always as fragile as she looks. Probably she is perfectly healthy, and as likely as not he has known her to dance all night and play round eighteen holes in the morning. Her fragile-looking grandmother used to have a dozen healthy children; an excellent proof of the deceptiveness of appearances. The question of work is in reality merely a matter of social values, which women themselves can decide, and if they can be brought to realise that productive forms of activity are more interesting than an eternal round of amusement their men folk will not raise any special objection.

Above all, no one should attempt to interfere with the mode of life of any woman who has found a way to be indispensable to her husband and family. She cannot have done this without finding a considerable amount of happiness and satisfaction herself. Of course one is not speaking only of the woman who is indispensable merely

from the point of view of creature comforts—it has been expressly said that even the butterfly may be indispensable—and the *métier de femme* covers a wide range. The feather-bed type of wife may actually be a mental irritant to a certain type of man, and for such there are usually other women who can make him materially comfortable.

The indispensable wife is one who could not be replaced, and it should be the aim of every wife to become indispensable to the man she marries not only out of consideration for him but because her own self-respect demands it. Of course if she does not really love him the task will be a hard one, but by whatever means she accomplishes it we may be sure that there need be no degradation in her relationship to the man to whom, in exchange for his care and protection, she has given such a priceless gift. If, however, a woman, in return for her home and the privileges of being a monogamous wife, gives nothing in exchange but a few hours' dilatory supervision of the household, she is really little more than a parasite, and the effect on her own character is bound to be disastrous, while it is difficult to believe that her relations with her husband will not eventually suffer. The discontent and restlessness of modern women is partly attributable to the under employment of a large section of them, and the theory, steadily instilled into them for two generations, that their first duty is to themselves.

It is not, however, psychologically desirable that man should be relieved of the lion's share of the

economic responsibilities of family life. To the altruistic sentiments induced by these responsibilities we owe a great deal of the progress of the human race. In the ranks of the working-class, whether the women go to factories or not, there is still plenty of occupation for them, and they are also usually the administrators of the family income. It appears to the lady visitor, who sometimes during her calls sees the man of the house being waited on by his hard-working wife, that the latter does far more than her share. She does not remember that this "lazy brute" probably started out for his work at six o'clock in the morning. But as soon as a man goes up in the world and his wife can afford the luxury of another female to work for her, she is on the bottom rung of a ladder on whose top is perched one who, like the lilies of the field, toils not neither does she spin. There is no such ascending scale of leisure for men. The working hours of the rich and successful are often longer than those of the obscure, while the pressure of work is certainly greater, and, poor or rich, the vast majority of men find the greatest stimulus for their efforts in the thought of the wife and family whose welfare and comfort depend on them. The protective instinct, which is the most elevating and refined side of man's passion for woman is called into play—nay, is kept in being—by this very dependence.

In a relationship which involves the dependence of one partner on the benevolence of another—using that word in its broad sense—it is, of

course, difficult to ensure a perfect equipoise. Were equality possible it might form the foundation of more perfect unions. The question, however, is not whether economic or other dependence degrades the woman, but whether she can do without it. The subject must be more fully treated later in its economic aspect, but broadly speaking, the elementary laws of nature are opposed to any real *equality* of status of the two sexes in the marriage tie. This may appear a wide assumption and one that ought to be supported by a vast amount of proof. Feminists, from Mrs. Gilman to Mrs. Hartley, are never tired of advancing proofs that nature has not always given the advantage to males. Their researches into the sexual relations of cirripeds and spiders do not, however, advance us very much. At the bottom of most feminist writing, and clearly set forth both by Mrs. Hartley and by Frau Mayreder, is the conviction that in sex relations woman, modern civilised woman, is at a disadvantage; because it is for man to initiate, although upon woman falls the consequence of the intercourse.

This generalisation is in accordance with that primitive differentiation of the sexes which results in the activity of the male and the quiescence of the female—what are known as the katabolic and anabolic characteristics of sex. But civilisation introduces a number of new elements which affect and modify sexuality, in which suggestion, imagination and love are conspicuous. The female may, in a sense, take the initiative by bringing such influences to bear on the male. But the

point to be observed here is that, whereas a woman's power of reproduction is not dependent upon sexual activity, a man's sexual activity is essential for that purpose. The advantage, therefore, rests with the sex which requires stimulation in order to exercise the reproductive power and this is the case with man and not with woman. It appears that nature, in decreeing this essential differentiation between the most primitive organic functions of the sexes, had laid upon the female the obligation of attracting the male or being condemned to sterility; that, in point of fact, she must seek a mate in the interests of the race. This differentiation, however, does not remove sex-inequality, it merely takes us back a step further towards the root of it. The true significance of those specialisations which, by rendering woman more unlike man also increase her attraction for him, is here revealed. To say that under such conditions "equality" is possible is to beg the meaning of the term.

Inequality, however, does not necessarily imply inferiority or superiority, but it does involve a different attitude of the sexes towards certain mutual acts. It is out of this essential difference that arises that "subjection of woman" which may be real or imaginary, according to the psychic relations she establishes with her mate. The superiority of the male from the physical point of view is relative to the functions both sexes have to perform in a civilised society, but it is something more than merely relative. In size and muscular development the male is the superior, as a rule, to



the female. These advantages do not by any means always give him the pre-eminence, for the psychic quality is the decisive one, and may reduce a big, strong man to impotence beside five foot two of femininity. Still for social purposes, now as always, man is superior to woman. Organised society rests on him. It could go on quite comfortably if every woman retired to her own particular wig-wam and did nothing but breed. Both for the purposes of nature and in social functions, therefore, man occupies a different position from woman and we cannot discount the effect this has always had, and will always have, on social relationships.

It is amusing to find that writers who are most eager to claim an equality of status for woman are also anxious to secure for her a lien on her husband's income—they do not suggest that he should have a lien on hers. It is perfectly true that a system which makes a woman dependent on the benevolence of her husband may give an unfair advantage to the type of man who is mean, or a bully, or even careless and indifferent. Among educated women of refined sensibilities it is often galling to be obliged to ask for every penny they spend, and, however hard they may work for their homes and children, not to have the control of any share of the family income beyond what goes in household necessities. Not only a regard for woman's sensibilities but practical commonsense makes it desirable that every girl should be given a sum, however small, as a personal allowance, that she may learn the value

of money, and that all wives should be secured similarly from the indignity of having to ask for what should be regarded as their right. Women of the working classes usually receive their husband's wages with a small deduction for his personal expenses and are the administrators of the family income. Where this system is abused we need to set up a higher standard of that marital, and also parental responsibility which are now so much on the decline.

Neither in the working class nor in any other, however, is the proposal that wives should be entitled to a fixed proportion of their husband's salary or wages to be seriously entertained. "Wages for wives" may sound plausible, but, although a man may have to pay his housekeeper, whereas he gets his wife without a salary, it must be remembered that he can dismiss his housekeeper at will. That he should be legally bound not only to support but to pay a salary to one who may be incapable, or unwilling to perform the duties she undertook, is an absurd proposal. After all, no man need marry at all, and the prospect that a definite share of his income would be automatically alienated if he did so would be a deterrent to many men who have not the slightest intention of behaving meanly to their wives. The enforcement of such a law presents fresh difficulties. So experienced a social worker as Mr. Cecil Chapman seriously contends that the employer could be asked to keep back the wife's share in the case of recalcitrant husbands. This would be both an onerous and invidious task

which few employers would undertake, and the whole machinery would break down at once if husbands, in any numbers, proved refractory.

The solution of the economic difficulty must be sought on the lines of woman's age-long struggle for monogamous marriage—by an appeal to the protective instincts of man. Whatever may be our view as to the best adjustment of economic relations between husband and wife there is considerable evidence that our present system of marriage is the result of the theory of man's responsibility for his wife and her children. That this responsibility, originally confined to hunting for food and fighting enemies, has been translated into an obligation to provide not only the necessities but according to ability, the luxuries of life, is proof of the advancing status of the wife, and no corresponding obligation is laid upon her beyond the elementary one which prevents her from imposing on her husband the child of another man.

Feminists who contend for an equality in sex relations usually fasten upon such loopholes as still exist through which a man can evade these one-sided duties, and claim that they should be stopped. The writer is all in favour of strengthening the law of marital responsibilities to any point compatible with effective administration, but beyond that point such legislation only defeats its own end. To make such a claim in the name of "equality" is, however, ridiculous. We are claiming for women in the interests of the family a strong handicap in the conjugal stakes, but were

it possible to make her equal with man no such handicap would be needed.

It is, however, a very serious question whether this theory of the responsibilities of man as a husband and father is not already seriously undermined in our country. In some parts of Great Britain the work of married women in factories is accepted as a normal condition, and if this state of affairs spreads it may become customary for women to earn a definite share of the family income. There is something quite different in principle between the casual work of a married woman to supplement that of the bread-winner, or to replace him if he fails, and the regular assumption by women of a whole or part of the duties of bread-winning. There is some difficulty in estimating accurately the number of women who are partly or wholly bread-winners, in the sense that they contribute to support others than themselves, but the approximate number of *women wage-earners* of all classes, *over 10 years*, in the United Kingdom is 5,309,000, and the number of *females over 15 years of age* is 14,671,048.<sup>1</sup> Roughly speaking, therefore, about one-third of

<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from the Census of 1901. The estimate of women over 16 years insurable under the Insurance Act of May 1st, 1912, was 4,660,000, but, this excludes employers, who are also, of course, wage-earners. It must be borne in mind that the *census* figure of women wage-earners includes a large number of little girls earning a few shillings per week. The classified Census of 1911 is not published at time of writing, nor is it possible to ascertain the number of females between the ages of 10 and 15, which accounts for an obvious discrepancy above

our women are wage-earners, but, while this includes an overwhelming proportion of young unmarried girls, it does not include a certain number of married women and widows who make a living by taking in lodgers. Still, the figures do not warrant the assumption that, so far, man is ceasing to provide for his family.

The drawback to any system of marriage which divides the economic responsibility equally between husband and wife is that it cannot fail to bear more heavily on the latter, on whom must also fall responsibilities which her husband cannot share. Under these circumstances, while she is subjected to a severe strain, he is being deprived of a valuable ethical influence, and his protective instincts will revert to the condition of those of primitive man, who witnesses the toil of his wives without pity or emotion. It may be argued that many men of our own race do this already, but it must be repeated that the best types do not, and that our ideal at present is that the brunt of the family responsibilities should be borne by the man. Any change in this ideal is surely to be deprecated on many grounds.

How to reconcile the apparently conflicting theories that man must support his wife and family, and yet that woman must not be idle, under the present highly specialised conditions of domestic work, is a problem which will be dealt with later on. It is a great mistake to envisage it as merely an economic problem—it is largely psychological. No solution is possible without a change in feminine ideals, and feminine ideals are the

result of feminine education and training. The comparative value to the world, and the comparative strain on women involved by the change from work done at home and work done outside the home for wages, are points which must be discussed more fully in another chapter. Women, whatever their sphere, have never been contented with their lot. They have always, down through the ages, struggled with man to obtain that regulation of social relations which will give to the wife and her child a permanent place and a superior position to that of the mere pleasure-woman.

It is because Nature does not seem to have placed men and women economically on an equal footing that it is so difficult to construct, even in imagination, a successful form of union in which both parents are equally responsible for the upkeep of the home. Of course many educated women contribute to the family income; some may earn more than their husbands. One knows several women writers who certainly do this and Mdlle. Claire de Pratz, in her study of Frenchwomen,<sup>1</sup> tells of a man who is employed as a cashier in his wife's business. There are, similarly, many cases of happy marriages in which the wife is an heiress, but all these must form but an infinitesimal number of exceptions to the general rule. In France, it is true, the woman almost invariably takes a *dot* with her which is not infrequently invested in the man's business, in which she thus becomes a partner. It appears, on the surface, as though this system provides a *via media*

<sup>1</sup> "France from Within," Claire de Pratz.

between making the wife entirely dependent, as is usual with us, and placing the burden of supporting the family almost entirely on her shoulders, as is customary in Siam, and to a limited extent in Burma. Incidentally, it must be said that the latter conditions are customary and not legal obligations. But it is not the *dot* so much as her own qualities which give the French wife her privileged position, and in other countries where a bridal dowry is usual it merely serves to emphasise the commercial side of the marriage contract and adds nothing to the dignity of women.

The fascinating theory of economic partnership, not on primitive lines but as sharers in a lucrative business, should, however, be studied in France, where it obtains among the bourgeoisie, and where, it has certainly helped women to obtain paramount influence in the family. The best known newspaper proprietor of the day told the writer that when he was starting a paper in Paris the business men he interviewed either brought their wives or asked for time to consult them before coming to terms. The fact that a Frenchman cannot contract a marriage without the consent of both his father and his mother is, in itself, a proof of woman's power in domestic life. Apart from women who, without being wage earners, are their husband's business partners, there are in France 6,381,658 wage-earning women in a total female population of 14,381,462, and out of 7,728,854 married women 2,685,796 are wage-earners as well as wives. Only 703,148 are employed in domestic service. There is no country in the

world where married women work for wages as they do in France, and it must be acknowledged that in addition they are admirable housewives, and do not neglect the *métier de femme*. A great deal of the household gear which Englishwomen, as a matter of course, get ready-made is manufactured by the Frenchwoman with her own hands.

What is the price paid by women and by France for this immense and varied activity on the part of her admirable women? The world knows only too well. The causes of France's decreasing birth-rate may be numerous. It would be wrong to lay them all at one door. But the decline of the maternal instinct which must primarily be responsible cannot be altogether dissociated from the strain which is put upon women when, in addition to their maternal function, they must shoulder economic burdens and responsibilities over too wide a field.

Mdlle. Claire de Pratz, who as a feminist is not likely to give an unfavourable view of modern woman, describes a lady professor in her Lycée combining in her own person the duties of a bread-winner (by the strenuous occupation of teaching), a housewife (who frequently prepared a dainty meal for her husband on her return from the Lycée), and a *femme du monde*, who was prepared, *en grande toilette*, to go into society in the evening. Another graphic touch shews us the infants of these married professors brought to them for nourishment between the *cours*! One wonders whether the quality of that nourishment, say on a hot day after a trying lecture to inatten-



tive children, was all that it should be, and it is inconceivable that any human woman could stand the strain of a dual existence and permit more than once, or at the most twice, such a dislocation of domestic matters as would be involved by having babies. Her standard would forbid it.

In a class, such as our own cotton weavers of the north, where the work of married women is habitual, there is no such standard, and that is why the birth rate does not necessarily decline in a class which goes outside its home to work for a living.<sup>1</sup>

The Frenchwoman is a conscientious housewife and mother with a high ideal of craftsmanship. She seems to have decided that one child is all she can look after properly, and having regard to the circumstances of her life she is probably right. The industrial worker, on the contrary, whose children only survive because of the continual intervention of the State between them and parental incompetence, knows no such limitation. Yet it is pretty certain that she does restrict, in most undesirable ways, the birth of children whose advent is inconvenient, and a high infant mortality may be counted on to further reduce her responsibilities.

When, therefore, we begin to consider the

<sup>1</sup> This statement needs some qualification. It is not quite certain that the birth rate does not decline under such conditions, but the writer has failed to find the necessary specialised statistics. Infant mortality and deterioration of physique are, however, certain effects. The percentage of rejections for the army in industrial centres like Dundee, where married women work, is significant. See also report (Cd. 6, 909) Local Government Board,

desirability of altering the economic basis of marriage we are bound to remember that any attempt to make both parties bread-winners will almost certainly result in placing too large a share of the burden on the woman, and that this will ultimately react to the detriment of the race and the State.

## CHAPTER VI

WOMAN, ECONOMICS AND THE STATE

. . . . Thereupon she took  
 A bird's eye view of all the ungracious past,  
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
 As emblematic of a nobler age ;  
 Appraised the Lycean custom, spoke of those  
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo ;  
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines  
 Of empire, with the woman's state in each  
 How far from just, till, warming with her theme  
 She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique.  
 Tennyson, "The Princess."

"All the varied activities of economic production and distribution, all our arts and industries, crafts and trades, all our growth in science, discovery, government, religion . . . these are, or ought to be, common to both sexes. To teach, to rule, to make, to decorate, to distribute—these are not sex functions : they are race functions.—Mrs. C. Perkins Gilman, "Woman and Economics."

"We claim all labour as our sphere."—Olive Schreiner,  
 "Woman and Labour."

All the idols are overthrowing,  
 Man the end of his reign descries,  
 Maids are clamouring, wives are crowing,  
 Widows thrill with a wild surmise . . .  
 Pulpit and platform overflowing,  
 Ready the scheme of things to revise ;  
 See them, eager, militant, knowing,  
 Write, plead, wrangle, philosophise,  
 Answer papers and vote supplies,  
 Wield a racquet, handle a cue,  
 Paint, fight, legislate, theorise,  
 Nothing is left for the men to do.

W. E. Henley, "Ballads."

## CHAPTER VI

### WOMAN, ECONOMICS AND THE STATE

A VERY interesting theory in regard to woman, economics, and the state, unsupported, however, by reliable evidence, is to be found in "The Truth about Woman," already quoted, and forms indeed, the basis for the constructive philosophy of that work. According to the author of this book nature did not necessarily lay a social handicap on woman in giving her the maternal function, a statement which she supports by quoting instances of birds which, after the eggs are laid, divide the parental duties impartially. She also quotes examples from lower forms of life in which the female is the larger and stronger. These excursions into natural history are interesting but far from conclusive, as must obviously be the case with all comparisons with variable Nature. The lines on which the human race has developed and the environment which has so largely helped to shape its evolution differ vastly from many of the other infinitely variable needs and circumstances which condition the activities of

lower forms of life. Chief among these differences is the more complex character of the human brain, which is correlated with the far greater length of time that the human infant is dependent on its mother. Mrs. Hartley is of the opinion that it is Nurture, not Nature, which is responsible for the disabilities under which, from some points of view, a woman suffers. It is, however, impossible to separate the specialisations acquired by adaptation to the environment from "Nature," since they are the conditions under which the individual has survived. Were it not for that fact we might be prepared to go a certain distance with Mrs. Hartley if she could prove her next thesis, which is that woman, in the first stage of marriage and civilisation, was the head of the family and the predominant partner.

This theory of what she calls the "mother-right" age is vital to the main argument of her book, for she postulates that all the present disabilities and defects of woman, and the problems of sex, are due to the inversion of the "natural law" of woman's predominance in family relations. This inversion, she believes, is due to the development of the idea of property. Woman, becoming a mere economic asset, lost her prestige and fell into a state of subjection in the patriarchal age, though by so doing she gained a more individual relation to the father of her children. Mrs. Hartley believes that if we can restore to woman her lost pre-eminence, through freeing the marriage relation of any economic inequality

of status, we need not necessarily rob man of his position. Instead, the two sexes, combining "father-right" with "mother-right," will enter a new and more perfect phase of union.

In one form or another this seductive theory of mating, on terms of "economic equality," permeates all feminist literature, and has given rise to many experiments in new forms of marriage. Mrs. Hartley is, however, the first woman-writer to support it by an appeal to sociology, and for that reason her argument must be more carefully studied. While the discovery that woman, as a sex, at a distinct period of human society, was able to secure a position of social domination while carrying on the work of reproduction, would not conclusively prove that she could regain that position under quite different conditions, yet it might afford a starting ground for such a theory.

The evidence adduced in "The Truth about Woman," although obviously only a selection from the author's notes, is quite sufficient to show on what she bases her conclusion. Briefly, it is the fact that among primitive peoples who can still be studied the man does not always set up a home of his own, but goes to that of his wife and often works for her and her kindred, and further, that descent is reckoned through the woman, and not through the man. "The bond between mother and child made woman the centre of the family . . . we find society growing up about woman. The finding of such authority held by primitive women is strange . . . women

. . . were the first organisers of all industrial labour . . . it was not till *a much later age* that men supplanted women and monopolised the work they had started. Through their identification with early industrial processes, women were the first property owners ; they were the sole creators of ownership in land . . . women were the first agriculturists, weavers, dyers, and dressers of skins, potters—the first architects.” The change in this condition of affairs arose, continues Mrs. Hartley, “through a property value being connected with women themselves.”<sup>1</sup> The women’s kin, thereupon, began to use her for barter, and under their influence the stringency of the sexual code was first tightened. At a much later date virginity began to have a market value and chastity was established as a virtue on a property foundation. Thus woman’s bondage was initiated, but “moral development” had nothing to do with the development of “father-right,” on which ultimately the family came to rest.

Mrs. Hartley makes it clear, however, that she does not deny some specific advantages which accrued to woman when, in return for a more or less permanent hold over the father of her children, she exchanged “freedom” for bondage. Midway between the periods of mother-right and father-right, she thinks, comes one in which part of the woman’s prerogative has been usurped by her male kindred, as evidenced by the widely-spread custom of giving authority over a woman’s children to her brother. These rights were later

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 123, *et seq.*



sold to the husband for a bride-price. "It was in this way, *for economic reasons*, and the personal needs of both the man and the woman, and not . . . specially through any fighting propensity of the male, certainly not by any unfair dominion or tyranny on the part of the husband, that the position of the sexes was reversed . . . but the result to woman was no less far-reaching and disastrous."

Perhaps the best criticism of the theory thus set forth is to reconstruct primitive conditions in a different light. Mother-descent may be equally well attributed to the difficulty, under early social conditions, of establishing paternity. The growth of individual property among men undoubtedly stimulated the development of a form of marriage in which a man could secure inheritance by his own children, but until that period arrived he passed his goods on, not to his sister but to her children—the nearest of his known kin in the next generation. There is no proof in this of any position of importance being accorded to woman, as such, nor that she held property in her own right—rather the contrary, since, if she was not the property of the one man she was in bondage to the tribe. What, then, was her position in the dawn of society, when the desire of men for stranger women than those of the group in which they lived drove them to another group for satisfaction of their desires? She was a form of property then, as much as, if not more than later, and the very fact that her mate could not beckon her out of her group and set up housekeeping

with her wherever they chose, proves this. Marriage by capture and elopement prove this. The woman and her children were labour units of great value to the men of the group; any man wanting a "stranger" woman must therefore carry her off in the teeth of her male relations or must remain awhile with her group. The children were not his—he had to fall back on the children of his sister.

This method of robbing Peter to pay Paul was obviously one which the dawning intelligence and greater powers of social organisation of man would not permit, and when he commuted the labour he had had to give, or the period spent in helping to replenish another group, for a bride-price he was only confirming, not initiating, the theory of woman as an economic asset. She merely exchanged the bondage of the group or tribe for the bondage of one man, and all civilisation is witness not to the disastrous but to the beneficial results of the exchange.

Moreover, it is quite arbitrary to decide that moral feeling had nothing to do with the change. The growing sense of parental affection and responsibility—the dawn of a more elevated idea of marriage—the true beginning indeed of monogamous marriage, in the passion, more or less enduring, for one person, must date from this period which, coming sooner or later among all savage peoples, is absent from the history of none.

As for authority for either this view of primitive sexual relations or Mrs. Hartley's it may be men-

tioned that Westermarck (who is rather sparsely quoted by her) declares<sup>1</sup> that cases of the father having no voice or authority are rare, and do not always imply either that the man does not support his family or has no status in it. He proceeds to criticise in considerable detail the conclusions of Bachofen, afterwards supported by McLennan (and adopted by Mrs. Hartley) that a system of kinship through mothers everywhere preceded the rise of kinship through males. Bachofen attributes mother-kin to the supremacy of woman, McLennan to the uncertainty of paternity, while Westermarck adopts neither hypothesis but contents himself with pointing out that the examples of "father-kin" among primitive peoples are quite as numerous as those of mother-kin. He suggests that inheritance and descent through the mother followed the same natural law that led to the bestowal of her family name upon the children—the result of her more stationary character and longer connection with the child. Finally he does not believe that "there ever was a time when the family was quite absorbed in the tribe." (The strongest man would take the woman who most attracted him, and jealousy being a common feature in primitive sexual affection, would keep her so long as she pleased him.) "I do not, of course, deny that the tie which bound the children to the mother was much more intimate and lasting than that which bound them to the father. But it seems to me that the only result to which a

<sup>1</sup> "History of Marriage," p. 41.

critical investigation of facts can lead us is that in all probability there has been no stage of human development when marriage has not existed, and that the father has always been, as a rule, the protector of his family."

The observations of Frazer on the question of mother-kin do not really refer to the *most primitive* conditions, since they form part of his study of totemism and exogamy. Incidentally Mrs. Hartley seems to have neglected the study of these important subjects, for she states that "The oldest form of marriage was what is known as 'group marriage,' which was the union of two tribal groups or clans, the men of one *totem* group marrying the women of another and vice-versa, but no man nor woman having any particular wife or husband."<sup>1</sup> This sentence piles Pelion on Ossa in the way of misstatement, but the chief point to be noticed is that she does not distinguish between primitive marriage and the more complicated forms introduced long after the beginning of true family life. Speaking of the operation of exogamy (seeking a wife outside the home group) Frazer says distinctly, "Father-kin may be as primitive as mother-kin."<sup>2</sup>

Before turning to another side of the theory of "mother-right" it should be pointed out that "mother-kin," or the reckoning of descent through the mother, does not necessarily mean that any special dignity or "right" appertained to her.

<sup>1</sup> "The Truth about Woman," p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> "Totemism and Exogamy," iv. 129.

Even more misleading is Mrs. Hartley's picture of the dawn of civilisation under female auspices. Her chief authority for this picture seems to be drawn from the American-Indian tribes, whose primitive habits have long been overlaid by elaborate laws and customs. She refers also to the chapter in "Sex and Society," by W. L. Thomas, which describes the division of labour between the sexes in primitive times.<sup>1</sup> Neither in this chapter nor in any description of life among really primitive peoples is there justification for her claim for "a civilisation which owed its institutions and mother-right customs to her [woman's] constructive genius. . . . a period whose history may well give pride to all women." It is practically certain that the connection with food was the first concern of man, and his gregarious habit was primarily the result of combination to secure it. Similarly the scarcity due to natural conditions or to long continued hunting led to the break-up of large groups into smaller ones, and, as Westermarck shews, to the segregation of families. In primitive human existence the superiority of the male as a food-getter must have begun when roots and fruits were superseded by flesh as a diet, and as society began to shape itself this physical handicap was supplemented by the skill and cunning whereby man outwitted his prey.

It is assumed by Thomas that woman, who had to perform all functions outside the actual killing of food, invented the first rough utensils and

<sup>1</sup> P. 123, *et seq.*

industrial processes. It is difficult to get proof of this. Man invented weapons under the stimulus of his conflict with the lower animals. He also (as is admitted even by Thomas) invented the needle and probably all the processes whereby clothing emerged from its most elementary condition. In Kaffir kraals and among other backward peoples one may watch the women at work on elementary manufactures, and performing all the tasks connected with primitive agriculture ; the man, even when his primeval tasks of hunting and fighting are gone, being still convinced that other occupations are unmanly. The fallacy of drawing any conclusions from such conditions lies in the fact that the peoples who in our day appear primitive are far from being so. What proof have we that women were the inventors of the tools they use ? Contact with other civilisations has left its mark on them. What is certain is that among peoples who still leave agricultural and industrial processes to their women (even when they may have borrowed methods and materials of a relatively efficient kind) the level of those processes is extremely low. So far as we can judge from first hand observation among savages whose men still confine themselves to hunting and fighting<sup>1</sup> the condition of the family at a period when all males were so employed must have been extremely wretched, and the word "civilisation" is only comparative. Why woman should be proud

<sup>1</sup> Such as some of the Australian Aborigines, Negritos of Malaysia, and (to a modified extent) the now extinct Bushmen of South Africa.

of this era, or why she should regard, as specially favourable to her sex, conditions which notoriously exhaust the female and render her prematurely aged is not clear. Mrs. Hartley believes she has found European women living under conditions closely approximating to those of primitive times in the work performed by them and in the social importance they enjoy. As to this it may be said at once that hard work and social power are by no means correlated in fact, and that the least privileged European woman of to-day enjoys advantages secured to her by the invention and labour of man which place her in a far more favourable condition than any primeval ancestress.

The power and influence enjoyed by women at various periods and in different climes are attributed by Mrs. Hartley to the survival of "mother-right." It seems simpler and more credible that they were due to special environmental conditions which were favourable to the development of those humanitarian and ethical considerations which have gradually refined human relationship, and which grow in proportion as the stress of the actual struggle for food grows less. The Egyptians, as Mrs. Hartley remarks, were an agricultural and conservative people. They lived under the beneficent conditions provided by their great river, which, at stated intervals and with no effort from themselves, irrigated and fertilised their land, rendering agriculture easy and extraordinarily productive. This natural advantage was increased by the cheapness of human labour under a system of slavery. They were not always

peaceful, and their greatest artistic period coincides with the expulsion of the alien Shepherd-king rulers and with a career of expansion ; but the scarcity of outstanding incidents in their inconceivably long history proves that, thanks to nature and to their geographical situation, they did enjoy a comparative immunity from the disturbances always consequent on the clash of opposing civilisations or rival races.

Under such conditions as these woman may always be expected to rise in power because her contribution to society becomes comparatively more valuable. In Egypt she was helped by one factor not mentioned by Mrs. Hartley—a very complicated and superstitious religion. Priests and women have this in common, that they cannot gain or consolidate their influence by cultivating the fighting technique. The nature of their hold on society is sought respectively in man's spiritual aspirations or superstitions, and in his desire to please the sex upon whom he depends for the joys and amenities of life. A combination between Religion and Woman almost invariably tends to sap man's virility and in Egypt this combination reached a high level of development.

It is clear that under these circumstances a certain class of woman achieved a position of great independence and freedom, and that in this class under these conditions, family life, as understood by the Egyptians, may have presented very attractive features ; but in the first place it is not proved that this particular form of family life was advantageous to the community as a whole, or to



the progress of humanity, and in the second, the result was achieved under circumstances which find no parallel in our own day.

Chief among these conditions (apart from the isolation of Egypt and her natural advantage over other contemporary states) was the presence in the community of a vast number of slaves. Slave labour enhanced the æsthetic value of the non-labouring class of women, and released them from tasks and obligations which would otherwise have limited their social activities. Moreover, wherever there is a slave class of woman marriage contracts represent a very small percentage of the relations between the sexes.

It is on the marriage contracts of the Egyptians and on tomb inscriptions that Mrs. Hartley bases most of her conclusions, yet it is certain that such documents in a wealthy aristocratic country can relate to only one numerically small section of society—the property-owning class. Among this class, even in our own day, marriage is a family affair and “settlements” are the rule and not the exception. A thousand years hence, Macaulay’s *New Zealander* might draw very favourable conclusions as to the social power of women from some modern marriage deeds, and especially from some cases which come into the courts, where the husband, even if wrongfully sued, has to pay all the costs of the action. Among the Egyptians, as with ourselves, formal marriage was firmly based on proprietary considerations, but this ancient people seems to have gone to greater lengths than ourselves in securing an equality for the wife in

the possession of family property, or rather in recognising the right of the mother of a man's children to such an equal share.

It does not seem clear, however, from the evidence available, that marriage was recognised apart from maternity, though some men made provision for women who had lived with them but who had not borne them children. The actual conditions must have varied considerably at different periods, but wherever marriage is rendered conditional on the birth of offspring we cannot presume a very high estimate of the sensibilities of woman. The union is obviously a means to an end, and that end is not merely the comfort and security of the woman.<sup>1</sup> In any case, however, the records preserved only refer to the privileged aristocratic class, with family power and religious influence behind them.

The great sexual laxity permitted to Egyptian women is a reflection of the even greater laxity enjoyed by men, who had opportunities to exercise it also outside their own class, and it may be observed that such a laxity invariably accompanies luxury, and in some of its results must be detrimental to the family ideal and ultimately to national life. It is as though, with the accumulation of property, man sets less value on the qualities of chastity and faithfulness which the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 90. It is true, as Westermarck says, that marriage is the result of children, not children of marriage, but this is using the term "marriage" in the limited sense which he has arbitrarily adopted. The modern legal form of marriage goes considerably further, because it is a concession to the sensibilities of women

primitive man will often exact from his spouse by the aid of a club.<sup>1</sup> Havelock Ellis believes that Egyptian morality expressed the dignity of woman, because it laid no stress on pre-nuptial chastity and put no penalties on conjugal unfaithfulness. The dignity of a human being, according to this view, consists in being the sole arbiter of one's own conduct. A woman's chastity is her own affair, not the concern of the man who may make her his wife.

This doctrine constantly recurs in feminist writings and should be clearly recognised by all those who, from mixed and often contradictory motives, wish to range themselves in the feminist ranks. Were the consequences of a woman's sexual laxity confined to herself the claim for freedom would be much stronger, but the law of chastity has its social and hygienic side. Compare the longevity, the extension of the productive period, and the persistence of youth and beauty among women of races who have complied with its obligations with those of races who know no such restriction of their natural desires. It is possible—even certain—that we may go to extremes in this respect, and create fresh difficulties by too fanatical an adherence to any conventional scheme of morality; but it is absurd to argue that it derogates from a woman's dignity that the exercise of her sex function should be regarded as involving interests

<sup>1</sup> This is rather a nice point. The primitive man may lend his wife as a form of hospitality. Also his idea of monogamy does not necessarily include life-long mating or pre-nuptial chastity. Still, he is notoriously jealous of his spouse for the time being.

more important than her personal inclinations, and therefore to be safeguarded. We submit to a vast amount of interference with our private desires in the interests of the race or the community of which this is but one phase. If it is true that Egypt permitted laxity of sexual relations under the ægis of legal marriage it appears that, unlike the Greeks, they placed the inclination of the individual before the welfare of the state.

It is impossible, of course, to dissociate the position of women from the general political and social conditions under which they live. Mrs. Hartley fully recognises this. "Races," she says, "begin with the building up of society, then there follows a period of warfare—the patriarchal period, which leads on to a later stage much nearer in its working to the first—a final period, as Havelock Ellis says, 'the stage of fruition.' Woman's place and opportunity . . . belong to the first and last of these stages." She does not seem to see that this wide generalisation commits her to a doctrine which she has repudiated—that the predominance of man depends on his fighting activities; but in its present connection her theory, which is widely spread among those who desire the "equality" of the sexes, is of special interest because it connotes the belief that the British Empire has passed into that third stage in which the decay of the fighting technique of man and the rise of woman-power may be found in significant juxtaposition. The support by Socialists of the political side of the woman's movement is not infrequently justified on the grounds that the abolition of armaments

and a reign of universal brotherhood must eliminate the principal differences in the functions of male and female citizens. The writer has heard an eminent Colonial ex-statesman, who is a prominent supporter of votes for women, base his argument on the hypothesis that we have as an Imperial race passed through the stage of acquisition, in which man must play a predominant part, and are now in the stage of organisation, where the sexes are equal. This theory must be more fully dealt with later. It is referred to here because there seems to be some inherent connection between the economic dependence of women on men, the restriction of sexual licence in women, and the fighting technique of males. With the disappearance of the first two comes a diminution of the third, or perhaps the order should be reversed. The whole question involves historical research outside the scope of the present book.

There is no region more full of pitfalls for the unwary than that which is covered by historical research. After all, for the data that lie beyond a very limited period we are dependent on records of a strongly individual character, frequently written for propaganda purposes and seldom by persons who had any opportunity for wide observation. The accumulation of evidence on some disputed point may be conclusive, but the vast majority of persons who turn to history for some specific purpose have a theory ready made, and reject all evidence which does not bear it out. Thus Mrs. Hartley chooses to believe Egyptian family life to have embodied the most complete

equality, and she therefore rejects the testimony of Greek observers who said specifically that the men obeyed the women. Yet their observations were quite as trustworthy as the eulogistic notices on tombs which are, as in our own day, no very sure index to the quality of the family affection which inscribes them "to the best of men, the most faithful of friends, the kindest of masters," and so forth.

With this reservation, then, we pass on to the well known facts of the civilisations of Greece and Rome. In the former civilised woman reached her *nadir* as a wife and mother, for among no other European people has there obtained the entire segregation of a class of women devoted to breeding purposes, while for companionship and amusement the Athenians turned to courtesans who were strangers. The liberty accorded to Spartan women was theirs solely that they might exercise their bodies and because the strict supervision of the males made any irregularity impossible, but it appears that the fighting technique of the Spartan men did not prevent their women from gaining considerable power over them, for the Athenians twitted them with being woman-ruled. The real truth probably lies in the lack of initiative developed in man by too rigid a discipline, and as a matter of fact the Spartan fighting technique for which so much was sacrificed, fell to pieces of its own weight, as did the civilisation built up on this highly artificial foundation. The result of the eugenic theories of the Spartans should be carefully studied by

followers of that school to-day. Sparta was thorough in the matter; the unfit were not permitted to survive, much less to propagate their kind. Yet note the marked sterility of Sparta at an age when Athens reached the zenith of human achievement in art and literature.

The principal feature about the position of woman in Rome, which stands out above all controversy, is that the period of her complete emancipation, when she reached a pinnacle of legal and social equality with man which is still unparalleled, synchronised with the decadence of art and literature and the decay of the Empire. Mrs. Hartley follows those authorities who deny that it was a period of any exceptional licentiousness. There may be difference of opinion on this point but no one can deny that it was one of extreme luxury. The patrician families, on whose domestic relations rests the evidence for the high position of woman, were withdrawing more and more from the active side of national life and retiring to their estates and villas, where they lived in conditions of the utmost refinement and sybaritism. The wars of the Empire were fought by the provincially recruited legions, and the dreaded barbarian crept nearer and nearer. It is notorious that, under these luxurious conditions, patrician houses were frequently threatened with extinction for lack of heirs, so that adoption was freely resorted to, and the real work of the country was carried on by the large alien slave population, whose relations with their masters might uphold the dignity and security of a privileged class of women but

afforded none for womanhood as a whole. During the last period of the Roman Empire, under Christian influence, a reaction against sexual excesses set in in the shape of asceticism, and some idea of the excesses can be gained from the violence of the ascetic movement, which could not have owed all its force to the influence of a new religious conception. In any case the conditions of life in the Rome of the barbaric conquest were obviously very different from those in the palmy days of her wealth and greatness.

Before leaving what is not an attempt at historical analysis but merely criticism of a theory by the light of information which is the common stock of history readers, it may be worth while to refer to the artistic and philosophic achievements of the different civilisations which have been thus briefly reviewed. Egypt is particularly interesting because of the unique nature of her art. The earliest remains of Egyptian architecture are the work of a people already possessing a knowledge of the art of construction and a technical skill which have never been surpassed, and the most massive of these constructions are approximately the oldest, dating from *circa* 3700 B.C. They are believed to be mausoleums, designed as enduring resting places for the body, to which the soul, after a long cycle of trans-migrations, will return. It is important to realise the religious and also utilitarian character of these wonderful erections, which were only made possible by the sacrifice of human life and labour on a colossal scale. Only selfish and superstitious



tyrants, utterly regardless of the sufferings of their people, could have carried through such vast and unremunerative undertakings, and if this was really a period of "mother-right" and female influence we can only conclude that tenderness for the individual and pity for the oppressed, which are the supposed characteristics of woman, had either not developed under Egyptian civilisation, or are not necessarily found in a woman-ruled land.

From the period of the pyramids five centuries rolled by without any special progress until the expulsion of the shepherd-kings (who had usurped the throne of Egypt) and a revival of military activities led to a period of great architectural development which lasted for four hundred years, and saw the building of the great temples. One cause of this revival was the introduction, as the result of conquest, of fresh slaves and prisoners of war, and while in size and grandeur of conception the edifices of this period are unsurpassed, the actual workmanship shows signs of deterioration from the earlier standard. The Pharaoh of the Oppression, who required bricks without straw, was symbolic of the task-masters of Egypt, and after the exodus (cir. 1300 B.C.), which was of course, part of a general weakening of Egypt's military power, the slave supply fell off and building came to an end for something like a thousand years. Under the Ptolemies, the dynasty founded by the victorious general of Alexander the Great, a fresh era of temple building set in and old glories were renewed, and in the

days of Roman domination Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, was a centre of learning and the most splendid court of the period.

What would be really useful, if the material exists, would be an attempt to trace the legal and social position of women at all these different periods, but, failing that, it is permissible to point out that whatever characteristics may have been evolved by Egyptian domestic relations among the upper classes they did not conduce to the survival of Egyptian civilisation or the growth of a living art. Egyptian architecture, for all its wonders, occupies no very important place in the evolution of that art, and except for a few features borrowed and improved on by the Greeks, the characteristics of Egyptian work have become obsolete. The extraordinary stagnation evinced by the stereotyped models which, from age to age, were repeated without a touch of naturalism, seem to show that mechanical skill and not imagination, invention or even close observation were the qualities evolved.

Mrs. Hartley contributes a most suggestive observation of the lack of differentiation between the male and female forms in Egyptian sculpture, which she thinks may not only symbolise their equality of domestic status, but may indicate a partial disappearance of secondary sex characteristics.

Far different was the evolution of Greek art and literature. The worship of beauty corrected by a most refined and delicate perception were the directors of technical skill and craftsmanship of

the highest order. Gazing at the heroic figures of the Fates on the Elgin marbles—Stevenson's "Quiet, great-kneed, deep-breasted, well draped ladies of necessity"—or on the dainty Tanagra figurines which actually belong to the same period, one finds it difficult to realise that woman, so exquisitely expressed in these idealised forms, was to the Greek either nothing more than a breeder of men or—at the other extreme—a pleasure-companion. Moreover the legends and stories of noble women and the attitude of men towards them in dramatic literature suggests that they triumphed over the heavy disabilities laid upon them in the interests of a pure citizenship.

When Greece fell before Rome the conquerors were a people who, equally with Athens, believed theoretically in the subjection of woman. The decadence of Roman art and literature in the days which saw woman's emancipation must also be noted, not as cause and effect, but as correlated effects of the same cause—the wealth and luxury of the patrician class and the sloth and decay which seem to be their inevitable consequence.

Where, in the records of the great civilisations of antiquity, do we find justification for the feminist dictum that "Women's position . . . can be judged best by the equity of the moral code in its bearing on the two sexes," and that "wherever a different standard of moral conduct is set up for women there is something fundamentally wrong in the family relationship"? How, moreover, are we to reconcile this claim with the fundamentally opposed one that the wisdom of Egyptians,

Romans or Greeks is found in the importance they gave to the mother? Once again it is necessary to re-affirm that the best conditions for motherhood are those which afford the best chance of a permanent connection with the father of the child, and secure his care and protection for the family. From this fundamental point of view the Athenian system, which went too far, and by degrading wives into mere breeders led men to form other and dearer ties, was as bad as the licence and luxury of decadent Rome or effeminate Egypt.

There is no trace in any of these civilisations of woman's economic independence in the sense that, as an economic producer, she is able to hold her own with man. She was endowed by man—a very different position, and one that can only be secured among a limited class of persons unless it carries with it the obligation of personal service in return. In the matter of owning, acquiring, inheriting, administering and bequeathing property, woman to-day is the equal of man in most particulars and his superior in some, so that reform in this matter is not necessary. But if by the economic equality of women feminists mean her "endowment," either as a wife or as a mother, or simply as a potential wife and mother, they are entering into quite a different sphere of argument. It is man's benevolence, not the provision of nature, which is the basis of their claim, and while they will find their strongest case in the proof that enlightened, tolerant, and cultivated nations gave considerable freedom to their women, they will always have to remember that the small nation

which reached the highest pinnacle of intellectual and artistic achievement made no such concession to the mothers of their children.

Finally, Mrs. Hartley's attempt to establish the "equality" (social and sexual) of the sexes as the harmonious working of a law of nature, fails absolutely when tried by the historical method, since it rests on the theory of an early period of "mother-right" superseded by "father-right." Early as is the period of the benevolent marriage contracts or philosophical reflections preserved to us by the sands of Egypt, we know, by the irrefragable testimony of architecture, that the people who left these writings were already far removed from primitive culture. They had, indeed, advanced almost as far in mathematical science as the most modern nations of to-day. They were highly civilised and cultured and at the same time the prey to an elaborate superstition. If "mother-right" existed amongst them it was not because they were nearer to nature than ourselves.

The only law of nature to which we can, in human relations, refer with any certainty, is the one which makes it possible for a woman to reproduce her kind only about once a year, while man has no such limits to his capacity for reproduction. Enlightened feminists do not deny this essential inequality and yet they cannot see that the establishment of a legal code which places the sexes on an equality is not an expression of nature's law. Legal codes and moral standards are built up in the interests of the community, and in this respect the reduction of woman's freedom may be more

important than the limitation of man's. The benevolence of man in permitting women sexual licence (only possible with a system of endowments) is not, from the point of view of the welfare of the community, above suspicion. It has nothing whatever to do with his respect and esteem for her or for the maternal function.

As we have to consider the claims of women in the light of a society no longer confined to a class in which females are endowed by the males irrespective of their domestic qualities or work value, we can find very little real help in the analogies with earlier luxurious civilisations. In one respect our condition resembles theirs—the amenities and luxuries of life depend very largely on a surplus of female labour—but unlike them we have to meet the demand of poor as well as rich women, not for endowment but for a man of their own. The sensibilities and prejudices of women complicate the economic problem, and make it altogether unlike that faced by the primitive woman, but it is along the lines of those sensibilities that the solution must be sought, and the appeal to man must be made, not on the ground of nature's intentions, as to which he has always reserved his opinion even when acquiescing most meekly in the social ordinances imposed on him by woman, but on the basis of an appeal to ethical considerations and to the constructive patriotism which sees in the security, the welfare and stability of the family the first duty of every citizen.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DUAL VOCATION

“Then, as for my meaning as to women’s work, what *should* I mean, but scrubbing furniture, dusting walls, sweeping floors, making the beds, washing up the crockery, ditto the children, and whipping them when they want it, mending their clothes, cooking their dinners, and when there are cooks more than enough, helping with the farm work, or the garden, or the dairy. Is *that* plain speaking enough?”—“Fors Clavigera,” Ruskin.

“As [woman] becomes more individualised she suffers more from the primitive and indifferentiated conditions of the family life of earlier times . . . The home cares and industries, still undeveloped, give no play for her increasing specialisation. Where the embryonic combination of cook-nurse-laundress-chambermaid-waitress-governess was content to be “jack of all trades” and mistress of none, the woman who is able to do one of these things perfectly . . . suffers doubly from not being able to do what she wants to do and being forced to do what she does not want to do. To the delicately differentiated modern brain the jar and shock of changing from trade to trade a dozen times a day is a distinct injury . . . a waste of nervous force.”—Mrs. Perkins Gilman. “Woman and Economics,” p. 156.

“There must be specialists; but shall no one behold the horizon? Shall all mankind be specialist surgeons or peculiar plumbers? Shall all humanity be monomaniac? Tradition has decided that only half of humanity shall be monomaniac. It has decided that in every home there shall be a tradesman and . . . a Jill-of-all-trades. . . . Cleverness shall be left for men and wisdom for women. . . . The woman is expected to cook . . . to tell tales to the children . . . to illuminate and ventilate . . . but she cannot be expected to endure anything like this universal duty if she is also to endure the cruelty of competitive or bureaucratic toil . . . she should have not one trade, but twenty hobbies; she, unlike the man, may develop all her second bests. . . . Women were not kept at home in order to keep them narrow; on the contrary . . . in order to keep them broad.”—“What’s Wrong with the World?” G. K. Chesterton.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE DUAL VOCATION

IN the discussion of fundamental characteristics one is in a realm where theoretical controversy is inevitable, and where only those who care for the pursuit of abstract principles will be tempted to follow. The question of the vocation of woman, however, is essentially a practical one, and in the present chapter will be dealt with on grounds quite apart from the metaphysical side of the controversy as to woman's capacity for different kinds of employment.

The vast majority of persons do not deny that, whatever may be woman's vocation, maternity and the care of children must always be her main occupation. To them it seems clear that motherhood must always be woman's chief business and most engrossing pleasure, and (if they are men) they feel that it is a wise dispensation of Providence which has thus provided for the welfare of the race.

But super-added to this comfortable conviction two disturbing considerations have arisen in com-

paratively recent times. The first is the discovery that women are adding to their maternal duties the professional wage-earning vocations of men, and the second is the undeniable fact that some women, owing to the composition of our society, are denied all chance of embracing the normal vocation of motherhood. The problems of the work of married women, and of those women who, from choice or necessity, remain single, cannot be divided into water-tight compartments as is sometimes assumed, and for a very simple reason. No one can tell until the extreme age limit of woman's reproductive capacity whether she will be a mother or not. Her potential vocation of motherhood, therefore, lies behind her professional occupation, influencing her outlook on life and making it essentially different from that of man. Moreover, there can be little doubt that her chance of performing her natural function in a satisfactory manner largely depends on the way in which she is otherwise employed.

One of the marked features of our social and industrial evolution is the specialisation which is gradually confining every individual more and more to one stereotyped task. The old-fashioned bootmaker, who fashioned footgear throughout, is replaced by an army of men and women who turn out by machine the different parts of a boot, and who are destined through life to do nothing else than turn out those distinct parts. The woman who a century ago would have shared with a single maid the duties of cooking, dressmaking, house-cleaning and taking care of children, now

employs one specialist to cook, a second to clean, a third as nurse; buys all clothes ready-made from a fourth, and the household gear from a fifth.

The only vocation for which specialisation in training is not considered necessary is that of motherhood, and unless a girl is entering one of the professions which deal with small children—nursing or infant school teaching—she will be brought up as though such things as babies are never likely to come her way. It is as though there were a sort of tacit understanding that maternity and its duties must be kept out of sight or calculation, for fear they may bulk too largely in the horizon of girls who may never achieve them.

It may be argued that at no period have women ever enjoyed any special training for the performance of their natural duties, and that instinct plus a normally healthy body and an otherwise well trained mind are sufficient equipments—better, indeed, than a training which might render a girl too self-conscious. In many respects this is quite true, and in other directions than that of motherhood we may well deprecate too early specialisation for vocational purposes. The great difference between modern education and that of our ancestresses, however, lies in the fact that, whereas they had to be prepared for a considerable range of duties, all centred in home life, and gained that preparation in a practical manner by taking part in home duties, our modern girls are given an education which has little if any connection with home life, and no relation to the

tasks and duties connected with motherhood. Even in the matter of amusement the life of a modern girl does not centre in the home. It is during the period of general education and bodily training which precedes vocational specialisation that habits of mind, character and body are formed which no later training can altogether obliterate. It is not so much in the absence of definite instruction, or practice of domestic duties during the period devoted to vocational training, that the present method seems weak, as in the whole system which divorces a girl more and more during school-life from the interests and duties which are specifically domestic.

It is true that the impoverishment of home life consequent on the decline of home arts and industries has left for those still engaged in practical domestic work chiefly the more monotonous and repugnant tasks—particularly the everlasting cleaning which is the substratum of all such work. The demand for greater variety both in work and play which is the result of brain stimulation (not always of brain cultivation) renders these tasks intolerably irksome to the vast majority of women, and they are performed more and more perfunctorily by a class who are driven by economic pressure and who confine themselves as far as possible to the mechanical performance of routine tasks. The work of a household must have involved a liberal education for the efficient housewife in old days; at present, it can be carried on, under the departmental system, with a minimum of knowledge in the head of the house.

It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if the younger generation of women, growing up under such conditions, find the machinery of home life very uninteresting—just machinery, working well or ill, but in any case offering apparently no outlet to their budding powers. The world of school life, on the contrary, is full of interests and possibilities, and it is only natural if they should come to regard it as the ante-chamber to another world into which as grown women they will have the *entrée*; a world in which the irksome tasks and monotonous duties connected with home are reduced to a minimum. It is quite certain that if the modern girl was approached at this stage with a proposal that she should give up her dream of freedom for a year or two, and devote them to acquiring not only the skill but the tastes and habits necessary for a good house-wife and house-mother, she would reject the proposal with scorn.

At some period, however, either while she is still filling her time with athletic pursuits or is launched on an "intellectual" career, and in either case is absolutely detached from the sordid details of domestic management, this girl falls in love. At once her horizon changes. The possibility of a "house of her own" gives her an interest in household matters. She very likely takes a series of cookery lessons, buys books of "household hints," and even (in extreme cases) takes a course of domestic instruction at some school or college. She is aware, in short, that she is about to take up a vocation for which she has had no

training and she tries to supply her deficiencies at the last moment ; or, if she is of the more self-confident kind, she is certain that brains and common sense are all that are needed, and that all this fuss about food and servants is quite unnecessary when one is a capable, up-to-date person.

From whatever point of view she may approach her new life, however, there is little doubt that sooner or later she will suffer severely from the fact that the whole of her education has inculcated in her habits and tastes which cannot be freely indulged in home life. For women whose worldly means permit the employment of a staff of efficient specialists the change, of course, will not be so great, but for the vast majority of middle-class women the step from girlhood to married life involves the loss of personal freedom in order to meet claims, small and petty in themselves, yet of considerable cumulative force, and involving tasks which the young wife is the more ready to despise and dislike because she cannot perform them really well. She will, therefore, either perform them with no satisfaction to herself or will delegate them to others and then wonder how to fill up her time.

The feminist solution is that women should not give up their freedom ; that they should have their own professional vocation, and should carry it on just as a man does, giving to the home just what he gives — only leisure hours.<sup>1</sup> A few

<sup>1</sup> See C. Perkins Gilman, "Woman and Economics," and W. L. George, "Woman of To-morrow."

exceptional women of one's acquaintance have actually accomplished this dual task, but in its fullest working form the question should be studied in our own industrial northern centres, where married women habitually work, or in France.<sup>1</sup> It will be argued that such a system must be judged by the quality of the homes which result from it, and the health and welfare of the families they shelter, for by this standard the wage-earning work of married women of all classes can alone be judged. Unfortunately there is a lack of definite information on which to rely for the facts necessary to establish the comparative well-being of the two classes of homes in which women are, or are not, gainfully employed. The infant mortality statistics of areas where married women are industrially employed are practically the only definite group of facts we can turn to. "Nearly fifty years ago," writes Miss Tennant, in "Woman in Industry from Seven Points of View" (1908), "a close relationship was established between infantile mortality and the industrial employment of women. Nearly fifty years ago it was shown that the system which dealt so swiftly with the infant, dealt as cruelly, though more slowly, with the child, and dealt perhaps most hardly of all with the mother. Year by year this buried evidence is reinforced; but though its lessons are re-taught they never seem to be learnt."

We are dealing, however, more especially with the middle class woman, who does not fall into the category of industrial workers and whose

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V.

home conditions will certainly have a higher standard. Such a woman, it may be urged, can afford, if she is herself a contributor to the family income, to pay other women, specially trained for their work, to take her place in the home. It is said, that whether she is a wage-earner or not her social standard will demand that she should employ such women, and as this reduces her own tasks to a minimum she is better engaged in some gainful occupation than in wasting her time in a social round or in perpetual "shopping."

Before acquiescing in this view it may well, however, be asked first, whether the work of the "trained specialist" in the home is really an equivalent of that formerly given by the housewife or mother; and second, whether the conditions of life in which the mother goes out to steady wage earning work are really suited to her own physiological needs. The question of the social standard must be reverted to later on.

The perennial discussion of the shortcomings of domestic servants, which culminated not long ago in a serious inquiry by the Women's Industrial Council into the conditions of domestic service, does not encourage confidence in the efficiency of the "experts" who take over what used to be the personal care of the mistress of the house. It is, on the whole, quite astonishing that servants are so good when the conditions of their work are considered. The old system, whereby the older and younger women, mistress and maids, worked together, was really an apprenticeship for the latter, but is now only possible



in large, well-organised households where experienced servants train younger ones. The average middle class household is now staffed with young women who have had no opportunity of learning house-craft, and comparatively few mistresses are competent to teach them, even if they were prepared to take the time and trouble. The standard of appearances is high, of real craftsmanship exceedingly low. The division between employer and employed is greater, domestic service ceasing to be an occupation where personal affection, interest and companionship are "amenities" to be weighed against long hours and loss of personal freedom. Everything, in short, points to the "expert" domestic of the future as a more or less skilled worker who for stated hours per day will perform definite tasks, and, with the general upward trend of women's wages the more skilled workers will demand higher and higher pay.

In the memory of many middle-aged persons there are pictures of old "nannies" who, in the past, mothered other women's children with a devotion which was truly maternal.<sup>1</sup> The attachment of many a woman to her nursling is not on the same plane as other hired service. But nowadays the very specialisation which makes a proficient babies' nurse also professionalises her

<sup>1</sup> One remembers "Cummy," R. L. Stevenson's "second mother, my first wife, the angel of my infant life." She was a well-educated woman and came of "superior folk" at a time when, in Scotland at all events, domestic service and a sound education were not considered incompatible, nor "menial work" degrading.

point of view, and the majority of such women will only remain with their charges for the first two or three years for fear of losing proficiency or standing in their profession. Of course the number of middle-class homes which can afford the ministrations of such highly trained nurses is strictly limited, and the result must certainly be that, at the best, the child will pass through a series of hands, more or less competent, while at the worst it will be handed over to the tender mercies of hopelessly inefficient and immature persons. The same holds good of the whole circle of domestic duties. Money may buy comfort ; it cannot buy the personal touch which means so much more than mechanical perfection.

Even with ample means the middle-class household will never really rise above the housewifely capacity of its mistress.

When, therefore, we are asked to consider the possible advantages of a home to whose management the house-mistress contributes only such supervision as her leisure hours afford, we are met by the growing difficulty of supplying her place with hired labour, and the certainty that, at its best, that hired labour will not be of the same quality that a woman ought to be able to give to her own home and her own children. In the vast majority of cases the woman who is professionally employed will actually endeavour to make up arrears of home work in her leisure hours, just as we have seen the French lady professor at the Lycée combine in her own person the duties of bread-winner,

housewife, and *femme du monde*. It must be emphatically stated that such a duplication or triplication of energies can only be undertaken by using up as income the capital reserve of nervous energy which is meant to carry a woman through life. Moreover, the woman is very rare who can put the best of herself into two different kinds of life and work. One or other generally suffers, and since the standard required in professional work is a definite one, if the position is to be retained, it is the home and family which are most likely to suffer if the earnings of the wife become a recognised and indispensable part of the family income.

It is sometimes asserted that the economic difficulty which often stands between young men and matrimony would be partly solved if their wives could guarantee a share of the family income. In the case of women whose occupations can be carried on at their own leisure, and in their homes, this might certainly be the case. Such occupations, however, are not numerous; they include literature, painting and sculpture, music (in some forms) and the handicrafts which have recently had so distinct a revival. The vast majority of young married women, however, find it difficult to preserve in their new environment the impulse and inspiration which are necessary for such work. The personal side of their lives is too absorbing. Under such conditions the feeling that they must work, and must sell their work, may be harassing and deleterious to their health. Later on they may return to their professions with renewed

zest, and they will be better women and better housewives and mothers if their craftsmanship in one respect teaches them the value of skill and training in others. For the most part, however, the earnings of a woman who is perhaps a teacher, or a secretary, or employed in business, or holds a clerical post in a government office, may appear to facilitate marriage, but, when the extra expenses involved by her absence from home are considered, the net financial gain is not considerable, while the result on the comfort and well being of the family may be out of proportion.

The most important consideration, however, is the health of the woman herself, and it must be remembered that, with the tradition of thousands of years behind her, and the compelling instincts of maternity ever with her, she will inevitably take upon herself a larger share of domestic tasks than a masculine breadwinner. The sick child she leaves at home, the fretful baby who keeps her awake at night—these are her intimate and peculiar pre-occupations, and no departmentalising of her household will lift them from her heart when she goes out in the morning to her work. Nor can she easily acquire that somewhat impersonal attitude towards the comfort and cleanliness of the home which is man's prerogative. In short, under no conceivable circumstances can a woman who is a mother place herself on the same domestic level as the average man. Her instincts are more domestic than his. The result will be that, if the home is not to be utterly neglected, or if family duties are not to be shirked altogether, she must be

both breadwinner and housewife, and the higher her domestic standard the more will she refuse the duties of maternity with which she is unable to cope. The result of trying to combine two vocations will be that she will reduce her family duties to the minimum, but even so we surely have every reason to fear that by damaging her own health she must damage the race.

At this point it is necessary to consider the many pleas put forward for wage-earning work for women on the grounds that their health needs it. The most eloquent is to be found in Olive Schreiner's "Woman and Labour," in which she "claims all labour" for woman's sphere, and believes we should try to win back the status of our Teutonic foremothers who stood shoulder to shoulder with man even in battle. Similar arguments, directed to securing the economic independence of woman, which they believe essential for her social and economic equality with man, are put forward by Mrs. C. P. Gilman, Mrs. Hartley, W. L. Thomas, W. L. George, and many other feminists. Arguments are advanced to show that modern woman's discontent can only be met by "a special and occupational interest and practice for women married and unmarried. This should be preferably gainful though not onerous nor incessant."

In the last sentence quoted we have an important admission from Mr. Thomas who in many respects is a pronounced feminist, and who actually regards child-birth as "an incident in the life of a normal woman of no more significance,

when viewed in the aggregate and from the standpoint of time, than the interruption of the work of men by their in-and-out-of-door games." It is almost inconceivable that anyone who has an elementary knowledge of physiology should make such a statement, or believe any comparison possible between the time spent by men in recuperating by means of sport the energy expended in work, and the time and energy expended by women in the function of reproduction. Yet, presumably in the interests of this "incidental" function, Mr. Thomas would restrict women to work which, though "preferably gainful," must be neither onerous nor incessant. Some indication has already been given of the limited classes of occupation which fulfil these conditions, and it may be said at once that there is no fundamental difficulty in the way of any girl who may desire to acquire or to practise, either before or after marriage, these or similar crafts. Whether she can make her profession "gainful" is a question of individual talent. Obviously, however, such concessions by no means meet the claims of the three women writers, who demand economic equality for women, for it is hardly likely that a profession which is neither incessant nor onerous in its claims will, in these days of competition, enable an average woman to maintain herself, much less share the expenses of a home and family. The work which is to have a true economic value must be something considerably more than a play interest.

The contention of Olive Schreiner, Mrs.

Gilman and Mrs. Hartley, that some women enjoy robust physical health while combining hard work with maternal duties, is supported by evidence drawn chiefly from the agricultural working classes. Mr. Thomas also gives an instance from the fisher-woman population of France. A fruitful field of investigation would be found in an enquiry as to the conditions of life, the duration of youth and strength, the fertility and health of offspring of women who work hard in the open air. But when such an investigation was complete, and even supposing that it was entirely satisfactory from the feminist point of view, we should still be faced with the difficulty that we are not dealing with a class of women who are prepared to do agricultural work, nor is there agricultural work for them to do in this country if they desired it. We are dealing with the altogether different problem of the educated woman, whose tastes and manner of life are urbanised and whose whole training makes her turn from physical to mental occupations. It does not seem to occur to ladies who declaim on the health of women who work side by side with their men on farms, that an almost equally good bill of health could be presented by the women who are domestic servants—although the latter, of course, must not be used too freely as an illustration, since their work is most invariably done prior to marriage. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare the bill of health as shown, say, in the Domestic Servants Insurance Association, with the high rate of illness and disablement among

women post-office clerks or teachers.<sup>1</sup> A healthy woman undoubtedly has more chance of good health in married life if her girlhood has been free from over-strain or breakdown, and when we are considering the desirability of a certain amount of work for all women we cannot leave out of account the evidence which seems to show the health advantages enjoyed by those who do domestic work.

The operation of the Government Health Insurance Act should provide a valuable body of statistics for use in estimating the sickness conditions among women. It is already evident that the actuarial calculations were below the mark. Previous to the passing of the Government Act such women as were insured belonged either to local Provident associations or to one or other of the large Friendly Societies, and for the most part they were picked lives. In such forms of insurance it was to the interest of the members and of their medical attendant to keep down the sick pay, and this certainly operated in the past in inducing women to put up as long as possible with minor ailments before calling in the doctor. No such inducement now exists, with the result (by no means to be deplored) that women will go on the sick list for reasons which would not, previously, have kept them from their work. They are not malingering—it is perfectly true in a vast number of cases that without becoming really ill or laid up, they are not up to their work, and the conditions which

<sup>1</sup> See also Chapter VIII. for comparison of sickness between men and women.



produce this kind of disability are not confined to any class of worker.

While, therefore, we may subscribe most heartily to the theory that idleness is bad for any woman, married or single, it cannot be admitted that all forms of labour are necessarily good for her, and we want a great deal more evidence before we can be sure that she will really be better off, either economically or physically, as part bread-winner in the home.

There is, of course, a class of women to whom gainful occupation is not presented as an ideal but as a necessity. There is a general impression that their number is increasing owing to the failure of modern man to meet his family obligations.<sup>1</sup> Any relative increase is probably found in the middle classes. It is important, however, to realise that it is not so much that man is failing in his duties as that obligations have increased out of all proportion. The daughter who is unmarried till thirty, or never marries, constitutes a more onerous charge than the one who became a bride in her 'teens or early 'twenties. Families, it is true, are smaller, but social standards have advanced by leaps and bounds and expenses with them. There is, there-

<sup>1</sup> An impression not justified by the census of 1901, which showed a relative decrease in the number of wage-earning women. This decrease is due, however, to one class—domestic servants—being smaller. The figures for women wage-earners has been given (Chapter V. p. 148). Roughly, out of a female population of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  millions over 15 years, 5 millions are wage-earners, but a large proportion of these are under 25 or over 45. This means that the vast majority of men support their wives and young families.

fore, considerable truth in the feminist view that the providence of man can no longer cover the needs of all his female relations. Nor would it be well to return, even if we could, to the altogether dependent daughter. She earned her living in former ages, within the home; now she is trying to earn it outside, but there is no reason to go from one extreme to the other. If, as will be discussed in more detail later on, the right physiological development of woman requires that she should not overstrain herself in early womanhood, then the aim of social readjustment should be to relax the pressure which drives her too early, regardless of health, into a fierce competitive struggle with man. So far as that pressure is due to artificial social standards it might be relaxed, and there are many young women now toiling in unhealthy occupations who might, if they chose to do the work of a house, stay at home.

A feeling of helplessness comes over the writer as she pens these words. At once she can see the flaming ranks of "business young ladies," clerks, type-writers and many others to whom such a suggestion seems an insult to the intelligence. To do "servants' work" would mean the sacrifice of their "independence," of every prerogative and ideal which they cherish. It would cut at the root of all their pleasures. Even more indignant is the high school and college girl to whom opens out a vista of more intellectual but equally strenuous careers.

It is, however, only a question of artificial standards. There is nothing intrinsically finer

about one kind of work than about another. The only true criterion is the standard of the work itself and its usefulness to the community. We have set up a feminine scale of values, with a female professor at the top and a kitchen wench at the bottom ; but it is quite an arbitrary scale. The world wants both—the kitchen wench, probably, even more than the professor. Let us be honest, therefore, and acknowledge that part, at all events, of the compulsion which drives women into the open labour market is not economic necessity but their own tastes, habits and theory of “gentility.” Some of them, it is notorious, accept the “gentility” of a vocation as part payment for their services. In all this we see the evolution of the female mind under the “education” of the last half century, and before going any further we must see what feminism has to say on this particular subject.

“The home is the enemy of woman. Purporting to be her protector it is her oppressor. It is her fortress, but she does not live in the state apartments, she lives in the dungeon.”

—W. L. George, “Woman and To-morrow.”

“Home is the girls’ prison and the woman’s workhouse.”

—G. B. Shaw, “Man and Superman.”

“Woman’s work is the kind of work which man prefers not to do.”—Cicely Hamilton, “Marriage as a Trade.”

“It is a mistake to suppose that the baby, any more than the older child, needs the direct care and presence of the mother. Careful experiment has shown that a new born baby does not know its own mother and a new made mother does not know her own baby . . . It is that trained hand that the baby needs, not mere blood relationship . . . Direct, concentrated, unvarying, personal love is too hot an atmosphere for a young soul.”

—Mrs. C. P. Gilman, “Woman and Economics.”

“Drink, indeed, our teachers will criticise nowadays both as regards quantity and quality, but neither church, school nor state will raise a warning finger between a man and his hunger and his wife’s catering . . . There had been the cold pork from Sunday and some nice cold potatoes and Rashdall’s mixed pickles . . . cold suet pudding to follow with treacle and then a nice bit of the pale, hard sort of cheese he liked . . . He had also had three big slices of greyish baker’s bread and had drunk the best part of the jugful of beer . . . he was not so much a human being as a civil war.”—H. G. Wells, “The History of Mr. Polly.”

“The art of weaving and the management of pancakes and preserves, in which woman does really appear to be great, and in which for her to be beaten by a man is of all things the most absurd.”—Plato, “Republic.”

## CHAPTER VIII

### FEMINISM AND THE HOME

It is not sufficient recommendation to a theory of life or of social relations that its author should label it "progress" or "reform." Change and progress are not necessarily synonymous terms, although in our restless age they are frequently mistaken for each other. At the same time, because one is opposed to some particular form of change it does not follow that one is satisfied with things as they are. In dissenting from certain feminist theories of social "reform" the writer bases her objection to them on the ground that they are revolutionary, and she is a believer in evolution but not in revolution.

If it is true, as this book has tried to show, that the dependence of woman and the family on the male is in the interests of the race, and if it cannot be shown that at any period, or in any clime, women have shared the duty of providing for the family *when that duty involved leaving the home and offspring to be looked after by others*, then the proposal that they should now do so is a distinctly revolu-

tionary one, involving a radical change in our conception of family relations. It is no argument to say that this change is coming about as a practical fact, apart from theories, because, even if this were true (and it is not true of the vast majority of married women in our country that they are bread-winners) we might still regard this as a social evil, and set about combating it. Feminists ask us to make the bread-winning wife and mother our ideal instead of regarding her as the victim of untoward circumstances—a very different attitude and one which cannot fail to affect very seriously the course of social evolution.

The ideal or standard adopted in the class which is intellectually best equipped has a great effect on those below. At present the rise in prosperity of a working man's family means the release of his wife from any compulsion to wage-earning, but if the feminist theory became general this social standard would disappear. In dealing, therefore, with the work of "educated" women it must not be forgotten that one cannot separate women into classes in this matter of ideals. The desire to be one's own mistress in one's own home plays a part at present in every class of life, and influences women's outlook on life to an extraordinary degree. If it is merely a selfish or lazy characteristic let us away with it, but if it is rooted in instinct let us give it the respect and attention it deserves.

It is hoped that this study may make its way into the hands of some of those to whom feminist literature is a sealed book, and it is therefore necessary to make it quite clear that the doctrines

and theories put into the mouths of feminists are not misrepresented or misconstrued. The average man or woman will not meet these views in their daily reading and feminism may well appear to them as a fantastic mass of theories spun by a circle of faddists. The atheist who "spouts" in the Park, the anarchist who demolishes the Throne every Sunday to the apathetic amusement of a small circle of loafers—these ineffective propagandists must not, however, be classed with the feminist, for the simple reason that the evil that the two first present carries its own cure with it.

Feminism has a far wider audience and a more authoritative pulpit. With its roots deep in the sex-discontent of women who are at odds with their environment it follows the lead of the bold and often brilliant spirits to whom the world is still their oyster, which they with a pen will open. Two generations of book learning, to a sex which had exercised itself traditionally in more practical ways, have resulted in a curious mental intoxication. The gospel of intellectual asceticism has its followers and does its de-humanising work, but a new school has arisen which revolts against the austerities of life on the "higher intellectual plane" and claims for woman no mere right of "spiritual" expansion but of bodily realisation, on her own terms and in her own way. The claim is the natural and logical result of individualism—the shibboleth of the new feminism. The "instinctive nature" of woman cannot always be denied, even in the interests of a higher intellectualism, and so comes about that curious medley of free love, free

motherhood, economic independence, intellectual expansion, anarchism, socialism, "pure religion," mysticism and atheism all mixed up with unconscious naïveté and offered to us by the school of feminists to which (in some respects) Mrs. Hartley belongs, as a new philosophy of life and a new gospel of sex relations.

It is difficult to direct the student to the authorities from which this new philosophy derives. Only those who, like the writer, have been living for the past few years in close touch with the so called Woman's movement, and who, therefore, have had their eyes and ears open for its echoes, can realise the extent to which it is permeating a section of our womanhood. The common stock of ideas is not large; a great number can be traced to Mrs. Gilman's book "Woman and Economics," published first in 1885, but the different schools which live, flourish and contend under the feminist banner have as yet no settled dogma and no high priest. A great deal has been done to spread some of their ideas by means of pamphlets, many of them issued by Suffrage societies, dealing with the question of sex relations in a distinctively feminist manner. Lectures, discussions, drawing-room and public meetings are, however, the favourite media for the extension of ideas which will not always bear the ordeal of being translated into cold print. The attention of the writer was first drawn to feminism through questions asked at suffrage and anti-suffrage meetings. These questions invariably bore on sex-relations, and following up the clue they gave



a whole literature of sex-revolt was discovered, and led to the conclusion that a distinct and influential body of opinion is being formed among educated women which (to put it mildly) is hostile to marriage as a social institution and to the conception of the home as woman's peculiar care.

When attention is drawn to the extremist section of feminist opinion the more moderate feminists, and especially suffragists who have not concerned themselves with the feminist side of their case, loudly disclaim all such aims and aspirations. They beg that their cause should not be judged by the "wild women" in it. In the same spirit the Fabian society socialist may shudder at the crudities of the red flag park orator. And yet there are doctrines which all sections of the feminist party agree in holding, whose logical application and result are only faced by those who are termed extremists. To be a moderate feminist, or a moderate socialist, frequently means to lack the courage of one's convictions. The point of view which will be presented to the reader may, therefore, seem extreme, but given such widely accepted theories as the "economic independence of woman," the "absolute equality of the sexes," or the necessity for the "reform of marriage" it will be found that, in practice, there is bound to be some such revolution in family life and habits as is frankly demanded by the bolder spirits in the feminist ranks. The influence of these bolder spirits on the younger generation is far greater than is usually supposed—a fact which has come

to the writer's knowledge through the unwitting self-revelations of young women and girls.

It is undesirable to give a gratuitous advertisement to publications which (one honestly believes) are dangerous to the public welfare, not in the sense that the writers are advocating what is usually called immoral, but because they preach revolution and anarchy; and, for this reason, the following quotations are given without reference. They come from a periodical chiefly read among a "highly educated" class of women, whose editor (a woman) and some of whose female contributors hold University degrees. Other names found in it are well known in various branches of sociology, and the principal feature is the correspondence, usually signed in full, which is chiefly remarkable for an entire lack of reticence on the most intimate subjects. The following extracts have been arranged in the form of a crescendo, leading up to the new feminist conception of the home.

No. 1. "Is there any reason why, because a woman desires to be a mother, and loves one particular man well enough to allow him to be the father of her child, that she should thereafter wash his dirty linen and prepare the particular dishes his masculine soul loves. . . . Because a woman loves her baby . . . is there any reason why she, and only she, is fitted to perform the many duties required to keep it healthy and clean. . . . That the human mother may need to get a substitute for a time, if engaged in a profession or trade . . . is easily conceivable. Why in the name of reason should we condemn a woman to be

a life-long parasite because she has *one or two* babies to care for . . . the way of advance would seem to be to insist on the same training for girls as for boys, and a persistent insistence on the supreme importance of their regarding their work as a human economic necessity, to last a lifetime."

No. 2. "If every woman were sure of a job, and sure of a minimum wage of thirty shillings a week probably 90 per cent. of women 'married' or 'single' would have at least one child. And there would be no difficulties about caring for it. A liberal form of State insurance to cover the period of confinement could easily be arranged, and every woman worker could be allowed two months' leave of absence at least once or twice in her working life. . . . Women need wealth; therefore they must produce wealth; and what they produce they must be paid for . . . for the rest they will please themselves, from motherhood to their dresses, from lovers to their tricks and 'little ways.' These are individual and not collective affairs and far from seeking the intervention of the State, the State must be peremptorily forbidden the presumption of interfering with them."

No. 3. "Hatred of domestic work is a natural and admirable result of civilisation. . . . The vast majority of women refuse domestic work. The recent movement down the kitchen stairs—the last tumble of which is the King's College Home Science course—has no support among the women who are alive . . . domestic work is the most elementary form of labour. It is suitable

for those with the intelligence of rabbits. . . . For heaven's sake let us take this unpleasant job and give it over to the specialist to organise as a trade process."

Here is the gospel which, in a variety of subtle forms, is being dropped into the ears of the class of young women who are destined to be the teachers of the next generation, and here one recognises the result of that divorce between home-life and intellectual life which leads to a contempt for all the processes on which the latter depends. It is not many women, perhaps, who have the courage of the last writer quoted, to say openly that domestic work is only suitable for people with the intelligence of rabbits, but in reality she is only reducing to its logical conclusion the theory of female education for the last half century—of which she is the result. Note her contempt for that half-hearted return to an earlier theory in the "movement down the kitchen stairs" which has recently set in. Here we see how, having tried to dig up the domestic instinct by the roots, our pedagogues are now endeavouring to graft it again on to the top-most branch of an entirely different tree.

The root of the evil, as has already been suggested, is in that arbitrary classification of "work" which gives a dignity to any kind of "brain" work though denied to physical labour or handiwork. Instead of devising how to meet the gap left in women's lives by the loss of home crafts the educational pioneer concentrated all her efforts on obtaining as much book-learning as possible

for her sex. The mistake was exactly paralleled in the sphere of elementary education, for which we are now paying dear. The subject, of course, is far too wide-reaching to be more than touched on here, but the parallel between the democratisation and the feminisation of education is strikingly brought out in a little book on woman, by an American college professor of strong feminist sympathies.<sup>1</sup> Discussing the modification of the Press in the direction of "fragmentary, egoistic, personal, and emotional appeals," he says

"These are the qualities of children's minds and of undeveloped minds everywhere. The change is a part of the larger democratic movement of our time . . . had women not been so active, something of the same sort would have happened, but if women were all to forget how to read overnight, there is no doubt that the newspapers would find it advantageous to print more statesmanlike editorials and abstract news."

Briefly—in one rather too sweeping generalisation—the tendency in both democratic and feminine education is to encourage a superficial knowledge and to stimulate self-consciousness, without supplying the link between thinking and being on which the harmony of life depends.

For, however extreme the views of the three feminists here quoted may seem, they are absolutely in key with the whole theory of an education which has eliminated every kind of handicraft from the curriculum of its educated women, and has reduced it to a minimum for the

<sup>1</sup> "Woman in Modern Society," Earl Barnes, p. 103.

children of a class which will probably have to get their living by it.<sup>1</sup>

Before discussing the possibility of re-organising home life on terms which will free the wife and mother for an independent career as a wage earner, it is worth while to pause for a moment to consider what are the purposes of Nature on which the meaning of life depends. Nature has, so far as we can judge, only one purpose—reproduction, and in securing that end the getting of food is the first necessity. Man has improved on primitive nature in a thousand ways, has elaborated her scheme and developed all kinds of senses and apprehensions on which are built up his complicated feelings, desires and modes of existence. The apprehension of beauty in myriad forms, corporate and incorporate, the exercise of his faculties, the control of his emotions—all these go to refine primitive nature, but down at the bottom

<sup>1</sup> Of course, cooking and sewing are taught in elementary and secondary schools, and there are technical and trade classes for boys and girls. Of the value of these only an expert can judge, but that value varies enormously with local circumstances. The fact which is necessary to be emphasised is that the status of hand work in all our school systems is lower than the status of head work, and it is very seldom that a "really clever" boy or girl specialises in handicraft. He or she will naturally gravitate to the class which hopes to get its living in a black coat and with clean hands. The sentiments of feminist No. 3 are very strongly emphasised in our elementary and secondary school ideals, and reflect accurately the feeling prevailing in the class just above them, in which middle class education is carried on. The middle-class girl has absolutely no craft at her finger's tips, and nowadays she does not even practise an accomplishment unless she is to take it up professionally—to make money by it. See also Chap. IX, p. 255.

of all these exercises of the human, conscious reason there lies the law of nature—we eat, drink, and reproduce. The scheme of life which reduces eating and drinking to an unimportant place is as foolish as that which believes we can substitute an “intellectual” for an “instinctive” life—and yet live. To live to eat is bestial ; to eat to live is the fate of the most refined human being, and therefore, it is not below the honourable intelligence of the most intellectual woman to be interested in the preparation of food. Women take credit to themselves that they care little about food and recklessly tamper with their digestive organs rather than use their superhuman minds to preserve their very human bodies. There is absolutely no credit to them in this—it is simply stupid, or the result of a deficient education.

The act of eating and drinking as a social act does not, as many feminists point out, constitute in itself a family bond, but the fact of eating and drinking together not only promotes digestion but, if properly understood, establishes a feeling of community. Correctly viewed and organised it is a social human tie—one of the acts which distinguishes man from the brutes. It is a genuine bond to share one's pleasures, and eating and drinking ought to be a pleasure, and ought to be shared. To part with this kindly, sociable, human form of intercourse—the breaking of bread together—is to lose a civilising influence. The growing tendency to feed in large, promiscuous herds is a return to a less civilised form of life and has no connection with the refinements of

eating and drinking either as an art or as a sacrament of fellowship.

There are many apparently simple and elementary things in life which can be elevated by intelligence to a plane of true spiritual significance. If, however, the material issues are to be refined they must first be studied. In other words the person who wishes, in the matter of eating and drinking, to rise above the grosser aspects of these acts, must be prepared to treat them with the respect they deserve. A meal that is good, in every sense of the word, is as much of a masterpiece as a fine picture—and as rarely to be met. It is true that the meal disappears while one can return again and again to the picture, but the advantage of knowing how to prepare a good meal is that it can be done over and over again—once learn the craft and the materials on which to exercise it are almost limitless, whereas the inspiration for a good picture (to judge from contemporary art) comes but rarely even to the most accomplished artists. Of the comparative value to man of art in the studio and art in the kitchen it is, perhaps, dangerous to say too much, but it may not be amiss to point out that our artists go to France for their training, whence come also such refinements in cookery as our islands can boast.

To imagine that an art which plays so great a part in our mental and body welfare is unworthy the study of an "educated" person betrays profound ignorance. It is the first duty of an educated woman to apply that cultivated intelligence of hers to this matter of eating and



drinking, and all her education will be as a thing of naught if she cannot ensure for herself and her household that their bodies are nourished and their minds consequently stimulated by pure and wholesome food, served under conditions which conduce to proper assimilation. If the educated woman is able to ensure this without giving it her personal attention, well and good. No one who keeps a dog need bark himself, but there are thousands of so-called educated women in English homes who can make no better use of their book learning than to use it as an excuse for poisoning themselves and their families with badly cooked food. As for the women a stage lower in the social scale, who pass through the mill of our elementary and even secondary schools, their ignorance of the science of feeding amounts to a national disaster.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore let us dissent with all our strength from the theory that the "educated" woman, on

<sup>1</sup> If it is thought that there is exaggeration in these views, let the reader obtain a report of a recent conference at the Guildhall on the subject of the feeding of school children. "The diet of ordinary school children," said Mr. Black, of Durham, "is almost as bad as that of necessitous children." Dr. Victor Blake, the school medical officer of Portsmouth, made the same point, and Dr. Haden Guest, another school doctor, declared that "Conditions of malnutrition and improper nutrition exist not only in poor homes but in the homes of the well circumstanced." The note emphasised throughout the Conference was that children, all over the country, are being starved, not because their parents are poor, but because their mothers are ignorant. When one remembers the large number of girls who pass through middle-class kitchens before marriage, one wonders what sort of a standard they acquire there.

her progress upwards, must kick the kitchen pots behind her. The most obvious sign that she is losing touch with nature is to be found in her contemptuous attitude towards one of the central facts of life. Feminists who try to compromise between their sneaking conviction that domestic labour of all kinds is degrading and their perception that some woman has got to do it, imagine the disappearance of the individual kitchen, and the growth of the restaurant habit. As a matter of fact, however, which has been tested over and over again, catering for a large number of people can only be economically effected by the sacrifice of a good deal of the variety and individuality which characterise the family meal under skilful management. Hotel food, even of the best, is excessively monotonous, and it is nothing but domestic incompetency on the part of a wife and mother (or, preoccupation with non-domestic work) which drives modern families into hotels or "mansions" with common kitchens.

No one, however much they agree with these sentiments, need be accused of declaring that all women must be cooks. The argument is that in social significance and usefulness to the human race the preparation of food is an honourable, interesting, and exceedingly important occupation; worthy not of the rabbit-brained but of the most intelligent lady who ever wrote B.A. after her name. Women have hitherto declined to believe this because the preparation of food has always been a feminine charge, and women were, and are, obsessed with the idea that everything a man does is

more useful and important than their own tasks. Therefore all the scientific discoveries which have arisen out of food preparation, and nearly all the inventions and appliances in connection with it, have been made by man. It is suggested here, in all humility, that there is ample room for more discoveries and more applied science in the kitchen, and that woman, now that she is partly freed from more pressing duties, might well try to occupy this sphere.

So far she has not even succeeded in keeping man out of the kitchen, for the inventor of new dishes and sauces, the pioneer of fresh methods whether of cooking or cleaning, is invariably a man.

The theory that, by departmentalising all the work now done by the servantless, or nearly servantless woman, in her own home, women can be freed for a second occupation, was first ventilated by Mrs. Gilman and is growing apace in attractiveness for a generation to whom domestic labour is hateful. It is urged, very plausibly, that many home functions are already trade processes, and that clothes, food and household gear bought ready-made reduce the housework considerably. Electric light and heat, hot and cold water laid on, electric cleaning apparatus—all these labour-saving appliances may be counted on to release women from the traditional home tasks. But, even when we have the last word in all such inventions we have not found an electric substitute for the human being who, in the centre of all these "processes," is still needful to give the personal touch which means "home." Moreover the allowance of two

months once or twice in the lifetime of the woman, to be set aside for the business of having babies, is a grim index to the quality of motherhood to be expected under such conditions. It is very easy to picture the baby being cared for by "experts," but even supposing that the rate of wages in a socialist State did not permit of the competition which sends up the remuneration of any expert beyond the reach of the average mother, there will still remain the ineradicable (and quite justifiable) conviction of every good mother that her baby is unlike any other, and that the "expert," to whom the child is just another specimen of the genus infant, cannot be trusted to realise its right to individuality.

It is not easy to speak without heat of these pernicious doctrines of an ideal life for woman which encourage her to delegate to others the duties of maternity. Many women, it is true, do this already out of idleness or ignorance, or from sad compulsion, but to make it part of an ideal life for women is a different matter and a great evil. The bringing up of a child, even when its first year of complete dependence on its mother is over, is a joy and a privilege that no true woman would barter. Is there nothing in that intimate tie of the child to its mother to differentiate her care and understanding of it from that of a hired stranger? If so her "spiritual evolution" is indeed proceeding on strange lines. The limitation of the feminist family to one, or possibly two children, is also significant. It is obvious that a family of three,

the minimum for keeping up the race, would take too much of that valuable time which is to be spent in wage-earning. If a woman between the ages of 23—30 has three children she will have plenty of occupation until she reaches the mid-period of life, for the human mother of the educated class does not cast off her family pre-occupations as soon as the children can walk. At 45 she will probably be seeing her daughter safely through the critical period of girlhood. Again, no one suggests that educated women should themselves perform all the duties of caring for and educating their children, or that by so doing they should cut themselves off from every other form of activity, but a thorough understanding of those matters and a close supervision of them is necessary for every woman if she is to perform her maternal duties properly.

Is such a supervision of the home and the maintenance of some form of family life compatible with the regular outside occupation of married women? That is the question. Feminists do not meet it. They confine themselves to demonstrating imperfections in the present home system and to drawing fancy pictures of a Socialist Utopia, such as that depicted by Mr. W. L. George in "Woman and To-morrow," in which communal houses and kitchens and the miraculous intervention of armies of "experts" solve the problems now found in the "individualistic" home.

There is no doubt that we are trending towards the break up of the individualistic home, and that

the growth of flat and hotel life, and restaurant habits, seem to point in that direction. But do not let us drift into it. Let us know where we are going. The woman of the future, who has entirely lost her home life and work, may look back with longing eyes even on her pots and pans and position as a "servant wife." It is asserted that this ideal of the home as the special care and preserve of one woman has tied her to material things. It is urged that her emancipation from the fetish of home life is essential for her soul's freedom. The comparative value of what are called material things is a controversial matter but so long as they are connected with the art of living they are not to be rejected as immaterial to higher development. The question of spiritual evolution is even more controversial. One aspect of the problem, however, remains which can be discussed on rather more solid ground. Is it in the interests of woman's bodily health, and the health of her offspring, that she should become a self-supporting economic factor in the State, and that she should let the "providence of man" go by the board?

If woman is to be normally the economic partner of man in the home it is a question of first importance that she should be his economic equal. The great majority of feminist writers on the subject of woman's labour seem to believe that the removal of all restrictions, customary or legal, the opening on equal terms of men's corporations, colleges, trade unions and societies, would make the necessary difference in the economic outlook of women. It

is, no doubt, a handicap on woman's earnings that she has fewer alternatives when it comes to choosing a trade or profession, and that among those alternatives there are comparatively few highly paid ones, but it is extremely doubtful whether this handicap can ever be removed, having in view the different capacity of men and women. There must always remain a range of professions and trades, numbering among them some of the most productive, from which women are physically debarred, and another range in which they will find it difficult to compete because of the strain on nervous energy caused by their peculiar organisation. As an economic factor woman must remain the inferior of man, and the fantastic schemes which make every woman a wage-earner, and provide every one with a job and a minimum wage, do not come into the region of practical politics. So long as she is man's economic inferior so long will there be a strong argument in favour of making her dependent on him. By so doing each family secures the providence of the most efficient bread-winner, and the personal care of the most efficient parent. Suggestions that the father should share more fully in domestic cares and the mother in bread-winning, neglect the fact that it is of racial importance that each sex should perform the duty for which it is physically and temperamentally best adapted.

In using the term "economic inferior," as applied to woman, it must be understood that the writer does not acknowledge a *positive* inferiority, except in the sense that male work, on the whole,

is more wealth-productive. The value of domestic work to the world is not expressed in terms of wages, nor can the vocation of motherhood be placed on a wage-earning basis. It is as a producer of material wealth in the labour market that woman is man's inferior. The higher she is in the plane of spiritual development the less possible is it to determine her services to man or to the race in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Although it is impossible to treat so complicated a subject in any detail here, it may be well to touch on some of the main points on which the relative inferiority of woman as a wage-earner rests. Some feminists demand the removal of the restrictions on women's labour due to the Factory Acts (which were always opposed by leaders of the suffragist party) on the grounds that these regulations, though humanitarian in their intention, actually handicap woman in industry by imposing greater obligations in respect to her on her employer. It is very important to realise this claim, because it is a logical result of claiming complete economic equality between the sexes. Obviously if one sex is to work on different terms from the other, if the hours of work, conditions and regulations are to be different, the employer cannot always undertake to make the remuneration equal. The inequality in conditions of employment is responsible for some, at all events, of the inequality of payment about which we hear so much, and it becomes obvious that the question of physical capacity for the purposes of



wage earning must not only dictate woman's economic status, but must influence her position with relation to man and the home. In the textile industries, where men and women are organised together into trade unions, they receive the same payment per piece for piece work, but this does not establish women as the economic equals of men, for the earnings of the latter are larger, owing to their greater physical capacity, even in trades where they actually perform the same class of work. On the whole, moreover, men gravitate to the more skilled, and women to the more unskilled processes of industrial work—a condition partly due to the expectation of marriage and to the fact that woman's work is not, generally speaking, continuous.

Needless to say, it is only extreme and ignorant fanatics who urge that regulations in the interests of the health of woman and her offspring are due to the selfish desire of man to limit her economic competition with him, but it is necessary to mention that this charge is made, has often been made in the hearing of the writer by irresponsible persons, because it shows the extremes to which a certain wing of the feminist party are prepared to go. When Mr. Burns proposed a bill to extend the period before and after child-birth during which a woman may not be industrially employed, quite a wave of indignation passed over the feminist ranks. Similar outcries greeted the humane regulations of fifty years ago which withdrew tiny children from the factories. It was urged that their poverty-stricken families would be

nearer starvation for lack of their little wage. In reality such limitations of badly paid and unskilled work are actually beneficial to the worker in the long run, and the limitation and regulation of women's work has had an effect the reverse of depressing on the family wage as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

The sanitary regulations which are applied, in the interests of the race, to woman's industrial work, do not, of course, play so great a part in the occupation of the "educated woman" with whom we are chiefly concerned. Still, the clerical and commercial pursuits which are followed by an increasing number of those employed in "business," and which shade almost imperceptibly into professional employment, are subject to regulations as to hours of work which differentiate women from men.<sup>2</sup> Can it be seriously suggested that any relaxation in such limitations is desirable? On the contrary, one of the strongest and most sensible feminist demands is for an increase in the female inspectorate with a view to checking the tendency of employers

<sup>1</sup> The theory that women are replacing men in industrial work is not borne out by the Royal Commission's report on the Poor Law, 1909, in which it is stated that "The great expansion of women's labour seems to have been in new fields of employment, or in fields which men never occupied," *i.e.* they follow in the factories the home arts and industries which were traditionally theirs.

<sup>2</sup> Where law does not apply custom steps in. A business man or member of Parliament will not require the attendance of a female secretary or clerk for the same length of time or at the late hours which he would without hesitation expect a man to work.

to overlook such rules in times of emergency. In short, no responsible person will seriously suggest that men and women should be put on an equal footing as regards hours of work in the vast range of clerical or business pursuits which are now open to women.

Coming higher in the scale we have a range of professions in which such regulations do not apply. The hours required of a female teacher, or doctor, or artist of any kind, will not differ substantially from those expected of their male colleagues. Yet it is practically certain that if the demand is the same the response will be different. Here are the figures as to the health of teachers under the London Education Committee, taken from a report printed in the *Times* of June 26th, 1913. In 1910, leave of absence for more than one month was granted to 10 men and 45 women on account of nervous complaints, while in 1912 there were 14 similar cases of men and 111 of women. In the Post Office the percentage of employees absent through illness for more than a day was 49 per cent. for males, and varied from 84 per cent. to 94 per cent. for women in different departments.<sup>1</sup> These Post Office figures are important because the regulations as to hours and conditions of work are strictly adhered to, and yet the high percentage of illness suggests that the work is found extremely arduous.

Interesting evidence as to the comparative sickness of men and women is found in a letter to

<sup>1</sup> Replies to (printed) questions, House of Commons, April 28th and July 9th, 1913.

the *Times* of July 25th, 1913, containing a report on the work of a woman's sick club which includes in its 1,400 members, clerks, secretaries, domestic servants, dress makers, shop assistants, factory girls, and social workers—practically every class of "wage earner." The report confirms the view taken in a previous chapter of this book that the Government actuaries have greatly under-estimated the amount of sickness among women. It goes on to say :

"The great difficulty in the management of women's sick clubs is that there is *so much more sickness among them than among men*. As a rule men are never on sick pay unless they are completely disabled by a real illness, but women, especially married women, are very often really unwell and unfit for their daily work, because they are over-tired, strained, and, I grieve to say it, underfed."

The period of heaviest sickness is between 25 and 55, after which it becomes comparatively light.

It may be urged that experiences which are drawn chiefly from classes below that to which the "educated" woman belongs are not valid in her case. She has better food, better housing, and, in all probability, a physique developed by exercise and games. It is difficult to generalise on the question of woman's employment when the circumstances are so different for different classes, but the writer is not without knowledge of the actual conditions of working life in more than one sphere, and she is doubtful

whether the advantages possessed by the "educated" woman in some respects are not more than counterbalanced in others.

In the first place it is by no means certain, if a woman has qualified for a profession which needs severe mental study during girlhood, that her physical development is as complete as her appearance may suggest. The greater difficulty and danger experienced by the so-called better class woman during maternity does not prove that her training has really been of physical advantage to her. Nor does she, as a rule, display the powers of endurance possessed by her poorer sister.<sup>1</sup> She is subject to a variety of nervous diseases from which they, as far as can be judged, do not suffer to the same extent. It is true these diseases attack her whether she is a wage earner or not, and some of them are eminently maladies of unemployment, but that educated women wage earners are immune, or even that they do not suffer excessively from such troubles, will not be denied by any doctor with an extensive practice among women. Experience of associations which employ such women is full of sad cases of breakdowns of various kinds. Either the early training of such

<sup>1</sup> "This much we do know, that probably at no other time in history has childbirth been so difficult, so unhealthily difficult, as now, and that this has manifested itself chiefly in the last fifty years, a period marked by increasing educational strain for girls and boys, by increased gymnastic and violent exercises, such as hockey, for girls, and by employment for young women outside the home."—"The Nature of Woman," J. Lionel Tayler, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. See also next chapter.

women is at fault, or women generally are not adapted for onerous, strenuous and incessant work. The first half of this hypothesis must be discussed more fully in a subsequent chapter.

It will probably be argued that a great deal of the sickness among employed women is due to bad conditions of life at home. This does not, however, account for the disparity in the sickness experience of men and women, nor does it adequately explain the high rate among Post Office employees and school teachers, of whom the majority must come from fairly comfortable homes. Therefore, while no one will deny the necessity for improving the position of women who are forced to be wage earners, it may still be argued *a priori* that it would be better still if they need not be wage earners at all, especially for the first two decades of married life. And—to return to the particular question of the relative inferiority of women in the labour market—it does not seem possible that the sexes can ever be economic equals when their physical capacity and health conditions show such a striking disparity. The woman who is an employer of labour, or who is engaged in professional work in which she must meet the open competition of men, is often, in reality, less protected from over-work than the worker whose hours are limited and who has little responsibility. It must not be supposed that the burden of wage-earning really falls more lightly on one than on the other. Cases of exceptional talent make success easy for a few, and there are occupations marked out for women

by the fact that they can be followed without incessant and monotonous work, but for the most part the privilege of earning one's own living in any walk of life involves regular, every day, monotonous, hard work, and that is exactly the kind of work for which woman, at any period of her life before the age of fifty, is physiologically unfitted.

It is often urged that even factory work, under sanitary conditions, is healthier as well as more congenial to many women than the labour of keeping a house and children clean and cooking three square meals a day. To a woman who has been brought up to do a certain amount of physical work, however, the household tasks will be far less exhausting from their very variety than the mechanical process to which the average industrial worker is condemned.<sup>1</sup> The endless repetition of the same action, involving very likely close attention, but wanting nothing more than the same physical and mental actions and re-actions repeated *ad infinitum*—such an employment is mind deadening and body wearing. The effect on men cannot be good, but on women, particularly married women, in whose system such delicate re-adjustments are continually taking place, the result

<sup>1</sup> A great deal of nonsense is talked about the over-driven wives and mothers of the working class. Where the family income is insufficient, it is true, women suffer most, but it is not too much work they suffer from, it is too little food. To abolish home life in order to relieve such women is like burning down the house to roast the pig.

cannot fail to be injurious. The effect on nerves is seen in the tendency when the strain is over for the day—the strain which has become so mechanical as to be hardly perceptible to the sufferer—to feel a violent reaction, in which light, noise, variety and often some form of rhythmic motion appear to be a physical necessity. The life of the streets or of the dance halls and theatres is often an irresistible attraction after the monotony of a day in the factory.

It may seem impertinent to suggest that a similar psychological process is operating even with the highly educated woman worker, who, in one or other of the many ways now open to her, is earning her own living. In the majority of occupations, however, routine will be necessary, and a long period spent each day, usually shut up in a room or office, meeting the same class of mental problem with the same nervous effort and making over and over again the same muscular actions, means a nervous exhaustion and reaction at the end of the day by no means quite dissimilar from that which seizes the industrial worker ; and the methods open to such a woman or suggested by her tastes, for working off this fatigue, are often, in reality, far less healthy than those of the factory girl. Teachers of all classes must suffer from the necessity of repeating themselves, and especially when they are confined to the narrow circle of single subject. The most successful—those whose deep interest in the personality of their pupils supplies an ever fresh stimulation—must still suffer from the nervous



reaction consequent on a continual demand on the same faculties and a repeated harping on one string. The profession whose followers (although it involves very hard work) seem to keep their youth longest is the one in which a variety of emotions is continually called for; in which, in short, monotony is the least of drawbacks—the stage.

The work of a household and family, on the contrary, is extremely varied in its demands both on head and hands, on nerves and muscles. Considered as work, apart from attractiveness or social significance, it must be quite as good for a woman to manipulate a pastry roller as to handle a type-writer, and far healthier to make beds than to sit at an office desk. There are a thousand and one little things to be done in and about a house and in connection with the care of children, which involve a thousand and one mental processes and muscular actions, and keep both body and mind perpetually alert without involving too great a strain on either. The application of intelligence to domestic work and the increase of labour-saving appliances (of which Englishwomen are almost ignorant) should reduce the laborious side of such work, but no one who has ever attempted the practical work of a house will deny that, according to the standard of comfort and beauty maintained, one can spend practically as much time as one likes on the mere business of keeping a household in proper order.

In justice to educated Englishwomen it must be said that a certain number actually do this, with

the assistance, perhaps, of a woman or girl for the rougher work, but the low standard of housewifery in our country leads far too many to rely entirely on absolutely unskilled hands. In parts of our Empire such as Canada the scarcity of unskilled female labour makes it necessary that even well-to-do women should do their own housework, and their standard is considerably higher than that which their English sisters are prepared to accept. These Australasian and Canadian women are astonished at the domestic incompetence of their English sisters, and though they would very often be glad enough to secure help in their own lives, which, in a society where men predominate, are sometimes overburdened with the claims on woman, yet they have certainly so far escaped that demon of discontent which makes the domestic horizon such an empty one for our countrywomen, and drives us solemnly to consider whether it may not be necessary for their souls' welfare that wives and mothers should delegate what remains of their home work to others and go out to "gainful employment."

The main argument, however, in favour of home work as compared with outside work for married women, is that the former can be done, more or less, in one's own time and in one's own way. It is true that the demands of a family may make incessant calls on the wife and mother, but no greater in reality than are made by the school time table, the factory bell or the exigencies of professional competition. And, as a matter of fact,

a woman who is her own mistress can suit her work to her needs, particularly if she is intelligent and trained and understands the organisation of her forces, so that undue fatigue or strain can be avoided when they might prove injurious. Under no other conditions of work is this possible to the same degree.

It must be clearly understood that all these considerations may be over-ruled in particular cases without vitiating the general principle which the writer wishes to establish, which is to the following effect :—

That if genuine need for more occupation is felt by women of the "educated" class it is pertinent to ask whether they could not attain their ends better by taking over the work of their households (or part of it) and the care of their children, rather than by entering into some wage-earning profession.

To which may be added that a class of married women which makes sport an occupation instead of a recreation is a canker in any country, and can only be regarded as a sign of national decay. In the experience of the writer such women are quite as common in the middle class, whose men are all workers, as among those who, men and women alike, do not have to depend on their individual exertions for a living. There are just as many idle poor as idle rich, and among middle class women who have neither the responsibilities of the rich nor the compulsions of the poor there are an astonishing number who toil not, neither do they spin, and yet are arrayed as the lilies of the

field. It is not uncommon for this very class to develop the nervous diseases which seem to affect the unemployed and the over-employed about equally, and in a vast majority of cases the family doctor, if he dared, instead of prescribing an expensive "rest cure" would like very much to tell his fair patient to dismiss her maids and do her own house-work for a month.

If any feminist reads these pages he or she will conclude that one who can express such views is prepared to relegate woman to the position of a slave or "servant wife"; denying her the economic independence which can only be hers by wage earning in competition with men, debarring her from a vast number of interesting and profitable pursuits, the writer, it will be said, is prepared to thrust the wife back to the companionship of pots and pans, to remain a perpetual Cinderella, while her male relations, or, perhaps, her spinster sisters, go to the ball and enjoy the feast of reason and the flow of soul. No matter if the brain of this woman is teeming with original thoughts, if she is capable of the most epoch making research, or the most delicate play of fancy—her time must be spent in ministering to the bodily wants of a man whose intellectual capacity may be far inferior to her own, and to children who could be equally well if not better cared for by "experts." The modern woman, with her new creed of her duty to herself, we shall be told, cannot accept the theory of such a sacrifice.

At once, be it said, there is no intention

here of laying down rules for individual women, or even of attempting to decide what is best for different types. There are women who ought never to marry or to have children, because they are not of the maternal type, and other women whose gifts in other than the domestic direction mark them out for some special line of work, whether they marry or no. But the average woman is not, perhaps, such an original and gifted person as she is now taught to believe, and whatever her capacities may be, if she embraces the vocations of wifehood and motherhood she ought to make a success of them, and in order to make a success of these vocations she must be prepared for them.

The care of children is closely connected with the food question. To judge from medical periodicals doctors are still trying to persuade "educated" women that the best kind of prepared milk or infant's food is a poor substitute for the natural article. Naturally, a woman who has a trade or profession to follow, in addition to being a mother, will do her best to persuade herself that the doctors are wrong, and that probably their male prejudice against women workers is the cause of their insistence. But even those mothers who pay this form of tribute to nature are increasingly delegating all secondary duties to hirelings, and the most plausible excuse is that the trained nurse or kindergarten teacher is so much better able to control the child. As a matter of fact, modern education has often obliterated that quickness of perception and sympathy, and especially that

natural patience which were the heritage of the more instinctively maternal woman, and which are now more often found among the illiterate and even the less moral and orderly types of womanhood. The woman who, by modern standards, may be most admirable is often the worst mother.

The multitude of servants, teachers, school friends, visitors and acquaintances who now crowd the lives of quite small children constitute an environment far too full of excitement and stimulation for growing brains, and are but a poor exchange for the constant care and attention of one familiar and always-the-same person who looked after the children of a less "educated" age. The prevalent restlessness and love of change are reflected in the modern child's attitude to toys. The beloved ancient doll with a battered head has almost ceased to exist in nursery life. Toys are broken and deserted and books are read and thrown aside, and the constant desire is for something new and untried.

There is a tendency to believe that the carefully brought-up child of our present day, who is perpetually with grown-ups whether they are his parents or not, has an advantage over those who were kept to a nursery atmosphere and only descended to the companionship of "The People Downstairs" at stated intervals. It is claimed that the modern method creates greater confidence and sympathy between parents and children. This intercourse, however, is usually decreased to a minimum just when it might prove of some advantage to the child, for the absorption into

school life, which now takes place with girls as well as boys, leaves a small percentage of time for home, and the chief endeavour of the average parent is that this period should not be one of boredom to the young critic who is learning to view his home from the outside.

For small children the loss of nursery life is a great disadvantage. Old fashioned nurses, beyond a few strict rules about cleanliness and behaviour, left their charges mercifully alone—did not make any assaults on their minds, or try to correct original views on natural history or geography. "The People Downstairs" were viewed with tolerance from the serene heights of nursery lore. Life was full of thrilling interests of which they, poor souls, had no conception. The modern child can seldom enjoy such a privileged detachment. He or she is continually surrounded by the benevolence of "grown-ups" who interpret life according to their own view, and who are full of that accurate and detailed information which produces atrophy of the imagination. Therefore in desiring the closer supervision of children by mothers one is not necessarily anxious that they should be more looked after, so far as their minds are concerned, but rather the reverse. A mother ought instinctively to know when to leave a child alone—which the "expert" seldom does. The aim of girls' education should be to cultivate the instinctive, sympathetic qualities and to produce a well-balanced, healthy, restful type of woman to whom the duties of maternity will be congenial. No institution, however well managed, can do for a

child what its mother and its home can do if they are the right kind of mother and the right kind of home, and that modern children are so often deprived of this ideal environment is not an argument in favour of handing them over to "experts"—it is an argument for trying to improve the breed of mothers.

To sum up : so long as food must be eaten to support life, clothes be worn for beauty as well as warmth, and houses be something more than mere shelters from the weather—so long, in short, as human homes exist, and human children require to be brought up in them, there will be a range of occupations to which the best educated woman in the world cannot do better than direct her personal attention ; they are suffering very badly at present for the lack of that attention. Woman is marching forward to "wider spheres" leaving all these interesting feminine occupations behind her to be done in an extremely inefficient manner by hired women of inferior mental and social standing. In so doing she is abandoning *the one sphere* in which she is easily first in favour of others where, do what she may, she must always be handicapped in comparison with men. No removal of restrictions can do away with that handicap or give real equality in a sphere of economic competition, for the handicap is the result of nature's laws ; it is a physical and consequently also a mental handicap (for some purposes) which no training can eradicate, and on the proper observance of those laws depend the health and well-being of the race.



But with the change that has taken place in social and industrial conditions it is not possible that woman should regain the lost arts and industries which once filled up home life and made it so varied and interesting, moreover, the simplification of household tasks by machinery must reduce the time necessary to be spent on them, and the application of intelligence to this work should reduce them still farther. Therefore, there will always be, in our country not only a surplus of women who have no actual home or maternal duties as their main occupation, but a surplus of energy left over in the lives of many married women, even of those who have performed their duties to the full. From these surplus forces much might be expected if rightly directed and encouraged to expand on lines which are sympathetic to the distinctively feminine psychology.

172 "Practical reasons oblige us to send our boys into an atmosphere of crude ideas, under the tyranny of mob-rule. Let us at least keep our daughter in a reasonable atmosphere of mingled old and young where she may retain her originality, and hear the wider point of view belonging to a more experienced generation."  
—Isaac Taylor, on education. 1810.

"The exigencies of the corporate life are imperative in these days and with our institutions . . . only this is one of the points where I don't want women to imitate men. I want them to remember that it is their business to maintain variety of type, and individuality of development and leisure (which has nothing to do with idleness)—the leisure for calm thought and grace, and affection, against the tendency to excessive competition, intense overwork and running character into uniform grooves."

—Catherine Winkworth, (Quoted by Mrs. Max Müller).

" . . . There is just this difference between the making of a girl's character and a boy's—you may chisel a boy into shape as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of the better sort, as if he were a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything—she will wither without sun, she will decay in her sheath as a narcissus does if you do not give her enough air. She grows as a flower does."—Ruskin, "Sesame and Lilies."

"The ideal which the mother and wife makes for herself, the manner in which she understands duty and life, contain the fate of the community."—"Amiel's Journal."

"The happiest women, like the happiest nations, have no history."—George Eliot, "The Mill on the Floss."

"Paradise lies at the feet of the mother."—Koran.

## CHAPTER IX

### EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE

FREQUENT reference has been made in the foregoing chapters to the system of feminine education now in vogue among us as responsible, to a certain degree, for the general feeling among educated women that they are square pegs in round holes. The most definite charges brought against that system have been directed to the alienation of women from home-life, which, nevertheless, they may be destined to take up as a vocation, and to the comparatively greater value it sets upon brain as distinguished from handwork. Subtly connected with both these influences is that glorification of the celibate life which is the natural outcome of intellectual individualism.

The transference of girls' education from the home to the school has meant the supersession of the influence of the mother by that of the spinster teacher. The maternal instinct is not confined to those who have children of their own and there are many teachers who are of the true maternal type, but the life conditions of the celibate teacher

have drawbacks which the wisest of them are perfectly willing to own. It is difficult, in writing of this question, to avoid an appearance of misprizing the work and character of unmarried women. The world of women does not for the writer divide itself into two classes, those who are married and those who are single. It divides along lines of psychology, already indicated, into the maternal and the non-maternal types, and although actual physical experiences must give a wider and deeper significance to the first type yet they are not absolutely essential to it. There is a spiritual motherhood for some of those to whom is denied the full realisation of their sex privilege, and this fact constitutes a freemasonry among such women. But even a limited personal experience among those who adopt teaching as a profession will reveal the fact that they are tending towards the non-maternal type—an inevitable result of their education and environment.

The humanising atmosphere of a large family is now too seldom attainable. Girls pass from their feminine school to their feminine college. Why not? say the feminists. Do not boys have the same experience, and does it dehumanise them? The answer is that, temporarily, it does. The school boy and youth are not broadly or conspicuously "human"—they are humanity in a special and individualistic stage of development. But they pass very soon into a world of give and take, by no means exclusively masculine, and at no stage of their evolution are they subjected to quite the same degree of dogmatic influence

which gives so decisive a shape to the mental evolution of a girl. This is partly the result of the feminine habit of concentration on detail, which education, so far, has encouraged, and not eradicated. The meticulous conscientiousness of the average school girl is notorious. It is a reflection of her teacher's habit of mind and pursues her through the whole of her education and vocational training. She does not seem to be able to assume that protective armour with which the boy instinctively defends his growing mind from the frightful assaults made on it in the name of education.<sup>1</sup> Feminists claim that "genius" is essentially a female attribute. It is interesting to find that the kind of boy who usually does best in examinations (though he may not be heard of afterwards) is certainly the one who exhibits feminine traits of eager receptivity, quick observation, conscientiousness, and imitativeness.

This pathetic helplessness in the grasp of the educational machine is specially characteristic of girls, and they apply themselves with patient docility to the accumulation of unrelated ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Girls, in the writer's belief, are temperamentally less able to resist the "dogmatic pressure" to which they are subjected in school life, and which is now applied to them with more vigour than formerly because they have been sucked into the whirlpool of competitive examinations, and are expected to show "results" of their education in a tangible and concrete form; because, also, that sensitiveness to the opinion of others which is traced to its biological source (see Chapter II.) affects them very strongly in their relations to their teachers, for whom they often form exaggerated attachments, and to whose praise or blame they are morbidly sensitive. See "The Tragedy of Education," by E. Holmes.

If they have the supreme misfortune to be accounted "clever" they will be crammed unmercifully, and sent with a mass of undigested information inside their aching heads to a further stage of "education" at college. The unfortunate feature of a girl's college is that most of the students go there to train, not for life, but for a profession, and the vast majority are, of course, destined to some branch or other of teaching. There cannot be, therefore, in the average woman's college the environmental influence of a wide general culture and keen zest for life which are characteristic of the same institutions for men. Those emancipative influences which, as Mr. Holmes tells us in "The Tragedy of Education," may exist in every school and every home, come to the rescue of man at a critical stage in his career, in the comparative freedom of his college life from pedagogic supervision. But in almost every case a woman following out a scheme of higher education will spend the time, outside her classes, in a somewhat cloistral and school-like atmosphere, very much under the shadow of those "results" which she knows are expected of her—a "dogmatic pressure" none the less real because automatically applied. The influences which surround her and her loss of "touch" on the life of the world outside cannot fail to be reflected in her character and often in her manners and appearance.

There is no intention here of decrying the period of life to which many college-bred women look back with pleasure as the happiest and most

fruitful of their lives. There are also an increasing number of girls who take their years at college or university as they should be taken—as a preparation for life, not for a profession ; a period of growth, not of severe pruning. But the type of woman under consideration, the unmarried teacher, is essentially the victim of the certificate machine, and she predominates in all serious circles in women's colleges. Moreover, since women's colleges aim at nothing more nor less than enabling their girls to pass the same examinations and satisfy the same standards as those applied to and made for men, it follows that the intellectual life of such communities is less spontaneous and more strenuous than they would be were they framed to develop the mental and psychological powers of women. The lack of freedom and joyousness in the development of the modern woman teacher is largely the result of this disregard of her sex needs and aptitudes, and is strongly reflected in her emotional outlook on life.

From her more or less cloistered life, with its anxious outlook on the future (a subject which harasses young women much more than young men) she passes to school teaching, and at once becomes the centre and ideal of the more ardent young spirits of her own sex, who are just beginning the climb of which she has accomplished the first stage. The conditions which have made her what she is—a potentially fine woman perhaps, but often stunted and warped on the emotional and distinctly over-strained on the physical side—are operating with redoubled force on them. Are

they not the children of the generation whose women of every class see something mean and degrading in all the old, homely, common things of life, and who aspire to raise woman to a higher pitch than she has ever reached, through the achievements of "free personality," operating through an intellect which has been pitchforked along the path of knowledge?

To such a generation it is little wonder that their idol, their ideal, should not be the mother-type at home—dear, perhaps, but "far behind the times"—but the unmarried, independent woman who is shaping their minds and characters. It is she who, "economically independent," gloriously at home in that world of abstract ideas which lies behind the covers of books, serenely oblivious of the vulgar and commonplace happenings of daily life, mistress of herself and of her fate, appears to youthful eyes as the great new type of womanhood. Her detachment from man seems to them a declaration of independence. As they grow older and read it is evident to them that the girl who stays at home and "helps mother" gets very little share either of the excitement, the pleasure, or the glory that is to be had by adventurous spirits, and it does not seem worth while to be "educated" for a career which will show so few tangible results. As likely as not the home girl's help will be taken for granted and she will not even be thanked! All the books and papers and pamphlets are full of splendid things done by unmarried, or at any rate "independent" women, and the public service of one, the public speaking



of another, the scientific attainments of a third or the philanthropy of a fourth make a much greater show than the everyday, commonplace, quite unnoticed work and devotion of women who are only wives and mothers. Slowly but surely has grown up a theory that, although women will always be impelled by nature to be mothers, and though motherhood may bring them great happiness, there are far more noble and important things to be done. To parody the words of the third feminist in the last chapter, "motherhood is the most elementary of all work—requires no intelligence—anyone with the brains of a rabbit can do it! Let us turn over this unpleasant job to people who have nothing better to do."

A teacher of the maternal type in her annual letter to her old pupils last year, commented on the fact that many of them consulted her about their love affairs and said, with real wisdom, that their mothers could be better guides for them in all such life problems than an unmarried teacher. The instincts of her young friends were probably right in making them turn to her, but she is not unmindful of the wider aspect of the question of the influence of mothers, though probably few of her colleagues would take such a sane and generous view. The supersession of the mother by the spinster teacher is the beginning of that process which makes marriage increasingly difficult for the modern girl. Not only does she set it more and more on a plane where it can be weighed, dispassionately, against other life vocations, but her continued contact with the cloistered type of

woman is reflected in her own manner and appearance. No one wishes a schoolroom to be the breeding ground of love intrigues or a forcing bed of precocious emotions, but there is some medium between that and the atmosphere from which a young girl emerges encased in an armour of hardness and scepticism. She despises sentiment and shrinks from the idea of passion. Her coldness is not the pure passionless coldness of the snow, which may melt in the sun's radiance, it has the hard quality of marble, is in fact, correlated not with innocence but with an absence of idealism. A knowledge of life may dispel some of the illusions of youth—but youth has a right to its dreams, its hopes and its enthusiasms, and the world is so much the poorer for every bright, hopeful, tender, and romantic soul that is prematurely darkened.

The material for sex-instruction cannot be found in an ordinary school curriculum, but then neither can one say definitely that the suffrage propaganda is to be found there. Yet both seem to find their way somehow into the teaching of many modern school girls. The truth is that girls are extraordinarily susceptible to subtle influences at this age, and are quick to discover a point of view. They are as imitative as monkeys, so that a strong personality will stamp itself on a girls' school and reveal its influence in small as well as in great matters. On the whole the main feature in the attitude which girls learn, somehow or another, to take up, may be summed up in one word—the watch-word of the new woman—individualism.

Readers of this book will realise why in sex-relations, in maternal relations, in domestic habits and in intellectual pursuits this ideal—of the cultivation of the *ego*—continually obtrudes itself. Translated into the plain language used by the unsympathetic philistine family of the modern girl it is called “selfishness.” Self-centred the young girl leaves school, and takes up her place at home, seeks a business or profession or goes to college. Self-centred she may permit the affection of some man, but her code will not allow that she should pay back in his own honest, natural currency what he is prepared to spend. As often as not she is more calculating than the most artful matchmaker, and takes as much as she can get with the stipulation that little shall be required in return. This appears to her, by the hideous perversion of her point of view, to be an evidence of extreme self-respect on her own part.

A recent writer in a review devoted to women’s interests commented on the dearth of marriages among middle-class women<sup>1</sup> and said that, “Among the rich, men marry if the fancy takes them; among the poor a man can live more comfortably and cheaply married than single . . . but the professional and middle classes can only marry by exercising great self-denial.”

Why is this? Because the middle-class woman has ceased to be her husband’s lover and help-mate. Her social standard demands that she should keep a tribe of servants to do the house-work, and even her maternal functions require the

<sup>1</sup> Lady Selborne, *The Englishwoman*, July, 1913.

assistance of expensive experts. Her own solution of the difficulty (according to feminists) is that she should enter a profession and be her husband's economic partner. The vast majority of men, if they want an economic partner, will live with one of their own sex. They require something different in a wife. Not one who is as harassed and hard worked and preoccupied as themselves, so that when they both return home in the evening they will have nothing but their respective "shop" to talk about, but one who represents a quite different side of life—one who is out of the turmoil of competition, who can be counted on to keep the fire alight on the domestic hearth, and whose presence is restful and at the same time stimulating. It will take a long time before man will accept the feminist theory of the impersonal, non-individualistic home which he is to share with a highly individualised lady on a sort of easy hire system. Although there may be some husbands and wives who already share the economic business life, an entire revolution in sex-relations would be necessary before such a state of affairs could become usual among "educated" people.<sup>1</sup>

Men, in short, require some amenities in return for the bachelor freedom they are prepared to give up. Even those—and they are the majority—who would gladly shoulder family responsibilities for the sake of the companionship and love of a woman, are deterred when they feel that a girl

<sup>1</sup> Reference has been made in previous chapters to the reasons for maintaining the present economic basis of the family.

expects "to go her own way" entirely in married life. Another type of man—often a fine one—may sorrowfully give up hopes of marriage because he has work to do which he believes he ought to put before his own happiness, and because there are few women nowadays who are prepared to make sacrifices for their husband's work. Yet there are splendid women who have done this. Modern girls, who will neither give passion nor take on their own shoulders the amenities of family life are "giving too little and asking too much." They consider it degrading to be the sort of help-mate a man wants, and at the present moment the reason why many of them do not get married, why many have no chance to marry, is because, as wives, educated women are luxuries too expensive for many men to afford.

What more serious indictment of our present female education could be found? In describing the product of the modern educational system an extreme type has, of course, been taken. There are plenty of healthy, merry, kind, affectionate, domesticated and unselfish girls—clever ones too—who are still conscious that they have not got their proper niche in the scheme of society. The vast majority of such girls, if they do not marry happily as Nature intended them to do, are victims of the absurd social standard already so often referred to—they are being sacrificed on the altar of gentility. The best thing for them to do is to escape from it to countries where a more natural state of affairs still exists, and where a woman is not *declassée* if she washes her own

children. At present it is almost impossible for a young couple to contemplate matrimony, if they belong to the professional classes, without an income which will run to at least two maids, and, be it said, the worldly wisdom of parents who frown on imprudent matches is not without justification. To make love in a cottage a success one must be an efficient house-maid, a good plain cook, a patient nurse, and an energetic gardener. And none of these trades come by nature.

Reference has already been made to the recent attempts to graft domestic science on to the overgrown tree of female education. The idea seems to be that the educated woman, who cannot be expected to take an interest in scrubbing or cooking, should be instructed in the theories on which those elementary tasks are based. There is, of course, a great deal which science can teach as to food values and properties, in the matter also of hygiene and sanitation and in the more abstract side of domestic management altogether. The rule of thumb under which our households and kitchens are now carried on is demonstrated every day in the slovenly and wasteful house-keeping which is the rule rather than the exception. But in the experience of every woman who has tried for herself there is a singular hiatus between "domestic science" and the work of a house—particularly in cooking. It is as though one had tried to learn to play the violin theoretically and were suddenly presented with an instrument and a bow. Are we once again approaching this important question from the wrong point of view?

Is it not a *craft*, rather than a scientific theory, that we women need to acquire ?

In this connection may be noted a very interesting report on handwork in schools, the result of a commission appointed four years ago under Mr. Dyke Acland, to consider the desirability of instructing school boys in handcraft and school girls in homecraft and domestic economy. This committee's terms of reference included only secondary schools. It might with advantage have extended to a higher grade, and indeed it is absolutely useless to contend for the principle of handwork in elementary or secondary schools and to bar it out from public and high schools. The result will be an outcry that we are robbing the children of the poor of their intellectual birthright in order to keep them at a level where they can best serve the rich. The committee's opinion, if valid for one class of school, is equally valid for another, and it is this: that secondary education has been too exclusively concerned with the cultivation of the mind by the means of books and by the instruction of the teacher. They lay stress not so much on the vocational importance of such handicrafts as may be taught, as on the educational value to all pupils of a training which will give balance and completeness to their character, and they declare that the evidence before them does not show that the introduction of such handwork is detrimental to literary work, but rather the reverse. The effect on the moral and mental development of the pupil is considered to be more important than the actual manual

dexterity obtained, and among other advantages it offers an outlet for the rational use of leisure ; it brings the work of the school into relation with that world which is outside the class-room ; it is a training in corporate effort and a relief from the strain of purely intellectual study.

As a social influence handwork in the schools tends to correct the depreciatory attitude towards work with the hand which has generally obtained in the past, and it is stoutly asserted in the report that there is no such divorce between brainwork and hand-work as the devotees of a purely intellectual training seem to imagine.

There are thousands of persons all over the country who will recognise the sound good sense of all this for *secondary schools*, but is it not time that we abandoned these attempts to modify the theory of democratic education which we adopted, in principle, when we made education compulsory? No one would now dare to propose that, under the guise of national education, we should give a trade training to boys or girls. It is merely the business of the school to equip their minds and bodies for any state of life unto which it shall please God to call them, and particularly to permit them to develop their own capacities. The children in secondary schools, too, are the picked "intellects" of the elementary schools. For them may be opening out the ladder of education about which, nowadays, we hear so much. It is as part of *general education* and character training that handwork must take its place among us, if we are ever to regain our lost



sense of craftsmanship and all that it means of intellectual and artistic satisfaction. But what is good for one boy or girl is equally good for another nowadays—the line which will divide them in after life is by no means so sharply drawn; for education should be a matter of character training and development and the main qualities needed by all classes are much the same. Even from the practical point of view, moreover, our boys go out every day from middle-class homes to lands where these social distinctions must be forgotten. They do very well. They have the defects of the qualities acquired at public schools, but the qualities themselves are good material upon which to work. Would the grafting of handwork on to their curriculum be either difficult or disadvantageous? It might develop a side of their characters which will be called into play in the “Colonies.”

As for girls of the middle classes, the question is simpler. Unlike many of their brothers, the vast majority are destined to take up a vocation in which craftsmanship would make all the difference between failure and success. Unlike many of their brothers they are being infected with an intellectual snobbery to which handwork would be a valuable corrective, and lastly, unlike their brothers, they are becoming more and more slaves to a social snobbery of similar origin, and their more easily influenced minds are taking an indelible impression of the theory that “work” is degrading which they may not be able, like their brothers, to rub off in a wider contact with the world.

There is yet another side to this question of practice versus theory in domestic training. The vast majority of women who, with the best intentions, and either from economic necessity or because they have emigrated to a new country, take up domestic work seriously, find it physically exceedingly arduous. They forget that they are suddenly bringing into play all the muscles of the body, many of which have never been used in such directions before. The actions of bed-making, scrubbing, or polishing furniture do not need a great amount of physical strength, but they do need long practice before they can be accomplished without severe fatigue. It is, therefore, an unfair test that a woman who has never been accustomed to such physical exertions should suddenly be plunged into the midst of them, and this is an argument for steady practice from early years, and for a continuous use of all the muscles such as can best be gained in physical exercises of an entirely different character from the more strenuous forms of sport, in order to keep the whole frame supple and harmoniously developed.

If, therefore, domestic science is to re-enlist the educated woman in the service of the home it must not be regarded as an alternative or special subject, to be theoretically learnt, chiefly with a view to lecturing on it afterwards. Unless we are to part with our homes altogether, and betake ourselves to those cheerless communal dwellings depicted by Mr. W. L. George or Mrs. Gilman,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Feminists who advocate, in the supposed interests of woman, the disappearance of the individual home and the individual

the educated woman must personally take the matter of domestic management in hand, and, as an economic question, she may find it necessary to dispense with a good deal of the inefficient and expensive assistance with which, at present, she masks her own incompetence.

But, as has already been said, the problem of the education of women would be much simpler if we could assume that only the exceptional few, for exceptional reasons, would fail to take up the vocations of wifehood and motherhood for which domestic knowledge is so indispensable an equipment. The problem of "The spare time of the married woman and what shall she do with it?" is not by any means the most serious one to be met. We may reduce the number of those who, while anxious for matrimony remained unmarried, both by encouraging emigration (which will be discussed in another chapter) and by an upbringing of girls calculated to remove some of the present deterrents to middle-class marriage.

Of another side of the question—the education of boys on lines calculated to foster domestic tastes—there is no space to speak here, but the influence of home life in fostering habits of simplicity and economy might be a valuable nursery and kitchen, are still kind enough to leave us individual sleeping rooms and even (for those who wish) a family sitting-room. Such compromises betray the weakness of their case. The instinct which leads us to desire privacy in one part of our family life will always lead us to get it, whenever possible, in others. As for the communal kitchen and nursery they will never be adopted for choice, although the incompetence of individual women may make them a necessity.

factor in the matrimonial prospects of many young men.

But when all this is done there will still be a number of women—it is not accurate or just to call them a surplus—of whom some are unfitted for marriage, others do not desire it, and others again have failed for a variety of reasons to find a mate. The possibility that her girl may be in one or other of these classes is an ever-present thought in the mind of every careful mother, and her natural desire is to equip that girl not only professionally but temperamentally, so that, if she is destined to walk through life alone, she may do so with sure, unfaltering steps. In the next chapter an attempt will be made to trace some of the indispensable conditions for such a training.

## CHAPTER X

EDUCATION OF THE UNMARRIED WOMAN

“Are women to be brought up as wives or unmarried independent women, or can an education be devised which will adapt them equally to be either?”—Roscoe, *National Review*, 1858.

“There is a real danger to-day lest women be content with women friends, and aim merely at woman’s welfare—danger, in short, of a woman’s movement in a false sense of the phrase.”  
—L. H. M. Soulsby, “A Woman’s Movement.”

“And that learning should take up too much time or leisure I answer; the most active or busy man. . . . (except he be either tedious and of no dispatch, or lightly and unworthily ambitious to meddle in things that may be better done by others) hath, no question, many times of leisure . . . the true bounds and limitations whereby human knowledge is confined and circumscribed . . . are three. The first, that we do not so place our felicity in knowledge as to forget our mortality, the second, that we make application of our knowledge to give ourselves repose and contentment, and not distaste or repining . . .”—Bacon, “Advancement of Learning.”

“It is true, however, that some of the merriest and most genuine of women are old maids.”—R. L. Stevenson, “*Virginibus Puerisque*.”

## CHAPTER X

### EDUCATION OF THE UNMARRIED WOMAN

IT has been said, earlier in this book, that matters would be immensely simplified if one knew beforehand which girls would marry and which would not—if, in short, they came into the world labelled. The uncertainty of their destination complicates the question of education and training in what may appear to be a hopeless manner. After all that has been said as to the main womanly function and its social and psychical significance it is hardly necessary to reiterate that the woman who does not marry misses the highest possibilities of her sex, and the vast majority of mothers, even if their own matrimonial experience has been unfortunate, instinctively hope for their girls a happy marriage as the crown of a successful life. Yet, in obedience to the modern theory of female education, these mothers permit their daughters to be trained for everything but matrimony.

In preparing these young runners for the race

that is set before them, moreover, let us remember the Nemesis which overtakes those who train too long or too hard. In the attempt to equip them we may actually snatch the prize from their hands. More and more are the pioneers of education feeling their way to a conception of the child mind as something which must grow naturally and healthfully, must apprehend life for itself and frame its own ideals. In this matter of the vocation of woman the great harm that has been done to girls is that in the revolt from one dogma we have gone to the extreme of another. From conceiving wifedom and maternity as the only vocations for women we are swinging over to the theory that they are not vocations at all—merely “incidents.” It is said that the aim of female education formerly was to enable girls to achieve matrimony. Nowadays it seems as if the whole aim is to prevent them from achieving it successfully. This book is a plea for the setting on one side of all such notions. Let the young girl approach life as free as possible from all undue influence. The best atmosphere in which to secure her individual development is one in which no one *ego* is too paramount, and where can we find such an environment save in the natural, human atmosphere of a home, with father, mother, brothers and sisters, cousins and young friends, associating freely and rubbing off their corners against each other?

The recognition of this principle is gradually gaining ground as regards the children of the state, who are being placed in increasing numbers not



in institutions, however well managed, but as boarders in cottage homes. Visitors to such homes recognise that the actual material prosperity or standard of comfort and cleanliness is really of less importance to the child than the human homeliness of the atmosphere, and the affection and mutual interests of the inmates.

How to secure this environment in a "one child" home it is hard to say. Advocates of small families on the grounds that one or two children are more likely to be well looked after are obviously of the opinion that constant supervision by adults is the *sine qua non* of a healthy childhood. The very reverse, as has been said, is the case, and the great advantage of true family life is that it partially releases the child from this supervision and sets it free among equals—to grow at will. Whether such an environment will be provided by the school of the future remains to be seen. Absolutely the reverse is found in the girl's school of the present, and under any circumstances the ideal atmosphere for the girl, whose case we are considering, would be one in which the companionship of other children, the sympathy and intuition of a mother, and the broader views and more impersonal attitude of a father are combined, and in which the mutual affection and respect of the two parents are an object lesson in the happiness which comes through forgetfulness of self. In short, a natural, simple, happy human home is the best possible starting point for any child. Trite as this conclusion may be it needs

to be emphasised, since many feminists seem to think that a well managed institution is the best environment for children.

The merits and de-merits of co-education are far too controversial to be discussed here, although the writer has been interested in the question for many years and has made some study of it in the United States and elsewhere. Up to the age of ten it appears to have many advantages; after that certain disadvantages intervene which may or may not outweigh the advantages, according to various points of view. What is gained, especially up to the age of ten, is the positive advantage of an association which, in its mixture of girls and boys, does supply some of the educational influences of the large family now so rare. After the age of ten, however, so physiologists tell us, the development of the two sexes is unequal at various periods and the practical difficulty of teaching them together increases. The temperamental differentiation on which so much stress has been laid in this book also makes its appearance after this age, and an education which will supply the right stimulus and controls to one sex may be inadequate for the other. Evidence gathered in the United States points to the conclusion that, far from reducing sex-consciousness or putting off the age of sex attraction, boys and girls educated together show great precocity in their love affairs, though the temperamental sexual frigidity of a large number of American women (a curious phenomenon which cannot be discussed here) probably prevents much immediate

harm from coming from these boy and girl flirtations.<sup>1</sup>

At present, however, we are dealing chiefly with principles—the principles which should underlie the education of a girl who may not marry, and may be destined to be a single, self supporting unit of society. The first principle laid down has been that she should have a free and happy childhood in a normal home. The second is that she should be given every chance of having a healthy body throughout life. No intellectual gift can compensate her for the ruin of her health, and yet it is no exaggeration to say that the path of modern education is strewn with the dead, mutilated or devitalised bodies of women whose physical well-being has been sacrificed before the Moloch of competitive examinations.

During the period of adolescence physiological changes are taking place in a girl which make a heavy demand on her nervous energy. In many cases she may need a great deal of quiet and repose, and under no circumstances should she be encouraged to fight against the lassitude which is nature's own protective weapon—yet at this critical period the vast majority of girls are in the thick of school life. The demands upon them are incessant, the pressure is insistent and their own conscientious

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing the New York newspapers are discussing the high percentage of unmarried men and women, especially in the "college graduate" class. A woman editor states that the best type of "business girl" frequently refuses matrimony, and that those who marry are the ones who are "too lazy to support themselves."

nature impels them to respond far beyond their real strength. In the intervals of brain work they are encouraged or even compelled to take various forms of severe physical exercise, such as hockey or cricket. After they are seventeen, if they are destined for "a career," the tension tightens, and it does not release them until at twenty-two or twenty-three they "finish" their professional training and start on their life work. Of course in the medical profession, or if they take up some specialised branch of science, the training will be longer and the examinations more severe, but these come at a less critical period, although the cumulative effect of previous overstrain may help to make them severely felt.

In a previous chapter reference was made to the difficulty experienced by modern "educated" women in maternity and to their general susceptibility to a variety of small ailments. It is necessary here, although we are considering the education of a girl who may not marry, to go a little further into the question, and, as it is one on which something more than general knowledge or experience are needed, the following quotation, from one who has made a study of bio-genetics, is particularly apposite.<sup>1</sup>

"It is comparatively easy to inculcate a physiological habit in the young, but when once established it is extremely difficult to alter. . . . during adolescence the natural habit of a girl's functions leads her to develop her power to store nutriment, and to develop various organs of her

<sup>1</sup> "Sex Antagonism," Walter Heape, M.A., F.R.S.

body which are designed to function as sources of nourishment for the children she ought to bear. . . . If a girl be properly treated during adolescence, the physiological habit which is necessary in order that she may develop into a satisfactory mother will be established in the majority of cases. This physiological habit entails the natural flow of nourishment along particular channels to special sites in the body. . . . if, by artificial means this natural flow of nourishment be diverted to other tissues and other organs ; that is to say, if the girl during adolescence be called upon to perform a variety of strenuous duties which cause a marked waste of tissue in others organs of the body, and a marked drain of nourishment to those organs in order to renovate that waste of tissue ; then the physiological habit which is essential for the proper discharge of a woman's functions is interfered with.

“ . . . . It is for such reasons that I hold that overwork in girls' schools, strenuous exertion at games and the muscular training which is essential in order that athletic competitions may be performed is radically bad for girls during the period of adolescence. It is by such means that their energy is diverted from its normal channels at a critical time of life, and it seems certain that, in a large number of cases, that normal course is never afterwards properly established.

“ A normal woman is physiologically constituted to bear children and to rear them. . . . When, in addition to the derangement incidental to the non-performance of these natural functions of woman

is added an abnormal stimulation of some other system of organs, the risk of disorganisation of the latter system is greatly increased. For this reason it appears certain that repeated stimulation of exaggerated sentiment, constantly resulting in volcanic upheavals thereof, or any conditions which incite indulgence in long sustained, abnormal strain of nervous tissue, induces weakness which is very likely to lead to serious derangement of that tissue, particularly in the brain. . . . Woman has what may be designated as a predisposition to nervous derangements as a consequence of disturbance of generative function. In order that a woman should escape such evils she must lead a life which is in accord with her physiological organisation. . . . not only when she arrives at mature womanhood but also during adolescence."

In plain language, if a woman is to have a fair chance of physical health, whether as married or single, she must not be treated like a boy, whose organs are differently constituted, or permitted overstrain of mind or body during the critical period of the womanly development.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is a part of feminist doctrine to deny the generally accepted view, here explained on biological grounds, that woman, while not constitutionally weaker than man, is more subject to nervous derangements. Miss May Sinclair, in a pamphlet published by the Women Writers' League, quotes a letter from Dr. Agnes Savill commenting on Sir Almroth Wright's much abused letter to the *Times*. Dr. Savill says: "Sir Almroth Wright speaks of the alterations in character during maternity and at middle age. *Certainly some cases exist* . . . but the majority of women are obliged to work at such times, and no difference is noted except in ultra-civilised

The sad part about the system to which we sacrifice the minds and bodies of our young girls, is that, if they are to compete with men in the open labour market of the professions—which is the ambition of the cleverest of them—they must go through this mill. Having accepted masculine standards of education women must comply with masculine tests, although all the time everybody knows that those tests are far from satisfactory for ascertaining either capacity or knowledge.

Had the pioneers of women's education boldly designed an entirely new system for that sex, with every grade specially adapted for their needs and yet calculated to develop their capacity and individuality to the utmost, they might have set up their own standards, they might have avoided the nightmare of competitive examination; they might by now be producing women scholars, teachers, scientists, craft-workers, who, starting from their own standpoint, would reach heights parallel to, if not identical with, those of men. The demand for such superlative women might have solved the

classes of society, where so much time is spent on the cultivation of the emotions. Many a girl enters on the study of nursing and medical profession with the same idea. . . . Progress in her work necessitates arduous and daily application, and in a very short time she finds herself stronger in body and in self-control. Ask the women surgeons and physicians, ask the business women, ask the matrons of the great institutions . . . you will get the same reply, '*There is no time for such nonsense.*'"

But facts and figures (see Chapter VIII., p. 20) speak for themselves. They tell a very different tale.

question of making unmarried women self supporting, while the crowning advantage would have been that those who married would have made much finer mothers for the next generation of men and women! We do not know, *because the experiment has never yet been tried*, of what modern woman is capable under conditions which set out deliberately and intelligently to cultivate her distinctively feminine faculties along the lines marked out by her physiological and temperamental differentiation from man.

Leaving all such dreams aside, however, it must be postulated that it is the business of the careful mother to see that under no circumstances, and for no hypothetical vocational advantage, shall her girl be robbed of her birth-right of a healthy body. Whether she marries or remains single the blessing of a sound body will be of more value to her than dozens of university degrees. There is no reason, however, why she should not, even under our present insensate system, have a chance of both. The chief reason against such a chance is the premature hurrying of girls into the labour market, due, nominally, to economic pressure, but more often, as has been said, to artificial social requirements. Cut down the social requirements in the true interests of the girl, and let her from childhood have a share in light household duties. By such means save the money for her vocational training—if she wants one—later on. The average cost of a quite inexperienced domestic in a middle class household is upwards of £50 per annum—a considerable item in a middle class



budget—to which may be added the expensive amusements (including “shopping”) in which, for lack of other occupation, many middle class women spend far too much time. Then one may confidently reckon on saving doctors’ bills later on by reducing the mental strain on girls and giving them light, regular and healthy physical work to do.

But now comes the critical question of a vocational training, for modern social conditions demand that if a profession or trade is to be the means of livelihood it must be practised in no amateur spirit. This is an age of specialisation, and to be Jack of all trades and master of none is no longer sufficient for the wage-earner.

It is partly in the interests of this specialisation that domestic work has been cut out of the training of modern girls, and it would be useless to deny the difficulty of restoring it without some diminution in the time now spent on acquiring knowledge or skill which may command a higher market price. It is not claimed here that the girl who is a mistress of housecraft should necessarily try to sell her skill in that respect, and become a “lady servant,” though many women are prepared for such an evolution in our social methods. The practical knowledge of housecraft should, however, be acquired both for its own sake, and because it makes a woman independent of other women and is a valuable training both physically and psychologically. In short, as a character developer it has usefulness quite apart from the more practical side. It is too soon to say whether

or no this domestic training may not develop into a profession with large rewards for some and certain occupation for many "educated" women. There is room for development in such a direction for it cannot be supposed that we shall go on indefinitely under the present unsatisfactory conditions. The decreasing number of women in domestic service shown by the last classified census returns makes this impossible.

The question for women is whether or no they are prepared to part with the individual home. If not it is time they made some effort to save it, for at present, dependent on the services of a diminishing and deteriorating class, it is far from presenting a healthy appearance.

But if, in acquiring domestic craftsmanship, women spend some of that short period which is available for learning a trade or profession, how can they compete with man on whom no such demands are made? It appears practically impossible to find any trade or profession in which man is not already established, and in which he has not set up his standards. The answer to this question must be that we must find, if not new fields, new paths to the old fields. The type of woman, even now, who ultimately does best in competition with man, is one who has had an "all-round" general training, who has acquired breadth of view, tact, and a knowledge of character from free intercourse with both sexes, and who brings specially feminine qualities to bear on every subject she takes up. The machine-like stupidity of many specially trained women is the despair of those who try to

employ them, for women, even more than men, acquire occupational vices.

An interesting illustration of "new paths to old fields" is found in the development of gardening as a profession for educated women. Obviously to have tried to gain access to it through the doors open to men would have been extremely difficult. Colleges for women are now engaged in training them to be something quite different from the ordinary working gardener, or even the head gardener who has usually risen from the ranks of his profession. Women so trained are required to learn the allied crafts of preserving and bottling fruit, they may specialise in bee-keeping, in dairying, in poultry-keeping, in any special branch of outdoor work. And at the end they are not only practical gardeners but cultivated women whose companionship may be one of the advantages of employing them, especially if the employer is herself a lady and an amateur gardener.

The temptation of saying a few words here about gardening is too great to be resisted, even at the risk of digression. The "back to the land" movement among educated women is a sign of healthy and natural tastes which pedantry and "culture" have not completely uprooted. "God Almighty first planted a garden, and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures." That exquisite sentence, as true as it is beautiful, is by no means the least legacy to us of the Elizabethan age. Driven from the activities of house-life, women all over the country are busy in their gardens; such work, fortunately, has escaped the ban,

although it is, indeed, the most primitive and elementary of tasks, for our women gardeners are not satisfied to superintend. They dig, plant, sow and weed assiduously, and under their tender ministrations thousands of prim and ugly spots have been turned into havens of beauty. Formalism—man's idea of gardening—has given way to the sweet disorder and artlessness of the old-fashioned garden. What dreams of loveliness lie tucked away behind the tall yew hedges and mellow red walls of every village and country-side!

There is no greater gift to be implanted in the breast of every woman than the love of nature, and of living things, animal or vegetable, which will lead her sooner or later to a garden of her own—if it be only a few pots on a window-sill. One cannot, alas! give to town children that sense of country life which comes to those who are born and bred among fields and trees and flowers, but one can, at all events, find a place for these simple interests and natural joys even in the crowded life of the modern too-much educated and amused young person.

Closely allied with the transformation of our gardens through the personal care and affection of women is that movement for the beautification of our homes which has set in as a reaction against the heavy machine-made furniture and fabrics of the mid-nineteenth century. It is true women did not create the forms and fabrics which are now so much sought after, for the Sheraton and Chippendale, the old china and old chintzes which now adorn our homes, are revivals of an earlier

period of masculine craftsmanship. Still, the cult of the antique is strong among women, and happily it is leading them to realise the value of individual craftsmanship and the true relation between fabric and design. Out of the study of such matters has sprung up a new profession for women, that of the artist-decorator, and although men still compete in this sphere yet were it approached by women in a more serious spirit their qualities of quick observation, instinct for colour and sympathy with an individual point of view should enable them to make it almost exclusively their own. To do this, however, they need to make a study of all branches of furniture and decoration, and this again would lead on to a profession which is eminently intended for women, and so far entirely neglected by them in England, though not on the continent.

Why should women, whose acquaintance with the home is so much more intimate than that of men, be debarred from designing the fabric of that home? There is no legal barrier to women architects. Every woman is aware of a hundred imperfections in every house she inhabits, yet they are repeated over and over again. Of course technical knowledge and study are needed—women must go into the profession thoroughly. But the house of the future, which can be daintily and economically run by one educated woman needs to be built by another. There is no reason why women should not monopolise domestic architecture and leave bridges, railway stations and town-halls to men.

Finally, a plea shall be inserted here for a love of fun, a reserve of animal spirits, that gift the fairies bestow on all their favourites. Nowhere can these natural antidotes for unhappiness be more easily and delightfully cultivated than in a home circle. The capacity to find amusement in little things, the power of giving a true perspective to both big and small—these are essentially connected with the give-and-take of true family life.

Here, then, are some of the qualities equipped with which a woman may face life with some, at all events, of the possibilities of happiness, whatever her fate may be; good health, a practical acquaintance with the art of living, a love of nature, a sense of humour. A fourth may be added, not as least, though last in the list. An immense help in life is to realise that knowledge, skill, a power to do and to think, may be made an end in themselves, need not be regarded as a means to get public recognition and reward. Half the trouble of modern women is their clamorous desire *to do*, instead of learning *to be*. Faintly, however, through the mists of this generalisation, is discernible the truth that while woman usually wants *to do* for her own glorification or completion, it is only for someone else that she finds it sufficient *to be*. We are, indeed, back at the very starting point of all our voyages of discovery—the need which exists in woman to express herself through her affections and not in despite of them.

The conditions of economic competition cannot be altered in a generation, and it is not claimed for this book that it sets forth any complete

solution of woman's difficulties or contains any panacea for those social problems with which she is intimately connected. Chief among these must be the position of the young girl of the middle and lower middle classes who is driven by a real and imperative necessity into the labour market, and still more of those who, throughout life, must be self-supporting, or who are obliged to return to wage-earning because of the failure of the normal bread-winner. The overcrowding of departments of work easily accessible to such women, either because the work is not skilled, or because of the "gentility" attached to them, makes it impossible to hope for any real amelioration of the conditions of the women thus employed, save by reducing the pressure. Those who believe that all that is needed is the establishment of a minimum wage should study the working of that theory in Australia, where it has been shown that to put men and women on an artificial level results in the squeezing out of women and consequently the further restriction of the field of work open to them.

It cannot be claimed that the vocational training of woman hitherto has been dictated by considerations of her own physical or psychical well-being. It has followed blindly in the wake of the social and economic conditions which arose in the middle of last century, when the discovery of steam and ultimately of electricity began to revolutionise not only industrial methods but the whole conditions of life. The stage was a transition one, but women seem to have failed to perceive this and

to have believed that they were entering a new world, sharply disconnected from the old one, and in so doing they have increased and strengthened the worst features of the transitional period. The extravagant claims put forward for modern woman that she is so much more "free," noble, independent, and fearless, must be taken to apply to a small and self-satisfied minority. It is impossible to achieve spiritual freedom along the lines of slavery to the *ego*, which is one of the most rigid forms of servitude known, or social freedom along lines subversive of social order, or sexual freedom along lines of licence and anarchy, or economic freedom along lines of a theoretic "equality" and unrestricted competition with man. There is no sign that women are satisfied; on the contrary they suffer from a growing and formless discontent which takes shape in dozens of curious forms. Is it not time that we attempted a re-survey of the situation? Is it not possible that, having failed to achieve the emancipation of woman by trying violently to fit her as a square peg into a round hole we may suddenly discover that we are turning out the wrong shaped peg?



## CHAPTER XI

MODERN WOMEN AND POLITICS

“But though more intense, the sympathies of women are commonly less wide than those of men. Their imaginations individualise more, their affections are, in consequence, concentrated rather on leaders than on causes; and if they care for a great cause it is generally because it is represented by a great man, or connected with someone they love. In politics their enthusiasm is more naturally loyalty than patriotism.”—Buckle, “History of European Morals.”

“Men say that women have no sense of honour, which is true in the sense that they do not conceive themselves as bound by obligations to those who are not in intimate relations with them. With them loyalty to persons always takes precedence of loyalty to institutions.”—“The Comments of Bagshot,” J. A. Spender.

“We have this belief in the eternal life of our country, and the belief is the life itself. But let no strong man among us despise the help of women. I have seen our cause desperate and those who despaired of it were not women. Women kept the flame alive.”—Mazzini in “Vittoria.” George Meredith.

## CHAPTER XI

### MODERN WOMEN AND POLITICS

THE aim of the foregoing chapters is to establish, from various points of view, the thesis that "women are women and men are men." The mere mention of such a sentiment, which is specially identified with the public utterances of a distinguished ex-viceroy, is enough to rouse indignation in the breasts of feminists. It exasperates them almost more than any other form of argument, because, they say, it proves nothing. On the contrary, however, it proves a good deal that feminism is at pains to deny, and is the only solid sub-stratum for a philosophy either of sex-relations or of the status of women. It is perfectly true that it does not prove that men should do one class of work and women another. These questions are more matters of expediency than of principle. Yet it is true that, if our study of history reveals that there has gradually sprung up a rough distinction between the work of the two sexes, and that certain responsibilities and

tasks have been divided between them, it is a bold assumption that nature has nothing to do with deciding these "spheres." It is true that the line has not been drawn consistently, and that men have encroached on the one hand and women (very slightly) on the other. Thus men have become spinners or cooks (two of women's traditional occupations) while women have, at times, commanded armies and ruled kingdoms. But careful consideration will reveal that there is a rough principle underlying the division of labour between the sexes at every period. Those activities which involve an individualistic and personal attitude, which are concerned with the private and domestic side of life, have ever been the pre-occupation of woman, and those which deal collectively with public matters and are carried on in the mass (as it were) are chiefly the concern of man.

It is a very rough generalisation, but covers a profoundly significant difference in the psychology of the sexes. Woman's attitude is conditioned by her function. As the preserver of the race she must put her child before all other considerations. She is therefore pre-eminently concerned with the welfare of the individual; it is her paramount duty, part of her maternal instinct. No such necessity rests on man. As the organiser of society he must put the community before the individual, a traditional obligation which colours the whole masculine mentality. So far as a woman departs from her instinctive attitude she is a faulty mother; so

far as man departs from his he is a faulty citizen. Obviously a family run on male principles or a state on female ones would be equally sure of disaster. To find the due equipoise, to provide the machinery which will give the fullest possible scope to the essential feminine point of view without interfering with masculine principles, is the true problem of woman in politics.

It is no solution whatever to suggest that the exercise by women of certain political functions will obliterate these distinctions. That one can add masculine virtues to feminine ones, or achieve a masculine standpoint without sacrificing womanhood, is one of those fallacies dear to the hearts of women who have no real confidence in their own sex. It is true the perspective of one sex may be corrected by that of the other, so long as they remain distinct, but an attempt to fuse in one body the two opposing principles of individualism and collectivism<sup>1</sup> simply means a victory for one or the other. Were they artificially acquired characteristics we might assume that the victory would leave the two sides about equal, a certain number of men becoming, in this respect, feminised, and a certain number of women masculinised. This is not only a very doubtful solution but a most undesirable one. Were it possible to eliminate from some women the instincts they owe to their sex-function they would still be far behind man in the acquired and cultivated virtues connected with his particular form of citizenship, and

<sup>1</sup> These terms are used only in a political sense, not as moral attributes.

the same disadvantage would apply to men who de-masculinised their point of view.

As one sometimes meets such hybrids nowadays it is worth while to comment on them. Of the women it is a little difficult to write—they are not so easy to recognise. They are not necessarily “manly” in appearance or manners, and it is only by comparison with the “instinctive” woman of a high type, or the superior man, that one can realise the poverty of the contribution they are able to make to the common weal. As they are not able to transmit their own sexless character they are not of any real importance in the scheme of affairs, except so far as they are a dangerous example. Of the de-masculinised male it is possible to speak more freely, because he is more vocal—reveals himself quite openly. With him the assumption of a womanly tenderness for the individual is not an instinct—it is a sentiment, and to live in an atmosphere of sentimentality is one of his distinguishing marks. In politics he gravitates to philosophic socialism—not the red-flag anarchism of his more full-blooded brothers—but a mild and washy “brotherhood of man” kind of doctrine, which expends itself chiefly in the wearing of sandals and the eating of nuts. To such the British Government, be it Liberal or Tory, must always be anathema, because it stands for force—force in India, which keeps millions peaceful but frustrates the ambitions of the individual *babu*; force in Africa, which has delivered the black man from the slave-trader but requires him to work and pay taxes for the good

of the community as a whole ; force in England, which insists that law should be obeyed, even though individual freedom must be curtailed !

It would be a poor compliment to the female sex to say that such a being is a feminised man—he is not. The qualities he exhibits in excess are not feminine qualities but a perversion of them. He is simply de-masculinised—a poor man, without becoming a woman. Many women would repudiate the views here attributed to him. It is not suggested that they are women's views it is suggested that the attempt to replace the traditional masculine principle by a feminine one is liable to lead to the sort of mental chaos illustrated in this description. It is mental chaos because the average individual of this kind belongs to a class which is only preserved by the intervention of the providence of a government which has force behind it. The average, ordinary working-man Socialist, who is either, in reality, a Tory or an anarchist—either strongly in favour of privilege (in his own class) or anxious to bring about a general scramble—may subscribe in theory to the brotherhood-of-man jargon, but neither his aims nor his methods are individualistic. He notoriously tyrannises over those who may not agree with him and enforces class solidarity as the virtue above all others. Between him and the gentle, philosophic individualist of the Eustace Miles restaurant there is a great gulf fixed. It is from the latter type of de-masculinised man that has come much of the nominally male support for the feminist theory of “free personality,”

“ unfettered individuality,” and the like. Men—politically minded men—know that in all corporate action there is no such thing as individual freedom, and that women who claim the parliamentary franchise as the badge of a free soul are hopelessly beside the mark. It is no exaggeration to say that a large number of the men who support women suffrage (to descend from the general to the particular) do so, not because they think it would give women greater freedom, but simply because of the numbers of women who, they believe, would fall into rank and obey the crack of the party whip on one side or another. It is not votes for women they want but women’s votes for their own particular party.

The opponent of woman’s enfranchisement is accustomed to hear (sometimes from the same lips) two opposing arguments : first, that women would be divided into parties—would follow the traditional party divisions ; and secondly, that woman’s point of view would be more effectively heard. But if there is any feminine point of view which cannot be expressed save through a vote it is difficult to see how it can be organised on existing party lines. One might as well expect to find Home Rule supported in Parliament by Liberal and Conservative Irishmen elected on their own merits and not as Home Rulers. There are a limited number of questions coming before the Imperial Parliament in which the distinctively feminine point of view is really important. There are even a more limited number about which any number of women would keenly interest them-



selves, but when the former came to the front the woman's point of view would be merged in that of the party, and when the latter arose the party would go to the wall.

It is a very common attitude among really patriotic persons to despise party government, and many people believe that such questions as foreign policy, armaments, and social reform should be lifted altogether outside the turgid waters of party warfare. Unfortunately we have no reason to think that we are any nearer such a consummation, however devoutly we may wish for it, nor has it ever been made clear how party government can be bettered or replaced. Undoubtedly the healthiest condition is the one in which the issues are most clearly defined, for a state of affairs which divides politicians into "Ins" and "Outs" is at once demoralising and sterile of ideas. But far from reaching a period in which the wider issues of national policy become less and less controversial, we have just passed through one which has drawn into the controversial arena many subjects traditionally outside it. The attacks made on Sir Edward Grey, as foreign minister, by one section of the party which he represents, are an indication of the trend of public affairs. They were most ably written and the burden of them has been that the foreign minister had not been true to Liberal tradition in the exercise of his office.

Social reform appears on the surface to be a subject which might well combine both parties, but recent experience has shown that it is the most

controversial of all questions. Part of the terrible muddle into which we are now plunged, in which millions are annually expended in public and private benevolence while the most crying injustices and incompetences go unreformed, is due to the British habit of "muddling through." A steady and consistent theory of the duty of the citizen to the State and the State to the citizen, however imperfect it might be, could not fail to bring some order into what is now an administrative chaos. But it is becoming increasingly evident that we can never have such consistency unless one or other party in the State will adopt certain definite principles—and act up to them. If we are to have a socialistic State then let it be organised as such, and if it is to be a bureaucratic State let us, at all events, reap some of the natural advantages of that system. At present we seem to get all the weak points and none of the strong ones of half-a-dozen conflicting theories of government. There are very few people who have thought deeply over such questions as "social reform"—under which head we group all schemes for helping people who cannot or will not help themselves—who would be inclined to pin their faith to any special solution of the main difficulties; but the disadvantage of having no system at all is that no one knows what to expect, and that a premium is put on the irresponsibility which is the natural outcome of public and private doles.

Where can we look for the reformation of such a state of affairs, save to a strengthening and

moralising of the party system? There are many in the country who believe that our present chaotic condition is largely due to the dry-rot in the Conservative party which set in at the end of Mr. Balfour's last long administration. There is one thing almost worse for a country under the party system than a weak Government, and that is a weak Opposition. In the re-organisation of parties on definite lines of principle, therefore, lies the great hope of our country in the future.

It is often said of women, and truly, that their nature makes them opposed to compromise. Principle appeals to them, and for this reason they make hot partisans. It might appear, therefore, that the infusion of women into the electorate would help to strengthen that attachment to principle which has been postulated as one of the necessities of the age. But it is one of the conditions of a wise partisanship that its apprehension of principles should be both wide and deep. The lines drawn must be broad, and indicated by philosophy and the science of government as shaped by the best minds of the party which adopts them. Men have a sense of the traditions of their parties, and the most thoughtful of them continually measure contemporary political action by such traditions. They press through facts, often apparently contradictory in appearance, for the principle which binds them together, and the perspective they gain in this process is their most valuable asset in forming political judgments. Of course it is not pretended that the average elector is aware of these elaborate mental processes, or

even consciously indulges in them, but any one who has had opportunities of following discussions in working-men's clubs must be aware of the real interest evinced in basic principles, a fact which renders the propaganda of Socialism, with its theoretic symmetry, extremely attractive to the most active minds. The writer has some small experience of addressing meetings of working-men and women on more than one class of subject, and it has especially interested her to notice the close attention and applause given by the former to any demonstration of theoretic principles, whereas the latter must be approached through illustration and fact.

The reason is that to women the broad principle is focussed by the illustration, while to men the illustration is focussed by application of the principle. The danger of the womanly method is that "facts" are so often misleading, so seldom accurately represented. Like statistics they are clay in the hand of the potter. Women, therefore, are apt to concentrate on the non-essential and non-reliable part of a propaganda, and to embrace any suggested remedy for an immediate evil without taking a broad view and remembering that the cure may be worse than the disease. The power of sympathy and emotion which woman puts into her relations with the outside world intensifies this attitude, and often makes it impossible for women to perceive that, where opinions are divided, compromise may be the best solution. Compromise to a woman always looks like betrayal. Her partisanship and devotion to principle are

personal matters and she is far less likely than man to bow to authority and tradition, or to seek for broad guiding principles when immediate issues are obscure. It may be said here that to women immediate issues are never obscure. This optimism is probably the result of political inexperience, but while it has its disadvantages in practical legislation it is also a valuable reservoir of enthusiasm from which the experienced politician, not infrequently, takes long draughts. Political life would be poorer if it lost the influence of woman's present irresponsible but inspiring optimism.

Nevertheless it would be a real danger in an electorate which, like our own, under any conceivable and practical measure of female suffrage (which must be democratic) would contain a large proportion and even a majority of women. The number of people who, having no deep political convictions, transfer their vote from time to time, chiefly on personal or local grounds, and thus give "the swing of the pendulum" is probably increasing. Its presence in the country is, of course, a valuable check on party government so long as the principle of an appeal to the country on vital issues is upheld. But there is no doubt that under modern democracy a tendency arises to avoid that appeal by various methods, and the inclusion in the electorate of a vast number of people likely to add to the uncertainty of the party position, or to force an appeal on questions not fundamentally connected with party principles, would certainly lead to an elaboration of those methods and to the

development of a bureaucratic rather than a true Parliamentary system of government. The growth of a large and unwieldy electorate, with an enormous body of voters whose support might have no connection with the main party principles, would, in fact, sound the deathknell of our present Parliamentary system. Modifications of the most significant kind have taken place in that system already, under the stress of a legislative programme which aimed at placating a vast number of interests not intrinsically connected. Were the so-called interests of women as a class added to these, the task would become well nigh impossible, and the passage from a representative to a bureaucratic system of government would be accelerated.<sup>1</sup>

An illustration of the probable working of the female vote in this country can be found in the action of certain nominally party associations of women with reference to the franchise question. Whatever may be the views of individual Liberals on the subject it is impossible to urge that woman suffrage is part of Liberal tradition when it has been opposed by such outstanding Liberal statesmen as John Bright, Mr. Gladstone and the present Prime Minister, and when, on the contrary, it has had

<sup>1</sup> The writer must not be taken to mean that the true interests of women must therefore be neglected. She does not believe that women have really any interests as a class, apart from men. But an attempt is being made to manufacture both a class of women and a class of interests which are apart from those of the sex as a whole, or of the race, and on these lines the votes of women might be organised for female purposes and would have to be reckoned among the "interests" to be placated by government.

the support of Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour. It is, quite incontrovertibly, one of the few subjects on which party tradition throws no light, and which can only be referred to general principles as those principles are individually interpreted. In other words suffragism is neither orthodox nor heterodox for a convinced Liberal. Yet because a Liberal Government was not prepared to stake its existence, and probably ruin all its other legislative plans, by bringing in a Government measure for woman suffrage, women of the Liberal Association have with difficulty been restrained from action directly antagonistic to the welfare of their own party. Their incorporation was nominally a sign of enthusiasm for certain principles for which Liberalism stands, but on a specific question they were and are prepared to abandon those principles, although by so doing they may facilitate the return to power of a Government which is even less likely to grant a Government Women Suffrage Bill, and whose principles in other respects must be repugnant to Liberal women.

Even more remarkable, however, has been the conduct of Conservative women, who have openly allied themselves with the Labour Party at elections, although that party represents, even on the suffrage question, an entirely different principle than that for which Conservative suffragists contend. The policy of the National Union of Woman Suffrage Societies, as described in the annual report for February, 1913, is "co-operation with the Labour Party," in order "to

strengthen that party in the House of Commons which has made woman suffrage one of the first objects on its programme." One of the bodies affiliated to the N.U.W.S.S. (*vide* the same report) is the London Society for Woman Suffrage, and no fewer than sixteen of the most prominent supporters of the Conservative and Unionist Women's Suffrage Society, including the President and Treasurer, are members of the London Society or subscribers to the N.U.W.S.S. Yet one of the declared objects of this so-called Conservative and Unionist Franchise Association is to "maintain the principles" of the party whose name they have borrowed "with regard to the basis of the franchise," and so far as it is possible to define their programme it is one which claims the vote in exchange for certain payments to the State. The Labour Party, on the contrary, stands for adult suffrage, and the abolition of all other franchise qualifications. On other questions they are, of course, divided in the most fundamental manner from the ladies who so obligingly help in their election campaigns! It is quite true that the assistance thus given has been the reverse of useful, and that one candidate at all events,<sup>1</sup> rather ungratefully attributed his failure to the very propaganda which had filled his constituency with lady canvassers, but it is not with results but with the psychology of the woman politician that we have to deal.

It is impossible to take too seriously either the tactics or the party principles of women under such

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lansbury in Bow and Bromley.



circumstances, but it is certain that, were women enfranchised, the same tendency to form caves of Adullam would be evinced by the advanced guard (especially of those who have taken up "moral" questions) and would form a very serious difficulty in the way of party government. The use which can be made of Adullamites by skilful party tacticians would conduce to the downfall of the true representative theory in favour of less direct and more easily manipulated methods of government, and must not be forgotten.

The share in political work now taken by women is frequently brought forward as an argument for their enfranchisement, since it is undoubtedly true that these feminine political organisations are well managed and do a great deal of routine political work, as well as forming a valuable educative body throughout the country. It is frequently asserted that women are permitted to do the hard and "dirty" work and denied the privileges. Such a statement is not, however, accurate. The women's political organisations connected with either party are in all constituencies auxiliary only to the male organisations. The amount of work done by the respective men's and women's associations varies with local circumstances, but the person responsible for the constituency is invariably a man—the party agent. The fact that there are in practically every constituency a number of women of the (more or less) leisured classes, who devote their spare time to unremunerated work, provides a nucleus of workers who all the year round are prepared to carry on the routine of registration and other

work, and by intercourse with the working-classes secure a knowledge of their wants and desires. Meetings for women, with simple addresses on some question of the day, are given, usually from a strongly party point of view, and there is no doubt that this "political education," as it is called, of the women is reflected in the votes of their men at the polls. Nor are the meetings held only for women. Some of the speakers not only invite men but venture boldly into hostile camps and put their views with a freedom which would not be allowed to a member of the other sex. On the whole, however, the women who are actively engaged in this kind of political work seem to believe that their true mission is to "establish friendly relations" with their sisters in a different rank of life, to explain to them the benefits of Tariff Reform or of the Insurance Act, as the case may be, but especially to lead them to put their faith in the local Liberal or Conservative candidate as being the kind of gentleman most likely to look after their interests. The woman's political association does not exist for the threshing out of ideas or the discussion of rival policies, but to supply a link between women of various classes, to facilitate social intercourse, and to enable those who have shaped their ideas by reading, or have adopted them on authority, to instruct those who have little time or opportunity for any political speculation.

The ladies of leisure and position who form the backbone of such associations (though the rank and file are frequently women who do their own housework, or are wage-earners) are almost

invariably connected with the local member or candidate. Very often they are wives of busy men who could not afford the time necessary for the innumerable social functions which form part of "nursing a constituency," or for the house-to-house calling which is now considered necessary for a popular candidate. Under such conditions the wives undoubtedly do the lion's share of the constituency work, and the ladies' committee will be an important feature of the local party organisation.

But nowhere in this whole scheme is there any indication that women are called upon to do "dirty work" in politics. It is an insinuation which every member of a woman's party political association ought to repel. They do a good deal of routine work, and although they now employ trained and paid women speakers and organisers for their heaviest tasks the voluntary worker is the true foundation of their organisation. But neither paid nor voluntary worker is either responsible for the work of a constituency or is likely to be called on to perform any duty repugnant to a refined woman. If there are dirty ways in politics women need not, at present, tread them. At an election all the forces, male and female, are under the direction of a trained and experienced man, and the amount and character of the work allocated to each individual will not leave the sex or the sensibilities of women out of account. Until a few years ago the British public also made a strong distinction between the sexes which was in favour of women,

but, although a portion of that instinctive chivalry has been lost, a woman speaker or canvasser can still count her sex as a natural advantage in getting a hearing, unless, indeed, she is so unfortunate as to count among her audience the militant suffragette who has abjured chivalry in all its forms.

The organisation of patriotic non-party associations also owes a great debt to the voluntary aid of women, and the successful organisation of Suffrage and Anti-Suffrage societies all over the country is a further testimony to the growing habit of co-operation among women. There cannot be the slightest doubt that such a habit will have a formative effect on character, and that women will acquire, in appearance at all events, not only the methods but the ideas which govern the public life of men. A few years ago the lady who could "take a chair" with the proper formality, or make a speech, was regarded with wonder not untinged with disapprobation by her own sex. Now she is to be found (and not only figuratively speaking) in every drawing-room. We are, indeed, developing a committee type of woman, one whose mental activity is stimulated to its fullest by the very sight of a long, green baize covered table, with an array of blank paper and pencils at intervals round it!

It is frequently suggested that the active participation of women in the machinery of administration is qualifying them for political power; eradicating their feminine point of view and inculcating in them lessons of civic virtue and

solidarity which they could not learn in the individualistic atmosphere of the home. The writer, although herself a tiny cog in the feminine part of party machinery, confesses to a great doubt as to the truth of all this. Of the usefulness to women of political work as an outlet for energy and as an outlook on wide and interesting questions, she has no doubt. Her real doubt is as to the contribution of women to political ideals. The multiplication of tasks, the elaboration of machinery, have been accelerated because of the body of women ready voluntarily to undertake such spade work on either side, and at present it seems as though the elaboration of machinery is more effective as a method of getting votes than strength of principle or soundness of view. The record and judgment of a candidate are, really and truly, less vital factors than an up-to-date registration method, and, quite apart from the question of principle, any great addition to the electorate, accompanied as it would certainly be by changes in methods of registration, would add enormously and progressively to the mechanical side of political work and would still further exaggerate its already undue proportions.

But there is no doubt that, whether women get the suffrage or not, their newly-found talent for political organisation must find an outlet. Many who are opposed to the granting of the Parliamentary franchise see in Local Government a fruitful field for women's work. Hitherto, although they possess the Local Government franchises in a complicated and limited form, women

have taken comparatively little interest in this branch of public work. The growth in power of local authorities is a marked feature of our political evolution, and is the result of a continuous process of delegation of powers by the Imperial Government to local bodies. It is not too much to say that the vast majority of the questions in which women are more particularly interested, and to which they can contribute a peculiar experience and knowledge not possessed by the other sex, come within the sphere of local administration. Questions of public morals, such as are dealt with in a well-organised municipality by the Watch Committee ; of child welfare, such as street trading, apprenticeship, blind alley occupations, causes contributing to infant mortality, pure food ; a whole range of educational subjects which are dealt with by the local education committees and by the school managers, and which include not only the selection of teachers, but a wide discretion as to methods adopted, the provision of special schools, technical and continuation classes, medical inspection and feeding of necessitous children ; provision of baths, wash-houses, and recreation grounds ; the control of building operations and destruction of undesirable dwellings ; another group of questions connected with poor-law administration,<sup>1</sup> and yet another in connection with the intellectual and artistic life of the community as affected by local libraries, museums, art galleries and schools of arts and crafts

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III., p. 95, for a special suggestion as to this.

—all these come under the head of local government.

In Germany, whose municipal organisation is so much admired by visitors from this country, all this range of duties is under the care of expert paid officials. It is an essential feature of our own method, at present, that we should place the burden on the shoulders of citizens themselves. It is this burden which many people wish to see women sharing far more fully, and in this sphere, which is bound to widen, they see an illimitable field for women's power of organisation. The woman municipal voter is as yet almost unorganised. Two societies exist for advancing the interests of women in local government, but the area of their operations is circumscribed, and they have not the funds or the personnel for a really big campaign. The Local Government Advancement Committee (Anti-Suffrage) still in its infancy, is very sensibly concentrating on a measure to simplify the present complex qualifications of women for the different local franchises, and to render eligible for local office married women, who are, at present, debarred. When this is accomplished the next step should be a general attempt to rouse interest among women in the powers they undoubtedly possess. In this sphere the attention to detail, close observation and quick synthetic powers of woman are at their best, for it is on matters of experience and observation that judgment, as a rule, has to be formed. Moreover, in local government the emergence of party traditions is as much to be

feared and avoided as is the reverse in Parliamentary government—a counsel of perfection, but not without its bearing on the question of woman in politics.

It is sometimes declared, even by those who are prepared to make a distinction between giving women the Parliamentary and the Local Government vote, that there is really no difference in principle. Theoretically Parliament is a legislative body, and local governments are administrative bodies, but the powers of the latter are certainly verging on legislative authority. The true distinction seems to be that Parliament is the only sovereign body. It has delegated some of its authority to local government, but it is still not only the final tribunal but the body responsible for the maintenance of government. When the municipality fails to maintain law the Imperial government is called in, and re-assumes the authority which it had delegated but never abdicated. It is this aspect of the Imperial Parliament which places it in a sphere in which the woman citizen is not on the same footing as the man. She lives, moves, and has her being under the protection of the other sex, and that duty of protection is vested by the men of the country in the Parliament which they elect. On the decisions of that body will depend the measures adopted for the defence of the country, as well as the policy which may ensure freedom from attack or may lead to war with foreign powers. The woman citizen is not on the same footing as the man citizen in deciding these questions, or indeed in



deciding any controversial point which, in its legislative form, may need force to ensure its adoption ; because she will not under any conceivable circumstances be called on to support her opinion with force. She has every right to be consulted and considered and her interest in stable government and adequate defence is probably even greater than man's, but if power and responsibility are to go together women ought not to be in a position to decide imperial legislation.

This very brief and inadequate exposition of a well-known argument is not introduced in a dogmatic spirit, but rather to point to the desirability of a gradual political evolution in our country which will divide imperial and domestic questions, and give to women the fullest scope in the latter, while reserving the former for the decision of men. Should that day ever dawn, for which many of us are straining our eyes, when our Empire is indeed one, when the Five Nations come together in one truly Imperial parliament, and when the triumph of definite principles in political life makes strong and consistent government possible, we may find that woman's present political education has not been wasted, and that she can enter with confidence an arena of public usefulness where she can serve her country all the better because she is specifically and typically womanly.



## CHAPTER XII

### WOMAN AND THE EMPIRE

THERE are aspects of the question of the vocation of woman which deserve to be studied on practical grounds quite apart from philosophical or biological considerations. Among these by far the most important is that of the part to be played by woman in the evolution of new British communities over seas.

In the earlier days of emigration the length of time taken in passing from one continent to another, and the difficulty of communication made a vast difference to the spirit in which it was undertaken. Apart from those who "left their country for their country's good" the voyager to a new land was usually one who intended entirely to expatriate himself. He uprooted himself and his family, and with all his worldly goods, his wife, children and often other relations, he departed overseas. This transplanting of families was a very different affair from the individual emigration, chiefly by unmarried men, which we see nowadays. In the process of founding new civilisations

women took their full share, for they started out with their men and bore with them the burden and heat of the day.

With the annihilation of distance came the idea that it was better for men to go out alone, not only in order to be more free to carve their fortunes, but also that they might bear the initial brunt of that contact with untamed nature which life in a new country involves. The theory of the better-class woman, as a delicate and dainty creature to be sheltered from contact with the facts of life, was at its height when the stream of middle-class emigration began in earnest, but it is strange that the vaunted education which was to fit woman to take her place in the working world beside man has utterly failed to equip her to be his companion in this great work of filling up the empty spaces of the Empire.

Here was a new world to conquer. In the slower growth of earlier civilisations many generations had to pass before the primitive countryside was transformed into the highly complex and organised life of a city. Now one brief lifetime more than suffices to watch every stage in this transformation. But to take part adequately in this work one must be prepared oneself to begin right down at the bed-rock. In a new country specialisation is not possible at first, and the rough division of labour between the sexes has no regard for feminine tastes or aspirations; it is dictated by stern necessity. There is no surplus of labour—more especially of female labour—which can be employed in a purely arbitrary way.

Of course it is not true that all parts of the Dominions present the same features of a "new country." In South Africa and in parts of Canada there are civilisations of respectable age and tradition, and far from being behind the old world in elaboration of the machinery of life, or in attention to externals, some of the new cities are far ahead of Europe in these respects. These appearances, and the obvious sophistication of the men and women of the new world whom they meet, lead many people to draw the inference that life in these countries is in no vital respect different from life in the old country. One main fact—that there are too many women in one part of the Empire and too few in another—ought, they consider, to be remedied by wholesale female emigration. In the same rough and ready spirit these sanguine reformers think that overcrowding in English slums, and the under-population of, say, Rhodesia or Australia, are facts which ought to be made to "cancel out."

As to this the practical objection is to be found in the absolute refusal of all Dominion governments to accept any but a more or less selected class of immigrants. Whether or no they carry this policy too far need not be discussed here, but it has its bearing on the theory that we might use overseas countries as the dumping-ground of our "superfluous women."

The fundamental objection to any such scheme, even if it were practicable, is that the character of our overseas dominions, their rapid advance and success, has been due to the fact that they were

populated by a particular class of man and woman—a class in which energy and the spirit of adventure were strong. The process of natural selection has been complicated, of course, by economic pressure, but on the whole it is to the spirit of the pioneer in our race that we owe our pre-eminence in the business of founding new countries, and we want as far as possible to ensure that the stream which passes from us to them is inspired by this spirit. Without this outlet for our national restlessness and love of adventure our race would have been thrown back on itself, and would certainly have degenerated.

But what is true of emigrants in the mass is more especially true of women emigrants. Those who go out with male relatives have probably no choice. If they do well it may be that they are themselves born pioneers or it may be that they are displaying the essential female characteristic of adaptation to environment. But what we want is a stream of individual pioneer women to match the men—particularly the middle class men—who go out every year in increasing numbers to lands where they can hardly hope to find a mate. In such lands, it is true, a man's mate will have to accept the division of labour into two spheres. There are not sufficient women to produce a class of hired "experts" to whom she can delegate home and maternal duties while she goes out to earn wages. Before she marries she will find that her job in life will be to help some other woman with these domestic duties, and after she is married she will have her hands full in performing them for

herself. With a standard of living and appearances founded on conditions in the old world, where there is a surplus of female labour, the house-wife of the new country will have very little time left over to sigh for "occupational interests."

There is yet another side to the question. In new countries children are still ardently desired; not only for their own sake but because of their labour value and their ultimate value to the State. It is true modern conditions do not permit the exploitation of child labour, but in all agricultural communities the advantage of a large family is keenly felt. The farmer who has stalwart sons to help him in the fields, the mother who can count on her daughters to share the house or dairy work—these people do not sit down to calculate the advantages of keeping their family to the smallest possible limits.

Thus the woman wanted by a new country must be strong and hearty, ready to turn her hand to anything and (preferably) skilled in housecraft, which will certainly be her principal vocation. She must have sufficient confidence and resource to bear lonely days and long months with little amusement or variety outside her home tasks. Yet, since the rapid growth of her new country will probably, before she is middle-aged, find her in a very different environment, we want this woman to be able to bring to bear on her surroundings all those qualities of real refinement, sound tradition and high principle which should be the heritage of the best and best educated type of woman. She has to shape not only the bodies but the minds of

the young citizens of the Empire, and we cannot afford that that work shall be done by any order of woman save the highest that our civilisation has evolved in intelligence and patriotism.

Can we find in modern female education, in our elementary schools, secondary schools, high schools or colleges, any trace of the idea that some, at all events, of the girls who pass through them are destined for such a life? Does not our whole system seem to assume that the lives of all girls are to be passed in the midst of a complex civilisation, and under conditions which provide a surplus of female labour? Read the report of the committee on handwork in secondary schools (quoted in Chapter IX. p. 255), and judge whether a system which, even among the children of the working classes, fosters a contempt for manual labour, can be expected to develop the character or capacities for good pioneers. Read the feminist writings about the "servant wife," the degradation of "domestic drudgery," and the wonderful future opened out to women in intellectual development, and judge whether a sex brought up on such mental pabulum is likely to take kindly to conditions which mark out woman's sphere in so uncompromising a manner.

Leaving the question of character and tastes entirely on one side it is doubtful whether we are rearing, especially in the much educated class, a type of woman physically fitted for the strain of domestic labour plus child-bearing which life in a new country involves for women.



Many people who are anxious to promote the emigration of educated women deprecate the introduction of the possibility of marriage as an inducement. The false delicacy and ridiculous denial of their sex which "educated" women are now trained to make are said to render them averse to what may look like "husband hunting." It is true that the best type of woman will probably prefer to treat the subject with dignity and reticence, and the writer has every sympathy with her. Such a woman will not marry anywhere or anyhow unless she feels a genuine love for the man—she will certainly not marry "for a living." But in transferring her energies from a country where there are too many women to one in which there are too few, she will secure for herself the possibility of marrying if she chooses. In England she may have no choice at all. It is a literal fact that there are hundreds of women to whom love, with all its possibilities, has never once presented itself in any form. It is nothing of which a woman need feel ashamed; it is the life force within her, her most healthy and natural instincts, which urge her to seek through the world, if needs be, for the mate who is hers by right.

Of late many attempts have been made to soften the passage of the "educated" woman from her padded life to the more natural conditions in newer lands, and reports are constantly presented of "opportunities for educated women," in the shape of posts as clerks, typewriters, secretaries, teachers, sick nurses, poultry raisers, market gardeners, and even farmers. Canada is naturally

the country to which women look first for such openings, and it is not denied here that they may occur. But the woman who regards such occupations as easy alternatives to domestic work (of which, of course, there is always more than enough to be had) is reckoning without her host. Canadian women are being "educated" too, and the younger ones are often quite anxious to exchange domestic work for clerical and other town occupations. The lighter and more ornamental tasks will not be filled up by women emigrants however highly trained, and the real demand for women's work will continue to come from the despised sphere of home labour.

The writer is often asked to advise on the question of emigration for girls, having made some study of it, and it may not be out of place here to say a few practical words on the question. After the age of thirty the average woman gets more "set" in her ways, is less adaptable, just as her body is less pliant. For such women the process of transplantation is difficult and often painful. But for younger ones, and especially for those who are not oppressed by the possession of any "talent" but are just hearty, lively, good-tempered girls, fond of outdoor life and children, there is everything to gain in life in a new country. Domestic work at £30 a year (for inexperienced workers do not obtain at first the fabulous rewards given to the "professional" servant) does not sound a very grand beginning, especially when it involves doing by hand many tasks which are outside the labours of an English household.

But the difference between such work at home and in a new country lies in the fact, first of all, that there is no social stigma attached to it, and that one may finish the week's washing and go out to a ball with the *élite* of the neighbourhood without any incongruity, and second, that in a new country there is the element of hope. No one expects to go on doing the same tasks all their lives, and probably very few do. Fortunes do not come to all, but ease and comfort, pleasure and amusement, will reward toil and sweeten labour.

For a woman the supreme advantage of a new country is that she can look forward with confidence to being her own mistress.

The actual disproportion between the sexes in Great Britain is<sup>1</sup> 1,027,000 more women, but of these a considerable proportion are widows, who outnumber widowers in a very striking manner. The disproportion in the Outer Empire shows a trifle over 700,000 more men than women. The distribution of this surplus of men is as follows. Canada, with a total population of 7,250,000, heads the list with over 400,000 more men than women (in 1911), and last year we sent her, in nine months, 11,000 more men than women emigrants to swell the total. Australia, with a total population of about 4,500,000, has 171,000 more men than women, and in 1912 we increased this disproportion by over 7,000.

New Zealand's white population of about 1,000,000 contains over 52,000 more men than

<sup>1</sup> See 1913 census figures.

women, and 600 more males than females left our shores for this part of the Empire last year. The total white population of South Africa in 1911 was about 1,250,000, with roughly 95,000 men extra. This, however, includes some Imperial troops. Finally Rhodesia, whose little white community is almost exclusively of the "better class" type, and numbers under 24,000, has about 15,000 men, and only 8,000 women—a disproportion of about 7,000. This last figure is the most striking and startling of all, having in view the fact that southern Rhodesia is eminently a white man's country, but it must not be forgotten that there is a black population which performs domestic work for the white man.

It is not too much to say, in view of these figures, that the women of our race are falling far behind the men in the work of settling and civilising the Empire. Of the dangers and troubles to which men are exposed in countries where they are denied the companionship of women of their own race and caste it is impossible to speak here. No figures have been given for those colonies and dependencies of the Empire which are not truly white men's countries, and where, consequently, men must partially sacrifice the chance of a domestic existence. If the number of men serving in such regions were added to those who form the male majority in the self-governing dominions it will be clear that, from the numerical point of view, there are probably no superfluous women in our Empire.

The superfluous woman is the woman who is

not prepared to take her share in the work of the Empire wherever the hand of a woman is needed. How badly it is needed in some parts, how high is the mission of those who respond to this call, cannot be set out here. Yet a system of education which has left out of account the fact that we are not an Island but an Imperial race lays itself open to the charge of a blindness far worse than ignorance. It is a wilful, obstinate blindness.

It has sometimes fallen to the lot of the writer to speak to audiences in village schoolrooms on subjects which involve frequent reference to our Imperial heritage and opportunities. On such occasions the necessary wall map, to illustrate the references, is usually conspicuous by its absence. Is it to be found in every girls' school where a higher standard prevails? Are girls taught to understand that Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa are not foreign, savage countries, but homes of the British race? Are they encouraged to be proud of the spirit of adventure and enterprise which secured these lands for our people? Are they taught that there is nothing degrading for any man or woman, save a life of purposeless idleness, and that the highest possibilities of happiness are bound up in love and service?

Until such ideals are clearly kept before our girls, and until their practical bodily training has some relation to the facts of life, we cannot expect that women who, in their own sense of the word, are educated will be found taking their true place in the history of our Imperial development.

“The women’s unrest which is being called The woman’s movement . . . Many think that it is mainly distinguished . . . by the demand for the suffrage. To my mind, vote or no vote is not the main question—No, what I feel to be the true dividing line between the two armies is a false Individualism in the new way of looking at woman questions. The old army . . . wished to widen women’s sphere to include everything that a woman can do better than a man, . . . the army of the new woman would add to woman’s sphere the things that man can do better than woman. The Octavians (Old Army) look at woman not in splendid isolation, but as part of the whole. The phrase ‘the woman’s movement’ is antipathetic to them. A campaign to raise woman seems to them as lop-sided as a system of gymnastics which should aim at developing the left leg.”—L. H. M. Soulsby, “A Woman’s Movement.”

“The least of women, so soon as she loves, possesses something which is never ours, for, in her thought, love is always eternal. It is owing to this that all of them have with the fundamental Powers relationships forbidden to us . . . They are veritably the veiled sisters of all great and invisible things . . . They have still the divine emotions of the earliest days, and their roots go down, with a directness unknown to ours, into all that has never had boundaries.”—Maeterlinck, “Le Tresor des Humbles.”

“The pure woman, in whom a man has found his veritable Holy of Holies, who is one with him in heart and thought and will, has in her a strange mystery of spiritual fruitfulness, never yet described. The legend of that son of earth who, to regain his strength had only to touch his mother’s breast is realised in her to the letter. She is nature herself . . . who, in virtue of her love, can by a touch flood his soul with new life.”

—Michelet, “L’Amour.”

“Holiness is an infinite compassion for others; greatness is to take the common things of life and walk truly among them, happiness is a great love and much serving.”—Olive Schreiner “Story of an African Farm.”

“The ideal, after all, is truer than the real, for the ideal is the eternal element in perishable things.”—Amiel’s Journal.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE WOMAN MOVEMENT—WHAT IS IT?

IN the discussion of a subject so wide-reaching as "the vocation of woman" a large variety of subjects, often keenly controversial, have to be touched on in a more or less superficial manner, and in trying to present a clear and connected view of such questions in relation to the main point one is apt to express, somewhat dogmatically, opinions which are by no means beyond dispute. It is inevitable in treating of such vexed questions as sex-relations, sexual-differentiation, the economic position of woman, or education, that one should throw out challenges on every side and give many openings for criticism. The writer neither asks nor hopes for quarter from those critics, particularly of her own sex, to whom her point of view is unsympathetic, but she does ask, in the interests of the discussion which it is hoped to raise, that she may be judged not by expressions of opinion on isolated points, but on the main and fundamental principles which this book is intended to uphold.

In every society there must always be, for purposes of evolution, some individuals who transcend the normal, who rise above the average, and who, therefore, point the way of progress or perhaps of retrogression. Sometimes they are contented, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, with a purely destructive propaganda. Sometimes they are quite unconscious of any "mission," and simply follow the lead star of their own inner being, but in so doing create fresh forms of beauty and new ideals which pass out into the world and capture the hearts and imaginations of their less gifted fellow beings. To attempt to crush out such individuality in the interests of a convention would be a mistaken policy, even if it were not a futile one.

It must not be thought, therefore, that, in opposing certain lines of change one is necessarily opposed to all change, or is satisfied with things as they are. The writer is a strong believer in evolution, in an orderly and reasoned progress which keeps certain fundamental principles clearly in view but adapts the machinery of social existence in accordance with material developments. Since it appears that, in all climes and from the earliest ages during the long history of man, the family has been recognised as the form of human relationship best adapted to secure the survival of the race, and since the slow but sure growth of the monogamous system indicates a connection between monogamy and the development of human ideals, there appears to be a strong *a priori* reason for retaining monogamy and family



life as the foundation for the future development of society.

Students of feminism, and even those who know no more of it than is referred to in this book, must realise that the civilised monogamous ideal is threatened by a conception of marriage as an economic partnership, to be dissolved at will. That is the "monogamy" of the primitive man, who might easily have a hundred wives in turn without infringing its laws! The family also is threatened by the doctrine that the work of a home, and the claims of the race, constitute a handicap to woman's "spiritual progress," and that she can delegate to others all her maternal duties (save the initial one) with advantage to herself and the child. Both marriage and the family are seriously undermined by the widely propagated theory that modern woman's first duty is to herself, since the conditions both of marriage and family life (as feminists clearly see) demand from woman, even under the most favourable circumstances, some abnegation of her own personality in favour of the claims of others.

These subtle attacks on the existing form of family relations are almost invariably concentrated on the economic status of woman, and on the attempt to shew that she can be made independent of the individual man with whom she may be mated. Even Ellen Key, a feminist of the earlier type, who demanded little more than the cultivation of woman's powers in the interests of the family, is anxious to see the present economic relationship of woman to her husband changed to a claim by

all mothers on the State. Her object is to remove those artificial barriers which often prevent woman from fulfilling the functions with which Nature has entrusted her, and also to secure a certain livelihood for every child. But one objection which applies to a scheme for self-supporting mothers also applies to State supported mothers—in both the duties of fatherhood are eliminated.

*It is the right of every child to have two parents and to enjoy the providence and care of both.*

Assuming therefore—and it is one of the assumptions on which this book is founded—that the true path of evolution lies in a *greater insistence on paternal obligations*, and not in any measures which will reduce them, can those obligations be permanently and satisfactorily based on any tie less binding than that of true monogamous marriage? When one finds the same people (in the name of feminism) demanding with the same breath a looser marriage tie, the right of women, if they so desire, to have children outside marriage, and the establishment of a stronger claim on man for maintenance of his offspring, illegitimate or not, it is extremely difficult to discern any guiding principle save the theory that no limits must be put to the gratification of either maternal or sexual impulses. Do the advocates of such a system, or lack of system, really believe that paternal obligations can be satisfactorily commuted by a money payment, and that if a child has a mother the only father it needs is a banking account?

It is necessary to speak with considerable

emphasis on this point because so many forces are now arrayed in favour of the view that maternity is woman's own affair; that she may reasonably and honorably desire to have children without wishing for a husband, and that provided that she is able to rear them properly she ought to be encouraged to do so in the interests of her own health and of the State. She is, in the words of a feminist writer, "to have children for herself, for her own pleasure and at her own will." It is, moreover, an undeniable fact that many women would like to have children to whom sexual passion is unknown.

But when a woman is something more than a breeding animal, when her mind and soul are awake to the true meaning of life and love, she will realise not only the true nature of man's dependence on her love, but that her child cannot be wholly hers, that it has rights and claims which she alone can never meet. Not for her own pleasure and comfort merely can she deliberately face the responsibility of starting a new traveller on the difficult path of life. Nor will she desire to share that intimate responsibility save with one who appeals to her heart and mind alike as a true and worthy mate.

This, then, is the answer to those who, finding nature in the impulse which draws men and women together, imagine that all restrictions on such impulses must therefore be contrary to nature. The love of the civilised man for the civilised woman is, of course, a far more complex affair than the attraction which drew primitive man to his mate. Among the men who best under-

stand the meaning of love no happiness would be possible in a passion which was not reciprocated. This alone indicates a qualifying of the sexual desire due to intellectual and ethical influences. In the same way the primitive maternal instinct has been refined and purified in woman, and, although the sexual and the maternal instincts are not identical, they are for woman so closely interwoven that (especially in the maternal type of woman) they come under the same laws of her being. Primitive love, with its irresponsibilities and simple animalism, is not really possible for the higher type of civilised woman, and it is, therefore, arbitrary to suppose that in placing limitations and restrictions on her functions she is always refusing nature. It is her own nature she has to fulfil. Nevertheless her happiness and health depend on the harmony which exists between her own nature and the physiological functions which are the special attribute of her sex.

A girl of twenty-five, living a free but lonely life, confessed to the writer her desire for a home and children, but said she had never yet loved a man and did not think she wanted marriage. Asked whether she would like to have children supposing it were possible to do so without a man, she replied, hesitatingly, "No—I think not, after all, because they ought to be *some special man's children* to be really nice!"

The instinct which spoke in this girl is one which, in the writer's belief, actuates nine women out of ten, especially if they are healthy and normal; and though in later life, when dreams of

man's love are perhaps fading, they may long for the child who would renew for them their vanished youth, yet they know at the bottom of their hearts that it is sacrilege to ideals of love and motherhood alike to imagine that they could have been satisfied with a mere transitory and self-seeking passion, or that they would accept for their children any conditions less favourable than a true family life can offer. In short, the desire for a permanent tie with the father of her children influences the monogamous woman almost as strongly as the desire for children, and to deny this fact is to relegate the mother of a man's children to the position of a paid mistress. All thoughtful people agree that a man's responsibility for his children ought to be as strongly enforced as possible. All self-respecting women ought to agree that to imagine those claims can be met by money payments is to reduce to a commercial basis a relationship which ought to be founded on mutual responsibility. The providence of man—an expression often used in this book—must be something more than a mere doling out of cheques.

The logical outcome of such an attitude is not to preclude the attempt to enforce man's financial obligations for his offspring, but to resist all attempts to set up two forms of union, both legally and socially recognised, with the idea that women should be free to contract either according to their individual tastes. We fall below our ideals often enough it is true, but how much further might we not sink if we had no ideals?

In other parts of this book has been said, what must be repeated here, that if we are to maintain the ideal of monogamous life-long union we cannot permit any looser tie to assume an equal social and legal status with marriage. The unmarried mother sins against society, which is founded on the family; against her sex, in whose true interests marriage has been evolved, and against her child, which has a right to a father as well as a mother. This is a hard saying, but life is never easy.

To try to bind a man to his children and yet to weaken the bonds of marriage is an attempt to make ropes of sand.

It is characteristic of the confusion of thought among feminists that many, who insist on man's financial responsibility for his family, are still preaching the "economic equality" of the sexes with its logical sequence, the duty of woman to share in the burden of providing for the home. It cannot be proved (save in individual and exceptional cases) that woman has ever shared this duty *when it involved leaving the home and offspring*. Some women are doing this now, though their number in our country is still inconsiderable. The basis of the division of labour in family life has been the care of the home and family by the female, and the provision of food and other necessities by the male. This division of labour has not precluded the development of a fuller conception of paternal duties, while it has by no means always given the lightest share to woman, but the principle of man's responsibility

has been invariable. It is now proposed to change this basic principle and to make woman an "economic partner," with an equal share in the responsibility of providing for the family.

These proposals, which cut at the root of our social life, are revolutionary—not evolutionary, though the actual danger they present is not so much a general upheaval, with the establishment of a new order, as the gradual undermining of solid and well-tried principles, a loss of much that woman has gained in the past, and a consequent break of continuity and purpose in our social development.

In the attempt to correlate the anarchical state of woman's thought on all these questions with the theories of modern female education, it has been necessary to take an extreme type of modern girl, but as she represents the element which is passing through our high schools and colleges to proceed with the education of the next generation the importance of this type can hardly be exaggerated. The strange developments of what is called "The Woman Movement" in recent years cannot be dissociated from the gradual spreading over the land of the type of woman-teacher described. Men who are anxious to be sympathetic to woman's aspirations, but are puzzled by the lack of perspective and balance in some of their exponents and shocked by the extremes of sex antagonism to which they occasionally descend, must remember the channels through which the propaganda has trickled.

There is, moreover, a great deal going on

amongst women, deep down below the surface, which the average man, however sympathetic, will certainly fail to plumb. Feminists stoutly defend themselves from the charge of fostering sex-antagonism, and for those who are philosophic enough to discriminate between "man" and "men," it may be true that no such intention exists. But to the vast majority of young women who, without real experience, take their views of "men" from female "authorities" who dwell perpetually on the oppression, misery, obloquy, contempt and even torture which some men inflict on women, the vague saving clauses about "man," which often accompany these charges, must have little effect. It is a common statement of the feminist who desires to be fair to the "unfair" sex, that "man" is often better than "his own laws," and the reason given to women for the comparative bearableness of their lot is that even task-masters are sometimes generous and merciful!

It is, indeed, the favourite refuge of the "reformer" who is unable to find in her own experience any justification for the view that "man," *per se*, is a tyrant and oppressor, that she is exceptionally fortunate but is agitating on behalf of her less happy sisters. This is particularly the attitude of the well-to-do woman, whose very liberty to agitate is due to the unselfish providence of some male supporter. Yet only he who wears the shoe can tell where it pinches, and it is certain that some of the "poorer sisters" whose cause is so earnestly advocated would



repudiate "reforms" based on their own responsibility for the family income, or the right of their husbands to force a divorce "by mutual consent."

In its essence the whole feminist position, as summed up in the few books and many papers, speeches, and pamphlets which have dealt in recent years with the relations of the sexes, is concentrated on the reduction of those claims of the race on woman which, it is said, have hitherto handicapped her as a human being in relation with man. Her freedom, bodily and spiritual, material and mental, is shown to be bound up in the possibility that she may either shirk these claims or reduce them to a minimum, and delegate all that can be performed by others.

It is interesting, but not encouraging to those who believe in the spiritual guidance of the church militant here on earth, to find that many churchmen give support to what is called "The Woman Movement" in the belief that by so doing they are making an alliance between religion and "progress." It is to be regretted that they do not inform themselves more fully of the true character of the feminist propaganda before setting the seal of the Church's approbation on any part of it. This is such an important question, both for women and for the Church, that it is well to be explicit.

The movement to obtain the Parliamentary franchise for women is a political propaganda. The motives actuating its adherents may be mixed up with religious aspirations, or with the desire to promote all kinds of social and moral

reforms, but the weapon which is being claimed for the attainment of these objects is a secular one. The Nationalist may desire Home Rule in what he believes to be the interests of true religion, but no one pretends that the issue is not really a political one, to be decided on grounds of policy.

Therefore, although a churchman, in Orders or out of them, may ardently wish to see the Parliamentary franchise granted to women, this does not make the question a religious one. Certain clergymen of the Church of England in permitting their churches to be used for suffrage propaganda seem to assume gratuitously that the Almighty, to Whose service those churches are dedicated, takes sides with the women who want votes and against those who do not. This introduction of political controversy into the religious sphere is the more to be deprecated because we cannot afford, in these anarchical days, to part with our conception of religion as above the clash of interests and opinions and founded upon principles and ideals which admit of no controversy between Christians of the same communion.

An analogy, very unfortunate in the minds of many church people, has been drawn between the corporate activity of church people with regard to the Welsh Disestablishment Bill and the attempt to drag the Church into the suffrage controversy. There are, of course, churchmen who believe the disestablishment of the Church in Wales to be fair and just—it has the approval and advocacy of a Bishop. But even those who take this view most strongly, while they may very well protest against

any assumption to the contrary within the walls of a church, will not deny that it is a question which concerns people *as church members*, and therefore, as church members, they have the right to protest against the Bill and to combine not as private citizens, but as churchmen, for that purpose. No such justification can be made for the Church League for Woman Suffrage. There is no connection between church membership and the demand for votes for women, nor are any historical or traditional privileges of church people involved by the withholding of the parliamentary vote. Moreover, while church people combining to fight the Welsh Bill are doing so as a matter of defence, and to secure themselves from encroachment by the State, the Church suffragists are a body formed for offensive purposes, encroaching on the prerogative of the State.

This brief digression to a particular aspect of the woman movement was necessary, in order to illustrate the danger which exists that the end should be confused with the means. The betterment of woman's position is the end, and hundreds of church services might be held for this purpose without giving any offence, but woman suffrage, as a means to that end, is merely a controversial political question. Similarly one might pray earnestly for the improvement of the condition of the working classes but it would be highly objectionable to drag in references to Tariff Reform or the Insurance Act. The Roman Catholic Church has understood this, and with conspicuous astuteness has adopted a position of

complete neutrality on woman suffrage as on other questions of domestic policy.

Apart from the Suffrage propaganda, which certainly has not the slightest right to be called "The" woman movement, any more than the temperance propaganda or any one of the other causes for which women are now associated, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what is covered by this wide term—The Woman Movement. There is a tendency to sweep under this general heading every kind of scheme for social betterment in which women are interested—temperance, sweating reform, the "moral" problem, and many others. It would, however, be deplorable if these were in practice approached as "woman's questions." As a matter of fact they not only affect men as much as women but are studied quite as seriously and worked for quite as earnestly by men as by women. There is not any better way to foster sex antagonism than to assume that questions of wages, public morals or domestic relations involve a difference of opinion or of interest between the sexes, which render it necessary that their treatment should be founded on the special point of view of either sex. While, therefore, it may be possible to discuss the *rôle* played by woman in such questions as part of a general movement of the sex towards public and social work, it is neither desirable nor accurate to give the impression that the propaganda of such reforms constitutes a definite "woman's movement."

Not very long ago a series of meetings was held

to discuss what was called the Religious side of the Woman's Movement. A feature of these functions was a review of the many splendid and noble qualities possessed by modern women, focussed on the assumption that the parliamentary franchise would enable them to rise to greater heights both of character and achievement. It is doubtful if it is really good for any class of persons to indulge for any length of time in the contemplation of their own virtues, but apart from this it was clearly shown (since no single anti-suffragist was invited to take part in the meetings) that to the promoters the spiritual side of the woman movement was definitely connected with the parliamentary franchise.

At the beginning of this book a definition of the word spirit and spiritual was adopted, which made it clear that, to the mind of the writer, those terms can only be accurately applied to the element in us which is immortal. It is an obvious absurdity to imagine any essential connection between this immortal soul and the ballot box. Those to whom the possession of the parliamentary franchise appears as a necessary preliminary to securing spiritual development or freedom must explain their theory of spiritual existence more clearly ; but is it not one of the mournful signs of a materialistic age that women, in whom the lamp of spiritual perception has always burnt so brightly, should be losing their vision of it in the turmoil and struggle for earthly and tangible weapons ? The most spiritually minded woman may be a convinced Suffragist, but unless she is hopelessly

be-fogged she will not confound the material instrument of political warfare with the sword of the spirit. She will know, with that sureness of knowledge which we can only possess in faith, that even were the vote necessary for physical liberty, freedom of body and freedom of spirit are two wholly different things, and that in the free commonwealth of souls there is no such thing as bondage.<sup>1</sup>

Is it not to be regretted that some, who should be the first to point out that the kingdom of Heaven is not built with hands, should encourage the idea that there is any possible connection between temporal power and spiritual development?

Where then, is the true woman's movement for the emancipation of woman from spiritual bondage? Is it to be found amongst those who preach that woman's first duty is to herself, or those who tell her that nature has been unjust, or those who urge her to revolt against her oppressor, man? Is it

<sup>1</sup> "It may more truly be said that we who protest against unfreedoms are already free, because freedom is a spiritual thing which no man can take from us. *In a sense that is true up to a certain point.*"—Miss Maude Royden. But she does not make clear what the point is at which spiritual freedom becomes spiritual bondage, nor how this change is effected by material conditions. One wonders how it is influenced by the refusal of the majority of Churches to grant women any form of priesthood. Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Church League for Woman Suffrage, the Rev. Maurice M. Bell said: "The priesthood, and all that the priesthood involves, is debarred to women . . . that is a permanent prohibition." Yet if "freedom" is necessary for spiritual expansion this barrier may well seem far more illogical and detrimental than the limitation of woman's power in temporal matters.

really a sign that she is rising in the scale of human progress when she sets aside all those delicate and tender sensibilities with which she has clothed her relation to man and to her children, regarding them instead in the light of "encumbrances" and "hindrances" to her intellectual development? Is the increasing extravagance and restlessness of society and the consequent decay of home life an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace which women are cultivating?

Woman is always nearer to nature than man, because she has been entrusted with a function which takes the most civilised as well as the most primitive woman down to the bed-rock of life. It is she, therefore, who must set the standards of sex-relations, and it is she, in reality, who has succeeded so far in refining and elevating those relations beyond the mere animal passion. Is she to pause now in this task, to deliberately divert her energies elsewhere, or by her contempt and disregard for the function she has hitherto idealised destroy the very grounds on which her influence was based?

Much remains to be done to complete the task which woman, ages ago, set before herself. Man still falls far behind woman's ideal of what the father of her children should be. Here, indeed, lies a far deeper and truer ground for woman's discontent and dissatisfaction with life, and here, perhaps, lies the sphere for the true woman's movement. Not on the development of her own "individuality," nor on a self-realisation which discounts the claims of others, can woman found

her demand that man shall rise to a higher view of sex-relations and family responsibilities. How much he has risen under the influence of her gentle example no student of human evolution will deny. How far he still falls below her needs and the needs of her children only the aching hearts of mothers can know.

Something must be said here of the responsibility of women towards their own sex. The woman who spoils a man's ideal, who encourages the coarse or careless side of him, is helping to make life hard for some other woman. Especially do we need "the right kind of mother" to breed the husbands and fathers of the next generation.

Much has been said in this book about the necessity that women should give, and give with both hands, the richest gifts their nature possesses to the man they love and the children of that love; but it is impossible that giving can be all on one side in any relationship of true love. The most generous natures are those which not only know how to give but how to receive, and it is one of the evil influences at work on woman nowadays which teaches her not only to be self-supporting but to be self-sufficient, neither giving nor receiving. To expect kindness and to receive it graciously is an attitude which not infrequently stimulates the desire of others to meet that expectation and receive that gratitude. In the little things of life, as well as in the great ones, men and women need this feeling of mutual dependence to keep their relationship on a right footing. Is there not evidenced in modern social



customs and manners some derogation from this standard, and are women free from blame in the matter? It may seem a descent from the greater to the less (in considering the relations of the sexes) to refer to what are, perhaps, merely ephemera, but the writer finds it difficult to dissociate the "off-hand" manner of young men to their girl friends, and the desire of the latter to be treated with little ceremony, from a general tendency on the part of both sexes to follow their own bent with as little consideration as possible for the tastes and wishes of the other.

Yet on this consideration, on *habits* of consideration for each other, depend the success of married life and the proper fulfilment of family duties.

Woman's task, therefore, is to strive not for an egoism which will enable her to rival man, but to win him to a higher view of the possibilities of life, and of the responsibilities and duties which can only be properly undertaken by man and woman together. She must hold up that beautiful conception of human relations which is founded not on the assertion of one's own rights but on mutual sacrifice and recognition of each other's rights.

In the great mystery of life there is nothing after which our tiny human intelligence strains more pitifully than the everlasting Why, of whence we come and whither we are going? Woman, surely, is nearer to this mystery than man can be, because of her more intimate connection with the growth of the new being which carries on the life immortal. A belief in im-

mortality must be very vital to every mother who has thus forged her link in the great chain. To her will come at times the most vivid apprehension of the spirit life, the strangest other-worldly experiences. Is it possible to dissociate these psychic apprehensions from the peculiar function of woman? They are often, as all true women know, closely connected with it, both in their origin and nature. Why does a woman feel instinctively (what some scientific men are prepared to recognise) that her very thoughts may be reflected in the character and being of the child she is going to bear? The higher a woman is in the scale of intelligence and sensibility the more she will be affected by such ideas, which seem to indicate either a psychic bond between mother and child, or else such a delicate connection between the organisation of the two as to be an equally wonderful phenomenon.

When one pauses even on the brink of such questions as these it appears almost blasphemous to suggest that, after all, woman is only "incidentally" a mother. Surely in the marvellous process which makes her the actual channel of life there must be far more than a mere organic function comparable to other functions, and something infinitely important and far-reaching in its influences.

It may appear to some readers of this book that too much stress has been laid on the maternal function, and particularly on its biological aspect, and too little on that development of conscious reason which differentiates man from the lower

animals. But it is not only the biological aspect of the maternal function to which the writer refers its importance in woman's life. It is the deep psychical significance of maternity, and the possibilities of spiritual as well as intellectual development through the perfecting of woman's truly maternal attributes.

The great mistake of the woman's education movement of fifty years ago was that it assumed that the vocations of wifeness and motherhood needed no preparation—that the performance of all the duties connected with them was instinctive with women. This might have been true in a primitive society but not under the specialised conditions associated with modern life and with our conception of monogamous marriage. Nevertheless all intelligence and training were bent towards making women efficient in any other capacity. Out of this arose the feminist theory that there is some fundamental antagonism between the intellectual development of women and the proper performance of maternal and domestic duties, and closely correlated with this is the claim for "equality" with man, both social, economic and political—an "equality" which can be realised only if the claims of the race are relegated to the same position with women as they occupy with men.

Many feminists will object to the reduction of their theories, often scattered and disconnected in their own minds, to such a conclusion. There are hundreds to-day holding and preaching the doctrine of "economic equality" who are quite

unprepared for its logical outcome—the self-supporting mother. But if a ball is started rolling down hill one cannot dictate its stopping place, and those feminists who have the courage to face the logical results of their own propaganda do not deny that their aim is to reconstruct sexual and social relations on an entirely new basis.

It is in no ungenerous spirit that it must be pointed out that modern methods of public agitation, combined with our system of female education, are putting powerful weapons for such revolutionary work into the hands of women who speak not for their sex, but for a section of it—a section which is least in touch with nature and with the great, the immutable facts of life. The danger is that men, anxious to meet the views of women—as the best men are—should listen to these voices and believe them to be speaking for the sex as a whole. To such men it may well seem that the sacrifice of self which life demands of many women is a burden too hard to be borne. But deep down in the hearts of women themselves—beneath the superficial discontent and demand for “rights”—lies the knowledge that our strength is made perfect in weakness, that we must lose our life gladly to find it, and that for us there can be no true freedom save in the service of love.

To the leaders of the self-styled Woman Movement, feminists and suffragists, we others, we women who believe in the future of our sex only as an integral part of the race, who see no salvation for women which is not involved in the salvation of that eternal trinity of man, woman and child,

would say, as Lacordaire said to his countrymen at the height of their frenzied fight for freedom, "You have written upon the monuments of your city the words Liberty, Fraternity, Equality. Above Liberty write Duty, above Fraternity write Humility, above Equality write Service. Above the immemorial creed of your rights inscribe the divine creed of your duties."

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