

THE MODERN FAMILY

BY

RUTH REED, PH. D.

Assistant Professor Of Economics and Sociology
at Mount Holyoke College



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INTRODUCTION

The family has long been regarded as the primary and basic institution of our social structure. For ages before the first philosopher began to reflect upon the nature of the collective life, the family had functioned as an indispensable social unit, providing human life and serving as the pivotal point for the transfer of culture from one generation to the next. Moreover, the character of the family's functions has not changed with the passing of time. It remains today the only accepted agency for providing the biological units of each generation, for securing their care during the period of their greatest dependency, and for passing on to them the fundamental elements of our civilization — language, the elementary forms of self-control, and certain attitudes and habits which are essential to participation in the activities of the more inclusive social groups. In addition to these basic functions, the family performs valuable and highly regarded services for adults. Given a certain economic basis, it assures security of personal relationships and the opportunity to withdraw from the more complex forms of social intercourse to a simpler and less taxing *milieu*; thus it supplies a means both for the development and for the renewal of personality.

Because of the essential nature of their functions the family and other social institutions have, in the past, become inextricably intertwined, so that each unit reacts upon the others and influences their form and development. It appears axiomatic, therefore, that any fundamental change in the family structure must affect every other aspect of our related social life, and, in turn, that the family form must be conditioned by the course of other phases of social development.

In the last twenty-five years much attention has been centered upon the family because of its inadequate performance of certain primary duties. Its inefficiency in these respects is in some measure attributable to its growing instability as an institution — an instability statistically measurable by a constantly rising divorce rate in practically all countries of the civilized world. Economic and social conditions, too, have operated to produce a diversity of family forms which register marked differences in the personal and social services which they render — for example, the poor family, the middle-class family, and the semi-detached relationships in the families of the intellectual and artistic groups. Furthermore, there is a divergence in the birth and death rates prevailing in these varying family types, with social results perceptible in the changed number and quality of the biological units contributed to each generation. This gives rise to the query, on the part of some sociologists, whether under modern conditions the family is performing satisfactorily its basic function of supplying the social population, since its individuals continue to be recruited in increasing proportion from those social classes which are generally regarded as biologically and culturally inferior. On its functional side the family has been indicted by its critics for failure to provide the individual with the training necessary for a full participation in the larger social life. The varying economic and cultural environments afforded by families of different social strata bring it about that the members of each generation enter into the competitive conditions of modern life with marked individual differences in their equipment and training. The family is thus held by some students of its problems to be an agency for the perpetuation of social and cultural stratification. A considerable group of thoughtful and responsible people expresses dissatisfaction with the terms upon which the more personal and individual satisfactions of the family may be obtained. Resentment is felt, too, at the conventional limitations which the assumption of family ties places upon individual development and achievement. These dissatisfied persons are, therefore, desirous of creat-

ing a variant of the family form better adapted to human needs of the present day.

On the other hand, those adhering to the traditional view of the inviolable sanctity of the present family form have been entirely unwilling even to discuss the nature of family problems. They have urged that instances of individual failure in family relationships are to be explained in terms of the unworthy traits of the individual concerned, and they hold that such failures should, under no circumstances, be attributed to the family as an institution. According to their philosophy the family, not the individual, is to be considered of primary importance, and in all circumstances its sacred nature must be preserved. For the solace of those who have found the task of maintaining a family difficult, these advocates of the existing order have busied themselves with spinning a fine web of theological and metaphysical subtleties around the nobility of personal sacrifice in the interest of institutional stability; and while urging its acceptance they have simultaneously proclaimed to the world their faith that all is well with the institution of the family. Any effort to effect change in family customs, or even to discuss the desirability of such change, has accordingly met with the fiercest emotional resistance. The tendency has been for the family form to remain stable, while the other civilizational elements with which this institution is interwoven have been changing in form and growing in complexity. Consequently, the task of adjustment for the individual has been increased a hundredfold, and in many cases the result has been personal demoralization and unsuccessful adaptation to our changing social life. The emotional intensity of the attention focused upon the family has caused a crystallization of the belief that it would be impossible to adapt the institution to modern conditions without seriously endangering its primary structure. In the case of the individual this attitude can be explained by the fact that his ideas of family life have been gained in childhood, and it is well known that any reconstruction of the patterns of thought formed in this early period provokes a considerable emotional up-

heaval. Socially, the situation is paralleled by the intensely emotional and unquestioning nature of the attachment of other peoples to a highly-regarded element or belief in their culture — e.g., the esteem of the Hindus for the sacred cow, the regard of the Australians for the secret of the bull-roarer, and the belief of Christendom in the Virgin Birth.

This persistent reverence for existing family forms inhibited scrutiny of family maladjustment for several generations. Social workers and sociologists united in attempting to interpret each movement for the individual good in terms of its effect upon family stability. Movements for public health and for collective responsibility for child welfare were retarded in some cases by fear that the family would be supplanted as the chief agency for the protection and nurture of the individual. Meanwhile the individual was urged to submit to the discipline imposed by the inflexible nature of the institution, with a firm faith that the ensuing spiritual recompense would be of inestimable worth to him. But the indisputable increase in the divorce rate, and the evidence that a large number of cultured and intelligent people were leading comfortable and pleasant lives outside of marriage bonds, called attention to the revolt against the heavy burdens imposed by the conventional family life under modern conditions. Meanwhile the doctrine of individual worth gained recognition, while more favorable opportunities for the realization of personal ambition presented themselves and added power to the already forceful effort to avoid the sacrifice of individual welfare for the preservation of ancient social forms. The need was recognized for at least some effort to modify the institution in the direction of a greater conformity to contemporary needs.

In the following pages it is our purpose to describe the functioning of this historic institution under the changing conditions of modern life, to trace the evolution of its structure and duties, and to describe the problem of its adjustment to the other elements in our social system.

PART I

THE FAMILY IN THE SOCIAL SCHEME

I

THE INSTINCTIVE BASIS OF FAMILY LIFE

The Antiquity of the Family. The family unit of female and offspring, accompanied by a male protector, is older than the human race. Long before the dawn-man turned by the painful processes of thought to the fashioning of his first crude tools and weapons, our simian ancestors lived in family groups, the basic functions of which were sexual and procreative. The association originated in the primary attraction between male and female, and this cohesive force assured the continuance of the association until after the birth of the offspring, when other instinctive factors came into play. Whatever may be the nature of that primeval instinct which makes it pleasanter and more urgent for the adults of the species to nourish and protect their young than to abandon them, its existence seems universal among human beings and among their contemporary kindred of the anthropoid group.

Early students of social evolution held that the family was a late product of the social process, preceded by a long period of promiscuity and group marriage. But later researches have disproved the truth of these assertions, and it is now generally admitted that among all primitive peoples well-defined coöperative units for individual satisfaction and for the care of offspring exist.¹ To describe the nature of the instinctive bonds which form the basis of this association is the duty of biology and psychology, but it remains for sociology to interpret the significance of the resulting social groups.

Mother-love. Fundamental to the family unit are the attractive forces which hold the female and helpless offspring together,

¹ Lowie, R. H., *Primitive Society*. New York, 1920.

for upon their close association depends the survival of the species. The sacrifice of what an objective observer would regard as the mother's personal convenience and security to the welfare of her offspring has been explained by the intense physical pleasure which she derives from actual contact with her young.² The stimulation of the mammary glands in the act of nursing gives to the female a pronounced physical satisfaction, as do the other contacts which she has with her progeny in the process of caring for it. Through elaboration and association with these elemental stimulations there is built up that complex and powerful emotion — mother-love. Nursing by the mother of her own child is therefore regarded as a great factor in building up maternal affection, although its absence does not necessarily preclude other instinctive manifestations of tenderness and protection. Among mammals, physical love alone would be sufficient to hold the mother-and-offspring unit together, and to account for the female's seemingly unselfish devotion to, and defense of, her young. In strict adherence to the biological explanation it should be said that the mother animal fights in defense of her instinctive pleasure, and since the stimulus to this satisfaction is her young, she fights in defense of her young. This would in part explain why the reaction of the female to her young is not one of unmixed tenderness. The offspring may give her pleasure when circumstances are favorable, but otherwise the consequent inconvenience and annoyance may outweigh the memory of the pleasurable stimulation; and under these conditions the behavior which she manifests may be quite the opposite of tender. To Thorndike it appears that

all women possess from early childhood to death some interest in human babies and a responsiveness to the looks, gestures, and cries of infancy, being satisfied with childish gurglings, smiles, and affectionate gestures, and moved to instinctive comforting acts by childish signs of pain, grief, and misery. This series of situations and responses constitutes the maternal instinct in its most typical form. . . . To a woman who has given birth to a child, a baby to see and hold and suckle is

² Bain, A., *The Senses and the Intellect*. London, 1868.

perhaps the most potent satisfaction that life can offer; its loss the cause of the saddest yearning.³

Psychologists, however, have to admit that this generalization is not based upon any wide observation of the reactions of females to infant phenomena. A part of the alleged proof is the supposed tenderness exhibited by little girls in their treatment of dolls, but the expected motherly behavior in this connection is not always forthcoming. In fact, manifestations of rough treatment, indeed total dismemberment, of the loved object are by no means uncommon — conduct totally unfavorable to the species if this infant behavior is to be regarded as prophetic of the attitudes to be expected later in life. Nor can it be proved that there is any universal interest in babies among adult females, since their conduct toward infants shows marked divergences, varying all the way from strict avoidance of them to evidences of extreme fondness and delight in the contemplation of their activities. However, since these reactions can have been learned, or even, in many cases, assumed, it cannot be concluded with certainty that they indicate either strength or weakness of the maternal impulse.

It is here that analogy from the world of animals should be useful, since in their case the reaction of females to offspring is more strictly on the instinctive level. Animal breeders concur in the observation that behavior favorable to the survival of the young is much more marked in some females than in others — so much so, indeed, as to lead to their being selected as breeders for the group. This selection, of course, depends upon the physical fitness of the female to produce normal and healthy young, but even among the females so equipped there are marked differences in their behavior toward the young. In some cases this behavior has been observed to be so antipathetic as to make it altogether dangerous to trust the female alone with her offspring, whereas in others preoccupation with the welfare of the young is accompanied by signs of great nervous anxiety and fatigue on the part of the females, caused by tender care and solicitude. Even at its

* Thorndike, E. L., *The Original Nature of Man*. New York, 1913.

best, however, the maternal impulse among animals proves to be but a clumsy device for preserving the young — far more wasteful of life than the care which can be given by a trained breeder. Impulses toward care of the young manifest themselves in a small repertory of specific acts which can be varied but little with changing circumstances, and which in some cases result in the death instead of the preservation of the offspring.

The behaviorists conclude from their observations of women in confinement that no new, ready-made activities appear in woman's conduct except nursing — and even about nursing there is no sureness of procedure.⁴ They believe, therefore, that the instinctive equipment for specific responses is very slight and leaves much opportunity for the behavior to vary with changing circumstances. The accumulation of data on this subject is not large, however, and in its absence the assumption would seem reasonable that the maternal attitude varies with the physical make-up of the mother, her sensitiveness to stimuli from her child, and the social situation, including the prevalent ideals of womanhood and the mother's awareness of these ideals.

Howsoever lacking the data may be as to the strength of the original predisposition to motherly behavior, it is evident that conventional attitudes play a large part in the behavior of a mother toward her child. At some periods of history motherhood has been the sole means by which a woman could gain the recognition or gratitude of her group. Where children are greatly desired for economic or religious reasons, motherhood is held in high esteem, so that many inducements of a psychological and social nature are offered for the bearing and careful nurture of children; but where the need for population growth is less urgent and such singular inducements are not offered, the bearing of children may come to be regarded as a burden and as only one of numerous ways to distinction and self-development.

Conventional standards of conduct may be reinforced by the

⁴ Watson J. B., *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*. New York, 1919.

tendency of the mother to identify herself with her child. The physical connection between herself and her child is obvious; the child is an extension or adjunct of her own body. By a projection of this analogy the child's accomplishments, his manner of talking, thinking, and behaving, are regarded as an extension of herself, and her pleasure is increased if she can bring these into harmony with the conception which she has formed of her own personality. The bearing of a child is an act of which society approves; not only is the mother proud of herself and of her performance, but her self-satisfaction expands into love of her child. On the other hand, if her act is one which society disapproves, as in the case of illegitimate motherhood, she may show positive dislike of the infant because of the inconvenience and embarrassment which it causes. Where the social penalties attached to her act are severe, infanticide may result, even when this crime means death for the mother in case of discovery. It has been observed by nurses and obstetricians, however, that if an unmarried mother can be persuaded to nurse her child for a few weeks and give it physical care, she may develop such an attachment to it that she will be willing to keep it with her at all costs; but in some cases this attitude does not develop and the mother refuses to care for the child or even to have it in her presence. Not infrequently a woman who has refused to take any interest in her illegitimate child becomes a mother again after her marriage, and manifests a decided attachment to a child born in wedlock. The conventional element is thus seen to be very strong in the conditioning of motherly behavior. If, however, the environmental situation is such as to involve other competing impulses, there can be no certainty that the tenderness of the mother will be called into play.

McDougall attaches enormous social importance to the emotion of motherly regard:

From this emotion and its impulses to cherish and protect the young spring generosity, gratitude, love, pity, true benevolence, and altruistic conduct of every kind; in it they have their main and absolutely essential root without which they could not be. Any seemingly altruistic

action in which it plays no part is but a sham, the issue of cold calculation or of habits formed under the influence of rewards or punishments.⁵

According to his theory, the maternal impulse came into existence as an indispensable attitude in the struggle for existence, and by the process of natural inheritance was transmitted to the young of both sexes. Thus, the male also developed impulses of love and protectiveness, although these were not identical with those of the female because of the differences in bodily structure and functioning. However, this inherited altruism is held to account for the willingness of the male to remain with the female and coöperate with her in the protection and nurture of the young.

Father-love. Thorndike defines the paternal instinct in terms of specific responses to given situations. He says:

To offer a little child scraps of food and to see it eat, to snatch it from peril of animals and to smile approvingly at its more vigorous antics, seems to me to be the truly original tendency of the human male. Male thoughtlessness and brutality toward children, or toward whatever living being or thing that makes a similar appeal, is due not to a total loss of kindness, but rather to the presence of competing tendencies of the hunting instinct which is as much stronger in men than in women as the maternal instinct is stronger in women than in men.⁶

It has been observed that among all existing primitive peoples the male coöperates with the female in the nurture of the young and manifests toward the offspring varying degrees of tenderness according to the social situation in which he finds himself. But if, as Hartland contends,⁷ the fact of physical paternity was discovered late in the evolution of the species, then the knowledge of his biological responsibility can have been in no way connected with his paternal behavior. Among certain Australian tribes it is reported that the nature and significance of the male *rôle* in procreation is not known, and generation is attributed to spirits which inhabit the bush; nevertheless the men of this group are

⁵ McDougall, W., *An Introduction to Social Psychology*.

⁶ Thorndike, E. L., *The Original Nature of Man*.

⁷ Hartland, E. S., *Primitive Paternity*.

said to be mindful of the interests of the children and kindly in their treatment of them.

The truth may be, therefore, that the disposition to be tender and protective toward children is less specifically defined in the case of the male than in the case of the female. It would seem reasonable to infer that the male is instinctively tender toward the young who are in close proximity to him; and since these children are likely to be the children of his sexual companion, if they occupy the same residence, it follows that he will be tender toward his own children. Although primitive man may not strictly demand marital fidelity, and although he may attribute the origin of children to some mystic spirit, the effect of his care upon the preservation of the species is the same. Perhaps, too, some of the tenderness which he feels toward his sexual mate is transmuted into love of the children who are obviously hers. However, there are instances among primitive peoples where the mother resides in her brother's household instead of her husband's, and here the tenderness of the male finds expression in the care of the sister's children, since they are regarded as more nearly related to him by convention than are the children of his wife.

Although knowledge of biological paternity may not be essential to a manifestation of paternal behavior, probably it has greatly intensified that sentiment, especially when it has come to be associated with the transmission of names and of property. In some societies the offspring become of great importance to the paternal guardian because of the associations which have been formed between the family unit and religious duties, the latter including the future of the spirit life and the repose of the soul after death. In such situations the conventional factors play an important *rôle* in the development of a complex emotion, and children become of as much importance to the father as to the mother. In general, however, father-love is more conventionalized and intellectualized than mother-love, because of the different nature of the father's contact with the young. As in the case of mother-love, the paternal impulses toward tender regard for children may not

manifest themselves where the social conditions are unfavorable or where the offspring threaten the welfare or the survival of their guardians. Among some primitive peoples the fathers have a hand in infanticide, and often enforce the rule against the wishes of the mothers. In modern industrial society the father represses his paternal impulses at the time of business depression and takes to the road — although psychology aids our understanding of this act by suggesting that it arises from a determination to escape the torture of his thwarted tenderness as much as from a desire to avoid responsibility.

Among the more favored groups, however, there is a great tendency for the father to identify himself with his children and to take great pride in their successes and achievements. Because of the greater number of his social contacts, this element of identification, and the affection resulting therefrom, may become more potent in his case than in the case of the mother. The father sees in his children, too, the opportunity to realize vicariously the thwarted ambitions of his youth, and this intensifies his interest in the vocational activities of his children. This may in some measure account for the tendency of the male parent of a generation ago to force his son into economic pursuits favorable to the parent with little deference to the wishes of the son.

Filial Love. It was the opinion of Herbert Spencer that the development of a more worthy type of filial love should be the next step in the evolution of a simplified monogamic family.⁸ Certainly there has been no development of this type of affection at all comparable with mother-love or father-love.

As between offspring and mother, filial love has its instinctive basis in the mother-and-child relation of early infancy. As soon as the child becomes conscious of himself as distinct from others, he becomes aware of the pleasurable sensations arising from the close association with his mother, and his response to her is immediate and affectionate. Similarly he becomes aware, though usually at a later stage, of the pleasure-giving stimuli radiating

⁸ *Principles of Sociology.*

from his father in the form of desired activity. Gradually, with the passing years, these associations develop in number and in importance until an attitude of affection becomes the rule, provided, of course, the relations between parent and child have been on the whole harmonious. The love-life of the child is naturally centered upon his parents or guardians from the beginning, and because of the closeness of the association this fixation continues until adolescence, when the sensitivity of the organism to stimuli from the opposite sex becomes more marked.

The transition from a fixation of affection on the parents or on one parent to an adult of the opposite sex, which should follow naturally and simply the organic changes in the life of the youth, is often complicated by the means which the parent has used to stimulate filial love and gratitude. When the relationship between the parents is such that they turn to their children for satisfaction in their affectional life, the return affection from the child is often so intense that the later adjustment to adult life becomes a disturbing process. Children at the sensitive period of adolescence are easily moved to pity and to protective impulses toward their parents, and a fixing of attention on the parent at this period precludes a normal interest in contemporaries of the opposite sex. The child easily gains an exaggerated sense of gratitude for sacrifices which the parents have made in his behalf, with little realization of the compensations which the parents have received in watching his development. The bonds which unite the child to his family may by this process be so multiplied that any course involving separation of interest or of residence will be attended by great mental conflict and distress. This situation often arises in the case of widows who fear being left alone without affection and so unconsciously multiply and strengthen the bonds which bind their children to them. Similar situations of difficulty and unhappiness are also created in many cases for the younger child of a large family when the parents are anxious to avoid being left alone in the home. This may involve sacrificing all hope of

personal advancement or development to the task of bringing contentment to the parent, who is willing to accept the sacrifice because of his emotional need and because of his feeling of property right in the child.

Instances of this type of perverted affection are often found in families near the poverty line, where filial affection is firmly inculcated in order to insure contributions from the offspring for family support and for the care of parents in their old age. In fact, it is to the development of this affectional bond that society has heretofore looked for the solution of many problems which grow out of the modern economic system, such as old age, sickness, and unemployment. That this affection is not spontaneous, that it will not function without artificial aid, is proved by the existence of laws actually requiring persons to support their parents or grandparents in case of need.

An over-development of filial affection is more likely to occur in the case of girls than in the case of boys, because the attention of the former is more closely limited to home interests, and they are less likely to have suitable opportunities for forming outside attachments. This is much less true now than it was in former years when women were more strictly confined to the domestic environment, but its results are still seen in the devastating effects which it has had upon the lives of young women. This excess of filial love accounts for a type of woman frequently found in communities of women—mature in body and in mind, but unable to make the simple decisions of every-day life without parental sanction. A decision with respect to change of residence, if this involves separation from the parent, leads to painful conflict of emotions, strange to witness, between imagined parental obligation and personal ambition for advancement to the independent activities of adult life. The stunting of personal development and the consequent greatly diminished personal life are sufficient to cause some questioning of the value of intensified family bonds. Among families in which this hypertrophy of family bonds occurs, the life of the individual is sacrificed to

the maintenance of family unity, and personal development becomes difficult.

With the greater understanding of human motives and conduct which modern psychology has brought, there has come a tendency to minimize the importance of filial affection. Parents have begun to assume a more detached attitude toward their children, giving help when it is needed, but not obtruding themselves or their claims so obviously as in other days. The modern tendency to consider the rearing of children an art has developed a new standard of success — the character and the accomplishments of the offspring rather than any feeling of gratitude or affection which the child may manifest toward the parent. However pleasant and desirable comradeship and affection between parent and adult offspring may be, when these grow naturally out of common interests and association on terms of equality, payment for the responsibilities of parenthood should not be exacted in terms of affection or of financial support. Voluntary parenthood might be assumed to bring its own rewards in the pleasurable activities associated with child nurture.

Conjugal Love. The nature of the bond which holds men and women together in lifelong unions has never been adequately explained except in terms of habit and social pressure. The sexual attraction which is sufficient to unite them against all obstacles is itself intermittent, and is greatly diminished by habit and close association. At the present time, moreover, marriage and sexual expression are denied to many people until the urgency of the sexual need has greatly diminished. Analogy from animal life is of very little service in this connection, since with animals the mating impulse is seasonal, and no lifelong unions exist except perhaps among some anthropoids. Lifelong unions of a monogamic type exist among primitive peoples, but they are the exception rather than the rule. Where wives are purchased, a man may alter or increase his domestic establishment according to his means; and even where the marriage is a matter of voluntary agreement, there has usually been some social device for providing change and

variety in sexual companionship. From a sexual point of view monogamy is undoubtedly a greater burden for men than for women, since the interests of the latter are more completely absorbed by the interests of child-rearing and allied activities. Since men, on the other hand, have more varied social contacts, their temptation toward infidelity is greater. Fidelity to a monogamic union for a period of time has its counterpart, however, among the anthropoid apes, though we have no means of knowing whether these unions are lifelong. While there are many ties of common interest which knit the family group together, the instinctive basis is so flexible as to make possible a great variety of family forms.

II

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRESENT FAMILY FORM

Roman Individualism and the Family. When Christianity first began to exert its influence in the field of social relations, it ran counter to the ideals of family life which had developed in the later days of the Roman Empire — a family form which allowed personal liberty and independence to both sexes in a measure hardly equalled at any other period of civilized life. With the decline in the *patria potestas* women gained greater control over person and property, and a situation developed which placed Roman women, whether married or unmarried, on a plane of liberty and independence which compared quite favorably with that of men. Thus it came about that women under a *régime* of individualism in Rome occupied a position of dignity and importance equal to that which they had held in the patriarchal family, and to this was added opportunity of greater freedom for self-direction. This new freedom was utilized for a freer participation in the social life of the times and, in some instances, even in the exertion of influence on public affairs. Standards of family regulation became less and less rigid, and limitations upon individual liberty of both men and women in the favored classes were much relaxed. The disposition to marry, however, was greatly diminished because of the liberty permitted outside the marriage relation, and even within marriage the old standards of fidelity and devotion no longer held sway. Divorce became more and more frequent, and remarriage was not penalized. The birth rate declined and a crude form of family limitation grew out of the current practices of abortion and infanticide. Legislative measures and the offer of rewards for large families were of no avail in

stemming the tide of individualism. Statesmen and patriots condemned the standards of the day as inimical to the social order, not failing, however, to take advantage of the liberty which was allowed. Tirades of abuse were directed against the new attitude toward marriage, against the practice of divorce, against the new woman, and against the unnatural sophistication of the youth of the day. No discernible results were achieved by these advocates of the old order, and the reign of individualism in family life lasted until the coming of Christianity.

Changes Brought About Through Christianity. According to Sir Henry Sumner Maine,¹ Christianity undertook from the first to limit the individual liberty which was allowed in the Roman family. This was due, in part, to a reaction against the indefiniteness of moral standards and, in part, to the passion for asceticism which was shown by the early leaders of Christian thought. In the new philosophy the biological organism was regarded as a manifold source of evil in the world, and physical appetites were therefore to be reduced to the lowest possible level. Disapproving the current developments for the satisfaction of the bodily needs, the advocates of the new creed urged the denial of all forms of sexual gratification in order that the spiritual life might be placed uppermost. Regarding sexual activity as one of the major temptations to a complete life of the senses, the more determined of the sect refused any intimate relations with women; and to fortify themselves in their determination, they elaborated a philosophy teaching the moral inferiority and unworthiness of women, whom they professed to hate. Suitable forms of penance were accordingly advocated and forced upon women by the sumptuary legislation of the Church, and women converts to the new faith were urged to clothe themselves in rags and spend much time in penitential weeping. Increased emphasis was placed upon the value of virginity in the sight of God, and new *mores* for women were gradually built up to aid the Church leaders in their desire to escape temptation. Mothers were urged to encourage their daughters to look forward

¹ *Ancient Law*. London, 1907.

to a life of virginity sanctified by a spiritual union with God in place of the marriage ties of an earthly nature.

In order that they might elaborate their philosophy of religion and the social order undisturbed by worldly temptation, many philosophers of the new religion retired from all social contacts to follow a *régime* of self-direction in the wilderness, disturbed by nothing more menacing than their own thoughts and dreams. That the latter did not always conform to the precepts which these philosophers had elaborated for themselves and others, the records which they have left us abundantly testify. In their position apart from the rest of the world, however, they gained a reputation for exalted spirituality and godliness, and the veil of mystery which surrounded their lives served to enhance their influence on practical affairs. In the beginning they urged upon their followers the same ascetic *régime* which they themselves attempted to follow, but when this proved clearly impracticable, those who found themselves unsuited to strict continence were urged to confine their sexual activities to the narrowest possible bounds.

The Christian Monogamic Marriage. From these early precepts evolved the Christian ideal of marriage. Step by step the Church assumed control of marriage relations, until in time marriage was declared to be one of the holy sacraments.² The crude methods of family limitation which had been employed in the days of the later Roman Empire were brought under the ban of the Church, and all such practices were condemned lest they should encourage unlicensed indulgence within the bonds of marriage. Family relationships were defined in terms of the doctrine of woman's inferiority and her subordinate *rôle* in the social scheme. The man was declared to be the head of the household, and to him the wife owed obedience in all things not contrary to the doctrines of the Church. The Church even attempted to curb the curiosity of women in matters of religion by declaring that they should secure from their husbands, within the privacy of the home, all desired information. An inconspicuous position for them was

² Howard, G. E., *History of Matrimonial Institutions*. Chicago, 1904.

further guaranteed by rules forbidding women to become teachers or preachers. Children were to be obedient to both parents, and slaves of the household were urged to be content with their lot. Men with only one wife were regarded as more advanced in the realization of the Christian ideal, and to them were given the more honored positions in the Church organization. Marriage was declared to be a lifelong, indissoluble union between one man and one woman, and any sexual relation outside of marriage was pronounced a mortal sin. In order to curb the impulses of persons who might grow restive under such a rigid marital yoke, the Church elaborated and gave forth a philosophy of the marriage relation. The sacrament of marriage was said to have created a spiritual entity which was something greater than the individuals who had entered into it; and because of the sacred character which the Church ceremonial had imparted to this union, no sacrifice of individual welfare was too great to be demanded in the interest of its preservation. Births should not be prevented, and children should be reared in the teachings of the Church.

Lack of Conformity to the New Ideal. Through a system of well-defined penalties a measure of conformity to the new marriage form was gradually secured. Alongside the new Christian ideal of marriage, however, there existed an institution which testifies to the difficulty of confining the sexual impulse to one well-defined pattern of behavior: prostitution. Prostitution had existed under the Roman Empire, but the Christian Church placed upon it the heavy weight of its disapproval. While even this pressure was insufficient to eradicate the institution, it nevertheless operated to degrade more and more the social status of the prostitute. Although the Church maintained its condemnatory attitude, the existence of this group of women as a permanent social class continued. In the course of time prostitution came to be regarded as an inevitable concomitant of Christian monogamic marriage and as one of its essential mainstays. The historian of European morals regarded the prostitute as a means for preserving the purity of the home, an absolutely essential outlet for the uncurbed nature of

men, who had never been able to limit their love-life to a monogamic union. "But for her," says Lecky, "the unchallenged purity of countless homes would be polluted and not a few, who in the pride of their untempted chastity think of her with an indignant shudder, would have known the agony of remorse and despair."³

While the prostitute was recognized by many Christians as essentially useful in the social system, she was universally condemned because of the belief that the impulses to which she pandered were sinful. Throughout Christendom she was considered a social outcast and was denied legal protection by the very persons whose patronage maintained her. Only in rare instances was any effort made to ameliorate her lot, and then usually by some group of pitying and respectable women who had been shielded from the belief that her existence was necessary to the system which gave them status and security. That prostitution did not cause some further questioning of the validity of monogamy is partially to be explained by the fact that an atmosphere of great secrecy was maintained about it. The matter was considered one for shame and concealment, not to be discussed as having any connection with the holy sacrament of marriage. Social philosophers who believed that the long existence of the family had proved it necessary as an institution were puzzled by the equally ancient lineage of prostitution; they found an explanation, as did Lecky, in the belief that it was an evil necessary for the support of the good.

Communities of Women. Communities of women began to be formed at the time when men were endeavoring to withdraw from the social world to an environment more favorable for the development of a religious life. From the beginning, however, the principle of selection was different in the case of the women. Among the men, those who were disinclined to social activity were those who chose to devote themselves exclusively to a religious life, but in the case of the women other influences predominated. To women, the call to leave home and family for a new form of community life contained an appeal to the spirit of adventure and

³ Lecky, W. E. H., *History of European Morals*. 1887.

was more likely to have weight among those possessed of an inquiring and original turn of mind. Women who found the marriage yoke irksome sought this opportunity to throw it off while at the same time retaining an honored place in the community. Women of the noble class who had married unsatisfactorily, or not at all, sought scope for their activities in the new field which was now opened to them. Some of them repudiated their vows when more suitable opportunities for development offered elsewhere, but many remained in the convent life and rose to positions of eminence and wealth. Nor was the life in the convent lacking in variety and interest. Women of distinction assumed the right to a free and independent existence suitable to their position. They offered a gracious hospitality to travelers, and not infrequently they gave succor to political offenders whom they favored. In many respects their life was more in the current of the events of the time than was that of the lady of the castle. Nuns of great ability and spirit were found, and before the rules of the various orders had crystallized into an inflexible lexicon of petty regulations, they determined for themselves the sort of life which they would lead. The old Roman tradition of freedom and independence for women had not been entirely obliterated, nor were abnegation and humility considered the only virtues attainable by women who were striving for the good life.

It was not until quite late in the history of women's communities that a distinctive dress for them was evolved. Eldhelm in the eighth century describes the dress of the nuns of his time:

A vest of fine linen of a violet color is worn, above it a scarlet tunic with a hood, sleeves striped with silk and trimmed with red fur; the locks on the forehead and the temples are curled with a crisp curling iron and the dark head veil is given up for white and colored head dresses which with bows of ribbon sewn on reach down to the ground: the nails like those of a falcon or sparrow hawk are pared to resemble talons.⁴

From time to time the nuns were accused of giving overmuch attention to the adornment of their persons, but at first they were

⁴ Eckenstein, L., *Woman under Monasticism*. Cambridge, 1896.

apparently not affected by such criticisms. Neither were they cut off from all family ties by the new associations which they had formed, but they availed themselves freely of the right to go from place to place, as did the monks. Often they used the freedom of their position to perform certain services for members of their families, such as the weaving of fine cloth for apparel or the purchase of luxuries from foreign lands. That they were not altogether averse to masculine companionship was attested by the occasional arrival of an unexpected infant in their midst. In spite of the efforts, at one time not unusual, to attribute the child, in terms of their own religion, to the Holy Ghost, more homely explanations were usually offered and accepted. In general, however, the conduct of the women in the cloister was such as to gain the approval of the community in which they lived, and many nuns were women of great learning who could correspond with the leading prelates of the day in Latin as well as make graceful contributions to the romantic literature of the period. Some British nuns even developed a taste for foreign residence and spent a few months of each year in pursuing their activities on the continent. Thus it appears that the women's communities were on the way to establishing a form of life for women which compared quite favorably with that of the home in the freedom and the independence which it offered. Women were given the right of free association with one another on terms approaching equality, and the leaders among them enjoyed the competition with men in work calling for executive ability and resourcefulness. For a time it appeared that Christianity was offering to women a career alternative to marriage, and on terms which women of ability would gladly accept.

With the new glorification of service to the poor in the religious orders, however, both Church and community began to discountenance the free life of the cloister. The virtues of self-abasement and meekness were urged with such fervor that their acceptance gained great headway, and this led to fundamental changes in the lives of those who had taken religious vows. Devotion to religious service and to care of the poor gradually

displaced the more tempered living and the spirit of learning fostered by the early communities. The life of the cloister was transformed by the new emphasis, and the transformation produced another type of religious recluses — the poor, the unfortunate, and the defeated who preferred the quiet refuge of the cloister to a more active life. Rules of the various orders for women grew more rigid and severe with the need to discipline the new type of recruits, so that after a few decades life in the cloister came to be sought only by those of a humble and submissive temperament. The convent then was no longer an alternative to matrimony or an escape from the irksomeness of its bonds, but instead it became a refuge for those who had found no place in family life.

With the increasing authority of the Church in the realm of social relations and its greater control in all matters pertaining to the family and sexual life, the Christian ideal of marriage gained great influence. Celibacy for the clergy was declared to be the rule, and the sacramental nature of the marriage ceremony gained wide acceptance. The indissoluble monogamic ideal, as embodied in Christian doctrine, was then and later accepted by the philosophers as the ultimate ideal of family life, the highest possible attainment of social evolution. The continued acceptance of the ideal is indicated by the writings of modern sociologists, two of whom unite in saying:

For the idea that marriage is a lifelong union between one man and one woman, that outside of this union any sexual relation between a man and a woman is sinful, the world is indebted to Christianity. This debt is of priceless significance.⁵

Sociological Interpretation of the Christian Monogamic Union. For reasons quite different from those of Christian idealism, Herbert Spencer gave his distinguished approval to the monogamic form. Accepting the Darwinian theory of the transmission of acquired traits, he concluded that the monogamic form was innate in civilized man. His mind could not conceive the possibility of any

⁵ Thwing, C. F. and C. B., *The Family*.

other form, and he commended it as appealing to the reason both because of its simplicity and its definiteness and because nature had apparently made provision for it by supplying an approximately equal number of both sexes. The danger for society consisted, as he saw it, in a conflict of interests between the family and the state, and the gradual encroachment of the state on the domain of the family. He was opposed, therefore, to free schools, free medical care, and free water supply on the ground that the family would lose in importance and influence if deprived of control of these important functions. He foresaw the gradual weakening of family bonds with the increase of individualism, but he opposed the political emancipation of women on the ground that their activities should be confined to the home.⁶

Indeed, the Christian monogamic ideal is deeply entrenched in the civilization of western Europe. Religion and custom lend the enormous weight of their influence, while legislation and public opinion provide swift punishment for those who violate Christian family standards. Men and women of all social classes favor monogamy because their earliest emotional attachments were formed in connection with this form of family life. Women in particular adhere to the family form, because upon it depend their social standing and their economic security. The influence which they exert through neighborhood gossip, coupled with the pressure which they can bring to bear upon their husbands, enables them to exert considerable force in favor of the established family form.

Modern Individualism and the Family Form. Unanimous as was the approval with which the Christian ideal apparently met, the studies of Sir Henry Sumner Maine and others brought to light certain trends in the evolution of the family form which were disconcerting to the idealists. Maine observed that the progress of liberty had involved a change from status to contract and, in the field of family relations, a change from the consideration of the family as a unit to the consideration of the individual. Maine further observed that when the position of the family was strong

⁶ Spencer, Herbert, *Principles of Sociology*.

in relation to the state, the position of woman was inferior; that with the growth in the relative power of the state and the weakening of family bonds, the position of woman was improved. "The individual," he wrote, "is steadily substituted for the family as the unit of which civil law takes account."⁷ He foresaw further encroachments on the realm of the family by the state as the latter grew in power and in influence, and as the ideal of individualism gained adherents.

Lecky observed with regret the same trend, for he shared completely the Christian belief in the necessity for stringent regulation of matters bearing upon family life.⁸ He wrote:

All that is known in the name of decency or indecency concurs in proving that we have an innate instinctive perception that there is something degrading in the sensual part of our nature, something to which a feeling of shame is naturally attached, something that jars with our conception of perfect purity and something that we could not with any propriety ascribe to an all-holy being.

Müller-Lyer divided the history of the family into three periods: the clan period, the family period, and the individual period, which is just now beginning.⁹ The middle period he held to be exacting in the sacrifice which it demanded of the individual for the maintenance of family life, because in all cases of conflict between the individual and the family it was invariably the individual who was sacrificed; but with the increased importance of the larger collective units and the diminished economic and educational importance of the family, he foresaw a reëmphasis of individual values and a more decided effort to bring institutional forms into conformity with individual needs.

The changes in the attitude toward the family as the chief desideratum of social effort are registered in the changing ideals of its value in social work. In the early history of family case work in this country, an eminent social worker urged that the object of the

⁷ Maine, Sir H. S., *Ancient Law*.

⁸ Lecky, W. E. H., *The History of European Morals*.

⁹ Müller-Lyer, F., *Die Familie*.

whole program of social work was the conservation of the family and the provision of favorable conditions for its existence. All social movements were to be judged, therefore, in terms of family welfare.¹⁰ He regarded as regrettable movements for the provision of free lunches and free medical treatment for school children, because of their tendency to weaken family responsibility. He was, however, inclined to favor the movement for the reduction of the death rate from tuberculosis, because this movement would prevent the disruption of families by the early death of the breadwinner! No individual problem could be solved except in relation to the family of the person concerned, and any aid rendered on a purely individual basis was regarded with suspicion. The family was to be considered first, foremost, and always. With the modern development of individualism, social work has somewhat modified its philosophy of work. The home has "lost its halo" as the end of civilization and as the holiest of holy social institutions. The family is considered important as a means for the development of personality, but it is now recognized that the preservation of families as a social policy under all circumstances is attended by too great a sacrifice of individual comfort and happiness. More recent methods emphasize the individual and his development as the end of all our social life and endeavor, and point to the home as one of the most valuable means for the development and rehabilitation of personality. The home, however, is no longer the goal; individual welfare and development are the goals. The family and the home are the means, and are to be used only so long as the results achieved justify this mode of procedure.

Spencer observes that with the development of the species the individual is less sacrificed to the task of propagation because the period of youth is prolonged, because the number of offspring is decreased, and because there is a longer period of life remaining free after the cessation of reproduction.¹¹ The parents, too, having more time for the nurture of their offspring, derive from the process certain education and training. This is increasingly true in

¹⁰ Devine, E. T., *The Family and Social Work*.

¹¹ Spencer, H., *op. cit.*

recent years, since the more nearly child nurture approaches an art, the greater is the intellectual discipline required of the parents. This tendency is clearly observable at the present time when small families are the rule among the middle and the upper classes. Educated persons, particularly women, are evincing a decided disinclination to relinquish in favor of race propagation all hope of individual development and advancement. For generations women have borne the crushing weight of unlimited reproduction within the family, only to see the process recapitulated in the lives of their daughters. To multiply in order that children may multiply, was held to be the end of all living. Moreover, the family as an institution was assumed to be able to bear the entire burden of race production, although often it was unable to secure adequate financial support for the task.

The Advantages of Social Approval. The enormous value of maintaining a family form, however, has been urged and demonstrated by the advocates of monogamy. Ceremonialism and the emphasis on the esthetic and romantic aspects of marriage distract attention from its purely sexual appeal and offer tremendous reinforcements for its permanence. The problems of conduct in the relationship are simplified for people who have need of the weight of tradition in regulating their conduct. Required codes for individual guidance can be taught in early childhood, so that conformity in after-years becomes a matter of habit. This allows for prediction of behavior in important matters such as the care of children and dependents, and individuals are able to foresee their responsibilities and make suitable preparation to meet them.

In view of the value of retaining social recognition of family forms, many reformers have urged that social recognition be extended to certain types of unions now existing outside of the conventional marriage forms. It cannot be doubted that this would prevent much of the hardship and injustice which exist at the present time. So long as lifelong monogamy exists as the only recognized type of union, there will be much hypocrisy and evasion on the part of people who find themselves incapable of conforming

to its standards. Persons who have not limited themselves to the conventional standards find it difficult to determine decent norms of conduct, especially since public sentiment now condones any amount of harshness and injustice in dealing with these unconventional relationships because rules for their guidance do not exist. Yet the very fact that so many people refuse to accept the present form of marriage and enter into a course of action so attended by risks for themselves reveals the urgent need for the recognition of other forms. The truth is that there has never been a time when the Christian form of marriage described above has been universally accepted, and the fact that variations have persisted in the face of such severe penalties argues for the necessity of recognizing more than one form.

The Demand for New Family Forms. Not less important than the variations from the family form is the fact that large numbers of people have been unwilling to embrace any form of marriage. Many of these are women who have been unwilling to accept marriage on its present terms, but who have been too prudent to enter into unconventional relationships with men. This course has been followed at great cost to themselves and to society, since they have been deprived of the development which comes with love and motherhood, while society has lost the contribution which they might have made through the bearing of well-nurtured children. Some of these women have desired motherhood without the life-long association with the other parent which is involved in the present marriage relationship; others have desired love, but without the definite mode of life and activity demanded by conventional marriage. With the increase of individualism it is hardly to be hoped that one form of marriage could meet the needs of all human types, and the recognition of other forms would, therefore, seem to be socially wise.

Reformers in general have sought to secure greater conformity to the present rigid marriage form instead of making some effort to modify the form to suit existing conditions. Departures from the form are condemned as weakness by so-called "good" people,

while to call attention to the havoc wrought in individual lives by forced conformity to unhappy marriage vows is regarded as among the worst of social offenses. Persons confronted with the choice of sacrificing individual development or incurring social displeasure choose the former because the latter virtually involves loss of livelihood. It is impossible to estimate the sacrifice of individual development and happiness that has been made to the family form, but there can be no doubt that it has been considerable.

III

THE VARIED ASPECTS OF THE FAMILY'S FUNCTION

The Family Supplies the Population. The family form in the social order and its sanctions having been fixed by custom, the assumptions concerning its functions became more definite and far-reaching. Designed as a means for the restriction and regulation of individual life, in time it came to be regarded as the only institution available for providing a social population. Of primary importance to society is the birth and upbringing in each generation of a group of individuals adapted in number and in quality to the material and cultural conditions which the group has created. The monogamic family has been for many generations past, and is at the present time, the only socially approved institution for the performance of this function. Births resulting from an unconventional relationship are held to be evidence of moral depravity on the part of the parents, and social disapproval is expressed in ways that injure not only the parents but the child as well. Formerly such disapproval was justified through the necessity of condemning irresponsible parenthood in the interest of securing the proper nurture for children; but since irresponsible parenthood within the marriage form is not the object of social disapproval, and since all parenthood outside of marriage is condemned whether the parents are responsible or irresponsible, it is evident that at the present time social approval is based upon conformity to the prescribed rites and not upon anything more directly related to the welfare of the child. Monogamic marriage is still regarded by some persons as constituting the only safe guarantee of responsible parenthood, but the successful production of large and vigorous populations under other systems offers exceptions difficult to

explain. Although it is often stated that monogamy has been demonstrated to be the only practicable method of providing for child nurture, such a generalization can scarcely be maintained in the face of many recognized exceptions. Not only have other ways of family life proved successful in non-Christian societies, but within the Christian societies themselves all experimentation with the family form has been so thoroughly repressed that there is no possibility of judging whether or not some other system might not have worked better.

The Excessive Burden of the Poor. An examination into the birth rates of the various economic classes reveals the fact that the families at the lower end of the social scale contribute disproportionately large numbers to the next generation. The families possessing the slenderest economic means and the most limited physical equipment for rearing children are those on whom this burden falls most heavily. Nor is there any social or economic recompense for this exaggerated part which the poor assume. The family is held to be economically and socially responsible for the children born into it; and although their rearing and education are matters of the greatest social importance, the performance of these functions is left almost entirely to the families into which the children are born. Observations show that this duty exacts cruel sacrifices from some families in that it checks the development of the parents during their youth and cuts off hope of bettering their economic situation. Their acceptance of such a heavy burden of race production cannot be attributed to an over-developed social consciousness on the part of the poor, for the duty has not been assumed voluntarily. Parents with slender economic resources find that knowledge of methods of family limitation is withheld from them by the only medical authorities to whom they have access, and that the practice of family limitation is condemned by the clergy of their churches. That the task of rearing large families is not accepted without question as inevitable, is attested by the sullen complaints and the open protestations of the women of this group who resent the undue burdens

which they must bear by reason of their ignorance and who with eager persistence seek means of escape. No one who has seen the transformation in appearance and outlook of a woman in a poor family after ten years of excessive child-bearing and domestic drudgery can doubt that the burdens which have fallen upon her have been crushing. Nor do the children reared in poor families escape the disadvantages which the present family system entails. Because of their limited physical equipment and the ignorance which prevails in this group, the death rate among infants and young children is excessive, and the morbidity rate among the survivors is proportionately high. The child from a poor family is likely to begin life under a physical handicap which results from poor food and the hard conditions of his environment; and this handicap is not removed when he reaches adolescence, for at an early age he usually leaves school and goes to work for the purpose of contributing to the family income. His surplus earnings, which should be set aside for his future needs, are used for family support, and rarely does he receive any large share in his earnings until the time of his marriage. Even after he has assumed the task of providing for a family of his own he is often forced to contribute to the support of his aged parents at great sacrifice both to himself and to his young children.

The Differential Birth Rate and the Family System. Psychologists state that standard tests reveal a level of intelligence somewhat lower among the poorer classes than among those with larger economic resources. At present, therefore, the future population is recruited in increasing proportions from that element which is generally believed to possess less native intelligence than the more successful groups. Nor is mental inheritance the only aspect of the question to be considered. Poor homes with a large number of children are so limited in means that they are unable to provide those elements of culture and civilized life which society has produced by great expenditure of time and thought. Limited in inheritance, in health, in education, and in training for the economic struggle, the children of the poor are forced into the

competitive conditions of modern life and charged with the responsibility of maintaining a social order of a constantly growing complexity.

If the economically less favored classes are overburdened with the task of producing the social population, other elements of the population are not burdened at all by this responsibility. In the upper economic groups many persons show a disinclination to marry, and those who do marry for the most part have very small families. The more favorable environment which these people enjoy is not fully utilized in training the next generation. Valuable traits of a biological nature, cultural surroundings, and a tempered manner of living are not transferred, and their loss results in a retarded rate of cultural progress.

The Family as a Primary Group. The family performs socializing functions of the greatest importance. As a primary group of face-to-face relationships, the family lays the foundation for a social consciousness and for indispensable social attitudes. Loyalty, sympathy, and altruism are produced and fostered in the family circle. Obedience to parents and coöperation with siblings in common enterprises are of fundamental importance in the socializing process, and the family circle is possibly the best *milieu* for the creation of such opportunities. Comparisons of children placed in foster homes with children reared in institutions demonstrate the superiority of the former method of child care, although comparisons of the relative ability of the children at the beginning of the process would probably reveal that the former started life with a superior inheritance. Even poor homes have been found to supply an environment superior to any type of institutional life yet evolved for children, and institutional methods of child care have become increasingly unpopular. However, the diminishing size of the family in the middle and upper classes lessens its importance as a primary group. In these small family circles the children receive an inordinate amount of attention from their parents, often much to their detriment, and this accounts for their failure to develop those habits of conduct which are essential to success

in adult life. Many mental and nervous disorders of maturity are attributed by the psychologists to excessive attention from parents during childhood. To supplement the care given children in their own homes, institutions are therefore being evolved to meet the need of the child for face-to-face associations, for the testing of his powers, and for the discipline of his nature by participation in group activities.

The Family Service for Adults. The family also performs certain important functions for adults. The marriage relationship is generally entered into with the implicit or explicit understanding that it shall provide for the regulation and the satisfaction of the sexual needs of the individuals concerned. Under existing social conventions, however, persons contemplating marriage have no basis for judging their physical fitness for each other. Yet once the marriage relationship is entered, factors making for its permanence are at once brought into play, and it is a matter of pure chance whether the persons thus linked in a relatively permanent union prove to be well suited to each other. Mistakes in mating cannot be rectified except by dissolution of the marriage bond, with an attendant loss of social standing and vocational opportunity. Much dissatisfaction and infelicity, therefore, find their only expression in bickering and quarreling within the home and in the formation of clandestine relationships.

Many of the difficulties of marriage grow out of biological mismatching, and the recent growth of individualism has undoubtedly been responsible for an enormously increased number of unconventional companionships. Some of these have led to the divorce courts and to the establishment of new homes by couples who believe themselves well mated; others have resulted in unconventional intimacies maintained at enormous cost to the individuals concerned. As passion within the marriage relationship diminishes, due to habitual and prolonged association, there arises in both parties to the marriage contract a growing susceptibility to the charms of others. All such friendships, making for renewal of life and interests, are at present taboo or made the excuse for the

deliberate disruption of homes, with resulting injury to children. Even intimate friendships with members of the opposite sex are attended with great difficulties for married persons, because of the elaborate safeguards which have been thrown around the institution of monogamy. Individual development through free intercourse with other persons is thus greatly limited by the formal marriage contract and the acceptance of the limitations which it involves.

Whatever may be the possibilities of adjustment within the marriage relationship, it remains true that marriage for large numbers of people has been postponed to a time extending beyond the period when sexual needs are most keenly felt. The fact that economic conditions of family maintenance make it impossible for many people to marry until the more vigorous years of life are past, necessitates for them either a denial of all sexual satisfaction during this period of early maturity or the acceptance of unconventional unions which carry with them different social and economic implications. A large toll of nervous disease, insanity, and mental strain results among those who choose conformity to the social standards as the safer mode of conduct; for those to whom conformity comes at an impossible price there are prostitution and illicit *liaisons*, with the resulting risks of illegitimacy and venereal disease. An increasingly large group of persons in the upper class do not marry at all, and for them family life performs no services after maturity. For the women of this group celibacy has been the only alternative if they have been unwilling to accept marriage on the terms now exacted by society. The "old maid" has been the result of this limitation placed on personal liberty. Since in recent years this price is exacted of an increasingly large group of women, it must be reckoned as a failure of the present family form to adapt itself to human needs.

To recapitulate, the family in its present form may be said to serve but inadequately the affectional needs of those who have entered into the relationship; it does not begin to function for large groups of people until their greatest need for its services is

past; it fails altogether to meet the needs of a large group of persons who do not enter the marriage relationship, and who therefore do not function at all in the service of bearing and rearing children. Nevertheless, the monogamic family furnishes security of affectional bonds for certain persons whose temperaments are well suited to the conditions which it imposes; and the "home" as at present organized provides for large numbers of middle class persons a place for withdrawal and for the reassembling of the scattered elements of personality, in a manner more effective than is provided through any other form of social relationship now existing.

The Economic Functions of the Family. The economic functions of the family have been greatly curtailed in recent times. Before the advent of the factory system, the family formed the economic basis for the production of the goods or services which constituted the source of the family income. Members of the family formed the working force in the productive process, and the success of the economic venture depended upon their coöperation and stability as a unit. Because of the ties of blood which held the workers together, the economic gains were shared by all members of the family. The parents as elders and superiors in the producing hierarchy were the first to derive benefit from any change in economic status, but benefits were gradually extended to all members of the coöperating group. With the change in modern economic production, this system has been altered. The family is no longer a producer of economic goods, since virtually all production is carried on outside of the home in units organized on a scale better suited to efficient production. The home remains, however, the chief unit of consumption in all economic classes. Income is distributed to the individual according to his earning power, and this income is shared and spent by those who are united to the worker by ties of blood. At present there is no means for securing coördination between the income and the size of the consuming unit except the judgment of the individuals concerned, within the narrow realm of choice which is permitted them. As we have seen,

however, this device for control has resulted in the creation of consuming units in numbers inversely proportionate to the size of the income.

Although the family no longer functions as a unit for the purpose of economic production, it has been entrusted with the solution of many problems growing out of the modern productive process. The industry concerned makes nominal compensation, but the family must accept the greater share of the burden for disability resulting from industrial accidents. Widowhood as the result of occupational disease or industrial accident, premature old age, and unemployment are other problems of disability connected with modern industry, and their solution is generally left to the relations and to the immediate members of the family involved. This remains true at the present day, although the family as a unit has no control over the conditions which produce these problems. Economic production has been taken out of the home, but the responsibilities that have hitherto gone with production have not followed. The ties of blood are therefore relied upon to solve the problems created by production of goods on a large scale, and the stability of the family is regarded as a guarantee that these duties will be performed.

The modern family presumably provides useful employment for married women, and especially among the poor the performance of household functions consumes a large amount of energy and time. The housewife engages in preparing meals, making and mending clothes, laundering, and many other miscellaneous and unspecialized tasks. Where the family is large, the duties connected with household administration are undoubtedly arduous, but often the hours of work are so arranged as to allow considerable leisure to women who are not engaged in gainful employment. In the case of some women the unhappy effects of household work are probably due, not so much to the actual amount of work done, as to anxiety, discouragement, excessive child-bearing, and lack of opportunities for the gratification of personal desires and needs, all of which are implicit in many home situations.

Among the more favored economic classes the family has come to be, as we have seen, little more than a consuming unit. Taking advantage of modern labor-saving devices and machine processes, housewives have managed to have much of their work done for them; and since they have few or no children, a large amount of leisure is the result. The development of leisure-time activities in recent years has arisen from the need of providing entertainment for this group of women. Under some circumstances this leisure has led to the development of an intelligent interest in civic affairs, art, or literature; but for the most part the use of leisure has raised a serious question as to the desirability or even the justice of bestowing it in this way. Among groups in which impersonal interests have not developed, leisure has led to an excessive interest in personal relations, usually with unfortunate results to the individual and to society. In some communities where a large number of women live in leisure there has developed an almost pathological interest in personal affairs, giving rise to distrust and suspicion which have done much to prevent the development of wholesome community spirit. This intensified awareness of personal relationships, plus the ease with which private and family affairs become the subject of community scrutiny, is undoubtedly an important cause of maladjustment and an increased divorce rate in these classes. Matters which were formerly personal, or at the most of family concern, are no longer so regarded; but public opinion, chiefly formed by the leisured women of a group without culture and with an exaggerated sense of their personal importance, steps in to pronounce judgment. Unfaithfulness to the marriage tie, formerly treated with indulgence, not to say tolerance, now becomes a matter for community speculation and adjustment. Far from being a force making for the observance of moral standards in the present *régime* of individual liberty, gossip in this new era of leisure for women has acted as a disruptive force, making for social disintegration through promoting an insistence on standards of conduct which are no longer held in high esteem by large elements in the community.

Diminished Security in Family Relationships. It has been observed that the family does not offer security of personal relationships because of the ease with which domestic ties are now dissolved. Often, however, institutions which are entirely secure find themselves strangely out of harmony with the group which they are expected to serve. Business organizations are spurred by competition and risk of loss to conduct their affairs in the most efficient manner possible, and the danger of loss serves as a spur to greater activity. A business cannot long remain out of harmony with the wishes of the group it is designed to serve without suffering economic disaster. Educational or philanthropic institutions which are entirely secure in their existence because of guaranteed support have often been found to be conducting their activities along traditional lines without regard to the needs of their clientele. Such institutions have been known to hold aloof from contemporary thought and need in order to maintain their time-honored traditions uncontaminated by current developments.

It may be true that, in the past, marriage has also suffered from the undermining effects of too great security. Its growing instability may mean much for the development of its standards in harmony with recent needs.

The Desire for Children. The institution of the family meets the desire of adults for children. This is not always a conscious need, and the inclinations for the activities and emotions of child care may not be felt until the child is actually present. However, it sometimes happens that a child is earnestly desired for some purpose closely connected with the personality of the parent. Adults wish for some vicarious reliving of the experience of youth; they desire to realize some of the ambitions in which they have been thwarted, and they look forward to the possession of children as one means of satisfying themselves in this regard. Adults who are fatigued by preoccupation with themselves and their personal relationships desire some opportunity to fix their attention outside themselves, and to some extent children meet this need. The expressed motives of prospective foster parents

throw some light upon this question. A woman has been known to express the desire for a child to bring back the somewhat wandering attention of her husband to his home. A husband may desire an infant in order that his wife may have an additional motive for giving attention to her domestic duties. A woman, neurotic from too much leisure and preoccupied with the state of her health, may desire the presence of a child as a therapeutic agent. Elderly persons, after their own children have left home, wish young life around them again in order to make them forget the approach of old age and to assist them in maintaining their contacts with community life.

Often great difficulty is encountered in placing children who rate above the average in intelligence. Children of low-grade intelligence are more easily led to manifest the attitude of gratitude, obedience, and trustfulness which are considered the basis of a proper relationship between parent and child. Little girls between the ages of four and eight possess these qualities to a marked extent, and they are therefore in great demand by foster parents who are eager for this type of response. Boys from six to ten manifest qualities quite at variance with these traits, and it is often very difficult to find good foster homes for them. The need for parental education in the case of prospective parents of this type is obvious. The desire to see an individual develop to full maturity should be the greatest compensation for the parent, although some of the more instinctive elements in the parental attitude may have to be suppressed to achieve this result. In every species there is considerable sacrifice of welfare when instinct alone is relied upon, and this is particularly true of human beings. Parents who desire to see children retain childlike qualities in order to act as props to their own personality have need of a more reasoned attitude and an assurance of being able to find in themselves the security which they require.

IV

THE FAMILY'S TASK OF ADJUSTMENT

Custom Gives Inconclusive Evidence. The rapid development of the social sciences in recent years has resulted in the tendency to appraise our institutions in terms of individual and social welfare. The sanction given by use and custom, however, has been sufficient to impede the progress of scientific scrutiny in some aspects of social life, and reverence for the old has led to reiterated statements of the belief that whatever has been preserved to us from the past must, of necessity, be right. People influenced by this belief regard all departures from accepted codes of conduct as irrational attempts of individuals to fly in the face of the carefully garnered experience of society which they see embodied in customs and institutions. Comparative studies of the culture of different peoples have nevertheless raised doubts as to the unerring rightness of our folkways and *mores*. Analysis of social data thus secured makes clear the fact that custom has preserved and sanctioned many ways of behavior which are not directly related to the welfare of the group concerned, and may even be subversive of it. Customs show varying degrees of usefulness according to the external circumstances of the group, and folkways and *mores* may persist long after their usefulness has ceased. Any custom may be preserved which is not absolutely fatal to the existence of the group, and the degree of its usefulness at any particular time can be determined only by a rational and unbiased estimate of its ability to satisfy human needs as they are understood at the period under consideration. The family, no less than other institutions, has been subjected to an appraising analysis of this type, and the necessity for its adjustment to current needs is apparent.

Adaptation Needed for Eugenic Ends. Under modern conditions the family system has resulted in the recruiting of the social population from the lower social and economic strata of the community. Large groups of able men and women will not be represented biologically in the next generation. Undoubtedly many people of this group are able and eager to have children, but they cannot reconcile the assumption of such duties with their desire to regulate their lives according to a pattern less subversive of the ends of self-development. These people have been confronted with a choice so framed that they have been forced to reject the duty of race production, since it must be admitted that lifelong monogamy of a strictly binding nature is not suited to the needs of all people. The results have been deplorable—impoverishment of individual life and loss to the social population by the withdrawal of these people from the task of reproduction. The attitude of society in the past has been inexorable in the face of proposed changes. The family system is right; sanctioned by tradition and custom, it cannot change.

Now it happens that at every period in the history of matrimonial institutions there have been considerable groups of people who have not conformed to the social dicta. Among these people have been the artists, the seers, and the poets who, in the conduct of their personal affairs, have been allowed a measure of freedom which has not been accorded to any other group. This desire for more personal liberty is now extending, however, to other groups of the business and professional classes. The result has been the formation of new forms of marriage and of unconventional unions between men and women of similar background and tastes, in the hope that these unions may prove more amenable to their human needs. In some cases the hopes of the parties have been realized, but in others the experiment has been attended with results disastrous not only to the persons concerned, but to their friends and relatives as well. The conditions producing disaster have not always grown out of the unions themselves, but often have resulted from society's vehement disapproval and the determined defiance

into which the parties to the union were forced. Although even under the best of circumstances these violations of accepted customs have been committed at great cost to the individuals involved, they have nevertheless grown more and more prevalent, thus demonstrating that conventional marriage has entailed burdens which loom large in the eyes of many people. It would seem wise, therefore, for society to extend its recognition to these freer types of union, in order to lessen the cost to the people affected and to employ their benefits to the greater social advantage. This recognition need not, of course, interfere with the conventional family as it exists today, nor prevent the exercise of its privileges by those who prefer to order their lives in accordance with its plans.

The Need for Sanction of New Forms. The unconventional unions have assumed various forms, but primarily they are designed for those who wish some sexual companionship without the close association and the manner of life now urged upon married couples; and, secondly, they aim to meet the need of those women who wish children without the constant association and coöperation with a man which a modern conventional marriage entails. It must be recognized, however, that there exists a considerable group of women who do not wish lifelong association with a man but who do want children. Many of these women are now living within the marriage relationship, but they are not, as a rule, good companions for their husbands. Their interests center about children and "outside" activities, and they are concerned with their husbands only insofar as the latter provide the means which enable them to continue their chosen work. Sometimes the husband becomes aware of the situation and seeks another companionship, without, however, any intention of evading the responsibilities of his marriage. Yet at the present time the wife is virtually forced by public opinion and by the vituperative comments of her neighbors and friends to seek a divorce, however little inclined she would be to such a course from the standpoint of her own interests or those of her children. Many women of this type who have a

great desire and aptitude for the care of children, but who are nevertheless not gifted as companions of men, are to be found living outside of the marriage relationship. In some cases they have the necessary financial resources for the support of children, but social convention forbids them to assume these duties without the sanction of a marriage license. To meet such a situation, there might be issued a *mother's license* which would take cognizance of the woman's suitability to the task which she had in mind rather than to her relatively unimportant intention to spend the rest of her life in close association with a man. The opponents of such a course hold that a child would be greatly handicapped if deprived of a father's care and protection, and they also believe that the child might suffer social ostracism as a result of his unconventional parentage. However, conventions suitable to the situation would doubtless be evolved. Many people would hold that at the present time there are few fathers who give to their children much more attention than that involved in financial support and an occasional show of friendly interest. In the cases under discussion, financial support would, of course, be provided by the mother, and there is no reason why a father should not give to his children born out of wedlock the same friendship which he extends to those born into the conventional family circle. Another objection to the scheme might be raised on the ground that the mother would be obliged to seek her emotional satisfactions entirely in her children, since she would not have the constant companionship of their father; and it might be assumed that this concentration of interest would react disastrously on the emotional life of her offspring. However, a woman possessed of sufficient energy and intelligence to support her own children, and able to meet the requirements which a mother's license would impose, would be much less likely to fall into such an error than a woman whose interests were largely confined to dressing, feeding, and caring for the two or three children whom she had borne.

At present the protection and approval of society is given to parenthood in all cases where the prescribed rites have been

observed, and disapproval is expressed where these rites have been neglected. Rational considerations suggest that it would be more economical to extend social approval to responsible parents whether inside or outside the marriage relationship, with disapproval of irresponsible parenthood whatever the circumstances in regard to conventional observances. The old invidious distinction between legitimate and illegitimate parenthood should be abolished. Every parent who assumes responsibility for the care and nurture of children should be considered a legitimate parent, and every parent who refuses such care should be considered an illegitimate parent without regard to legal or religious formalities.

Need of Adjustment for Women. There is likewise need for further adaptation of the family situation to the increased employment of women outside of the home. Employment of wives and mothers in business and elsewhere has followed upon the insufficiency of the husband's income and the increasing attractiveness of new occupations for women as compared with housework. Entrance into marriage under the present conditions, however, implies the establishment of a "home," including a common residence for the parties concerned and a modicum of household industries. Regardless of their inclination for these perquisites of the married state, considerable social pressure is exerted to bring young persons into line with the general conception of what the assumption of the family ties involves. The husband whose wife does not prepare his meals is regarded by his neighbors and friends as "neglected," and a wife whose husband does not defray her living expenses is pitied as the victim of an unsuccessful marriage. However pleasurable to the woman may be the performance of the duties which result in her economic independence, she is under considerable pressure to perform the duties which are traditionally regarded as hers. Foreseeing that this is likely to occur, many women prefer the risks of an unconventional relationship to the constant struggle against public and family pressure for the establishment of a home with its conventional activities. Likewise, many men hesitate to marry, since the sexual companionship for them

involves a large accompaniment of economic responsibilities and a strict conformity to a prescribed manner of living. Public opinion recognizes as "normal," however, no form of living other than that based upon the segregation in a common residence of individuals of varying ages united by ties of kinship, who take their food together at stated hours of the day, and who in all of the relationships of life behave toward each other in a manner strictly regulated by custom and convention. To complete the picture, the duties of food preparation must be performed or at least directed by the female partner in the relationship, and the purchase of the raw materials and the accessories must be financed by the earnings of the male. Women engaged in "outside" activities are regarded with mingled horror and pity because they are cut off from the "natural" duties of the home. This formulated conception of the home raises great barriers to women in their professional life, and it accounts for many of the prejudices which they encounter.

Institutions to Supplement the Home. Important as are changes in family life, the development of institutions to supplement the home grows more imperative as the home and family become less and less able to perform the functions of the old rural family. Institutions for the care of infants and young children have begun to develop, but in many communities they exist only for the industrial classes. Methods for the care of children in small groups should be further developed. Day nurseries accomplish much in industrial communities, but as yet they have not received adequate support, while the persons interested in them have been so taxed by overwork that they cannot assure proper attention beyond providing for the purely physical needs of the child. The groups assigned to each worker have been so large that individualization of effort could not be secured. Such institutions are still inadequate in number for the women of the professional classes, and the cost is excessive for those who have greatest need of their services.

Economic institutions to supplement the home are also

demanding by increasing numbers of people. The home as an agency of production is inefficient except in those spheres of work where individualization is the prime necessity. Laundering and sewing, once considered inevitable concomitants of domestic life, are now much more efficiently performed outside the home. Cooking has as yet resisted all attempts at community effort, but the development of mechanical devices gives assurance that this type of work will be performed more efficiently outside the home.

Needed Adjustment for Poor Families. Family life should, moreover, be so adjusted as to relieve poor people of the enormous burdens which it imposes upon them. Rearing a large number of children is now not only a form of involuntary servitude for them but of dubious value to society. Motivated by their instinctive impulses to marry young, the poor have neither the knowledge nor the restraint necessary for the limitation of their families to a number that can live in decency on the wages earned. Repeated births for them are a burden sullenly borne, without the compensatory advantages and satisfactions which come with voluntary parenthood.

Nor should the family circle be used as the dumping ground for the unsolved problems of the modern methods of economic production. The cost of injuries to workingmen in the course of their employment should be borne entirely by the industry itself rather than in part by the family group which is in no sense responsible for the situation produced. Nor should the expense of maintaining unproductive workers during their old age be made an excuse for saddling a disabling handicap upon the younger generation; such maintenance should be the task of society, responsible as it is for the economic evils consequent upon the payment of low wages. In general, customs and legal enactments with regard to family responsibilities should be so modified as to make impossible the use of family bonds as a pretext for placing responsibility where responsibility cannot be assumed. Having once given the working classes access to information for the limitation of their families, society will be called upon to offer, through

financial recompense, some further recognition of the social value of bearing and rearing children.

Community Life. It must be recognized, however, that with all of the modifications that can be introduced into the home and into the family life, there will still be some persons to whom this mode of existence will not appeal. For them the family circle will ever seem too narrow for their needs, even though some permanence of relationship will be desired. Separate communities of men and women could meet their needs without the artificial restrictions which now surround these communities. This manner of living will always appear more congenial to those who desire to avoid residence in segregated family groups. Already it is recognized that during a period of vigorous educational endeavor separate communities of men and women offer superior attractions; for, however favorable the domestic environment may be for the solace of adults and the succoring of infants, individual development and attainment of maturity can more easily be promoted during adolescence if young persons live in communities with their contemporaries of the same sex. At present there are many persons who prefer this community life as a permanent mode of living, and to such persons the opportunity should be open without stigma and without artificial restraints on their personal liberty. In many primitive societies these separate communities of men and women constitute the conventional *modus vivendi*, and undoubtedly many people of both sexes, if left a perfectly free choice in the matter, would prefer it at the present time. There is no reason why permanent cohabitation of the sexes and their segregation in isolated units for the greater part of their lives should be regarded as more "normal" than any other existence which provides for the satisfaction of the instinctive needs and a healthful mode of life. Experience with the home under modern conditions reveals the fact that it is imperfectly adapted to the needs of those who are ambitious for fine achievement or for those who regard an opportunity for solitude as a great boon.

PART II
THE FAMILY IN AMERICA

V

THE EVOLUTION OF MATRIMONIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

The English Heritage. The early English colonists brought with them to America only the patriarchal form of Christian monogamic marriage. Anglicans and Puritans alike gave their unquestioning support to the domestic institution as it had evolved under the influence of the Christian Church in England, and in the colonies, therefore, standards of conduct with reference to marriage and the maintenance of the family were strictly and firmly upheld. Relationships within the transplanted English family were well defined, and it existed not only as an important social but also as a strong economic unit. That the family pattern was deeply rooted in customs and beliefs of the time, and accepted as right and inevitable by the women whose lives it molded, is seen in the statement of Mary Astell, who offered her philosophy of marriage to the English public in 1730. Her reflections upon its benefits led her to regard marriage as the best of all possible institutions for regulating the passions and providing for the care of children. She urged women, therefore, to submit to its necessities, to avoid high expectations, and to be prepared to seek the consolation of religion in case of failure. The woman's attitude toward her husband, she urged, should be one of complete submission:

A woman that is not mistress of her passions, that cannot patiently submit even when reason suffers with her, who does not practise passive obedience to the utmost will never be acceptable to such an absolute sovereign as a husband — a woman who marries ought to lay it down for an indisputable maxim that her husband must govern absolutely and entirely, and that she has nothing else to do but please and obey.¹

¹ Astell, Mary, *Some Reflections upon Marriage*.

This patriarchal ideal of marriage found expression also in the English common law which the colonists brought with them as their heritage to America. According to Blackstone, a woman, if still unmarried at the time of her majority, was recognized as a separate and responsible person in the eyes of the law, capable of administering her property and receiving its income. But at the time of her marriage her separate identity was merged with that of her husband, who became charged with the responsibility for her acts and with the administration and control of her property. This conception of the legal status of the married woman influenced not only her right to the control of her property, but also her opportunity to exert powers of guardianship over her children and her power to control her own wages.

The Early American Family. The English patriarchal family became firmly entrenched in America as the most important social institution of frontier life. The home constituted the center of the economic activities of the family, and in it the younger members received their instruction in household arts and in religion. Upon the staunch maintenance of family life depended the economic success and even the survival of both parents and children; and, obviously, authoritative government by the head of the family was the most economical mode of procedure. As a rule the women of colonial times had received even less education than their husbands, and since they married at a very early age they had little or no opportunity to prolong the period of their training. After marriage the wife's time was entirely occupied by the incessant child-bearing to which the women of the time were subjected, and by the varied tasks involved in the conduct of domestic industries. The most cherished ideal of womanly character was that of gentle submission and meekness in the face of authority, coupled with willingness to endure suffering and hardship without complaint. Perhaps more than anything else an utter selflessness characterized the good woman of the day, and a vicarious satisfaction in the achievements of her brothers, husband, or sons was her only legitimate ambition. A neighborhood reputation for skill in one of the

many household arts was not, however, beyond her reach, and contemporary records reveal how eagerly the early American housewife sought this distinction. Personal ambition, however, or even a moderate degree of assertiveness, was regarded as the most reprehensible of eccentricities and was sure to call down upon its possessor the frowns and disapproval not only of the men but of the other women as well.

Influences Making for Change in the Family. One of the first influences to disturb the calm of the patriarchal *régime* was the growth of the textile industry in New England and the opportunities offered to young women for employment in the factories. The unmarried women of the old New England families constituted the only available labor supply, and it was to them that the mill-owners turned with their inducements. In the absence of towns, the mill-owners provided dormitories as the most suitable method of housing their workers, and these facilities were offered to young women on conditions designed to forestall the criticism of even the most careful guardian of feminine virtue. Contributions to the *Lowell Offering*² reveal, however, with what reluctance parents consented to allow their daughters to live and work away from home. Fathers feared that young women would not conduct themselves with that maidenly reserve and modesty which had formerly distinguished their demeanor, and they were apprehensive that parental authority would be undermined once their daughters had escaped close supervision in the household. However, the lure of ready money to fathers with mortgaged farms in many cases bridged the gap between home and factory, and not a few enterprising daughters were allowed to sell their services with an understanding in advance as to the disposition of their wages. Their earnings were for the most part turned over to their parents, who used these additional resources to hold and increase the family property. Some young women were ambitious to assist their brothers to secure college training, and it often happened that young college men of the day received financial aid from their

² *Lowell Offering.*

sisters employed in the factories. That the sisters were not destitute of intellectual interests or desire for self-improvement is indicated by their eagerness, after their long hours of work in the mill, to attend lectures given by the leading philosophers and writers of the day.

Opportunities for formal education were very meager, however, even for those whose financial resources were ample. Prejudice against any tendency of women to further their own development was extended to the effort to establish institutions for their education and training. Fears were expressed that women, if given educational facilities the same as those given to men, would lose their gentleness, become ambitious and aggressive, and possibly rebel against the direction of their fathers or husbands. The effect of their temporary segregation during their period of training was also viewed with apprehension. Mary Lyon's seminary at Mount Holyoke was derided by its critics as a "Protestant nunnery," and her own efforts to secure financial support excited alarm and hostility on the part of many influential persons. Pauline injunctions with regard to silence and submission on the part of women were hurled against her, and her temerity in speaking before a "mixed" audience of men and women evoked from one of her male auditors the solemn remark that for his own daughter he would prefer death to such disgraceful boldness.

Not less important than the new occupational and educational opportunities for women was the increased leisure which they enjoyed when former household tasks were transferred to the factory. Societies and clubs for women rapidly sprang into existence and elaborated programs for social service in order to employ their leisure time and secure to themselves an honored status in the community. Women with religious interests utilized their leisure in developing missionary programs for the evangelization of heathen countries, while those with more secular interests devoted themselves to local projects for community betterment. Coöperation in common enterprises outside the home gave women an increased awareness of their own position and aroused in them

a determination to secure additional freedom and opportunity. A new type of feminine leadership gained prominence, represented by a bold, aggressive figure who wasted no fine phrases in demanding "rights" for her sex. Men in general were attacked for their assumption of masculine superiority, and their reaction was one of contemptuous aversion to the "new woman." These early leaders in the movement for women's social and political rights worked in an atmosphere of hostility and ridicule which surrounded every phase of their activity. For many of them a distorted and erratic personality was the result, and recognition of this woeful fact gave an additional argument to those who opposed their work. Women who found the approval of men essential to the maintenance of their status and peace of mind at first refused to participate in the work of improving their condition, and many of them actively combatted any change in accepted relationships. As time and more tempered modes of conflict brought less vigorous opposition and increased respect for feminine leaders, new elements offered their support, and many laws affecting the status of women were passed. The difficult crusade against habit and custom was greatly aided by the activities of prominent men who saw in the new movement a possibility of improving the position and security of the daughters for whose welfare they held themselves responsible. Many fathers, anxious to procure for their daughters the right to control the property which they gave them upon marriage, took a leading part in the campaign to bring about a change in the property rights of married women.

Legislation Affecting Women's Status. One of the privileges earliest sought by married women was the right to bequeath property by will. Before this right was acquired, unpleasant contests among heirs were of frequent occurrence; relatives of a deceased wife were often obliged to behold property which they had bestowed upon her pass to the surviving husband or to his relatives, even in direct disregard of the wishes of the deceased. Legislation designed to remedy this situation came into existence early in the nineteenth century, and at the time of the Civil War seven states

had already passed laws giving married women the right to dispose of their property by will. More important to married women, however, was the right both to control their property during their lifetime and to dispose of its income according to their wishes. Maine passed the first law giving women this privilege, and other states soon followed her example. These measures conferred a large measure of independence within marriage on women who possessed financial resources. Quite as important to the working woman was the right, denied her by the English common law, to control her own wages. A husband who did not live with his wife and children, and who assumed no responsibility for them, could yet appear at the factory and legally collect their wages when these were due. Early in the nineteenth century several of the states passed laws giving women the right to control their own wages, and by 1924 all but two (Georgia and Washington) had bestowed this privilege upon wives. The right of a married woman to form legal contracts was granted with greater reluctance because it was feared that she might exercise this privilege to dispose of property which she might own jointly with her husband. However, in 1924 the right of contract for married women had been recognized in sixteen states, and eight other states had recognized it save insofar as it affected property which the married woman owned jointly with her husband.³

The rights of a woman to the equal guardianship of her children were more slowly conceded. In 1912 there were fifteen states in the South, thirteen in the North, and four in the West which confirmed the father's exclusive guardianship. Some modifications in these laws have followed, but in many states the father legally maintains predominant control over his offspring.

At present there are few legal barriers to prevent married women from securing gainful employment, but many social and conventional restrictions now handicap them in seeking occupations and participating in community and government activities.

³ *A Survey of the Legal Status of Women in Forty-eight States.*

VI

THE MARRIAGE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The Increase in Marriage. People who have deplored the rise of individualism in the United States have predicted a decline in the marriage rate. This decline has actually begun in some countries of western Europe, and it gives cause for grave concern as to the future of the family there. Contrary to such predictions for the United States, however, the census reports show that there has been an actual increase in the percentage of married persons of both sexes. The census for 1920 shows that 76.5 per cent of the women in the group from 25 to 34 years of age were married — an increase of 3.5 per cent over the figures for 1900; and the rates for men show a similar increase for the same age group. The trend for other age groups lies in a similar direction, with an increased proportion of those married in the lower age groups. Not only has there been an increase in the proportion of the married population, but there is an evident tendency to marry earlier in life.

Many explanations have been offered for this high degree of preference for the married state on the part of the American people. The ease with which remunerative positions can be secured by young people and the propitious outlook for steady employment and advancement must be reckoned among the important factors which have played their part in producing a disposition to marry.

Marriage in Urban and Rural Districts. There is a larger proportion of married persons in rural districts than in cities. The census of 1920 reveals the fact that a state or a section of the country in which a large part of the people live in rural districts, is more likely to have a large proportion of married persons in the adult

population than a state or a section with a large urban population. In the case of every population class covered by the census statistics, marriage on the part of women is less common and longer deferred in cities than in rural communities. This may be attributed in part to the fact that the ratio of men to women in rural communities is higher, for this circumstance seems to affect the marriage situation favorably for women in other instances. Another factor which accounts for the high proportion of rural women married is the situation with respect to their employment. Farm work is performed with greater efficiency by men than by women, and consequently the work of women is limited for the most part to the home and its immediate environment. Since the farmer's wife thus performs all domestic work generally without assistance, and since married women find very little other employment open to them in rural districts, they are impelled to seek positions in more populous industrial districts. The women who have not married and those who are seeking favorable conditions of employment are thus attracted to the city by the hope of personal betterment, leaving a high proportion of married women in the rural districts.

On a somewhat similar basis, the lower proportion of married women in the city can be explained by the variety of occupations open to them. The home in the city is of less importance as a social and economic unit than the home in the country. In the city it is possible to secure a variety of satisfying social contacts without the necessity of establishing a home, and comfortable living arrangements can more easily be secured for single persons than for families. Attractive forms of recreation and amusement can also be found with greater ease in the city than in the country, and this greatly diminishes dependence upon home ties. The fact that marriage customarily implies a large measure of economic dependence for the wife must lessen somewhat the inclination to marry because of the heavy burden which this dependence entails under urban conditions. In the rural districts the home still has important economic functions to perform, and the services of the

wife in the capacity of homemaker have a definite economic value. On the other hand, the wife of the city apartment dweller is, unless gainfully employed, almost entirely dependent upon her husband, since the services which she performs have slight economic value. The husband's income does not necessarily increase upon marriage, and marriage may imply for him a diminishing of resources for his personal pleasure and comfort. Many men hesitate to marry because of a feeling of delicacy with reference to the continuance of the wife in her occupation, even though she herself may be willing to remain in her employment. The convention that the economic dependence of the wife is a badge of social respectability has been absorbed by persons who have come to the city from other localities, and long after they have encountered a new situation they continue to be influenced in their thinking by this belief. Employed women, on the other hand, may show a reluctance to marry because they are unwilling to surrender the position which they have gained in business or the professions, and because they are not eager to assume the additional part-time performance of domestic duties. It is also true that the conditions under which young people are forced to live in urban localities operate to produce a lower marriage rate. Separate clubs and housing facilities for men and women are provided at small cost but with no opportunity for varied social contacts. For some young persons these opportunities for association with persons of the opposite sex are supplied during their hours of employment, but it remains true that many men and women are engaged in separate employments to such an extent that they have no opportunity to form acquaintances which might lead to marriage. The old conventions governing social relationships in small towns and in rural districts still hold sway for many residents of cities and prevent a rational adjustment to the urban situation. Girls who have been reared in conventional families are unwilling to form friendships with men unless properly introduced by mutual friends, and when time and energy are largely consumed by the pursuit of an occupation these opportunities cannot be provided with sufficient

frequency. Urban civilizations have not as yet developed conventions suitable to the social situations created by their existence, and the old norms which govern rural and small-town behavior are obviously out of place. The result has been made the subject for much jesting and merriment by the staunch advocates of the view that our accepted conventions are adequate to govern any social situation which may arise. But the fact that there are some 300,000 unmarried men and 450,000 unmarried women in New York City suggests that the problem of the unmarried is already one of considerable proportions. Doubtless many of these persons have adjusted themselves, but the existence of so large a proportion of unmarried men and women suggests a probable lack of adjustment in the *mores* governing courtship and marriage. In explanation of its low marriage rate it should be said that the city may act as a selective agency in drawing to itself ambitious persons whose attention is directed, temporarily at least, away from the marriage question. Opportunities for advancement, the occupational status, and the more varied interests of city life tend to absorb the individual's attention to the exclusion of the question of marriage.

The Relative Number of Men and Women. The disproportion in numbers between the sexes may also operate to keep the marriage rate in the cities lower than in rural districts. It can be seen from the census of 1920 that 56 per cent of the total number of women live in the cities, as compared with only 53 per cent of the men. Some 58 per cent of the single women live in the cities, as compared with only 54 per cent of the single men. The marriage rate for women is found to be higher when men predominate in numbers, but the marriage rate for men does not show the same susceptibility to the predominance of women. Manufacturing cities where men largely predominate offer favorable economic conditions for marriage, and this, to the same extent as the numerical predominance of men, may explain the high marriage rate. For the country as a whole the males outnumber the females; and although this has some basis in the abnormal sex distribution of

the foreign born, there is also a preponderance of males among the native whites of native parentage.

Nativity and Marriage. The various population elements accounted for in census figures reveal perceptible differences in regard to the marriage situation. The native white population of native parentage shows a proportion of married persons in the later age groups slightly in excess of any of the other chief population classes. A large proportion of this population class, however, is subjected to the social and economic conditions of rural life which operate to produce the favorable marriage rate referred to above. The percentage of married women in the different population classes is shown in the following table:

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES MARRIED IN 1920 FOR THE CHIEF
POPULATION CLASSES BY AGE GROUPS

Age	Population Class			Negro
	Native White	Foreign Born	Mixed or Foreign Parentage	
15 years and over	60.4	69.7	54.0	59.6
15-19 years	13.3	14.3	6.2	20.0
20-24 years	53.4	61.6	39.6	62.8
25-34 years	77.1	84.2	69.1	76.4
35-44 years	81.6	84.8	74.7	75.4
65 years and over	35.0	32.9	34.2	27.2

It is evident that foreign-born women show a higher percentage of marriages than any other population group. An explanation of this fact is in order: local conventions generally make it impossible for foreign women to emigrate and travel singly, and consequently many either come with their husbands or meet their *fiancés* by arrangement upon arrival. Furthermore, men in the foreign-born group show a distinct preponderance in numbers over women, and this creates a condition favorable for marriage. It is also to be noticed that persons newly arrived from foreign countries are in the cities forced into close association with one another in an intimate community life by their common strangeness to the new

environment, and this close association creates social opportunities favoring marriage.

The marriage situation of the Negro group differs from that of any other population element. One-fifth of the Negro women between the ages of 15 and 19 are married, a proportion far in excess of that for other population groups. This situation reflects the condition of rural life and the low standard of living of large numbers of Negroes. The economic independence of the Negro women which allows early marriage probably affects the situation also. But in the later age groups the position is changed, for the percentage of Negro women married decreases in these years until in the group embracing those 65 years of age and over only 27.2 per cent are married, a lower proportion than for any other population class. This can be accounted for in terms of the peculiarities of the Negro death rate and the great instability of the Negro family. Divorce is no more common for Negroes than for other groups, but desertion apparently occurs with greater frequency. A large proportion of Negroes is found in the economic group where desertion is frequent, and the economic independence of Negro women may increase this rate; for Negro women possess at a lower level of economic competence what women of the other population elements are endeavoring to attain at a higher economic level: economic independence. Homes are more easily broken when personal relations become difficult and economic interdependence does not make for family stability. Furthermore, the Negro population has shown an excess of females over males at every census decade, and this situation may have operated to produce a situation unfavorable to marriage for Negro women. Recent migrations have further aggravated this situation in some localities with results still more unfavorable to the Negro marriage rate.

The group showing the lowest percentage married among the women 15 years of age and over is that of the mixed or native-born derived from foreign parentage. In the group under 44 years of age this population class shows the lowest percentage married as compared with the other main population divisions. In the class

from 15 to 19 years of age only 6.2 per cent of women are married, while the other groups show a percentage from two to three times as great. A plausible explanation of the marriage situation of these native women of mixed or foreign parentage lies in the fact that many of them are city dwellers and are therefore subjected to all of the influences making for a low urban marriage rate. Then, too, the character of the economic struggle to which they are subjected may affect the marriage rate somewhat. Conditions of economic hardship and struggle for improving the status of families may so absorb the attention and energy of the persons concerned that their attention is diverted from matrimonial plans. It is observed also that a situation resulting in personal unhappiness and dissatisfaction is created in the homes where the parents have a language and culture different from those of their children. These conditions which make for strain and bickering in the homes of the immigrants may operate to produce in their descendants a disinclination for marriage.

Marriage and the Educated Woman. A belief has long persisted that education and intellectual development tend to lower the marriage rate. Bertrand Russell has observed that Americans are less influenced by modern thought and philosophy than any other people on earth "except perhaps a few Central African savages"; and others support him in his opinion that the process of individualization has not undergone alarming development in this country. Nevertheless, among the graduates of higher educational institutions there prevails a marriage rate somewhat lower than that for the population at large.

This is particularly true in the case of women graduates of institutions of learning, and many theories have been offered in explanation. The eugenists believe that through the influences at work in the women's colleges the students develop attitudes of reluctance and even of hostility toward marriage, followed by a firm determination to "pursue a career" at all hazards. Women instructors who have never married are held responsible for this state of affairs, for it is believed that they inspire their students

to emulation of their achievements. However remote from fact this reasoning may be, it yet remains true that constant attention to intellectual development diverts the mind from marriage and prevents that devotion to its pursuit which is possible for the young woman who is unhampered by other interests and considerations. This intellectual preoccupation in early youth not only is a distinct handicap to the matrimonial opportunities of the young woman during her college years, but creates other forces which continue to operate after graduation. After a period of arduous and expensive training, the woman graduate is often under the necessity of pursuing an occupation for economic considerations. Her time is so occupied by her work and her striving for personal advancement that she cannot assume a dynamic attitude toward marriage. Her work, too, usually lies in occupations where she meets few men, and her place of residence is likely to be one of the numerous clubs or hotels for women where living is inexpensive.

Many college women are handicapped in any effort to alter this situation by the fact that they have come from good middle-class homes where they have been successfully taught that a frank and determined pursuit of matrimony is undignified. These conventions, however valuable they may have been when the social situation was different, now present great hindrances to women in carrying on their social activities, in that they prescribe modes of behavior which result in a greatly minimized personal life. Even a frank acknowledgment of a desire for marriage is still regarded by many of these young women as unworthy of their position; for notwithstanding the current views with regard to "flaming youth" of the day, it remains true, at least in the women's colleges, that girls are stubbornly faithful to the solid middle-class views which they have imbibed from their parents. The very fact that they have been sent to college indicates that their parents have had in mind for them other things than the whole-hearted quest of a husband. Girls who show an aptitude for intellectual pursuits are drawn off from the fields where matrimony is the goal to the preparatory schools in anticipation of a college career.

Many parents who retain the Puritan attitudes with regard to the pleasures and activities of youth have provided no suitable opportunities for their daughters to meet young men, and they are pleased at the prospect of the four years to be spent by their daughters in the "safe" pursuit of college activities. Vacation time is absorbed in family activities, and many young women reach the age of graduation without having had the opportunity to form friendships with young men of their own age.

Although it may be admitted that a college training in an environment apart from men offers some impediments to the pursuit of a matrimonial career by women, it is evident also that other factors are at work, for the women graduates of coeducational colleges do not marry with much greater frequency. Moreover, the marriage rate among women graduates of coeducational colleges has declined as vocational opportunities for women have increased. From this it seems reasonable to infer that many women who presumably have had the opportunity to choose have preferred not to marry. Moreover, there is much reason to be found on the side of those who prefer to arrange their lives without consideration of marriage as an important factor. With the increased earning power of women, virtually all their needs, except those immediately connected with sex, can be satisfied better outside of marriage than within it, and the amount of personal freedom allowed is considerably larger in the former case. Marriage, too, has certain implications which do not appeal to the independent and highly individualized woman of the present day. It must be recognized that the attitudes and customs which govern the marriage relationships were evolved and developed with regard to the needs and personality of a group of women who had not undergone any considerable degree of personal development, but who remained immature and pliable individuals in the family circle. In opposition to the democratic ideal of family life which is commonly set forth, many survivals of patriarchal family life have persisted in marriage to the present day. Moreover, it is true that ideals of the loved woman in America at the present time envisage the

immature and undeveloped girl, who forms the heroine in novel and cinema. It would almost seem that the American man can understand and manifest love for a girl, but that he has not reached that point of development in his love life where he can love a woman. Male ideals of love are still largely associated with notions of dominance and superiority. Our *mores* of love do not yet include to any great extent the mature and independent woman whose will is to function in family life only if it can be maintained upon a democratic basis.

These changed conventions of family relationships have not, however, affected the marriage rate among any considerable group of women. Within the population as a whole marriage is becoming increasingly popular; the evidence of an opposite trend is limited to a relatively small element.

VII

THE FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES

The Size of the Family Unit. The size of the family is of great social importance. Indeed, the number of persons in the family is one of the chief factors in determining the burden of support which is borne by those employed in gainful occupations, the character of the environment which can be provided for children, and the nature of the socializing process which will go on in the home. From the social point of view the size of the family is important in determining at what rate the population shall grow.

In 1850 the American family contained on an average 5.6 persons, whereas in 1920 it contained 4.3 persons. This decline of approximately one-third has shown itself for the country as a whole, and for both urban and rural districts. The rural family, however, continues to show a slightly higher average than the urban, the former in 1920 having 4.5 and the latter 4.2 persons.

This decline in the size of the family and in the birth rate is a phenomenon by no means peculiar to America. The trend toward smaller families has shown itself in all of the countries of western Europe save in Ireland, Roumania, and Bulgaria. With few exceptions, however, this decreasing birth rate has not resulted in any decline in the rate of population growth, and in the exceptional cases the decline has been slight. In general, the declining birth rate has been offset by a declining death rate, and in many countries the decline in the infant mortality rate alone has been more rapid than the decline in the birth rate. E. M. East estimates that with the improvement in public health facilities in any of the European countries, with the probable exception of France, an annual increase in the population of 15 per 1000 could be secured. In some cases, however, great concern has been

expressed about the decline in the birth rate, and governments have offered incentives to its increase in the form of small money grants and prizes to parents of large families, in most cases without statistically discernible results. Arguments for an increase in the birth rate for political or military reasons can be easily understood, but since advancement of the state in these respects is not always accompanied by an increase in personal and family welfare, and since the burden of population increase is at present borne by the family, the failure of an emotional appeal for an increased birth rate is easily understood.

Considerable concern has been expressed about the birth rate in the United States, where it has also registered a decline. In 1924 the birth rate in the registration area was 22.6, while the death rate was 12.2, making an excess of births over deaths of 10.4 per 1000. This means an increase of 1,140,000 persons per annum, which would seem not inconsiderable in view of present economic conditions. The trend of real wages and family prosperity indicates that our rate of population growth has not as yet resulted in a submergence of individual and family interests, but recent agitation for immigration restriction indicates that this danger looms large in the eyes of persons most interested in safeguarding the interests of the laboring classes. Professor Raymond Pearl has indicated that the supply of commodities most important to our national prosperity has shown a more rapid rise than the curve of population growth, but he warns the optimists that conditions do not warrant the assumption that this relationship will continue. It remains, then, a matter of speculation whether any more rapid increase in the population is desirable. Individuals who assume any measure of conscious direction of their own affairs are not likely, therefore, to sacrifice their personal welfare and convenience to this uncertainty of social need by making any efforts to increase the number of births.

Variations in the Size of the Family. The birth rate among the several economic groups has shown a wide range of variation. Estimating the number of children born to fathers of the various

occupational groups in the registration area, the birth statistics of 1920 show a smaller average number of children among the occupations which could be classed as "skilled" and "professional." The low figures for dentists, architects and artists, actors and teachers of art, are in striking contrast with figures for mine operatives, quarry operatives, and stone masons. The unskilled and poorly paid fathers show a higher average number of children born, and the classes which include the skilled worker, the professional group, and the better-paid administrative positions show a distinctly lower average. In general it may be said that the number of children born to fathers in the various occupational classes tends to vary inversely with the ability of the father to support them. The infant mortality rate varies also with the occupation of the father, being on the whole higher in the lower-paid occupations. Nevertheless, the number of children surviving in the families of the lower-paid occupations is higher than that in the other occupational classes considered, and the families of this class contribute a larger quota of children to the social population than do families in the more prosperous classes.

Not only does the number of children born in families vary with the occupation of the father, but it varies also with the nationality of the mother. The birth rate is higher for the colored population than for the white, and higher for the foreign-born than for the native population. For 1920 the birth statistics show that native white mothers bore an average of 3.0 children, colored mothers an average of 3.6, and the foreign-born mothers an average of 4.0.

Studies made by private agencies show that the average number of children varies also with the education of the mother. Ross and Baker of Illinois found in their study that mothers with only an elementary school education had an average of 3.49 children, mothers with high school training 2.67, mothers with college training 2.51, and mothers with graduate school training only 2.31.

The Question of Family Limitation. The reason for the varying size of the families in different economic and educational

classes is not difficult to ascertain. People who maintain a high standard of living limit their families so that they may be able to realize a scheme of life which includes the satisfaction of a wide range of wants, while persons of the lower economic groups fail to limit their families, in many cases because the idea of family limitation as a means of bettering their condition has not occurred to them, in other cases because the information as to means of family limitation is not available, and in still others because they are inhibited by religious scruples from making use of known means of family limitation. Moreover, persons who are required to undergo long hours of exhausting labor are so depleted in energy by their tasks and by their constant preoccupation with the small worries of everyday life that they are able to give only slight attention to the betterment of their condition. Social workers in prenatal clinics have often been amazed that women who were in possession of information with regard to family limitation, and whose economic burdens were greatly augmented by their constant maternity, did not yet avail themselves of the information they possessed, although they were apparently not prevented from taking this step by religious scruples. Nevertheless, new ideas take root very slowly and the idea of family limitation by artificial means is still novel to members of the lower classes.

Some of the poor who suffer from large families are deeply religious and are deterred from any thought of family limitation by the influence which their religious leaders exert over them. Moreover, the opposition of religious bodies to the practices of birth control has been definite and persistent. Their teachings obviously are disregarded by the more prosperous members of their congregations, but the collective efforts of the church have been directed toward suppressing efforts which would make such knowledge and means of family limitation available for all elements of the population. The grounds for the objection of religious bodies have been largely theological. Some of them continue to set forth the quaint arguments that the curse of child-bearing was pronounced upon Eve in the Garden of Eden for original sin, and that

any steps taken to avoid the curse must be construed as attempts to thwart the will of God. Still others argue that widespread information concerning birth control would result in an unhampered indulgence of the sexual instinct within marriage — although the large families of the lower classes might be held to constitute ample evidences that lack of birth control information has not acted as a deterrent to such indulgence. Still others fear that immorality might grow out of the use of such information, although rational considerations might indicate that the gestation of an unwanted child is not a suitable punishment for the young women who disregard conventional standards of morality. It might be suggested, furthermore, that this resort to unhampered natural functioning as a punishment leaves the men involved practically unscathed, although they are usually held to be the aggressors in such matters. Followers of some religious faiths hold that the production of a large number of children is a significant religious act, since the number of possible recruits to the Church is thus increased. Since, however, the mere bringing of children into the world does not insure their growth to an age when they can be active and useful, the logic of this argument is largely lost upon those who look beyond the mere birth rate for results.

It is obvious to those who are interested in lessening human misery and poverty that the spread of birth control information and propaganda urging its utilization are desirable. Hitherto society has relied upon the judgment of the wage earner to limit his family to a size commensurate with his ability as a producer; but this reliance upon individual judgment has not proven to be well placed, since poverty and hardship have been augmented by the extremely large families. Children are produced without reference to the social need for them and without reference to the ability of their parents to maintain them decently.

The objection to the spread of birth control information at present amounts to an objection to making this information available for the poor, since for many years the differential birth rate

has made it clear that the upper economic classes have availed themselves of the information. It is clear that large families involve a lifetime of involuntary servitude on the part of those who have assumed the burden unwillingly. Involuntary service to the state exists in many other forms, as in the performance of military duty in time of war and the payment of certain taxes in time of peace. But that population should be provided by people economically, and sometimes even physically, at a disadvantage, is an admission of a failure to institute the machinery for social control which cannot be otherwise than reprehensible in modern society. If the burden of child-bearing were so great that women were unable to assume it willingly and compulsory service were resorted to, then it would seem more humane that this should be imposed upon all women alike without discrimination in favor of the upper classes.

The Career of Motherhood. Moreover, it is true that at the present time society offers few rewards to the woman who has devoted herself to the bearing and rearing of children. Even the guarantee of her ability to continue in her occupation is dependent upon the earning capacity of her husband, whose income is in no way connected with the efficient performance of her functions as housewife and mother. It should not seem strange, therefore, that the women who have gone into the business of bearing and rearing large numbers of children are largely those who have been forced into it by their ignorance and their inability to avoid the course, rather than those who have had the opportunity to make a rational choice in the matter. Almost any other career open to women offers rewards of a material and social nature which can be gauged much more easily and with greater certainty than the rewards of the mother. At the present time there is not even the means of estimating her service to society, since there is considerable dispute as to the desirability of further population growth. Since there are no rewards given to women for the service which they perform other than those given to them individually by their husbands, the chief compensation to be expected is the satisfaction of their instinctive

desires with reference to children. Many women who are in a position to choose whether or not they will have children prefer to have a child in order to cement family bonds and in order not to miss this fundamental experience. However, since the satisfaction in this regard is as likely to result from one or two children as from more, it is not likely that mothers will pursue the experiment so far as to produce a large number of children. Activities associated with child-rearing are in many cases desired, but since they preclude activities of other types many women prefer to limit their families in order to have a greater variety of experience. To many women, therefore, motherhood has no appeal as a task or a profession, but only as one of the means for personal development which they wish to experience. Society has as yet devised no means for placing motherhood on a basis with the other professions. There are no requirements for an honored entrance into the occupation except a marriage certificate, there is no specific training for the task, and the only limit to the exercise of the privileges within marriage is physical inability to function further. Furthermore, there are no rewards other than the satisfaction of an instinctive need of children, and this satisfaction is obtained at such a cost that many prefer the satisfaction of other needs. In no other department of life is there so little planning and thought, and so high a degree of casualness, as in the conditions under which children are born and reared.

Those who are disposed to resent the modern educated woman's inclination to view her situation from an objective and reasonable point of view, attribute her unwillingness to bear and rear a large number of children to the spread of vicious propaganda by persons who have not adjusted themselves adequately to the marriage situation. Popenoe believes that "most of the trouble in the world is made by abnormal people unhappily married or not married at all," though he does not say why these abnormal persons should exert so much influence on current marriage trends. However, he sees a remedy for the situation in the better education of the normal young women:

An education of young women which prepared them better for motherhood, which inculcated a more scientific attitude toward the home, and which made them more efficient in the discharge of their domestic duties and better able to see the fallacies in the propaganda of home-breakers and which showed them how to take a larger part (though not by means of a "career") in the cultural and expressive opportunities of life, would do more than anything else to remove the sources of irritation.

It is doubtful whether any preachment of this sort will produce results which can be measured statistically. There may be a class of women who would prefer procreation under any circumstances, but the question might well be raised whether these persons constitute the class most desirable for the perpetuation of the race. In order to attract the more intelligent women, it would seem advisable to place motherhood on the level with other occupations in dignity, in independence, and in the rewards which it offers. Instead of a practical program, however, those who advocate a changed attitude on the part of the educated woman toward the bearing and rearing of children expend their energies in an emotional appeal designed to make present-day conditions appear desirable instead of promoting changes which would make a rational appeal. According to Popenoe:

A healthy woman is benefited by repeated pregnancies. Her system is organized for that purpose and it finds full expression of its potentialities and corresponding full degrees of well-being only in repeated pregnancies.

To make such an assertion when the only women who are experiencing repeated pregnancies are those who are living under conditions of poverty and whose maternity is involuntary, is obviously absurd. Women who have been able to choose have not followed such a course, nor are they likely to do so.

Advocates of an increased rate of population growth urge that women will cease to care for the activities "natural" to their sex if an alternative course is open to them, and they urge, therefore, that careers be not encouraged for women but that all ef-

forts be devoted to preparing women better for their time-honored occupation.

Wages and the Family. One of the greatest difficulties in providing a suitable *milieu* for the rearing of children has been the difficulty of wage adjustment. According to our present assumption in the economic world, a wage earner is compensated for his services in accordance with his value to the business organization which employs him. His services to society in providing a family receive no direct recognition, and his efficiency in this latter regard has been limited by his rating of efficiency as a wage earner. With the increased strength of bargaining power among the workers, they have endeavored to assure a closer correspondence between their wages and their family responsibilities by demanding that the wages given be sufficient to enable them to support a family of five at an economic level "suitable" to that class of labor. Many objections have been raised to this procedure. The worker's efficiency in industry may not be sufficient to entitle him to this wage, no matter how great the need of the worker's family may be. Further, there is the question of the responsibility of the industry for the worker's family. The rearing of a family is a distinctly social matter, but it is difficult to see why, in our present organization, an industry should be held responsible for the families which its wage earners produce. The service is rendered to society as a whole and the industry employing a wage earner has no assurance that the children of the wage earner will offer their services for its benefit at any time in the future. Then, too, the industry has no control over the family; it cannot say when the family shall increase; nor can it adjust the size of the family to the probable income of industry. Neither can industry say in what way the money, once it has passed into the hands of the wage earner, shall be spent. Furthermore, since the families of wage earners are larger than those of other classes, the number of children maintained by industries would probably be disproportionate to their importance in the social and economic order.

Even, however, if industry should be held responsible for the

families which the workers produce, it would be difficult to adjust the wage system to the family needs. Present incentives to efficiency demand that the wages paid for the same services be uniform. Studies made by Douglas show that a wage scale adapted for a "normal" family of five does not adequately meet family needs because of the scarcity of typical families. In the British census of 1921 an analysis showed that 26 per cent of the adult male workers were not married at all and hence had no need of a wage scale adjusted to a family of five. Of those who were married, 81 per cent had less than three children, and only 10 per cent had more than three children. A wage adjusted on the basis of a family of three dependent children would, therefore, be adapted to only 9 per cent of the married workers' families. In 81 per cent of the families there would be a surplus and in 10 per cent there would be a deficiency, which would affect far more than 10 per cent of the total number of children. Data for America, while less adequate, show a similar condition. A wage determined on a basis of a family of five (husband and wife and three dependent children) would meet the needs of only about 17 per cent of the families, while 38 per cent of the children in large families would not receive adequate attention. Moreover, from local studies Douglas concludes that industry would not be able to pay to all workers a wage adequate for a family of five persons.¹

There seems, therefore, to be an insuperable difficulty in adjusting wage payments to family needs on the basis of the average family. Direct recognition by society of the social value of child-bearing and child-rearing to the end that this service may be performed more adequately would more nearly meet the situation. A survey of the attempts that have thus far been made to accomplish this purpose will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

¹ Douglas, P. H., *Wages and the Family*. Chicago, 1925.

VIII

THE POSITION OF WOMAN AS AFFECTED BY MARRIAGE

Legal Disabilities of Married Women. Despite a long history of legislation having as its object the improvement of the status of married women, there are still some legal disabilities from which women suffer as a result of being married. In two states, Georgia and Washington, a woman's wages are declared to belong to her husband unless she is living separately from him, and in Florida a married woman is required to file a court petition for the right to control her own estate. In the states which were formed out of the land purchased from France (i.e., the Louisiana Purchase, including Arizona, California, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Washington) a husband may not only control all property acquired by his wife after their marriage, but may even demand her wages for his own purposes. In many other states the legal personality of the wife is still regarded as entirely or partially submerged in that of her husband. In addition to the state laws affecting the economic position of married women, there are many discriminations against them by the local authorities, who frequently deny married women the right to teach in the schools or to hold office in the local governments.

The Dogma of the Home. More important than these legal disabilities, however, are the more subtle forms of social discrimination practiced against married women for any violation of the conventional assumptions as to what should constitute their life and work. Any failure to occupy herself with the customary round of activities, even at the present time, occasions considerable comment and provokes resentment on the part of the people who themselves have performed this "duty." The dogmatic attitude

with regard to the married woman's sphere tends to prevent well-to-do and middle-class women from seeking outside employment, even though consideration for their personal welfare may strongly incline them to such a course.

The Surfeit of Leisure. It often happens that married women of training and ability are unwilling to accept the life of leisure guaranteed to them by their husband's legal liability to support them. In the case of women who have no children, or whose children no longer require constant attention, the efficient management of the household leaves them leisure to such an extent that they find it difficult to dispose of their time. Women capable of enjoying the successful pursuit of an occupation find this leisure particularly irksome and soon become restless and discontented. Unable to expend their energies through useful work, they give themselves to the pursuit of an active social life having no other aim than a respectable dissipation of leisure time. The realization that they are of no appreciable use except as companions for their husbands adds to their restlessness and to their zeal in furthering the busy round of activities which they have generated in their social world. In communities where this social life can find outlet through impersonal enjoyments of a cultural nature, no harm results except perhaps a certain deterioration of powers and abilities in the women concerned; but in certain communities, of which the college community is an example, where married women with few or no children have a large amount of leisure, an exaggerated awareness of personal relationships develops and works much harm in the lives of the persons affected by it. Often homes are broken or rendered unhappy by a community interest almost pathological in its nature. A rigid conformity to local standards of conduct is demanded, and a woman who rebels at the petty futilities which occupy the attention and energy of the idle wives comes in for an unreasonable amount of social censure if she seeks a form of employment different from that to which the other women have given themselves. Aside from being omitted from the social life of the community, she may find herself affected by so-

cial pressure of more weight in the effect which she has produced upon her husband's professional status by the independent attitude which she has taken toward their joint personal affairs. Even her husband's attitude toward her activities may be affected by the friendly taunts and criticisms to which a man can be subjected when his wife is economically independent. This overdeveloped social awareness in an isolated community acts as a selective force upon the community population, driving out those who have a well-developed feeling of personal independence and personal dignity, and leaving behind only those who are willing to submit all of their acts to community scrutiny. The position of husbands in a community of this type is particularly unfavorable, since their conduct at all times must be such as to meet the approval of this self-constituted group of censors. Divorce as an escape from an intolerable family life is impossible, since it involves forfeiture of professional status.

The Married Woman and the Job. Many women seeking employment have found themselves discriminated against because of their marital status. Discrimination by school boards has occurred with remarkable persistence and has occasioned much protest on the part of organizations of teachers. Marital status, it is argued, is a personal matter of no concern to employers except as it might be held to affect efficiency in the performance of duties. Discharge for inefficiency is recognized as a prerogative of employers, but it is argued that the latter should not presume to say without experiment that a change in the status of women employees would of necessity result in inefficiency. In many cases, however, the discrimination against married women by the school boards has been frankly declared to be a matter of social policy rather than a judgment as to the relative efficiency of married or unmarried women teachers. The duties of the teaching profession were held to be incompatible with the "proper performance of the duties as wife and mother," and the members of the boards were obviously as much concerned for the homes of the young women as they were for their performance as teachers. These school boards presumed

to function not only with reference to the school duties for which they were appointed but as directors of the social welfare as well. Their judgment in this capacity was rightly regarded as an infringement on personal liberty unwarranted by the powers of their position. Not only school boards, but many business offices, social agencies, and other organizations discriminate against married women in the matter of employment, and often refuse altogether to accept them. It seems reasonable to suppose that much of the responsibility for this attitude can be attributed to the conservative weight of community opinion which still holds that married women should employ their time in the performance of domestic duties.

With the progressive change in opinion and in the economic situation, much of this prejudice will undoubtedly disappear; yet married women should face candidly the fact that in many cases the responsibility is to be attributed to their inefficiency in positions which they have occupied. Persons who have not been prejudiced against the employment of married women, and have even been inclined to favor them, have developed an unfavorable attitude as a result of experience with their work. It often happens that married women who have engaged for a period of years in the unsupervised activities of the domestic life show an unwillingness to submit to direction and organization of their work when they have turned again to gainful employment. In many cases they evince jealousy with regard to the advancement of unmarried women whose careers have not been interrupted by matrimonial responsibilities. Then, too, the married woman is less likely than the unmarried woman to be entirely dependent upon her income, and this powerful incentive for efficient work is thereby removed. As long as married women regard their economic dependence upon their husbands as justifiable and desirable, they are not likely to develop into efficient workers in any field of endeavor. The desire to keep up interest in occupational activities and maintain a semblance of economic independence has led to the existence of a considerable group of pseudo-professional women whose activities are

a distinct handicap to the development of professional standards for women at work. These idle and dependent women have developed a cult of dilettantism which gives them an obvious excuse for neglecting domestic duties and for demanding greater freedom of action from their husbands on whom they remain dependent for support.

The Twofold Task of the Wage-earning Mother. Marriage in the United States carries with it the implication that the wife will be supported by her husband — and he is held legally liable for such support. However, the census of 1920 revealed that there were 1,920,281 married women in the United States in paid employments. Some 23 per cent of all women 15 years of age and over employed in gainful occupations were married — a considerable increase over the proportion married in previous census decades. In the age group from 25 to 44, slightly more than one-third of the women in gainful employment were married. A large percentage of these women were engaged in manufacturing and industrial pursuits. Many conservative defenders of the home have attributed this industrial employment to the growing restlessness of the modern woman, who is said to be discontented with the loneliness and monotonous routine of domestic life and eager for the sociability and change of factory life. The economic aspect is believed by these conservatives to be no more urgent than the longing of the wife for luxuries and enjoyments which she cannot afford from her husband's wages. Furthermore, they urge that the total gain to the family income is negligible because the wages of the wife are not sufficient compensation for the wasteful management of the family resources occasioned by her absence from home.

Studies of industrial employees in selected cities made by the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor revealed that 61 per cent of the married women employed were living with their husbands at the time of their employment. Furthermore, "it was not chiefly from the childless women that the married breadwinners were recruited, for nearly 53 per cent

of all the gainfully employed mothers had children and 40 per cent of these mothers had babies under 5 years of age." Almost four-fifths of the group of married women employed were maintaining homes during the time of their employment. Social workers and investigators who have made first-hand observation of the conditions which induce these women to seek employment add their testimony to the official statistics regarding low wages of husbands, that it is not the desire for luxuries which impels these married women to seek employment, but the economic necessity of maintaining a home and a family. The effect of their absence upon their children is registered in a greatly increased infant mortality rate and a high delinquency rate among the older children. The increased infant mortality rate may be attributed in large part to the prevalence of artificial feeding consequent upon the mother's absence from home. The death rate among infants who are artificially fed greatly exceeds the death rate of children fed by their mothers in the same economic group, but experience with scientific and sanitary methods of artificial feeding indicates that this death rate can be greatly reduced.

The Need for Rationalization. Society has taken little cognizance of the fact that many mothers are impelled by the low earnings of their husbands to seek employment outside of the home, with results detrimental to the health and welfare of their children. The social waste represented by this high death rate of infants and the drain upon the mother's energy and efficiency as a consequence of bearing and caring for the children is enormous. In a society aware of its own problems it would seem wise to recognize this situation and to deal with it in a way more in harmony with the accepted principles of civilized life than the present *laissez-faire* attitude assumes. Several possible means of accomplishing this end have been suggested by those interested in a more equitable distribution of social obligations. First, a wife whose husband earns a wage which is insufficient for the maintenance of children should receive instruction in the known methods of family limitation and be urged to make use of such information. If her

services are then found to be necessary in industry in order to supplement the husband's income, these duties could be rendered with greater efficiency and with less suffering to herself and without hardship for young children. Second, if the services of the wife in the bearing and rearing of children seem indispensable at a given period of population growth, she should be paid for such services and given the opportunity to devote herself to the task which society requires of her. Third, if the services of the wife as both wage earner and mother are required, society should acknowledge this fact and make adequate and humane provision for the care of the children while the mother is so employed.

The dogma of the sanctity of the home and the family has greatly hindered a recognition of the fact that mothers of young children are gainfully employed, and that there is a need for the development of agencies to assist them in carrying their double burden. It has been assumed that the home is the best place for the children, and the development of any methods for the care of young children outside of their own homes has been attended with much suspicion and fear lest the fact of such development should encourage gainful employment among mothers and a lessened sense of responsibility for the welfare of the child. The present high death rate among children of employed mothers and the hardships suffered by the mothers of this group reveal the wastefulness in human life of the practical application of such assumptions. An increased state control is, of course, difficult to obtain, but measures providing for the rest of mothers before childbirth and maternity, as well as nursing benefits, are possibilities which might lead to a general improvement of conditions. Private philanthropy has initiated the work of caring for the infants of employed mothers in day nurseries, and these have demonstrated the good effects of careful and scientific care of young children. Complaint is often made that women in charge of day nurseries, while well trained, scientifically and technically, for their work, yet fail to understand the social and economic difficulties which employed mothers encounter and, accordingly, fail to adapt

their services to the needs of this group. Considerable tact and experience are required to alleviate fear and suspicion with regard to new methods of bathing and feeding young children, and many mothers who are in the greatest need of the facilities offered refuse to accept the service. However, these difficulties of administration should not obscure the essential nature of the work which is being done in giving aid to women whose present obligation to render a twofold service to society has prevented an efficient performance in either task.

Another evidence of the unequal operation of the family system in differing social classes is thus evident. To women of the upper classes marriage brings economic dependence and an increased amount of leisure; in the wage-earning groups it implies for large numbers of women an increase of their already heavy economic responsibilities and the assumption of the duties of child-bearing and child-rearing as well.

IX

THOSE WHO HAVE NOT MARRIED

The Proportion of Single Persons. There are still many persons in the United States who do not marry, but the proportion of the population 15 years of age and over listed as "single" in the census statistics has shown a decrease for both men and women at every census decade since 1890. In 1890 41.7 per cent of the males 15 years of age and over were listed as single; in 1920 this percentage had decreased to 35.1; for the females 15 years of age and over the corresponding decrease was from 31.87 to 27.3. In spite of the low marriage rate among some economic groups, there remains a perceptible decrease in the total proportion of persons who do not marry. The proportion of the unmarried in the population decreases with the successive age groups until for males only 7.3 per cent of the population 65 years and over remain unmarried. The proportions of unmarried differ slightly according to population class and place of residence. There is a larger percentage of single persons in the urban than in rural communities, and those of foreign or mixed parentage show a higher percentage unmarried than the other main population classes.

The Results of Failure to Marry. The effects upon the individual of failure to marry are difficult to gauge. Studies of paupers in almshouses have shown a disproportionate number of single persons among the inmates, and the assumption has been made by some persons that failure to marry is one of the chief causes of old-age dependency. This does not of necessity imply, however, that married persons have been more successful economically, but merely that their dependency in old age, if it has occurred, has been taken care of in the family group. A disproportionate number of single persons is found among criminals, but

a causal connection between the two phenomena is difficult to establish. The exigencies of the criminal's employment prevent his participation in community life under circumstances which might lead to his marriage. The death rate of single men is shown by Professor Ogburn to be about twice that of married men for the same age groups.¹

The same comparisons with regard to health do not hold in the case of single women, but with regard to insanity and crime the comparison favors the married woman. Her greater security, and the fact that her duties within the home prevent her delinquencies from becoming matters of public moment, decrease the crime rate. It may be, too, that the more normal and adaptable types marry, rather than that marriage produces the type. In the case of married persons, relationships and duties are clearly defined by law and tradition; but in the case of single persons, a much larger number must be decided by the individual, with resulting strain and worry.

Persons with a high sense of duty regarding family relationships also tend to regard evidence of all kinds as supporting the argument for the supreme importance of the family. Professor Groves in making a survey of the employees of the Checker Cab Company discovered to his apparent dismay that the unmarried chauffeurs possessed better records in such matters as punctuality and reliability than did the married chauffeurs. In order to escape the effects of a conclusion unfavorable to his main thesis that all good qualities are derived from family association, he rationalizes thus:

Doubtless many of these unmarried chauffeurs are actually maintaining families, supporting their mother or bringing up younger brothers or sisters which makes them as steady as if they were married; some are looking forward to marriage and are therefore more reliable than they would otherwise be; a part of the unreliability of the married group can be charged up to unsatisfactory marriage, for a man who has married unhappily is often less steady than when he was expecting to be happily married.

¹ W. F. Ogburn, *The Journal of Social Forces*.

Although the percentage of persons who never marry is comparatively small, the delay of marriage beyond the years of early maturity is of great importance both from the individual and from the social point of view. The following table shows the percentage remaining single for age groups which include the more vigorous years of life for both males and females.

PERCENTAGE SINGLE (1920)

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
20-24	70.7	45.6
25-29	39.4	23.6
30-34	24.1	14.9
35-44	16.1	11.4

Failure of College Graduates to Marry. From the above it appears not only that a considerable number of persons do not marry at all, but that an even greater number during the more vigorous years of their lives are not being served by the institution of marriage. This situation gives rise to problems with regard to the birth rate and to the health and social adaptation of the individuals concerned. Moreover, in the case of certain social and educational classes even greater numbers of persons do not marry. About 50 per cent of the graduates of women's colleges do not marry, and the coeducational colleges show a percentage almost as high. Only 53 per cent of the Vassar graduates in the period 1867-1892, for instance, were married in 1915. A study of 16,739 graduates of several educational institutions in the East revealed the fact that only 51 per cent of the graduates before 1900 had married. A study of the coeducational universities conducted by Price and published in 1916 reveals that over a period of 10 to 25 years after graduation the proportion of the graduates married did not exceed 54 per cent. In agricultural colleges the rate was somewhat higher.

The marriage rate for men graduates of colleges has also been falling over a period of years, though the percentage of college men remaining single has never been so high as that for college women. The statistics for Stanford University reveal that 26.8

per cent of the men graduates from 1892-1900 had not married, as compared with 51.5 per cent of the women graduates. Since 1881 there has been a decline in the marriage rate of college women which corresponds with the widening of professional opportunities for women.

Unless financial resources are available, the assumption of family responsibilities by young college graduates involves a lowered standard of living and the renunciation of many privileges and pleasures. Then, too, personal freedom is to a great extent sacrificed, since close relationship with an additional family group is assumed at marriage and considerable limitation is thereby placed upon behavior and conduct. Escape from social scrutiny is more difficult in the case of married persons than in the case of single persons, because of the nature of the social life which centers about the family. Moreover, single persons of a marriageable age in the business and professional classes are likely to have severed themselves from family connections to an extent that allows of considerable self-direction and freedom, while the assumption of marital ties involves the submission of life and conduct to the old family standards.

For women of the educated class the choice is particularly difficult, because it involves the transference from the skilled and organized work for which they are trained to the more or less routine work of the home. It involves, too, the loss of their economic independence, the freedom to determine their place of residence, and the choice of where and with whom they will pass their vacations. Moreover, the educated woman of today resents the relegation of her social life to more or less close association with that unspecialized and often uneducated and untrained group, the "other wives." The social activities which these women have generated for themselves, and the long hours which they expend in their pursuit, are particularly exasperating to the woman who has been accustomed to work which yields to her a large amount of intellectual pleasure and satisfaction. When she is following her professional pursuits she often meets both men and women whose

tastes and interests are congenial with her own, so that their companionship becomes of great interest and importance; but after marriage, if she devotes herself to the making of a home, she finds it difficult to maintain these connections which grow out of her former professional interests, and after a few years of married life she may find herself relegated to the society of the women whose only claim on her interest is that they have married her husband's friends. After years of freedom and association with friends of her own choice, this prospect seems particularly discouraging for the woman who feels that she has no aptitude or inclination for the leisure-time activities of the Main Street variety. It must not be overlooked, moreover, that the relationship of wife and mother provides for the satisfaction of certain instinctive needs important in the life of every normal woman, but, definite as is the need for these primary relationships, the conditions under which they can be obtained cause many women who are free to choose to hesitate and even to forego their acceptance. The replies to a recent questionnaire sent to a considerable number of college graduates indicated the reasons why these women had not married.² In many cases they were unable to emancipate themselves from the domination of their parents; in others they were unable to marry the man whom they wished to marry; and in still others they had not had the opportunity to meet congenial men. This study is significant in revealing that these women who did not marry held the usual interest in men and matrimony, and that it was not prejudice or dislike of men which prevented marriage; on the other hand, it indicates that their attention was so taken up with other matters that marriage and its accompanying activities and satisfactions did not seem to them of such importance as to justify any great sacrifice of time or interests in order to secure this relationship.

There was a time when the stigma attached to "single blessedness" impelled many women with no inclination to marry to court marriage on any terms, in order to escape being "an old maid." This term was used to denote a timid and undeveloped individual,

² Davis, Katherine B., *Why They Failed to Marry*.

a woman who had not been desired, or one who had suffered such deprivation that her state produced only a feeling of repulsion in the minds of the persons who knew her. Moreover, she was an economic liability, and the burden of supporting her was borne by her male relatives often with ill-concealed resentment. Not only was her position less favorable and respected than that of the married woman, but she was held in contempt by her married contemporaries for having failed to achieve the honored position which was theirs.

With the increase in business and professional opportunities, however, the relative positions of the unmarried and the married woman have been somewhat reversed. In many cases the unmarried woman has developed a feeling akin to contempt for the moral standards of the married woman. The latter often performs no obviously useful work after the few years of preoccupation with her young children; on the contrary, she gives her time to the pursuit of activities which are neither useful nor interesting to a woman who is accustomed to professional work. Moreover, the wife is often disturbed and discontented about her own status, which depends upon her relationship as sexual companion to her husband, and she begins to wonder whether she could not find some occupation more personally satisfying and more socially useful. Then, too, in their dealings with each other, domesticated women have not developed standards of conduct which entitle them to any designation analogous to the term "gentleman" among men. As long as woman's status has been dependent upon gaining the favor of a man, she has played a lone hand and has been very free in her attitude toward standards of truth and fair-dealing when they did not fit in with her plans. Only in recent years has there been any *esprit de corps* among women, and it is for the most part among the professional women that this new attitude has developed. Married women have light regard for standards of decency or fairness when their status and serenity are threatened, and because of their economic dependence on their husbands they are not free to terminate this relationship when it

becomes personally distasteful to them. Their serenity, then, depends on the maintenance of a personal relationship, and to the maintenance of this relationship their manners and morals are adapted. Moreover, the married woman's position in society depends, not upon her personality and achievements, but upon those of her husband, so that personal responsibility and self-sufficiency are much less developed in married women than in unmarried women. With the increasing tendency to regard the individual rather than the family as the unit of society, this submergence of the personality and responsibility of the married woman becomes a greater cause for complaint.

With regard to the satisfaction connected with sexual life and motherhood, the difference is mainly in favor of the married woman. Any satisfaction of sexual impulses outside of the marriage relationship was in the past attended with such grave danger of severe penalties as to rule it out entirely for all rationally-minded women. Women who consented to extra-marital relationships with men were regarded as "victims," both of men and of an outraged society. The *mores* were constituted for the protection and the maintenance of the family life, and there was no consideration of the hardship which this might entail upon persons living together outside of the marriage relationship. Not only were they not regarded as deserving of place or consideration, but any sacrifice which might be exacted of them for maintaining the safety of marriage was held to be entirely justified. For women of the respectable classes there was no choice between marriage and celibacy.

Failure to Marry among the Poor. For the lower economic groups, then, it can be easily seen that the problem of the single person in the population is numerically unimportant and is gradually becoming more so. Interests in life among persons of this group are few and elemental, and since economic conditions are favorable it is to be expected that most of the persons will be found to marry early. Living arrangements are more easily made for the family than for the individual, and family and community custom

point to an early age for marriage. In the case, too, of persons in the lower economic classes there is not the choice between the easy and comfortable existence of a single life and the assumption of family responsibilities which confronts the unmarried person of the more favored economic group. Family ties and responsibilities are very close for the unmarried person of the wage-earning classes who ordinarily has duties of care and support toward his parents or relatives. For the young worker the establishment of a family of his own does not signify the beginning of responsibilities but merely the transference of his responsibilities from the parental group to a family relationship more in line with the satisfaction of his natural impulses. Besides, his range of interests is not large, so that deprivation in the matter of natural desire would loom larger for him than for a person with a richer and more varied range of interests. In the case of the laborer, his daily task is not of such a nature that he can derive a sense of self-enhancement or pleasure from its performance, and his pleasure and gratification are derived more largely from his personal and family relationships. Moreover, he has few or no interests of which he will be deprived by the possession of a family, since his standard of living demands little more than the satisfaction of his daily wants. In the case of girls, the desire to escape from parental restraints is of great importance; they, too, have few personal interests of a sort to compete with the satisfactions to be derived from the establishment of a home and family.

X

THE CHILD IN THE FAMILY

The Necessity for Child Protection. Interest in all matters which affect the welfare of the child has been greatly quickened in the twentieth century. Parental love is not a sentiment of recent growth in family life, but more favorable economic conditions and the increased family welfare have created a soil hospitable to its further development. Poverty and hardship can greatly inhibit the feelings of parental tenderness and interest. Persons who in the course of their employment have come to know families living below the poverty line have been amazed to see how the struggle for existence can inhibit and overgrow the instinct of protectiveness, even to such an extent that parents have been known to manifest little desire for the survival of their offspring. The birth of a child is regarded as a divine dispensation, but so also is his death, and the latter provokes no profound grief in parents who must bear a heavy burden of child-rearing. Before restrictions were placed upon child labor, poor parents were tempted to regard a child as an economic asset; they developed a strong sense of ownership with regard to their children and expected to realize from their employment considerable economic gain. In Southern mill towns of a decade ago it was not unusual for unemployed men to boast of the number of their children employed and of the fact that it was no longer necessary for them to work because of the earnings brought home by the children whom they had "raised."

The improvement in the welfare of children in poor homes has been due, in large measure, to various forms of state interference. Early measures for child protection were vigorously opposed by those who believed that the power and influence of the family would be thus supplanted. Among the first steps taken in the

nineteenth century were the factory acts, which aimed to protect the child not only against his employer but also against his parents, who might be willing to connive at his exploitation. As the need for further protection grew more apparent, other acts were passed defining the bounds within which the parents should exercise authority over the child. Acts supplementing those which forbade exploitation of the child by parents have assured him a minimum of education in the interest of his future efficiency. During the nineteenth century private societies were organized for the protection of children against cruelty and exploitation by their parents, and the public authorities coöperated in the work. In many localities legal enactments sanctioned the supplementing of home care of children at public expense by providing free books, free lunches, free medical care, and other services, all, by their very nature, giving recognition to the fact that home nurture and care had proved inadequate under existing economic conditions. The inability of the home to meet all of the requirements of child life was greatly emphasized by the growth of cities and the founding of homes with insufficient economic and physical equipment.

The High Regard for Childhood Among the Middle Classes. Among the classes where parenthood has become voluntary, however, the rearing of children is regarded in a different light. In the middle-class homes in America, the family life tends to center about the child to a great extent. The location of the family residence is in many cases determined by the character of the educational facilities for the child, and the family resources are invested in such a way as to secure his future. Parents determine their interests and amusements with reference to the child; and even the question whether or not adults shall subdue their personal inclinations and continue to live together after the desire for such association is past, is often determined by the probable effect which the decision will have upon the comfort and happiness of the offspring. This cult of the child has given rise to study and research along many lines, to the end of determining the most favorable

methods and conditions for promoting child welfare and development.

The Importance of the Early Years. Psychologists have recently placed increased emphasis upon the importance of the years of infancy and childhood. Many habits and attitudes essential to later success and happiness are formed during the first years of life, and the success of this early training depends upon a favorable home situation. The young child has been found to be extremely sensitive to the different elements of his environment, both physical and psychological. It is important, therefore, that foundations for later good health be laid by proper feeding and suitable hours and surroundings for sufficient rest. These conditions can be provided only in an adequately equipped and well-regulated household conducted by a person of sufficient initiative to establish and maintain the necessary routine and to change and adapt it to varying circumstances. Physical habits of self-control and proper eating and resting are easily formed in early years, and upon the establishment of such fundamental habits depends the probability of future efficiency. It is important that the child should have not only a healthful physical environment, but also family relationships so harmonious that an atmosphere of serenity shall prevail. Emotional maladjustments between parents are easily sensed by the young child, even though the disturbance may in no way affect the physical routine of his life. Much attention has been called in recent years to the destructive forces which become operative in the life of the child when his parents decide to separate. Divorce is believed to be accompanied by a high rate of delinquency and mental and nervous disturbance among the affected children. No comprehensive studies have been made, however, and these beliefs are based upon observations of individuals who have stated their conclusions with a firm conviction of their validity. In view of the fact that many parents sacrifice all hope of self-realization and personal happiness for themselves in order to maintain a home for their children, it would be interesting to compare the later development of children of divorced persons with that of children

who have grown up in a home where the parents are not well adjusted to each other.

Parental Education. In view of the well-known fact that many parents are themselves emotionally undeveloped and imperfectly adjusted in their affectional life, it is difficult to see how they can provide for their children an atmosphere favorable for the development of a well-rounded and stable personality. The mistakes and shortcomings of one generation are easily transmitted to the next through the home environment. One of the most perplexing aspects of the situation is the feeling of ownership which parents still maintain toward their children, even in cases where they no longer regard the child as an economic asset and in cases where they earnestly desire to promote his welfare. Persons who have assumed voluntary parenthood expect a personal return, though not necessarily in money. The father may desire gratitude and personal affection in payment for the arduous and difficult work to which his parenthood has committed him. In many cases he derives enjoyment from the protection and care which he gives his children, and is pleased to have them as a means for expressing his tenderness. When this feeling exists, an unprejudiced viewpoint in the parent-child relationship is difficult to obtain. There is need for an objectivity of attitude which demands not only a measure of detachment in sentiment, but also the ability to maintain this attitude while remaining in readiness to give help and guidance when it is needed. To insure a fuller development to maturity and a less hampered growth of offspring, the pleasure which the parent derives from his parenthood might well contain more of the intellectual and less of the instinctive element which is common at the present time. The instinctive elements are, as we have seen, primarily selfish, and their satisfaction depends upon the parent's realization of his desire to be of service to his offspring. The desire of the parent to secure this satisfaction may then take precedence over another course of action more favorable to the child's welfare — a fact which would easily be perceived by a parent capable of an objective evaluation of his relationship to his child. The pleasure

of seeing one's own child develop from infancy to maturity through a period of nurture and training which helps him to a full realization of his powers, should be an adequate satisfaction for any parent. The parent's instinctive impulse to bestow protection and tenderness is by no means negated by this intellectualized attitude; but the instinctive tendencies are disciplined and submitted to the direction of intelligence in order that the child may gain the maximum benefit from them. Because of the child's utter helplessness in the hands of his parents, and because of the fact that it is they who have willed his being, it is only just that his welfare should be considered the chief end of the parent-child relationship, and that the parent should submit himself to the necessary discipline and self-denial to achieve this.

The Change in the Maternal Attitude. A tendency of dubious value in recent years has been the attitude of mothers who are inclined to view their activities in relation to their offspring as a profession. At the present stage of training and development it is absurd to speak of this work as a profession, since there are no requirements for entry into the profession other than the biological ability of all normal females to reproduce. This new attitude is of value only insofar as it leads the mother to organize and integrate her activities in a manner beneficial to the child; and because of this new attitude, many mothers have made earnest efforts to acquire the knowledge necessary for an adequate accomplishment of their work. The attitude of regarding child-rearing as a task has, however, led many mothers with a limited understanding of the situation to an excessive concentration on the task, with the result that children in a small family are deluged with care and affection. Children so watched and tended have little opportunity to develop their capacities for initiative and self-reliance, and emotional attitudes are often generated which make later adjustments to adult life difficult. Furthermore, the mother develops a tendency to prolong her task and to maintain as long as possible the dependent parent-child relationship, which she regards as the essential part of her "profession." This inhibits the development

in the child of the independence and self-reliance necessary for adult life and prevents him from forming natural friendships with persons of his own age. Girls are more likely than boys to be subjected to this hypertrophy of family bonds, because they have fewer contacts outside the home and are thus more at the mercy of their parents. The effect is often seen in college students who worry incessantly about the "sacrifice" which their parents have made in sending them to college and show an unwillingness to participate in wholesome pleasure because of the necessity of using all of their time for the pursuit of some utilitarian end.

Courses of training for motherhood have been introduced into many schools and colleges, and, despite the occasional criticisms, have done much to discipline and direct the prospective mother's purely instinctive attitude by imparting a rational conception of the goal to be achieved by maternal care. It has been suggested that this beneficial attitude might be promoted by the mother's cultivation of extraneous interests, and that the children's development and growth to maturity would thereby be made easier for all. The mother's cultivation of such extraneous interests has become more necessary as the size of the family has diminished and as the use of mechanical conveniences has lightened the burden of home duties. Domestic courses for young women have, as indicated, proved unpopular on occasion, and the reason for this may be traced to the disposition of certain enthusiasts to force this course of instruction upon all women students regardless of their plans for future work. Then, too, the content of many such courses has embraced only the training necessary for the physical care of the child in infancy, and later problems of child welfare and family relationships have been omitted.

The Enhanced Importance of the Child. One of the chief causes of an increased interest in child welfare is the declining birth rate and the recognition by states that child life must be conserved if the rate of population growth is to be maintained. President Roosevelt was among the first to call attention to state responsibility for the welfare of the child, and it was due largely to his

influence that more adequate statistics relating to family life and child welfare were gathered. To a meeting of persons interested in the improvement of family relations he said:

Questions like the tariff and the currency are of literally no consequence whatsoever compared with the vital question of having the unit of our social life, the home, preserved. One of the most unpleasant and dangerous features of our American life is the diminishing birth rate, the loosening of the marital tie among the native American families.

One of the first features of child life to receive attention was the high death rate among infants born into poor homes and the apparently remediable social ills associated with this high infant mortality rate. Many eugenists opposed to a more rapid rate of increase among the poorer classes believed and taught that any measures looking toward a decreased mortality rate among this group was biologically harmful to society and therefore to be discouraged until such time as the poor could be induced to limit the size of their families. It is generally believed, however, that a better standard of living essential to a reduction of infant mortality among the poor is usually accompanied by a lowered birth rate, so that a serious social situation is not likely to be provoked by efforts made to save the lives of infants. The Federal Children's Bureau conducted a study of infant mortality in various localities for a period of several years and in 1925 published a summary of their conclusions based on the records of 23,000 infants born in eight cities and on the mortality records for all children under one year of age. These conclusions are worth consideration.

Causes of Infant Mortality. One factor making for a high death rate of infants among the poor was found to be the large number of children in the family, for after the first birth the mortality rate tended to increase with the order of birth. Popenoe believes that large families have a better chance to produce individuals of exceptional ability, because the oldest child starts life with a slight handicap which later children do not suffer. However, the chances of survival for the later arrivals in the family seem to be appreciably less than for those born earlier, except in the case of

first children, among whom the death rate is measurably higher. This phenomenon can be explained largely in terms of economic pressure which increases with the growth of the family, for when this factor is discounted the death rate among the later orders very largely disappears. The death rate for infants seems to be more closely regulated by the financial situation of the parents than by the birth rate — a crude and only approximately effective manner of keeping the size of the family proportionate to the family income. Infants of mothers under 20 years of age showed a death rate higher than that for any other age group except that for mothers over 40 years of age. It may be, however, that the age of the mother is not so important a factor in this death rate as the social and economic conditions surrounding early marriage and the lack of training and experience on the part of the young mother. The mortality rate was found to be higher for infants born at short intervals after preceding births, and thus emphasized the need for information which would permit of the proper intervals between births. Employment of the mother before the birth of her child was also accompanied by a high infant mortality rate, as was her employment in the first year of his life and the artificial feeding which followed upon such employment. When the father's earnings were low, rates for all causes were highest even when allowance was made for all of the other factors operative in these cases. The presence of intermediate factors in the chain of causation did not seem to lessen the responsibility of low family income as a primary cause. The fact that the mother in families where earnings of the father were low did not receive adequate medical aid and attention when the child was born, and that in many cases she was forced to seek employment during the first year of the infant's life, operated further to increase the already high mortality in this economic group.

Care of Dependent Children. Parallel with the increased interest in the child in the home has gone a greater interest in the child who has been separated from his family by the poverty or death of his parents. The early years of the nineteenth century witnessed

the growth of a large number of institutions for the care of orphaned children, and the popularity of this form of charity led numerous wealthy persons to devote their fortunes to the establishment of orphanages as monuments to their charitable impulses. In many cases these orphanages served a useful purpose for children who otherwise would have lacked physical care. As the facilities of the orphanages developed, however, it became evident that many parents were using their hospitality as a means of escaping their responsibilities, and that many children who were not orphans were being subjected to institutional care. The routine established in these orphanages, while it made a great appeal to visitors, was observed by persons in close contact with the life of institutional children to be destructive of personality and initiative. A visitor to one of the larger orphanages in England in 1864 describes the life as follows:

As our party, numbering some sixty or seventy, entered we beheld about one hundred and twenty girls sitting at work at low desks — all clothed alike in blue print frocks and neat pinafores with their hair cut short behind but arranged with the greatest neatness. On a signal from the principal teacher who was stationed on a small platform with a desk in front, the girls all stood up and placed their hands behind them. At another signal one of the orphans struck up a cheerful song which the rest at once joined in and all marched out in single file with as much precision in their steps as any of our modern volunteer corps would exhibit. The effect of this sight was really very striking and he who can witness unmoved these helpless orphans winding their way between the desks to the music of the touching songs which they sang, one after another, must indeed be made of very impenetrable materials.¹

As the protest against the rigid routine of institutional life began to make itself felt, numerous devices were suggested to secure for dependent children some of the personal freedom and individual treatment which children in their own homes enjoyed. The cottage plan, modeled on the ideal of the home, was adopted in many cases, while in other cases institutions for child welfare began to arrange for the placement of children in foster homes. Recent

¹ Taylor, W. E., *Ashley Down*. London, 1864.

studies have tended to show that even poor homes give better results in child care than do any institutions which have yet been developed and methods for placing children in foster homes have developed rapidly. Agencies for child placing state that the demand for children for foster homes far exceeds the available supply, and that the chief part of the task remains the development of methods for properly placing children in homes and supervising them until the first difficulties of adjustment have passed. Along with the movement for placing children in homes has gone the attempt to keep children in their own homes unless there is some reason other than poverty for breaking up the home. Children are more economically cared for in their own homes than in institutions, and unless the health or depravity of their parents makes the maintenance of the home seem inadvisable, it is generally regarded as better to hold the home together by giving whatever assistance is necessary until the economic crisis is past.

Supplements to Home Care for the Child. There is as much need for the development of suitable institutions to supplement the home care of the child as there is for the betterment of the child's care in the home itself. The functions performed by the large and self-sufficing rural family in socializing and training and giving recreational facilities for the child cannot be performed by the diminished American family in the city apartment. Of foremost importance for the young child is contact with his contemporaries under supervised conditions. At present these contacts are provided among the poor by casual association on the street and playground; and among the well-to-do, either by expensive nurseries and schools or through family connections. With the diminishing size of the family it becomes important to provide **these** contacts by means of other social agencies. Other agencies, for recreation, for the promotion of mental and physical health, and for the study of child problems are beginning to develop to meet the need of the child whose arena of development has passed to an increasing extent from the home.

XI

THE HYPERTROPHY OF FAMILY BONDS

Intensification of Family Bonds. Current literature and drama have done much to portray the hardship and suffering caused by the binding nature of family ties—a condition to which large numbers of individuals are subject. Far from contributing to individual development, the “good home” in many cases acts as a hampering factor in personal growth by so absorbing the interests and attention of young persons that their fitness for other social relationships is permanently impaired. Affectional bonds of a particularly deep and absorbing nature between parents and children may be developed and fostered when efforts are made to center the attention of the children on family and domestic interests. It has been observed that these early attachments, if sufficiently intense, may inhibit normal development to maturity and produce in adults desiccated and impoverished personalities.

Adults also encounter the difficulties which grow out of the firmly knit ties of family relationships. Many of these difficulties can be attributed to the current belief regarding the nature of the family bonds. It is often assumed that two persons at the time of their marriage enter into a state where their needs for social life and intercourse are largely satisfied by their association with each other. The assumption of the legal bond presumes not only a common residence under the same roof, but a sharing of income, of friends, and of intellectual interests. Speaking of this enforced association of the members of the conventional family, George Bernard Shaw says:

In the middle class, where the segregation of the artificially limited family in its little brick box is horribly complete, bad manners, ugly dress, awkwardness, cowardice, peevishness, and all the petty vices of

personality flourish like mushrooms in a cellar. . . . Home life as we understand it is no more natural to us than a cage is to a cockatoo. Its grave danger to the nation lies in its narrow views, its petty tyrannies, its false social pretences, its endless grudges and squabbles, its sacrifice of a boy's future by setting him to earn money to help the family when he should be in training for his adult life and the sacrifice of the girl's chances by making her a slave to sick or selfish parents, its unnatural packing into little brick boxes of little parcels of humanity of ill-assorted ages, with the old scolding or beating the young for behaving like young people and the young hating and thwarting the old for behaving like old people and all the other ills unmentionable that arise from excessive segregation.¹

The inability of individuals to conceive a manner of living different from that which they have known from childhood is seen in their attitude of inevitability toward many of the handicaps and limitations which family life places upon them, and which are by no means inextricably associated with their observance of legal forms. Many women of housekeeping proclivities suffer marked deterioration of powers and charm of personality after a few years of married life, although the new duties which they have assumed do not, by their nature or extent, impel them to such a course of self-immolation. Many women make a brave effort to continue an independent existence through several years of married life, but eventually admit defeat by sinking into the conventional *rôle* of dependent wife performing a small amount of housework and participating in the social activities of the neighborhood. The subtle temptation offered by the security and leisure of her position, in addition to the pressure which is brought to bear upon her by other wives of her acquaintance, make the pursuance of any definite task or ambition virtually impossible. Leisure of a cultivated and discriminating type cannot be gainsaid as one of the prized blessings of life; but the leisure of women in present-day America rarely leads to anything but mere idleness. Moreover, the close association into which the married pair are driven not only deprives them of the refreshing contacts and friendships which

¹ Preface to *Getting Married*.

they might form in a less restricted life, but shuts them in with each other in a way that deprives their union of most of its possibilities for development. A large part of the stodginess and the lack of adaptability found in the case of middle-aged persons can be attributed to the unvarying monotony of their home life and family relationships and the handicaps placed upon their seeking new friendships and fresh interests. The unconcealed eagerness with which the acknowledged pillars of society throw off the restraint of their family bonds to seek freedom while on vacation from the ties of home suggests nothing so much as small boys when school is let out. Much of the difficulty arises in connection with the convention surrounding the family life. Persons in marriage are assumed to be "happy" and they fear that the seeking of new contacts and interests may announce to the world their failure to attain that emotional state which they are popularly supposed to enjoy. That it is sometimes secretly admitted is a matter for shame and concealment. Edward Carpenter has confronted this question in "Love's Coming of Age":

The married pair thus driven into the closest continual contact with each other are put through an ordeal which might well cause the stoutest affection to quail — it is hardly necessary to say not only how dull a place this makes the home but also how narrowing it acts on the lives of the married pair. However appropriate the union may be in itself it cannot be good that it should degenerate — as it tends to degenerate so often — and where man and wife are most faithful to each other — into a mere egoism *à deux*. And right enough no doubt as a great number of such unions actually are, it must be confessed that the bourgeois marriage as a rule, and just in its most successful and pious and respectable form, carries with it an odious sense of stuffiness and narrowness, moral and intellectual; and that the type of Family which it provides is too often like that which is disclosed when on turning over a large stone we disturb an insect home that seldom sees the light.

Handicaps to Children. Regrettable as are the results in the case of adults, the effect on the children of close family life is even more damaging. The close association in the home environment and the large amount of supervision which is exercised over all of

the social contacts of young persons bring to maturity individuals whose opinions on all questions of social or public importance are so firmly fixed that they remain virtually impervious to any ideas or suggestions not in harmony with the patterns of thought imparted to them by their parents. It is for this reason that "thinking" or any active discussion of social questions by college students is so difficult to obtain. To any questions with regard to politics or economics they give the platitudinous responses which they have imbibed from their elders, and the response of one young person from a good middle-class home is an exact repetition of the opinions and sentiments of his contemporaries. Far from having been "socialized" in the home, the loyalties and understandings which young people have developed there are of the narrowest possible type; in most cases it requires the strain and stress of living in a situation calling for constant active participation in community affairs to adjust them acceptably to any but the smallest group of personal associates. Moreover, in the economic pursuits of early adulthood they are often hampered by their failure to comprehend human nature and characters of a type different from their family associates. Consciousness of class, of religious and political and sectional differences, and other disruptive tendencies in the social life are developed and greatly intensified by the close associations of home.

Moreover, manners of dealing with our associates as developed in family life are not well adapted to the broader social life. Home manners of frankness, of lack of restraint in speaking one's mind, of ill-concealed differences of opinion and thinking are not likely to secure good relationships outside of the home circle, and such manners, if put into practice elsewhere, are considered distinctly "bad." Most of the manners which the child has learned in the home must be unlearned before he is fitted for any broader association. The function of the school is here apparent, and the increasing necessity of sending children away to school at an early age gives recognition of the inadequacy of the home as an agency for training young children. But even here the influence of the

home makes itself felt in an insistence on the part of the parents that the institution maintain a "home atmosphere," and that the routine be as closely as possible an approximation of the home activities. Moreover, many parents of means interfere in the management of institutions to protect their children from competing on terms of equality with other children, and this serves to extend the limitation of home life.

Getting Away from Home. The problem of getting away from home and establishing another center of interest is one of the most difficult in the life of the adolescent, and usually is accompanied by great disturbance both for himself and for his parents. Even in the case of individuals who are trained for parenthood, the problem has been presented to them as one centering about the early years of the child's life, and they are at a loss to understand the situations arising in connection with later developmental phases. Because of the atmosphere of sentiment and decided loyalties developed in the home, many young persons are assailed with feelings of great misgiving and self-reproach when they begin to develop "outside" interests and associations. Parents often foster this attitude by manifesting jealousy of any person or influence which tends to distract the attention of their offspring from their primary interests and loyalties. Then, too, parents in some cases indulge their natural desires to give protection and tenderness at the expense of their children, and foster in the latter a dependence on parental affection which makes it difficult to remain away from home or to adjust naturally and easily to any other life. The number of necessary contacts in the process of securing an education and training outside the home environment have a fortunate tendency to offset the bad effects of centering attention on the family circle. The greater freedom allowed by convention to boys assures for them a greater likelihood of being able to make the normal adjustments of adult life, but there are many instances where development in this direction is thwarted by the deliberate attempt on the part of the parents—particularly the mother—to hold their affection and loyalty. Fathers as a rule are less likely than

mothers to handicap their children by an undue display of affection — especially when the latter have made motherhood a profession and are therefore likely to make an attempt to hold on when they see their task slipping away from them.

Over-domesticating Girls. In the case of girls this over-development of family affection is likely to be disastrous because their freedom of action outside the home is so limited by convention that they are almost totally unprotected against the pronounced loyalties of the domestic environment. This excessive devotion leads young women to the assumption of an undue share of family responsibilities, and leaves the male members of the home free to devote themselves to the pursuit of personal advancement. Young women in college manifest, in many cases, an undue sensitiveness and an exaggerated feeling of gratitude with regard to the sacrifices which their parents have made for them. Escape from home influences is thus rendered more difficult, and the development of women to a self-respecting and independent maturity is rendered less likely. Family crises are used as an excuse to interrupt professional activities of young women when the same circumstances would not be considered adequate justification for disturbing the routine of their brothers' occupational endeavors.

The Burden of the Family for the Poor. The hypertrophy of family bonds is seen at its worst in the case of the poor. Because of the economic conditions under which they live, the children are regarded as economic assets after the minimum of educational requirements has been met. Since in the majority of cases industry has not combined to pay a wage sufficient for maintenance of the workers during their working period and during the major emergencies of life, such as sickness, unemployment, and old age, the tie of blood kinship is relied upon to supply these deficiencies. Because of the family relation, it is held justifiable to force young boys and girls to seek employment before they have received training sufficient for an efficient productive life. During later years when these same persons are endeavoring to rear children of their own under the handicaps imposed upon them by their lack of early

educational advantages, they are required to burden themselves and their children still further by contributing to the support of old persons whose only claim upon them is that they chance to be related by ties of blood. This failure to view rationally the handicaps imposed by family bonds prevents progress in the solution of some of our most troublesome problems in industry.

PART III
THE DISORGANIZATION OF FAMILY LIFE

THE PROBLEM OF EARLY MARRIAGE

Child Marriage in Early American Days. The possibility of economically successful marriages for the very young was one of the most potent factors in breaking down the deeply-intrenched patriarchal form of family life which the English had brought with them to this country. The rapid development and expansion which began in the early years of our national existence made it possible for young people to escape the parental roof with every opportunity to succeed in the many occupations which were open to them, in keeping taverns, in fishing, in shipping, in farming, etc. Marriage arrangements brought about by cautious elders and relatives, which had been the rule during the more settled periods of the colonial era, were readily set aside by young people who eloped to the nearest public official for the solemnization of marriages arranged according to their own inclination and convenience. Foreign visitors in the country were greatly impressed by the prevalence of marriage among the very young, and they were no less astounded that the young people seemed able and willing to make their domestic and family arrangements without parental assistance. Thackeray, when he visited the United States, was astonished and shocked at the inclination which these young married persons evinced for hotel life in preference to separate dwellings of their own. Many young persons had married before they were able or willing to assume the responsibilities of maintaining separate homes, and they had gladly taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the family hotels which had sprung up to meet their need. In many cases, however, such convenient arrangements were not long maintained, for families were large and

virtually unlimited, so that after the first few years of married life separate dwellings were preferred.

The English common law relating to age of marriage — 12 for girls and 14 for boys — was recognized in most of the states during this early period, and marriage often took place very shortly after the legal age was reached. Child marriages were seldom censured, and their prevalence was not regarded as cause for alarm. The sympathy of neighbors and friends was, in fact, generally with the eloping couple, and parents who refused their blessing and forgiveness after the *fait accompli* were regarded as harsh and unsympathetic. There is slight evidence that early marriages worked any great hardship to the persons most concerned. There was little schooling for either boys or girls after the age of 12 or 14 unless they were exceptionally fortunate in their lot, so that their education was not interrupted by their new responsibilities. The most valuable part of the educational equipment in the pre-factory era was the training in agriculture and in the domestic industries and arts which young persons received from their parents at home. A grasp of the fundamentals of these subjects was of necessity secured at a very early age by the children of a large and busy household. Moreover, instruction and advice by parents and neighbors could be continued, after marriage, when such assistance was needed. Conditions of frontier life produced an early physical maturity, so that a boy of 16 or 17 could be expected to do a man's work, and the returns from his labor were often as ample as those of a more mature man. Under such circumstances there was little reason why he should not set up a separate establishment at an early age and enjoy the freedom from parental authority which such separation gave him. Girls, too, matured early and a young unmarried woman of 18 or 20 was looked upon as an old maid, and her chances of changing her lonely state were considered dubious unless she could bring herself to marry a widower with children. Early marriage for women involved much child-bearing and an endless round of domestic duties which apparently shortened the lives of many and left their husbands free to find

new wives among the younger women. However, the status of the married woman was much to be preferred to that of the unmarried woman and the hardships of her life were logically attributed to the trying conditions of frontier life rather than to the early age at which she married.

New Aspects of the Question under Modern Conditions. It is only with the developing complexity of our economic and social life that child marriage has come to be regarded as an evil. Occupations now open to young persons require a longer period of training and education if advancement is to be hoped for, and there is a far greater difference than formerly between the relative earnings of a boy and a man in all save the most unskilled occupations. At the present time, early marriage means shortening the period of education at a time when education has become more formal and institutional, and probably limiting the young man for the remainder of his life to unskilled labor and low pay. His chances of "rising to the top" without training and education are fewer, so that an early marriage fixes with greater certainty his occupational and economic situation as an unskilled wage earner than it did in the period of rapidly shifting fortunes and changing occupational status characteristic of our early history.

The Effects of Early Marriage on Women. For the young woman the consequences of early marriage are proportionately more serious in view of the improvement in her educational and occupational opportunities. At a time when formal education was virtually non-existent for a young woman, and when the only training which she received was training in domestic arts by her mother, early marriage involved few disadvantages. Refusal to marry meant not more but less freedom for her since she remained in the home and under the control of her parents, to whom her duty of obedience was no less as an adult than as a child. Marriage under these circumstances liberated her at least from the tutelage of her mother and even though she was in duty bound to obey her husband, his supervision of her work was of necessity less constant and unremitting than that of her mother. Furthermore,

she enjoyed an honored and respected — even though subordinate — place in the household and in the community. The bearing of many children was regarded as inevitable, and although for some women it entailed much hardship and early death it was not resented, for the compensations were known to be many. But with the diminished economic incentive to rear a large family in recent years and the heavy burdens involved in supporting children, young persons have been desirous of escaping the task, especially since it is no longer regarded as inevitable.

Physicians now believe that early child-bearing involves undue hardship for the young mother and a diminished opportunity for life on the part of her offspring. A study of infant mortality made by the Children's Bureau in Baltimore shows that the children of mothers under 20 have a higher mortality than those of mothers in the later age groups, except in the case of women over 40. Dr. W. B. Cannon, Professor of Physiology at Harvard University, believes that child-bearing during the years immediately after puberty may result in considerable harm to the mother, because the body has not had time to store up a surplus of vigor during this period of rapid growth. Carr-Saunders cites evidence that early child-bearing results in a marked tendency for the young wife to die prematurely from tuberculosis or some other respiratory disease, or from an ovarian complication. The awful effects, biologically, of child marriage in India have been described by physicians and travelers, although hygiene and medical practice are in such a retarded state of development that it is hard to say how much of this suffering is due to the single factor of child marriage. Other arguments are given to prove that early marriages result in a diminution of fertility and a lessened rate of population increase. Popenoe takes a contrary view of the matter and urges that the imaginary evils of early marriage are greatly exaggerated, and that such marriages among the better classes would be advantageous from a eugenic point of view, because the fertility of women, he believes, is greatest during the early period of their maturity.

It would be difficult to determine the physiological effects of child-bearing upon the women of the present generation, because the women in the United States who give birth to children at an early age are mostly in the lower income groups, and the conditions under which they bear and attempt to rear their children are far from favorable. It is quite possible that, given good health and favorable economic conditions, a young woman "of the better stock" might begin at the age of fifteen and produce healthy children until the age of forty-five without any great injury to her health or to the chances of survival of her offspring. Many women of the older generations accomplished this feat under the most difficult economic and domestic conditions; given the improved health and bodily vigor of the modern girl, there would seem to be no biological reason why she should not accomplish the same feat or even a greater one if her inclinations and those of her husband should lie in that direction.

With the increased opportunities for self-development and the widening range of enjoyments which come with mental development, there has been a tendency on the part of the more intelligent classes to turn from this frenzied round of procreation and devote themselves to other forms of usefulness, both personal and social. Economic conditions no longer warrant such rapid reproduction. Moreover, preoccupation with the responsibilities of family life from an early age hinders the development of personality, especially in the case of the young women concerned. It is customary for women to marry men older than themselves, and if while they are still children they should pass from the tutelage of their parents to the direction and control of their husbands they would have slight opportunity to develop adult traits of character.

Child Marriage Among the Poor. Recent social studies indicate that an overwhelming proportion of early marriages takes place among the lower economic groups, and that these young persons begin their family life under the handicap not only of immaturity but of unfavorable economic conditions as well. The census of 1920 reveals that in the United States there were 12,834

girls 15 years of age, and 5,554 girls under 15 years of age, married in that year. A total of 18,388 were still under 16. Further, 825 female children 15 years old or less were either widowed or divorced. Richmond and Hall estimate that in the United States at that time there were 343,000 women and girls who began their married life as child brides within the preceding thirty-six years. Climatic and geographical influences were shown to be of influence, and it was noted that early marriages were more frequent in the large cities of the South than in the North. This was attributed to the earlier physical maturity of the girls and also to the social conditions prevailing there. It was observed also that foreign-born girls married somewhat earlier than native girls, but that this habit of early marriage did not continue after the first generation. Only 6.3 per cent of the native girls of foreign parentage 15 to 19 years of age were married, but 14.3 per cent of this group of the foreign-born were married while only 13.3 of the native white girls of native parentage were married. Of the 18,388 married girls under 16 in 1920, 11,959 were native white of native parentage. Early marriages are more frequent in rural than in urban conditions, and rural influences have affected large numbers of the native white population. In the southern Appalachian Mountains early marriage is still the rule, and an unmarried girl at the age of 18 is regarded as an old maid. Such communities are isolated and cut off from many contacts with the outside world. Recreations are few and the social life centers largely in the family members, who pass their lives in drab and impoverished surroundings. The entire interest of the community is therefore confined to a few elemental situations of birth, marriage, and the cost of things in this life and the hope of salvation in the next, so that there is little to inspire young people with personal ambition or hope of betterment.

Richmond and Hall have classified their observations as to the causes of the child marriages included in their study and have judged them to be as follows: inadequate home protection, unhappy home conditions, exploitation and fraud, attempt to escape

compulsory school attendance or state control, and economic and occupational conditions. Added to the motives which impelled the young people themselves to marry early is the desire of the parents to exploit them for financial gain by seeking some form of employment for them before they have completed the state educational requirements.

The state laws with regard to the age at marriage have done little to discourage the marriage of children. Although the tendency to early marriage is produced by the social conditions which we have described, it is true also that more stringent and effective legislation might operate to prevent some of the less desirable effects of child marriage by forbidding the issuance of licenses. Marriages of young girls who have become pregnant are in many cases ordered by the court in order to protect the mother and child from social ostracism and disgrace, but in recent years a reaction from this point of view has been occasioned by those who believe that the interests of mother and child can be better served without marriage by making some adequate provision for the infant apart from its mother and allowing her to continue her training.

Richmond and Hall have observed that seventeen states fix no legal age at which people may marry without the consent of their parents — and in nine of these states the common law ages are formally recognized. In two states the marriageable age is 12 for girls and 15 for boys, in one state it is 13 for girls and 14 for boys, and in three states it is 14 for girls and 16 for boys. Only ten states fix the minimum age by prescribing a minimum age for license issuance. In most of the states the type of enforcement provided for in the act regulating age of marriage makes possible numerous evasions, so that children who have been refused a license at one place merely utilize the knowledge thus gained to seek a license at another place, carefully suppressing the information which was the ground for the first refusal. In 1925 the minimum marriage age for girls was 12 in twenty-five states; 14 in nine states; 15 in eight states; 16 in seventeen states; and 18 in only one state.

Many persons are opposed to raising the marriage age for

women and girls on moral grounds. In India it is believed that the highest intensity of the sexual passion can be evaded if marriage is arranged at or before puberty, and that the spiritual energy thus released can be utilized for the development of many personal virtues. It is believed also that raising the age of marriage would increase the prevalence of immorality. Doubtless, the extra-legal raising of the age of marriage by the operation of economic laws has had this effect in some measure, but since many child marriages of the present time result in annulment or desertion, it is difficult to see how the operation of a rule to prevent the marriages would produce worse results than are now produced by the marriages themselves.

The Necessity for State Control. It has long been argued that marriage below the legal age should be allowed if the parents consent. Since most early marriages take place in those families where the state has had to intervene for the protection of children against parental exploitation, it seems unreasonable to leave this important matter to the discretion of ignorant and often selfish parents. Children are not allowed to work in factories, or to cease attendance at school, below the legal age, even with their parents' consent. It seems unreasonable, therefore, to allow parental discretion in the more important matter of the marriage of children below the legal age, especially since the close connection between child welfare and early marriage under present-day conditions is evident. Marriage is a matter which should be regulated by the state, not by parents, and the legislation of the past few years has shown evidences of a slow but steady advance in that direction.

XIII

FAMILY DESERTION BY PARENTS

What is Implied by Desertion. Divorce is not so common among the poor as it is among the middle and upper classes. The applicants for divorce make formal announcement before society and the law that they wish a severance of family relationships, but the mere taking of this formal step implies that the parties concerned stand ready to assume whatever responsibility toward each other and toward their children the court may impose. But the deserter exhibits no such attitude of willingness to assume the responsibility which society may place upon him through a court order. His attitude, as expressed by his actions, is to escape from the responsibilities which have already been imposed upon him by the existence of a dependent family and to find a way to a more desirable manner of life. The unskilled wage earner is not prepared to adopt a deliberate and therefore expensive method of settling his family difficulties, but when he has reached his limit of endurance in the domestic situation he is likely to take his departure, unannounced, and with information as to his whereabouts as carefully concealed as his plans permit. Moreover, he leaves his family without means of support, and it is their applications for assistance to the philanthropic agencies or to the courts of domestic relations which furnish the basis for statistics of desertion. For "desertion," as the term is commonly used in reference to social and family problems, has no reference to the type of desertion which is alleged as the basis for divorce, nor does it refer to the families in which the departure of the parents has not resulted in problems of dependency and relief. Desertion in the vocabulary of the social worker implies abandonment by one or both parents under such circumstances that the community is forced to assume

the burden of care or support which was formerly borne by the parents as natural guardians.

The City as a Factor in Desertion. Desertion is usually assumed to be a phenomenon of urban life, because nearly all of the available information bearing on the problem has been furnished by social and legal agencies in the cities. The more varied occupational opportunities of the city and the lack of neighborhood or community sentiment as a controlling social force have been held responsible for the greater amount of family desertion in the city. Home conditions, too, are more likely to be crowded and unattractive, and the strain of city life is an aggravating factor in family discord. Because of the greater personal freedom possible in a densely populated community, men or women can more easily escape from home without being discovered. It is well known that desertion in rural life occurs, but since no social or legal agencies deal with the question, record of these occurrences cannot be secured. Insofar as desertion creates a problem for organized social work, at the present time it is limited to the cities. It is assumed by some social agencies that the male parent feels less scruple in deserting under conditions of city life, since he is well aware that there exist organized social agencies which will shield his family from the utmost consequences of his desertion. In many cases this belief is responsible for withholding aid until efforts have been made to find the missing parent, lest desertion be encouraged by too-ready relief of the hardships of those who are left behind. This point of view does not take into account the prejudice and dislike which many of the poor have for organized philanthropy and their willingness to make use of its services only as a last resort; nor does it take account of the ready sympathy and aid given by relatives and neighbors and church agencies in cases where no organized philanthropy exists — and the great encouragement which knowledge of this unorganized philanthropy might give to a doubting husband wavering on the brink of desertion. Since the chances of the deserter's family receiving care and sympathy are as great in the communities where no organized charity exists, it can hardly

be stated that the deciding factor in the act of desertion is a knowledge that there are such agencies in city communities.

It is difficult to secure a census of desertions occurring within a definite area, but the records of charitable and philanthropic agencies show that desertion is an important causal factor in dependency. Charitable societies report that the percentage of desertion cases among the total number of cases ranges from 25.5 in Indianapolis to 3 per cent in St. Louis for the years 1913 and 1914.¹ The median percentage of cases in which desertion had occurred was 8.1 per cent for the thirty-seven societies reporting. It was reported that in Chicago desertion had decreased considerably within recent years. The records of the United Charities show that less than 9 per cent of the families receiving help in 1922 had been deserted, as compared with 13 per cent in 1916.²

Men desert more frequently than women. The opportunity and hope of bettering a situation appears to be more promising in the case of men than in the case of women, who are more limited in their opportunity to earn a livelihood, and who, moreover, are more firmly bound to their homes by a closer association with the children. Desertion by wives does occur, however, and the problems thus created for social agencies are often very difficult—more so than in the cases of desertion by husbands, because if the husband deserts the financial aid may be sufficient to relieve the situation, whereas if the wife is absent it is often more difficult to arrange for holding the family together.

Causes of Desertion. It was formerly believed that desertion was caused largely by poverty and the husband's inability to improve his situation. It was discovered, however, that there were more deserters among the skilled and semi-skilled workers than among day laborers of the unskilled type. The Chicago study revealed that, although few deserting husbands had received high wages and very few had been in positions requiring skilled work, nevertheless there were still fewer who came from the lowest

¹ Eubank, *A Study of Family Desertion.*

² Mowrer, E. R., *Family Disorganization.*

income groups, the unskilled day laborers. In the case of the husbands of the lowest income groups it may be that their attention is so taken up with the economic struggle for existence that they have little time or energy to consider a betterment of their condition. Then, too, desertion requires some initiative and some hope of improvement, neither of which is characteristic of the lowest group.

Children in Deserted Families. Contrary to the common belief, children are not always the means of keeping parents together during periods of domestic difficulty. The organized charities would, of course, be less likely to have records of desertion where no children were involved, but Miss Brandt found in her study of desertion that in only 3.48 per cent of the families were there no children. In fact, social workers have observed the occurrence of so many desertions just prior to the birth of an additional child in the family that they have listed this as one of the chief causes of desertion. It was observed that the man with an already insufficient income viewed the increasing disproportion which was bound to come with a new member to his family with such dismay that he became completely discouraged, resigned the task of family maintenance, and disappeared. It is folly to urge such a man to "face his responsibilities," since clearly he is not responsible for the unlimited family. It speaks much for the stability of social institutions and habits, and for the great devotion displayed within the family relationships, that desertion by men does not occur more frequently. With a woman, the situation is so different as to make comparison almost worthless. Her relationship with the child is so much closer, and her opportunities for self-support are so much less, that remaining with her family offers fewer difficulties than do any of the courses open to her. Desertion of children by their parents has, however, been one of the chief factors in creating child dependency. According to Miss Brandt, 574 deserting husbands left behind 544 wives and 1,665 children, of whom 80.3 per cent were under 14 years of age. Moreover, it is believed that broken homes occasioned by the desertion of fathers are an important

factor in juvenile delinquency, since the economic hardship is accentuated by the absence of the father and the problem of discipline rendered more difficult by the enforced employment of the mother away from the home. Miss Breckenridge found that 8 per cent of the delinquent children in her studies had been deserted by the father.

The factors in the immediate family situation which give rise to the personal motives for desertion are many. A scolding and nagging wife has been found to be an excuse for desertion in many cases, as have sexual incompatibility, resentment at the restraints of family life, laziness, intemperance, neglect of home and children, immorality, and many other causes. The Chicago study of 1921 revealed the fact that more Negro husbands, and fewer Russian, Swedish, Bohemian, and Canadian husbands assumed the *rôle* of deserters than one might expect from the proportion which these nationalities contributed to the total population.³ Such statements, however, have no significance unless it is known what proportion these racial and nationalistic groups form of the total economic class in which desertion occurs more frequently. The personal motives alleged by deserting husbands are comparable with those alleged as causes for divorce, and the fact that desertion rather than divorce was resorted to may be explained in terms of the economic and social difficulties mentioned above.

Dealing with Deserting Fathers. The method of dealing with the deserter has varied at different periods in the development of social work and with the various societies. Formerly there was a disposition to find the deserting husband, bring him back, and make him realize the enormity of his offense by serving a term in jail. Family reconciliations were rendered difficult by these measures, and the motive for another desertion was thus supplied. Later, doubts were expressed as to the advisability of exerting legal and moral pressure to secure family unity, although the advantage of enforcing support for young children and dependent wives seems everywhere to have been recognized. Prosecution of

³ Mowrer, E. R., *op. cit.*, p. 93.

the deserting parent was in many cases rendered difficult or impossible by the unwillingness of the abandoned partner to give aid in this step. Such restraint of feeling, however, has not always been respected by the social agencies, and various forms of pressure have been exerted to force the unwilling partner to assist in the prosecution; in some cases further aid was refused until such action was taken. The "weakness" of the wife or husband in refusing to prosecute underlies family unity and confidence, and the only justification of the social agencies in destroying it is the constant necessity of keeping expenditures down to the lowest possible figure. The tendency of social workers to see situations in terms of principles and responsibilities which cannot be altered or evaded may in some measure account for their failure to deal wisely with such situations. According to some standards, a man is "responsible" for his family no matter what circumstances may have induced him to desert, and the justice of this principle must be upheld by punishing the deserter and employing stern measures to hold him to his responsibilities in the future. It is fortunate for the possibility of organized charity in the future that more intensive study of family situations has been made in recent years, and that the firmness of principles has been somewhat relaxed in favor of greater justice to the individual.

State Pensions for Deserted Mothers. Fifteen of the states which grant aid to mothers with dependent children place the deserted wife and her dependent children in the same category with widows. Those who favor this provision believe that, since desertion is an important factor in causing child dependency, the state should recognize this fact and make suitable provisions for deserted children by permitting them to be cared for by their mothers at home. Many persons, however, are opposed to such legislation, believing that it will encourage fathers to desert their children, and that deserting fathers will refuse to return if they discover that their families are being cared for. Dexter urges that "of these families a somewhat higher standard should be demanded than of widows and the necessity for breaking them up

appears more frequently.”⁴ These arguments, however, ignore two important facts: First, many deserters do not show sufficient interest to inquire about the welfare of their families or to return if matters are not going well. In many cases, deserters who do return are forcibly brought back; in others, they return from motives of self-interest: because they desire again the comforts of family relationships, because they need aid, or because they have succeeded in getting the vacation for which they left home. If a man has reached the point of deserting his wife and children, he is not likely to be deterred by thoughts of their welfare. Moreover, the maintenance of a child in an institution is more expensive to the state than the maintenance of a child in his own home, and institutional maintenance is far less desirable from the point of view of the welfare of the child. It would seem unwise, therefore, to handicap a child in his opportunities for development with the mistaken hope that his punishment may work some reformation in the conduct of his parent.

It is strange, too, that the staunchest advocates for the maintenance of family bonds should display such distrust of the motives which hold the family together. To hold that fathers remain with their families only because they believe that the children would be left in destitution by their departure is to ignore the instinctive basis of family life and the factors making for its permanence in the present state of social organization.

⁴ Dexter. R. C., *Social Adjustment*, Knopf, 1927.

XIV

WOMEN AS PROSTITUTES

The Degraded Status of the Prostitute. At the present time in the United States there is no occupational pursuit which carries with it such complete loss of social and legal consideration as prostitution. A woman who has entered this profession is believed to have forfeited all claims to respect or fair play. In the name of morality respectable people launch crusades against her, and at times when waves of "reform" sweep through a city she is driven from her home and harried from one locality to another with little or no chance of protection. If her property is taken from her she has little hope of being able to secure recompense, and even an attack on her person is likely to be lightly dismissed because of her degraded status. Leagues to promote social hygiene employ special police to hunt out the prostitute on the streets, and if she is detected in the business of soliciting patronage she is arrested and punished by fine or imprisonment.

The Immunity of the Patron of the Prostitute. Significant in explaining the social attitude toward the prostitute is the fact that when she is arrested and punished for pursuing her occupation, her patron does not share her arrest or punishment. In most cases he is not even required to appear in court to testify regarding the circumstances of her arrest. Prostitution is assumed by legal fiction to be an occupation of significance only to women; the men who bear the expense of maintaining the prostitute, and who participate equally with her in the act characteristic of her occupation, are not regarded as sharing in any respect the disadvantages of her status.

The Antiquity of Prostitution. Yet the prostitute panders to a need as old as the established order of society — the desire on

the part of men for sexual experience without responsibility or permanent association. The ancient Greeks frankly recognized this need, and Demosthenes summarized the situation in his statement: "We have *hetairae* for the sake of pleasure and wives to bear us lawful offspring and to be the faithful guardians of our houses." These women occupied a not unfavorable place in Greek society, and in the later days of Greek civilization they were the intellectuals among women, the musicians and the dancers who made a speciality of entertainment and companionship with men. The rewards as well as the demands for their services appeared to be ample, and though their position lacked some of the elements of security which belonged to the status of wife, their occupation was not a degraded one because of the importance attached to the services which they rendered.

The Christian Attitude toward Prostitution. With the establishment of Christian monogamic marriage, however, all sexual relations outside of marriage were forbidden, and sexual experience was closely bound up by the Church with the economic and social institution of the home. Since family limitation was forbidden, marriage involved the rearing of children on the part of those who were biologically able to reproduce. Now it has always happened that men have urgently desired sexual experience at times, and on occasions when they have not been willing or able to assume lifelong obligations and mutual responsibilities with the partner of their experience, and they have therefore bargained for terms. The Christian theology embodied a fundamental belief in the evil nature of sexual activity. The stigma attached to the indulgence was regarded as partially removed by asking the blessing of religious authorities and by assuming in connection with it the obligation of the home and family. Without these correlative burdens the indulgence of the instinct was held to be highly reprehensible. Today, therefore, the woman who panders to this instinct is regarded as the most degraded of human beings, because she is held responsible not only for her own behavior but also for unsanctioned indulgence by the man.

Modern Prostitution. A modern writer on prostitution has summarized its essential elements as follows: barter, promiscuity, and emotional indifference.¹ The element most characteristic of the prostitute, and the most dangerous of her attributes, is promiscuity, for even within the sanctioned relationship of marriage the other two elements of her trade may exist. A woman who acts as a sexual companion for one man within marriage, though she may be emotionally indifferent or even antagonistic to him, is thereby assured an economic competence for life and occupies the honored status of wife; but if the same woman should sell her favors to a number of different men and receive payment for her services, she would be ranked as a prostitute and her status would be degraded.

Since the prostitute renders a service which has been in demand since the beginning of Christian marriage, and a service which many theologians and moralists have recognized as necessary for its support, one may well ask why her status should be one of such abject degradation. Because of our insistence that legal unions of men and women shall eventuate in families with a heavy weight of economic and social responsibilities, it is at the present time impossible for many young men to acquire a sexual companion until the period of their greatest bodily vigor has passed and the need for sexual experience has somewhat abated. It therefore happens that these men use the one opportunity for sexual experience which they can embrace without assuming the permanent obligation — the prostitute or “daughter of joy” or near-prostitute. Such conduct on their part is condoned by certain elements who regard it as natural and inevitable; but another group, composed largely of women, regard it with horror and dismay. This latter group rely much on “sex education” to produce a change in the young man’s code of conduct and to insure his adherence to a “single” standard of morals until he is able to marry. Such education, however, overlooks the fact that the young man’s conduct is based upon biological development and physiological need, not primarily upon any set of social or ethical ideas which he may en-

¹ Flexner, Abraham, *Prostitution in Europe*. New York, 1914, Century Co.

tain. It is hardly likely, therefore, that education could remove the biological basis for his conduct, although in the case of some persons a measure of control of conduct may be secured. The same reformers who hope to accomplish a change by such educational propaganda attempt also to deal with prostitution by abolishing red light districts and driving prostitutes from the streets.

The Abolition of Segregation. This latter program has apparently accomplished much by breaking up the segregated districts where prostitutes were known to be accessible and driving them out on the streets where their conduct in soliciting subjects them to arrest and punishment. The entire program has apparently lessened the amount of commercialized vice in the country, and by making the life of prostitutes more precarious and difficult has diminished their number. Social workers and persons experienced in dealing with young delinquents agree that the decrease of prostitution has been paralleled by an increase in the number of "nice" girls who have had sexual experience outside of marriage; but because of the development of new sexual standards these girls do not regard themselves as "ruined" or degraded, nor are their chances of making successful marriages greatly affected by their pre-marital experiences. It may be true, therefore, that society by warring on prostitution has forced the question of the extra-marital relation to the foreground of attention in such a way that a more rational and humane method of regulation can be worked out, perhaps by the recognition of certain types of sexual companionships which have hitherto been denied sanction by the conservative and respectable elements of the population.

The Social Background of the Prostitute. Because of the increasing degradation of the prostitute, the recruits to the trade have come from the most ignorant and degraded classes of society. Woolston states that in 1910 there were probably about 200,000 prostitutes in the country, but more recent estimates indicate that the number has decreased since that time. These are for the most part young women, and they do not remain in the profession for many years. They come in disproportionate numbers from the

foreign-born elements of the population and from families where the parents are of foreign birth. The percentage of illiteracy and feeble-mindedness among them is high, and in most cases they have been accustomed to conditions of great poverty from the earliest days of their childhood. In some cases they have been exploited by their parents, who have shown more interest in their wages than in their welfare. Often the parents themselves have been of low moral standards, and their daughters have lived under such conditions of congestion and lack of privacy that they have had little opportunity to develop ordinary reticences and standards of decency. Aside from the poor conditions of their home life, they are subjected in their early years to employment in industries where the hours are long, the surroundings depressing, and the wages very low. Since from their infancy they attach no importance to the conventional standards of life, it is not surprising that some of these girls are attracted by the better pay, the finer clothes, and the greater variety and excitement which they hope to obtain from prostitution. In some cases they remain in the trade only a few months, and in other cases somewhat longer; but rarely do they continue more than a few years. Often they become infected with disease which makes continuation in the business difficult; again, they contract the drug habit and come to the attention of the authorities through its use. Sometimes they retire from the trade and enter one of the unskilled branches of service open to them, and not infrequently they marry. Examples are not unknown of successful homes established by women who earlier had been prostitutes. In many cases they are subjected to long terms in the so-called "reformatories," where the purpose of separating them for a time from society is accomplished. In some of these institutions much is accomplished by teaching young prostitutes and preparing them for some form of useful employment upon their release.

The Problem of Venereal Disease. One of the most serious problems related to prostitution is in connection with the spread of venereal disease. This situation is aggravated by moralists and

reformers who have stopped the spread of information regarding prophylactic measures which would prevent the spread of such diseases. These people believe that, if knowledge of prophylactic safeguards were more widespread, the patronage of the prostitutes would increase rapidly and soon undermine the fundamental structure of the family. It is their belief, and to some extent they are doubtless right, that the fear of disease prevents many young men from visiting prostitutes, but the fact that other young men are not deterred by such fear and continue to spread disease among the women and children of their families does not prevent moralists from attempting to stamp out prostitution in this way. At least some measure of responsibility for the spread of the venereal diseases among women and children can be attributed to these "social hygienists" who have obstructed the progress of medical science by attempts to use their knowledge as one of the props for their system of morality.

The Occasional Prostitute. One of the most perplexing problems for the reformer is the occasional prostitute who for the greater time is employed at some remunerative task from which she derives her livelihood, but who, in order to supplement her income, accepts occasional payments from men for sexual favors. This, however, is a question of wages rather than of moral standards, since the young women in question are often persons of intelligence and ambition who are led to make use of the resources at their command for the increase of their income. To urge young women, whose incomes are insufficient, to forego all amusement and all desire for the good things of life and to spend their evenings and holidays at home amid drab surroundings in order that they may by a series of petty economies avoid debt and be able to contribute to the support of their families, is to make an appeal which has no basis in logic or reason. If a childless woman who is married enjoys unexampled luxury and leisure solely by reason of her function as sexual companion to a man, her position is even less defensible than is that of a girl who is usefully employed most of her time but who occasionally accepts payments for

sexual favors which she renders. The legal bond does little to affect the social usefulness of women who trade on their sex for a livelihood. One of the most amusing situations in our family system occurs when wives who are maintained solely for their services as sexual companions observe with a shudder or with an outburst of righteous indignation the behavior of young women who accept presents from men in return for sexual favors granted outside of the marriage bond.

The problem of prostitution grows inevitably out of the conditions under which our present form of family life is maintained. Among the poor, where families are large, the offspring are so limited in their training and equipment for life that they show little reluctance to enter an occupation which carries with it such inevitable conditions of degradation as does prostitution. Young men, on the other hand, are unable to find a legal opportunity for sexual expression except at the enormous cost of maintaining a home and a family, and consequently they are driven, at great risk to themselves, to seize the only opportunity open to them.

With the increased adaptation of our family form to modern conditions we may expect the evolution of some less burdensome form of legal companionship to meet the need of satisfying young men and women who are not yet prepared to accept the family obligations.

THE UNMARRIED MOTHER AND HER CHILD

Early Punishments. The attitude of society toward the unmarried mother and her child constitutes the most convincing evidence of the vehemence and ruthlessness with which family standards have been enforced. The early Christian fathers demanded strong social condemnation of the unmarried mother, and whenever their influence was powerful the attitude of society became stern and implacable. Because of their belief in the evil nature of woman and her insidious appeal as the temptress of man, they held it advisable to punish her in a way that would make her realize the enormity of her sin. Almost the entire burden of responsibility was laid therefore upon her shoulders, and the conduct of the man was either entirely condoned or he was given some minor punishment. In many cases considerable sympathy was extended to him because of the temptation to which he had been subjected. Women were held entirely responsible for the maintenance of "virtue," and in any case of failure they received the major share of the blame. During the Middle Ages, the punishments involving public humiliation and disgrace became so heavy that many unmarried mothers were driven to kill their children at birth, although they knew that the death penalty would be visited upon them if their misdeed were discovered. The illegitimate child in English common law was declared to be *filius nullius*, without name, without kin, and without claim upon anybody for support. There was no legal recognition of the relationship between the mother and her child, and it was not until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the burden of supporting illegitimate children became heavy, that measures were taken to compel the father, if paternity could be established, to make a financial contribution.

Ernest Freund has pointed out that the most "striking feature of bastardy legislation is its stationary character, indicative of a lack of thought or movement as regards the relation of the father to the illegitimate child or perhaps to a certain extent also of an extreme conservatism of sentiment."

Present Attitude toward the Unmarried Mother. Not only has legislation been slow to reflect the influence of changing economic and social conditions, but the social sentiment of the conservative and respectable classes has been almost as slow to change. Girls who have been unfortunate enough to bear an illegitimate child are known in conservative communities as "ruined," "fallen" or "gone astray," and institutions provided for their reception and assistance are known as "rescue homes," "doors of hope," and "heart's ease," while the process which goes on within these homes is referred to as "reform." Often the young women in question are not received until they have "repented" and given suitable evidence that they mean to "go straight" after the experience. Dr. Carol Aronovici, in gathering data for an unpublished *Study of Illegitimacy*, discovered that five of the maternity hospitals in Philadelphia refused to take unmarried mothers and five others took them only in emergency cases. In the thirty-nine states that have enacted some form of mother's pensions, only two (Michigan and Nebraska) make provision for the unmarried mother, and one other (Wisconsin) makes provision for a "mother without a husband." Twenty-nine states extend the benefits only to mothers of legitimate children, while the others make such specifications as to reputation for good conduct in the community as to exclude the unmarried mother. This stands in marked contrast with the legislation of most European countries, where no discrimination in the matter of grants for child nurture is made between the married mother and the unmarried mother. A few states extend the benefits of workmen's compensation to illegitimate children provided they are being supported by the father at the time of the accident. In some states the unmarried mother is discriminated against in the registration of the birth of her child in

a manner that is not extended to the father of such a child. In six states the law forbids the entry of the name of the father on the birth certificate of an illegitimate child, though not the name of the mother, while in Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York the father's name may be entered only with his consent. In Georgia it is declared that the mother is the only recognized parent of an illegitimate child, though the father may be compelled to contribute to its support.

Rationalization of the Prejudice against Unmarried Mothers. The assumption indulging this treatment of the unmarried mother is that such treatment will discourage illegitimacy and tend to uphold the standards of family life. For this reason Popenoe urges that all measures "which have for object the endeavor to make illegitimate parenthood pleasanter and more respectable and to give to illegitimate children a better start in life must be looked upon with suspicion if not with actual disfavor." The ideal of the correct attitude toward the unmarried mother of a decade ago is shown in the following:

The chief object to be sought is her reclamation to good character and to good womanhood and so to strengthen and guard her as to prevent a recurrence of wrongdoing. *Incidentally* it is proper to take into account her feelings as a mother and to shield her as far as may be properly done from the shame and disgrace to which she is exposed. There need be no scruple about creating an affection in the mother's heart which will increase the pain of parting — The question arises is it right to free the young mother legally from the natural consequences of her error. Providence has ordained certain results which are intended to deter from immorality — We have no right to deal harshly with those who are already under the Divine discipline neither have we the right to interfere with the Creator's method of training and redeeming his erring children. Experience has proved that it is not difficult to find employment for a healthy young woman where she can maintain both herself and her child.

It is apparent that direct or indirect punishment of the unmarried mother takes account of only one parent, and not the one usually considered the aggressor in such matters. Amelioration of

the lot of the unmarried mother, moreover, is usually sought by compelling more support from the father. The bulk of the responsibility for illegitimate children has always been fixed upon the mother, and the desire of modern reformers and social workers to prevent any change in this attitude is evidence of the long acceptance of the non-responsibility of the male in sexual behavior. Fixing the responsibility for illegitimacy more firmly upon young women only guarantees for men a further respite from responsibility, and it is not surprising that they look with disfavor upon any shifting from the conventional attitudes.

Illegitimacy No Measure of Sexual Irregularity. The belief that illegitimacy is a punishment for irregular sexual relations and a measure of the extent of such behavior long ago ceased to have any validity. Mature persons who are sophisticated in sexual matters are careful to avoid untoward results; it is the young and the ignorant who suffer from such misfortune. In 1918, in the registration area of the United States, 45.2 per cent of the unmarried mothers were under 20 years of age, while the nodal age for such girls was from 18 to 19. A study of 500 cases of Negro unmarried mothers in New York City showed the largest group to be in the age groups from 16 to 20; studies in other American cities reveal for both white and colored elements of the population the immaturity of the mothers of the illegitimate children. Nixon, in his study of Australian statistics, points out that the illegitimacy rate would be almost doubled if the number of children born within the first six months after marriage were taken into consideration. The penalty of illegitimacy, then, is not the price of extra-marital sexual relations, but the price of inexperience, ignorance, and feeble-mindedness of young girls who are unable to arrange a marriage in time to escape the stigma of having a child born out of wedlock.

Background of Unmarried Mothers. Local studies in America indicate that the unmarried mother comes from the lower economic groups and particularly from the servant class. The low wages, the small expectation of marriage, and the conditions of

employment operate to produce a rate of illegitimacy higher than that for any other economic group. Figures for Australia, for Bulgaria, and for several German cities indicate that the group of women engaged in domestic service contribute to the group of women marrying a much lower proportion than might be expected from the proportion which they form of the total number of women of child-bearing age. On the other hand, they contribute more than the expected number of illegitimate children. In a study of illegitimacy made in Boston by the Federal Children's Bureau, it was found that of the unmarried mothers about one-half had been engaged in domestic service, while of the total number of gainfully employed women about one-fourth had been so employed. A corresponding study of Australian statistics indicates that the servant class contributes about 55 per cent of the illegitimate children and constitutes only 35 per cent of the total number of women employed in gainful occupations.

It is also true, that a very large number of the unmarried mothers come from homes where family relations are not normal, and where desertion, divorce, step-parents, or the widowhood of a parent produce undesirable domestic conditions for the young women. Of the 840 unmarried mothers whose histories were secured in the study in Boston, 261 (31 per cent) came from homes where one or both of the parents were missing. In the 18 to 20 year age group, 36 per cent were living away from home at the place of their employment prior to the birth of the first child. Dr. Carol Aronovici states that at Sleighton Farms, 67.24 per cent of the white girls and 84.49 per cent of the colored girls came from homes where one or both of the parents were missing. Apart from these abnormalities in the conjugal condition of the parents, the homes of the girls made a poor showing in such matters as cleanliness and order and general well-being. Moreover, in many cases these studies revealed that the family situation had been aggravated by taking lodgers and overcrowding, so that decency of life and conduct was rendered extremely difficult. In many cases, too, the mother of the delinquent had been employed away from home

and had been unable to give the girl supervision or training. In other cases indifference to the welfare of young girls on the part of ignorant and poverty-stricken parents existed, the parents manifesting little interest in the welfare of the daughter except insofar as she was able to contribute to the family income. Not infrequently it happens that very poor parents in an outburst of righteous indignation turn into the streets a daughter who is an expectant mother, refusing to give her any help or sympathy during the time when she most needs their protection, but later, when she is able to resume work, offer every inducement to bring her back home. A large percentage of the parents of unmarried mothers in the Eastern cities have been found to be of foreign extraction, and because of their old traditions, their poverty, and the difficulty they have met in adjusting themselves to American life, they tend to regard their daughters as economic assets and exact of them even heavier burdens of support and obedience than they exact of their sons. Irresponsible and of low standards themselves, these parents do not feel interested in and responsible for the welfare of their children, nor do they endeavor to help them in difficulties. In many cases, too, the unmarried mothers are clearly not of normal mentality, and this fact, plus the unfavorable surroundings in which they have lived from early youth, indicates the folly of assuming that these persons are wilfully seeking to undermine family standards or that severe punishment of them will induce any great respect for established institutions in those who might supposedly be impressed.

Agencies for Aiding the Unmarried Mother. So inadequate has the home proved to be as an agency for caring for the unmarried mother that many special agencies have developed for her care. These are operated for the most part under the guidance of philanthropic and religious societies and they attempt to render various types of aid to the mothers beside the single one of maternity care. In some cases it is possible for the expectant unmarried mother to enter the institution some time in advance of the birth of her child and to remain there until such time as she is able to

return to work. Such institutions render inestimable service to young girls whose families have been unable or unwilling to allow them to remain at home. But since the institutions are maintained by philanthropy and supported by the conservative classes, the attitude displayed toward the unmarried mother is often of a sort to undermine her self-respect and self-confidence to an even greater extent than has already happened by reason of her misfortune. In many of these institutions she is expected to "repent" and to realize to the fullest extent the enormity of her act on the assumption that, no matter how unfavorable her surroundings, she has been a perfectly free agent. After signs of the desired spiritual state have been obtained, she is allowed to participate in the routine work of the home which involves considerable physical labor, and she is compelled to listen to sermons and exhortations as to right conduct. After the birth of her child she may be urged or required to relinquish it to the care of the agency, or she may be offered a position in domestic service where she may keep her child with her. Because of the present laxness of our moral standards, she is likely to be regarded as open to the improper advances of any man with whom she comes in contact, and in many such cases the agency provides her with a wedding ring to ward off such undesirable approaches. The employment in domestic service of a woman of twenty or less with an infant who claims most of her time when she is not busy with a wearying round of domestic duties, imposes hardships which even the strongest could hardly endure. Aside from the fact that she did not want the child and regarded its coming as a great injustice to herself, she is also resentful — if she is not of the placid, unquestioning type so rarely found in domestic service — at the fact that she has been charged with an undue measure of responsibility for its support. Even if the father has been ordered by the court to contribute to the support of his child, the amount ordered is usually entirely inadequate even for physical necessities; the mother is expected to give not only her earnings but her time and energy as well, and at the same time must bear the stigma of constant association with a child whose

existence is considered a reproach and a disgrace to her. Consequently, many young mothers refuse association with the child and disclaim all responsibility for it. Social workers do not scruple to stir the instinctive feelings of the mother to nourish and care for her child, and by thus furthering the association during the first month of its life they stimulate feelings of affection on the part of the mother which make it difficult for her to relinquish it to the care of others. While some young women — and often the more intelligent and ambitious ones — refuse to have their infants with them because of their resentment at the social situation in which they are placed, others are made to feel by their would-be reformers that they have sinned so grievously that they become willing to accept any hardship or punishment while this penitent mood continues. Many cases of unmarried motherhood doubtless do not come to the attention of social agencies at all, since arrangements for care are made by the family group concerned. This is more likely to be true of the Negroes than of the whites; Negroes seldom exhibit vindictive attitudes toward the unmarried mother, who has practically the same opportunity to support her child as the married mother. The social service departments of maternity hospitals take cognizance of all unmarried mothers who apply for free care, and if they themselves are not prepared to give "supervision," they make arrangements to secure the service from some coöperating agency. It is customary, however, to ask no questions when a woman is able to pay for her hospital care, and in that event the machinery for supervision is not put into operation.

Repeated Illegitimacy. While statistics for a wide area are unfortunately not available, it may be interesting to note that persons engaged in giving practical aid to unmarried mothers recognize the frequency with which those who have been "reformed" or helped give birth to a second illegitimate child. Some of the social agencies have cases on record which have been supervised for a period of fifteen or twenty years during which the woman has given birth to several illegitimate children. It is true, of course, that some of these women are of inferior mentality and cannot be

held responsible for their acts; but this is not always the case. Lack of suitable opportunities for recreation and for satisfying conditions of life were found to be important causative factors of illegitimacy in the first instance, and it should be noted that these conditions persist after the child is born.

Social workers are not unaware of this fact, but they are limited in their ability to find situations for young women who are largely without skill in any occupation and who have not, while under supervision, received training for special work. Then, too, they are influenced by the belief that girls must be removed from the "temptations" of city life and consequently place them with their infants in domestic service in the country where opportunities for recreation are virtually non-existent. The mother is then urged to care faithfully for the child, to save her money, and to perform her work efficiently. But however commendable these ends may be in themselves, they are not likely to be sufficient for the woman who is still young and who, though she may have lived under conditions of great poverty, has been accustomed to a freer existence in her early years. Since her employment cuts her off from associates of her own years, it is not surprising that she snatches at any opportunity for companionship or recreation which her limited world offers. The tradesmen who come to the house are often the only persons who manifest a personal interest in her, and it is not strange that she should accept their friendship on any terms. Even if she is employed in the city in domestic work or in other unskilled occupations, her position is decidedly unfavorable. If her child is separated from her, she is often compelled to contribute some of her meager earnings to its support; and cases are by no means unusual where the unmarried mother not only supports her child but also makes regular contributions to the support of her family. Her eagerness in this latter respect is often pathetic because she hopes by helping her family to regain some of the respect and recognition which she craves. Even if she is received again in her home, her position is one of great loneliness and isolation, since former girl friends and companions

are likely to know of her experience and to show every wish to avoid her, while men friends assume a freedom of manner which makes the maintenance of her self-respect difficult. If she leaves home to enter an occupation in another locality, the loneliness and isolation may be oppressive and the difficulties of adjustment very great.

Support from the Father of an Illegitimate Child. The amount of support which such a girl can obtain from the father of her child varies from one state to another, but nowhere is it adequate. In most states the mother is required to institute bastardy proceedings against the putative father, and if she can establish paternity (the burden of the proof resting upon her), she may succeed in obtaining a court order compelling the father to contribute to the support of his child. Aside from the unpleasant publicity which attends such proceedings, the uncertainty of a favorable decision and the smallness of the award cause many women to forego taking the necessary legal steps in order to secure an award. Then, too, paternity is difficult to establish if the alleged father shows a disposition to contest the case, while if he desires to evade the issue entirely by removing to another community the woman finds herself in a hopeless position. If the man is generous in his attitude toward her and willing to make financial provision, legal action may antagonize him, so that he will refuse to contribute anything except the small sum which may be ordered by the court. The interference of social workers in cases of this type has often proved disastrous to the woman concerned. Records of these agencies show a not inconsiderable number of cases where an unmarried mother received assistance in ample amount from the father of her child until the social worker insisted, in the interest of morals, that all communication between them cease. In such cases the man withdrew his support, and when later a court order for support was secured, the amount ordered by the court was inadequate as compared with the sum which the man had been giving voluntarily.

One of the chief defects of the laws requiring the father to support an illegitimate child is the fact that the mother is required to

initiate the proceedings; and if she is without funds and legal counsel, her chance of establishing a case is poor. Minnesota has attempted to remedy this law by placing the responsibility upon designated public authorities. The law passed in 1917 states:

It shall be the duty of the board of control when notified of a woman who is delivered of an illegitimate child or pregnant with child likely to be illegitimate when born to take care that the interests of the child are safeguarded, that appropriate steps be taken to establish his paternity, and that there is secured for him the nearest approximation to the care, support, and education that he would be entitled to if born of lawful marriage. For the better accomplishment of these purposes the board may initiate such legal or other action as is deemed necessary; may make such provision for the care, maintenance, and education of the child as the best interests of the child from time to time require and may offer its aid and protection in such ways as are found wise and expedient to the unmarried woman approaching motherhood.

Information with regard to the fathers has been difficult to obtain in the studies that have been made because of the mother's reticence in speaking of so personal a relationship, and also because in many cases paternity has not been established. However, such records as exist reveal the fact that the average age of the fathers is greater than that of the mothers, and that their wages are higher. On the whole, there is no decided difference in the social classes to which the individuals belong, but in a considerable number of cases the father is found to be married.

Illegitimacy Rates. Statistics reveal that the percentage of illegitimacy in the total number of births in the registration area of the United States is much lower than in European countries. Of the total number of births, the proportion of illegitimate births ranges in European countries from 2.1 per cent in the Netherlands to 15.1 per cent in Sweden. Percentages of illegitimacy in the Scandinavian countries are high, while England and Wales show a rate of 4.2 per cent. In certain large European cities the rate is excessive. In Stockholm, in the period from 1905 to 1909, 33.4 per cent of all births were illegitimate; in Vienna the percentage was 30.1; in Paris it was 25.5. With these figures we may contrast the American figures. In 1920, in the registration area in the

United States 2.3 per cent of the births were illegitimate. The percentage for the white population was 1.4, while that for the Negro population was 12.3. The percentage in rural districts (2.4) was somewhat higher than that (2.1) for the urban districts.

The Illegitimate Child. The effect of the child's illegitimacy upon his own future welfare is unfavorable. In cities in the United States the death rate for illegitimate infants is almost four times as great as that for legitimate infants. These figures exhibit a greater disparity than do those for European countries where discrimination against illegitimate children is less marked. In the Massachusetts study it was found that they contributed a disproportionate number of "problem" children to welfare agencies and reform schools. The records of child-placing agencies, however, reveal the fact that illegitimate children, if placed while still young, do quite as well in foster homes as do children of legitimate birth. It is impossible to compile a record showing the effect upon the child of bewilderment as to the meaning of his origin, or showing the effect of subtle forms of discrimination manifested against him by his companions, but a study of the Federal Children's Bureau in Boston indicates that these imponderables are of great importance in developing the child's personality traits.

The fundamental defect in our present treatment of illegitimacy grows out of our unwillingness to lay aside the belief that children whose parents have not been married should be punished for this fact. Aside from the injustice of the attitude which holds an individual responsible for a situation over which he has had no control, the present attitude of society results in great waste, both in the lives of the individuals concerned and in their efficiency as adults. The chances of the individual for a happy adjustment to adult life are greatly diminished if he is made to believe that the mere fact of his arrival in the world was a shameful affair, and that his future must be forever colored and circumscribed by that fact. That such an attitude exists in society at the present time is due only to the trusting and unquestioning manner in which the individual accepts all of the beliefs handed down to him from the past.

XVI

DIVORCE AS A MEANS OF FAMILY DISSOLUTION

Changing Ideas of the Permanence of Marriage. In recent years there has been a great increase in the proportion of marriages that terminate in divorce. Individuals who find that their marital bonds have resulted in a lessening of their personal efficiency and happiness are no longer in the position of the fifteenth century French writer who spoke of the marriage bond as follows:

The like may be said of those who are to marry that they are like a fish that is free in the great water and he goeth to and fro as he pleaseth; and he goeth to and fro so long that at last he findeth an osier fish trap where there are divers fishes taken by the bait therein which they smelled out by its savours. And when the fish doth behold them he travaileth to enter and goeth about the said fish trap until he findeth the way in and he entereth weening to be in all delights and pleasures as he thinketh the others to be. And when he is there he can by no means come out again and he remaineth in dolour and grief there where he thought to find all joy and comfort.¹

With our diminished reverence for traditional and religious sanctions and our increasing tendency to evaluate our institutions in terms of their contribution to human welfare and contentment, there has been a disposition to judge the value of any particular relationship in terms of its worth to those concerned and to modify its functioning so as to promote this end. At the time when marriage itself was believed to be of greater importance than the individuals entering it, and when its bonds were considered sacred and inviolable, the dissolution of the regularized union between a man and woman was virtually impossible. The path of virtue and social approbation lay in the direction of the subordination of individual

¹ De la Sale, Antoine, *The Fifteen Joys of Marriage*.

inclination and wishes to the maintenance of the institution, and failure to accomplish this involved not only mortal sin but social disgrace as well. Because of the tendency of the Christian religion to glorify meekness and self-effacement as the supreme virtues, any attempt on the part of the faithful to assert the validity of their human needs and their right to adapt social institutions to their satisfaction was regarded as a dangerous tendency to be suppressed by all of the forces of organized society. The maintenance of institutional life has been held to be incompatible with individual expression and development, and the tendency to modify social institutions in the direction of their adaptability to human need has been held to presage the downfall of the civilization based upon these institutions.

Increased Emphasis on Personal Relationships. However, as the importance of the family as an economic and social unit diminished, the demand for individual liberty began to assert itself. In a day when the family was the center of all economic and social life for the individuals who composed it, the severance of the relationship might well have been regarded as a catastrophe for its members. But as economic activity, recreation, and the education and care of children began to move out from the home center, the only important elements remaining were the personal relationships between the members of the family; and because they were the most important elements in the family life, individuals began to insist that they be satisfactory. Individualists began to assert that initial mistakes in choosing a partner should not be regarded as permanently binding, and insisted that the differences arising from divergences of temperament which came with further development and growth should not be wholly disregarded.

The Prevalence of Divorce. Divorce as a solution of marriage problems has been more widely used in the United States than in any other civilized country for which comparable statistics are available. In 1924 there was in the United States one divorce for every 6.9 marriages, while in Japan, where the rate approximates our own, there was one divorce for every 8 marriages. The statis-

tics for France reveal one divorce for every 21 marriages; for Great Britain, one divorce for every 96 marriages; for Canada, one divorce for every 161 marriages. This greater prevalence of divorce in the United States does not of necessity signify a greater state of family disorganization, for divorce statistics take no account of families in which desertion or mutual arrangements for separation replace the process of divorce. Then, too, in many European countries incompatibilities in marriage can be more easily compensated by extra-marital relationships than in the United States, where there is a tendency to insist that all sexual companionships shall be sealed by a legal bond. The economic arrangement which forms the basis of marriage in other countries tends to make for greater permanence than in the United States, where the sole basis of the marriage is usually the inclination of the parties concerned. The willingness of people in the United States to secure divorce and remarry may indicate an optimistic belief in the possibilities of marriage, and their willingness to pursue its benefits even after an initial failure.

Not only has the United States a divorce rate higher than other countries, but divorce in this country has been increasing at a rate indicative of its growing popularity as a means for settling domestic difficulties. In 1916 there was one divorce to every 9.6 marriages, while in 1925 there was one divorce to every 6.7 marriages. The divorce rate is not only increasing faster than the marriage rate, but it is also increasing faster than the rate of population growth. The rate of increase is more rapid in some sections than in others, the Pacific States showing the most rapid increase in recent years. In Oregon in 1924 there was one divorce for every 2.3 marriages, in California one divorce for every 4.9 marriages, while Texas and Oklahoma showed rates almost as high. Nevada, because of its popularity as a resort for divorce-seeking migrants from other states, showed almost one divorce for every marriage.

Women and Divorce. Approximately two-thirds of the suits for divorce initiated in the United States in 1924 were brought by women. This fact is taken by some persons to indicate a condition

of greater restlessness and discontent with modern marriage on the part of women than on the part of men. Other factors might, however, account for it. The tradition of chivalry with respect to the woman's prerogative in terminating a sexual companionship is still strong. Then, too, it is generally believed that the courts are more lenient in their attitude toward divorce petitions presented by women than they are toward those presented by men. A man may suffer injury to his professional or business standing if he publicly brings a divorce suit against his wife. Furthermore, business responsibilities may make it impossible for him to go from one state to another to seek a divorce. Since the wife is usually freer to change her place of residence in case of a family severance, and since she possesses more leisure time, it is often easier for her to initiate legal proceedings.

It must be true, nevertheless, that women are more ready to terminate marriage than they used to be because of their increased opportunities for economic independence. A woman of training and experience can usually find work of an interesting and remunerative nature if she has not been long absent from her employment, and because of the knowledge that this course is open to her she may be unwilling to endure conditions to which otherwise she would be compelled to submit. Then, too, if she has been employed before her marriage she has become accustomed to a large measure of economic and social independence and therefore finds it impossible to submit to family restrictions which would have been inevitable in a patriarchal form of family life. Conventional ideas with regard to what wives should or should not endure are rapidly changing, and a modern woman may feel obliged to judge herself aggrieved by a situation which women of an older generation would have regarded as quite tolerable.

Children and Divorce. In 1924 only 35.7 per cent of the applicants for divorce reported children; 53.9 per cent reported no children, and the remaining 10.4 per cent did not report whether or not they had children. There was a small decline with respect to

previous years in the proportion reporting children, but it is difficult to say whether this was due to the decreasing proportion of couples with children or to an increased disinclination of couples with children to break up their homes.

Much has been said of the necessity of holding a home together for the sake of the children. The assumption is that children who are not in constant association with both of their parents are greatly handicapped in their training and in their opportunities for achieving a happy adjustment to the responsibilities of adult life. It is believed that the mere fact of divorce will deprive the child of the society of at least one of his parents, and produce in him or her an emotional tension which will result in conflicting loyalties and consequent mental stress. These predictions of disaster for the child are based upon the belief that the divorced parents will either hate each other or at least regard each other with such disapproval that the child will be required to take sides with one or the other, to his great emotional and spiritual detriment.

The belief regarding the mental state of divorced persons is in part derived from the knowledge of the legal conditions involved in the granting of divorce. A legal severance of the marital tie, by mutual consent, is not allowed in this country. In most of the states it must be asserted, and proof must be offered, that one party has sustained injury at the hands of the other, which entitles him to freedom from further obligation in the marital relation. If it can be proved that the couple have agreed to a divorce, "collusion" is charged and the decree is withheld. Parents who find themselves temperamentally incompatible and unable to live together amicably are forbidden to make an adjustment by divorce upon their recognition of that fact, but are constrained to do injury to each other before taking action. Under the necessity of proving their incongruities and injuries the parents, however unwilling they may be to do so, are obliged to make of their divorce a community or public matter by bringing their difficulties into open court. It is often observed that this forced exposure of mistakes and the grievances engenders far more bitterness on the part of the

divorced couple than the long-standing discord which may previously have existed between them; and it is largely from this community comment and its results that children suffer. There is no inconsistency in assuming that children can be brought up wholesomely in a home maintained by the mother, into whose custody they are most frequently given; and the eagerness with which pensions are awarded to mothers who have lost their husbands by death shows that the public has confidence in the usefulness of such homes. Nor is there any reason why the child should be shut off from the interest and protection of his father, even though his father may maintain a separate residence or have another family. The convention with regard to the attitude of divorced persons toward each other is at bottom largely responsible for the conflict which arises in the child's mind, and this conflict need not occur if the child is merely given to understand that his parents for the benefit of all concerned have agreed to live separately. The maintenance of separate establishments and even the establishment of new families by both father and mother, if undertaken without bitterness and recrimination, need injure the child less than the constant controversies and quarrels which the child witnesses in the home where the parents are incompatible.

The belief that parents must sacrifice their happiness and chance of individual development for the sake of the child is based upon a misapprehension as to the child's real nature and his needs, and the conditions under which these can best be met. Family relationships today are so little concerned with economic and social functions and so largely a matter of personal relationship that differences of opinion and temperament have come to be of fundamental importance. The welfare of the child is dependent upon the vigor, the resourcefulness, and the happiness of parents much more than upon the mere number of hours they spend together in his society, so that the maintenance of a home without a basis of harmony and agreement between the parents constitutes a lamentable instance of social waste. If the parents are incompatible, the child constantly sees them at their worst instead of under

circumstances so favorable that he might be expected to gain something from the association. Moreover, the child is subjected to the constant strain which grows out of the incompatibilities of his parents, and their moments of depression and dissatisfaction are reflected in his moods.

Length of Marriage and Divorce. Nearly two-thirds of the divorces are granted to couples who have been married less than ten years, the greatest number occurring in the fourth year of marriage. It is apparently during the first years of marriage that differences of temperament and opinion assert themselves, and these differences, if they become unendurable, culminate in divorce. After many years common interests and activities may tend to prevent divorce, and as the parties grow older they become less vigorous in the assertion of their needs. It may be assumed that marriages which have lasted beyond ten years represent a condition of amicable adjustment on the basis of common interests. On the other hand, it may also be that the parties, after having been persuaded to endure an unhappy union for ten years or more, become so inured to the hardships and so hopeless of finding a more suitable relation, that they simply abandon the struggle and resign themselves to their unhappy state.

Alleged Causes for Divorce. Foremost among the causes for which divorces were granted in 1924 were cruelty and desertion. Adultery ranked third, and the percentage of divorces granted to husbands for adultery was almost twice that granted to wives. The conventions which underlie this action are readily understood. Women can more easily obtain divorce for cruelty or desertion than can men, and they prefer, therefore, to allege these as grounds for divorce rather than endure the unpleasant publicity which attaches to cases where infidelity is charged. On the other hand, the husband is perhaps on the safest ground when he alleges adultery as a cause for divorce, since the presumption in favor of granting a divorce under these circumstances is very strong. The greater presumption in favor of the man under these circumstances is based upon the biological argument which is still very strong in

the public mind, and which was expressed in forceful terms by Dr. Samuel Johnson:

Confusion of progeny constitutes the essence of the crime; and therefore the woman who breaks her marriage vows is much more criminal than a man who does it. A man, to be sure, is a criminal in the sight of God, but he does not do his wife a very material injury if he does not insult her, if from mere wantonness he steals privately to her chambermaid. Such a wife ought not to greatly resent this. I would not receive home a daughter who had run away from her husband on that account.

Most women today insist that a single standard of conduct in sexual matters must prevail for both men and women and that the standard must be one of continence before marriage and fidelity after marriage. Most men are still of the opinion that their wives should come to them as virgins, and that any unfaithfulness after marriage must result in a severance of the marital ties. Since men have long expected this standard of women, the belief seems to prevail that it is the "highest standard" attainable, although the reason which led to its establishment, the "danger of confusion of progeny," has long since disappeared with the development of methods for preventing conception. However, the seriousness of the offense of adultery is reinforced by the Christian concept of "purity" in relation to sexual behavior and the belief that sexual experience outside of the sanctioned relationships, even though attended by no undesirable consequences, may be a cause for greater injury than the lack of any fundamental trait of character. In fact, the term "virtue," as applied to an unmarried woman in the past, had reference to her possession of a specific physical integrity, and her rating as respectable or non-respectable was determined by her bodily state with slight regard to mental or spiritual qualities. After marriage she still possessed "virtue" if she remained faithful to her husband, and her behavior in this regard was rated as more important than that in any other.

This materialistic conception of virtue has now been extended to men as well, and their failure to meet its requirements causes many divorces; and in cases where it does not result in divorce,

it occasions much bitterness and recrimination in the home. Many families in which a happy adjustment of personal relationship existed have broken up suddenly because of a single lapse on the part of husband or wife, and community sentiment has heartily approved the refusal, as justified by the provocation, of the unoffending partner to continue the relation. The concept of the property rights of husband and wife in each other finds its highest expression here, and this will doubtless persist so long as such an attitude is considered just and natural.

Divorce for the Poor. Although evidence on the subject is incomplete, it is believed that the poorer classes employ the divorce court to solve their family difficulties less than do the classes better situated economically. Among persons who are hard pressed by the economic struggle the preoccupation with this aspect of life precludes close attention to the more personal problems of life. The economic bonds among the poor are strong, the family income is a composite one, and any sundering of the family tie involves serious financial loss. It is true, too, that the more highly developed the personality, the greater the difficulty of adjustment; this problem arises more frequently in the case of those in the trained and educated group who marry later in life and who are more taken up with the realization of their personal ambition than are those whose lives are planned along simpler lines.

The Uniform Divorce Law. Since 1923 the General Federation of Women's Clubs has sponsored a uniform marriage and divorce law which it hopes to secure by an amendment to the Federal Constitution. The bill was introduced into Congress by Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas and, although it aroused no general interest, it furnished an occasion for the more interested parties on both sides of the question to state their views. Bills framed in connection with the proposed amendment embody some of the more liberal measures proposed by recent advocates of reform in the field of marriage and divorce. The proposed marriage law contains provisions with regard to age, physical and mental fitness of the parties desiring to be married, publicity of application for a

license, witnesses to the marriage, and proper registration by the local authorities. It provides that divorce be granted for five causes only — adultery, physical or mental cruelty, abandonment or failure to provide for one year or more, incurable insanity, or the commission of a felony. It requires that application for a decree of divorce shall be made sixty days in advance of the date of trial; that the defendant shall be reached through personal service; that both parties shall have the privilege of visiting the children after divorce, that the mother shall have charge of all minor children unless she be specifically declared unfit, and that one year shall elapse before the decree is declared final.

Proponents of the measure argue that the regulation of marriage and divorce by federal law would obviate legal entanglements in matters of inheritance consequent upon a change of residence by divorced persons. The argument is made, too, that the law would operate equally for all and prevent the migration from one state to another of persons of wealth and leisure who are enabled by their circumstances to obtain their divorces under favorable conditions, while the poor have only the resources of the community in which they may live, whether they be favorable or otherwise.

However, the opponents of the measure call attention to the fact that it is framed and sponsored by conservatives who are presumably as anxious to arrest the steady progress of divorce as they are to regulate the conditions under which it shall be granted. Another objection may be found in the fact that policies in regard to divorce have not yet been adequately tested by local authorities; consequently, if the lessons learned from these incomplete experiments are now crystallized in a federal law, it will be extremely difficult later to effect any modification. A diversity of legal provisions with regard to divorce is held to be preferable to uniformity based on the incomplete experience so far accumulated.

Alimony. One of the questions now most discussed in connection with divorce deals with alimony and the support of the wife by the husband after their marriage has been severed by divorce.

It is generally believed that a man who has married a woman owes her support for life even though the marriage tie be sundered. Her return for this economic boon is her companionship as partner in marriage, but the man performs a reciprocal service equally prized by the woman. Another basis for the assumption is the recognition of the fact that a woman is in a position to trade upon her sex as a means of livelihood provided she secures legal sanction before assuming the status. In return for her companionship and the performance of certain subsidiary duties she receives economic security and a vested interest in her husband's property and income. Upon severance of the marriage tie it is assumed that the wife will still be able to collect from her husband the means of support by reason of the fact that she acted as wife to him during one period of her life.

As justification for this attitude it is pointed out that in many cases the wife has been obliged to give up her occupation or profession upon marriage and that, if she has been idle for a number of years, she will be forced to return to gainful employment with a greatly diminished earning power. Since the obligation growing out of her marriage involved this sacrifice of professional or business standing she has insisted, and with reason, that she be compensated for her loss. As long as convention requires that a woman have no other occupation than companion for her husband during the time that she is married, it appears only just that she receive compensation for the economic loss which she has sustained by acting in this capacity.

However, it seems less plausible that a woman who has lost merely a few years from her employment should be granted financial independence for her entire lifetime. Since most marriages which terminate in divorce are dissolved within the first ten years of married life, the economic loss which the woman sustains can hardly be considered permanent. There is justification for the view that she should be granted support only until she has had time once more to adapt herself to the conditions of gainful employment. It is often observed that a childless woman may

demand alimony only in a spirit of revenge and from a desire to diminish the resources which her divorced husband's next partner may enjoy.

Class Handicaps in Divorce. The moral connotations which surround the whole subject of the legal dissolution of marriage work great hardship to some classes, as is seen by the timidity which they evince in making use of its privileges. Persons in professional pursuits, particularly teachers and ministers, often see all opportunity for continuing in their occupation cut off by the publicity given to a suit for divorce. It is generally believed that men and women in these professions should give no voice to their domestic discontent, and an undue amount of personal subordination is expected from them. This social attitude works great detriment to the successful pursuit of these occupations by fostering unhappiness on the part of persons engaged in them and by driving from professional pursuits a considerable number of vigorous and able individuals who are unwilling to submit to such social dictation. Many of these irksome class discriminations will disappear when divorce comes to be considered in the same light as the legal dissolution of a business contract or partnership.

PART IV

SOCIAL DIRECTION OF FAMILY EVOLUTION

XVII

EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE FAMILY FORM

The Prejudice Against Experiment. Discontent with the family form has seldom resulted in any concerted action to alter it. Mary Astell in 1730 complained that: "God ordained it for a Blessing, not a curse; we are foolish as well as wicked when that which was appointed for mutual comfort and assistance has quite the contrary Effect through our Folly and Perverseness"; but her suggestions for change dealt with the modification of human beings rather than with any change in the institutions meant for their service. Communities of men and women who have foresworn marriage, and who find their compensation in religious and social service, have existed from the days of early Christianity, with the entire approbation of the surrounding communities. Their abstinence from the ordinary human relations is usually believed to give them virtue and holiness, and their neighbors draw from their lives of deprivation a warm consolation for their own lot. Few social experiments, however, have aroused such horror and consternation as those which have had as a part of their program a change in family form or sexual relationships. Social measures which in any way affect the conditions of family life almost invariably meet with strong opposition and animosity.

The Oneida Community. During the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century a number of communities were established in the United States for the purpose of experimenting with a new form of social order better adapted to human needs than that in which the great majority of the American people then lived. Some of these communities limited themselves to effecting changes in economic organization, while others busied themselves with remodeling all aspects of organized life according to principles

previously agreed upon. One of the most significant of these communities from the standpoint both of the principles involved and the success achieved was the Oneida Community, established on February 1, 1848 at Oneida, New York, by John Humphrey Noyes. The number of persons forming the community was at first less than one hundred, and the conditions which applicants for membership had to meet were from the beginning stringent. The persons who entered the community were committed to a religion and a philosophy known as "perfectionism," because their object was escape from sin — their aim being the perfection of character, and the establishment of a social order favorable to the development of perfection in human beings. Community of interests and of goods was to be one of the first principles of the new order, and a new system of sexual companionships in harmony with this economic principle was devised. This was known as "complex marriage," which in the words of Nordhoff meant that "within the limits of community membership any man or woman may and freely do cohabit, having first obtained each other's consent through the intervention of some third person or persons."

It was the opinion of Noyes, whose personality and genius guided the new community, that "in a holy community there is no more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law than why eating and drinking should be; and there is as little occasion for shame in the one case as in the others." Young persons who had reached maturity might, through the intermediary of one of the elders, arrange for a period of cohabitation in order to ascertain their suitability to each other. Even before this preliminary period of cohabitation, the young persons were given the opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with the mental and bodily characteristics of each other, in order that neither should feel cheated because important facts had been suppressed before the intimate relationship was established. These unions worked no disadvantage to women because a crude though effective mode of contraception was known and utilized. It was expected that some

of these unions would be permanent, but if such was not the desire of the persons concerned they could be terminated without stigma and without censure — unless an individual should show too great a devotion to experiment and change.

Noyes entertained no enthusiasm for monogamy, because it encouraged selfishness and the narrowing of interests to the precincts of the home. It thus militated against the development of that community of property and interests in the economic order upon which he had set his heart. His interest in community matters did not preclude his interest in individuals, for upon them his main interest was centered. His chief object was the perfection of human character by means of righteous social conditions, and to this end all of his community projects were directed. Monogamy he regarded as ill-suited to this purpose because of the faults which it engendered in human nature. "It provokes to secret adultery, actual or of the heart. It ties together unmatched natures. It sunders matched natures." Noyes would have no hand in establishing it as a preferred form of family life in Oneida, and he declared his unwillingness to impose such a burden upon human nature. Sex should not be used for enslavement, but as a means for the development of personality and the liberation of individuals for the task of achieving the perfect life. Companionships for the satisfaction of sexual desire were to be molded to the needs of the individual; individuals were not to conform against their wills to the interest of the relationships which had been established.

Opponents of community life maintained that upon its initiation a state of anarchy and utter confusion, if not of promiscuity, would immediately follow. Noyes foresaw the possibilities of disturbance in the freedom allowed and provided for its control by social examination and direction. A system of mutual criticism was instituted through which frank and open criticism by comrades gave the individual the opportunity to see himself through a perspective other than that of his individual desires. At times an individual, either through his own wish or at the suggestion of

some member of the community, would seat himself on the platform at the church to subject himself to the comment and criticism of his fellow-members. Contemporary accounts have it that these criticisms were both comprehensive and acute, and that any grossness or laxity in personal attitude was certain to be dealt with in a penetrating manner.

Noyes held that individuals should not be unduly handicapped in making their adjustment to sexual practices, but he believed that the bearing and rearing of children involved considerations of an almost entirely social nature. In response to the criticism which he had received he stated:

We are opposed to involuntary procreation. We are opposed to excessive and of course oppressive procreation which is almost universal. We are opposed to random procreation which is unavoidable in the marriage system. But we are in favor of intelligent, well ordered procreation. We believe the time will come when scientific combination will be applied to human generation as freely and successfully as it is to that of other animals.¹

In order that propagation might be socially controlled and as scientific as human knowledge at that time permitted, there was introduced into the community a system of "stirpiculture." In this first attempt twenty-four men and twenty women were selected for the experiment from among those in the community who were considered "fit." Experienced medical men were appointed to have charge of the matter and a plan for improvement in the quality of the human material in the community was worked out. Each mother had exclusive care of her child during the nursing period, and at the end of that time the child was taken to a central nursery. During this first stage of transition to the community control the parent was required to leave the child at the nursery from eight o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in the afternoon. This period lasted until the child was one and one-half years old; it was then left at the nursery for the entire time and the mother sur-

¹ *First Annual Report of the Oneida Community in February, 1849.*

rendered her responsibility in the matter of its upbringing. She was not, however, forbidden to see the child, but she could visit it, take it for walks, and retain her close connection with it. The child remained under this community control until it reached the age of thirteen or fourteen. The persons of the council considered of highest ability in child training were in charge of the nursery, and visitors to the nursery received the impression that the children were healthy and cheerful. Women who were thus relieved of the care of their children engaged either in the production of other children or in other duties which were assigned to them. Persons living under the system appeared satisfied with it, and the economic affairs of the community were decidedly successful. Undeserved poverty was eliminated, savings were accumulated, and a period of general prosperity ensued.

However, the churches and the conservative elements in the neighboring communities were shocked by what they regarded as the "immoral" situation which prevailed in the community, and their hostility increased as they learned more of the ways in which the community directed its affairs. Ministers used the "evils" of the community as texts for their sermons and ominous threats began to be made against its continued existence. However, some liberal elements among their neighbors defended the "Perfectionists" and the *Syracuse Courier* spoke as follows of the health conditions:

There have been fifty children born alive in the community in nine years and not one has died, and all are now well and free from disease. Five children have died at or about birth and there has not been one single case of abortion. In the United States thirty per cent of the children die under ten. In the community there has not been a case of croup, cholera infantum, or diphtheria for fifteen years.

In spite of this obvious success in producing and conserving human life and in providing an adequate basis for a life of economic freedom, the criticism launched against the community continued and in 1879 a new constitution was drawn up which abandoned all the distinguishing characteristics of the old system.

Thenceforth the community functioned in relation to matters of economic enterprise only.

The Mormons. Another social experiment which involved a change in family form was that of the Mormons, whose system of polygamous marriage has overshadowed in the public eye the important work which they performed in the settlement of the West. Brigham Young, the practical administrator of their affairs, employed his considerable ability and great influence to produce in Utah a community wherein there was little drunkenness or crime, where the general level of prosperity was high, and where there were no social outcasts or persons living in poverty. The activities of speculators in land and commercial profiteers were brought under strict public control in the public interest. The poor man was given an advantage in competing with his neighbors, and such aid and direction were given to the least successful members of the community that they were raised to situations of prosperity and comfort. European peasants who were converted to the Mormon faith by the zeal of missionaries sent out from Utah and by the promise of financial aid, which was adroitly mingled with the exhortations to spiritual reconstruction, came to the settlement in the West and found there opportunity and kindly aid. In spite of some internal dissensions, the community had, in general, a high spirit of religious enthusiasm, and devotion to the general good prevailed. Travelers from the East whose sense of horror had been pleasantly stimulated by tales of the degradation and subjection of women living under the system of polygamy were amazed at the respect with which Mormon wives were treated and the kindly consideration which was shown for their welfare. Untutored peasants from Europe who were accustomed to expect from their wives not only a high degree of industry in household activities but also work in the fields were amazed and somewhat dismayed to find that such was not the rule in a polygamous community where the labor of women was restricted for the most part to household tasks and where in family matters they were treated with great kindness and consideration. Critics of Mormonism have not hesitated to

point out that this consideration was based upon the desire of the leaders of thought to protect the women so that they might exercise their function of reproduction to the utmost. But in an age when this function did not inspire the same reverence and consideration among other elements of the population, the kindly attitude on the part of the Mormons, for whatever motive, marks a distinct advance in the welfare of women. The leaders of Mormon thought and policy held it to be their duty to propagate, and rewards for the full performance of this duty were promised to the faithful in the world to come. The Mormons recognized the practical value of providing a population for the region in which they had settled and early realized that the rapid growth of their own numbers would insure the possibility of maintaining the institutions which they held in great esteem. Then, too, the rapid migration of men to frontier communities had produced a surplus of women in the East, and some of these women were induced to join the Mormons in the hope of having at least a share in a husband. Polygamous patriarchs from Old Testament history were held up to the more orthodox as giving sanction to the family of the Mormons, and not a few orthodox persons who remained firm in their convictions were yet puzzled to refute the claims of the Mormons to Biblical sanction. The level of prosperity in the first hard years was high, and the wives in a polygamous family had the comforts of prosperity as well as the solace of religion to reconcile them to their lot. Family government was patriarchal in form, but it was so everywhere in the United States at that time and the wives of Mormons seem not to have rebelled at their lot. The duty of polygamy, when economic resources permitted, was urged upon men, not only as a means of securing eternal salvation, but as a step entirely in harmony with their best interests as individuals. It was pointed out that a man by taking a young wife, when his first one grew older, thereby prolonged and renewed his youth and freshened his interests in community affairs. Under the benign influence of Mormonism this purpose could be accomplished without discarding the former wife or wives who retained their position

of security and honor in the family and community, while the incoming wife found a home and a chance to enhance her usefulness by bearing children.

This taking of a new wife was one of the features of Mormon polygamy most abhorred by feminists and their sympathizers, who believed that such a step by the patriarch worked a greater hardship to the older wife by relegating her to a position of no importance; but that this by no means happened may be seen by a perusal of the history of the Mormons. In many cases the elder woman retained her position of authority and influence in family affairs, for taking a younger wife was regarded as entirely in harmony with religious principles. That some jealousy was provoked is unquestionable, but on the whole the system seems not less harsh than certain aspects of our present system, in which this displacement of an older wife by a younger woman is made quite possible by divorce, and in which an older wife may be discarded entirely by her husband, often with inadequate financial provision, in favor of a younger woman.

The serenity of life in the Mormon community was disturbed by the migration through their community of adventurers on their way to the gold fields of the West. The profits derived from the trade with these travelers allowed the extension of their industries and their projects for the public benefit, but the old harmony of life was destroyed by the settlement of these non-believers in their midst. Deeds of violence were charged against Mormon leaders and a spirit of hostility was engendered against their entire scheme of life. The descendants of the Puritans were turning their attention to a vigorous campaign to enforce obedience to their principles and uniformity of conduct throughout the country. Slavery and polygamy offered the most promising fields for their reforming zeal, and in 1856 the platform of the Republican Party contained the pledge "to prohibit in the territories those twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery." Public sentiment was greatly aroused against the Mormons because of their polygamous marriages, and this opposition gained such strength as to offer a

considerable menace to their community. The abandonment of polygamy was eventually made one of the conditions of Utah's admission into the Union as a state, and thus ended the experiment with polygamy as a family form adapted to civilized life.

Reasons for Few Experiments. Experiments with the family form in America have been judged with such severity on scriptural and theological grounds that the tendency to experiment has been virtually stamped out. Both of the experiments described above were successful in that they accomplished the purposes for which they were undertaken, and in both cases the new form was apparently satisfactory to those who participated. In both cases the experiments were terminated in deference to outside pressure to enforce conformity of behavior to established standards. In more recent years the tendency to experimentation has been limited to such changes in family forms as could be brought into seeming conformity with legal requirements, and to the attempt to modify the laws regulating marriage and divorce.

XVIII

THE EVOLUTION OF THE COMPANIONATE

The Natural Growth of the Companionate in Recent Years. A division of function in the ancient form of the family gives evidence of continuing social evolution. This differentiation has come about within the legalized family form and has been dependent upon no propaganda or organized body of sentiment to give it support. It owes its existence to changed economic and social conditions and to an evolving philosophy of human relations. The term "companionate" to describe this new form of marriage was first used by M. M. Knight in an article which appeared in *The Journal of Social Hygiene* in May, 1924. While the relationships within the institution have undergone considerable change, the marriage itself retains the ancient form and the legal sanction. Companionate marriage in current usage connotes a legal companionship between a man and woman qualified by a private agreement that no children are to come of the union and that the wife is to be economically independent of the husband. In some cases it implies also the agreement as to the termination of the marriage by wish of either party through the proper observance of legal forms as to divorce.

The Need for the Companionate. The companionate is well suited to the needs of women in the professions who do not wish to handicap themselves in their careers by the assumption of the conventional family obligations, but who do, nevertheless, desire the companionship offered by marriage. The companionate meets this need without the necessity for change of occupation or the abandonment of the work for which they have trained themselves. Their personal freedom, since they are not economically dependent upon their husbands, is in no way abridged, but they are saved

from the loneliness and solitude which the pursuit of a career formerly involved. It allows, too, for a more adequate satisfaction for the women who desire love, but who do not find this desire accompanied by a longing for children.

This companionate marriage is also well adapted to business and professional men whose income is not yet sufficient for the support of a family, but who do not wish to postpone marriage until such time as an adequate income is attained. If children are desired at a later period, the companionate marriage can then be put upon a family basis. It must be recognized, however, that there are many young men who are so interested in the pursuit of some form of intellectual endeavor that they are unwilling to undergo the responsibilities or distraction of ordinary family life, but who do desire, nevertheless, the companionship of a woman on terms which do not involve such responsibilities. The companionate marriage is also desirable for this group, since it obviates the necessity for irregular relationships. The "companionate" does not refer to that type of childless marriage in which the wife is dependent upon the husband, for one of the primary conditions of the companionate is the economic independence of both parties to the marriage. Many so-called "modern" women live with their husbands in a state of parasitic idleness, assuming no responsibilities of family life or of employment of any other type. These women trade upon their sexual companionship for their livelihood, and they are found among the staunchest opponents of any measures which would allow a free sundering of the marriage tie. In cases of divorce they seek alimony by virtue of the fact that they have been married and their continued economic dependence is not a matter which they resent or wish to escape.

Objections to the Companionate. Many objections are raised to the "companionate" marriage, however, even when both parties are economically independent. It is alleged that it is "selfish," since the parties to the marriage make no provision for children but center their entire attention upon themselves and their own pleasure in their relationship. It should, however, be pointed out

that both men and women are engaged in the performance of certain duties for which they receive remuneration, and this may be held in some measure to prevent preoccupation with self and their own domestic affairs. Failure of married persons to have children could hardly be considered selfish unless it could be proved that their service in other capacities would not be of comparable worth to society. More often the term "selfish" is used to express the disapproval of those who hold that the sexual companionship should not be enjoyed without the correlative responsibility of children. Among persons who do not hold this view of the evil nature of the sexual impulse such considerations have no binding force, and these persons regard themselves under no obligation to expiate their companionship by assuming burdens of dubious social value. There is nothing inherently noble in the fact of having children, and since this important social matter is entrusted to the discretion of families, it is not surprising that they regulate their conduct in the matter in harmony with their own needs and desires.

Eugenists offer objection to the companionate marriage because some of the abler elements of the population withdraw from the task of reproduction, and because this function is left to those of the wage-earning group who are believed to have less native ability than those who are interested in the formation of companionate marriages. To overcome the social handicap of the differential birth rate it might be wiser, however, to urge an extension of the companionate marriage to the wage-earning classes rather than to discourage it among other groups. Unskilled wage earners whose prospects for an increase in pay are small might be induced to avoid to a large extent the grinding poverty in which they and their families now live, if they could be persuaded to adjust their marriages upon a companionate instead of a family basis. Since they are unable to support children in circumstances conducive to health and the general welfare, it is obviously better both for them and for the social good that they avoid the responsibilities which they cannot meet without undue hardship to themselves and to young children.

Many persons urge that companionate marriage is "trial" marriage, since the parties agree that divorce shall be obtained if desired. Although divorce by mutual consent is not permitted legally in this country at the present time, it is generally recognized that if the parties to a marriage desire divorce they can readily obtain it under a statutory regulation. If the petition for divorce is not contested, the grant is more completely assured, so that divorce is practically obtainable by mutual consent of the parties. Since divorce is relatively easy, it follows that in a certain sense every marriage is a trial marriage whether a family marriage or a companionate marriage in formal intention. It is probably true, however, that divorce would increase if it were allowed by mutual consent through operation of a greatly simplified legal procedure; but this could affect only the adults, since children would not be involved in the divorces from companionate marriages. That this would result in an era of frequent divorce and remarriage is doubtful, since economic and social conditions still require that persons occupy themselves with the business of earning a living; and for these persons, as well as for those with well-defined interests of other types, the disturbances due to a constant shifting in personal relationships appear as something not to be endured unless necessary.

The Companionate for Young Persons. Judge Lindsey and others have argued that the companionate would obviate many of the evils which exist in connection with late marriages of the present day if the privilege of such marriages were extended to young persons who are still in college or in professional schools. The support of these young persons could, they say, be provided for by their parents in the same way as before marriage, and the young couples would continue their studies under more favorable conditions. It is doubtful if the lowering of the age of marriage for the very young persons of this class would confer any benefit. To young persons of the wage-earning class who, if not allowed to form a companionate marriage, would undoubtedly form a family marriage, there can be no doubt as to the value of allowing the more liberal type of marriage; but in the case of students, their

existence is sufficiently varied and interesting to make the addition of a sexual companionship to their already crowded lives seem not only superfluous but also distracting. The full development of personality is more surely provided for in the case of young persons if the assumption of the responsibility of the sexual companionship is deferred until there has been time for the discovery and the development of the other interests. It is true, moreover, that the importance of sex in recent years has been greatly over-emphasized because of the reaction to the repression of Puritan standards and because of the stress which has been laid upon it in modern literature and in commercialized amusement. The sanctioning of any marriage form under such conditions that persons would be likely to undertake its responsibilities at an early age clearly should be discouraged. Companionate marriages, as well as family marriages, should be limited in their privileges to those who are mature by the raising of the legal age for all marriage to a point where this maturity would be more nearly assured than it is under our present system.

The Genius and Marriage. It has long been recognized that artists and poets and reformers, as well as others who regard themselves as specially gifted persons, have assumed for themselves a very large measure of freedom in the arrangement of their marriage relation in harmony with their need. This tendency was observed with regret by the historian of morals, Lecky, who says:

Very sensual and at the same time very brilliant societies have indeed repeatedly existed and the histories of both France and Italy afford many examples of an artistic and intellectual enthusiasm enriching those who were morally most frail; but the peculiarity of Greek sensuality is that it grew up for the most part uncensured and indeed even encouraged under the eyes of some of the most illustrious of moralists.

The assumption of special privileges by the members of this class has been largely condoned by other groups in society because of the belief that their needs were in a special sense great and imperative.

However, many people would probably have persisted in their

course of exceptional behavior had not such tolerance been given them, because of their strong confidence in the validity of their claims to personal freedom. Many persons now demand all of the rights of freer love which were formerly conceded only to exceptional natures, and contend that the right to an exceptional destiny in personal affections shall not be denied anyone for whose need it makes real provision.

The more complex the individual nature, the more difficult it becomes to adjust to another person in the marriage relationship. The opportunity for "happiness" in marriage may be, therefore, one of the prices which the exceptional individual pays for the privilege of a special destiny. Conformity to the conventional mode may easily result in the sacrifice of all opportunity for the development of talent. Certainly, the insistence that all persons be prepared for "normal" marriage and parenthood, and made ready for any sacrifice to secure it, militates strongly against the development of individual genius. This insistence upon the worth and desirability of the "normal" life in matters of family relationships has grown out of the persistently fostered belief that human beings are alike in their bodily as well as their spiritual needs, and that a neatly devised and well regulated plan for the satisfaction of their needs is all that is desirable. Mrs. Havelock Ellis quotes¹ James Hinton as saying that our present way of living is like that of a man who, finding certain arches too low to allow him to walk upright, was content like an animal to creep under them on all fours. If the evolution of variety in marriage forms continues, it may be that in the course of time the needs of all persons can be served by forms of relationships socially approved and socially regulated; but in view of the well-known opposition to change in any matter, it appears probable that an increasing number of persons will find it to their interest to regulate their behavior in accordance with their own needs and their own consciences without reference to the sanction of society.

¹ *Semi-Detached Marriages.*

XIX

SOCIAL RECOGNITION OF PARENTHOOD

The Social Nature of Parenthood. In recent years there has been an increased tendency to recognize parenthood as something more than a private matter. As we have already observed, social intervention in family affairs began in the interest of the child's welfare, to protect him from economic exploitation by his family, to see to it that he did not suffer cruelty at their hands, that he was supplied with the necessaries of life during his helpless years, and finally that he was given a minimum of education to fit him for his career. The realm in which the parent has reigned supreme over the destiny of the child has gradually been narrowed until he is hedged about on many sides with limitations upon his power and control. At first this social awareness of the fact of parenthood limited itself to the prescription of the duties of parents and the limitation of their power, but within the last twenty years there has begun a recognition of parenthood in terms of its social value, and rewards have been offered for this service.

The Necessity for Social Recognition. The necessity for subsidizing parenthood grew out of two considerations: the declining birth rate, and the high rate of infant mortality. Since parenthood was held to be a private matter to be initiated and controlled by the individuals, it was natural, as soon as they began to reflect upon the means for bettering their condition, that they should consider the limitation of their families to proportions allowing for a higher degree of individual welfare. Whatever the assumption may be with regard to the sentiments inspired in parents by the association with their offspring, it yet remains true that the possession of children curtails greatly the pleasures of the parent and limits his opportunities for economic advancement.

Moreover, children limit the parents' enjoyment of leisure by the constant demands which they make for interest and attention—demands which the parent can hardly resist and still play his *rôle* of good parent. Parents who are most thoughtful and ambitious limit families to the smallest proportions, and those who have not yet begun consciously to plan for an improvement in their standards of living continue to produce large families. But, because of the strain in economic affairs produced by the existence of large families among this class of people, children are born into surroundings unfavorable to survival. The birth rate is, therefore, accompanied by a high death rate, so that the population does not increase so rapidly as the high birth rate might indicate.

The rewards of parenthood in the past have been the psychological rewards that come from association with the child, the hopes held out by religion, and the recognition by neighbors of a duty well done. The responsibilities, however, have been recognized as in many cases outweighing these advantages, since the burden of support is borne entirely by the parents. Other interests have come into competition with the interests of parenthood, religious sanctions have lost their powerful appeal, and the burden which parenthood imposes has inspired a desire to escape its responsibilities.

The Beginning of Aid to Parents. The movement to aid parents in caring for children in their own homes began in the United States with the White House Conference called by President Roosevelt in 1909 to consider problems having to do with the care of dependent children. The sentiment was expressed at this conference that the care of dependent children in their own homes was preferable to any method yet offered by orphanages and other institutions for child care. It was urged that some provision be made by the separate states for the granting of public funds to aid widows in their struggle to support dependent children. This recommendation caused a large measure of protest from private agencies which had been engaged in social and philanthropic work, because of their fear that competition with state

agencies might undermine their influence and prestige. They predicted waste and misuse of public funds because of what they regarded as an inevitable connection between their administration and politics. It was urged, too, that a state agency could not give the same amount of interest and attention to careful investigation and close supervision of cases as could the private agencies.

Administration of Funds. However, there were many who believed that organizations established with public funds could utilize the careful methods employed by private agencies so far as these methods were in harmony with the public interest. Aid by private agencies, however carefully administered, carried with it the taint of charity and philanthropy, while the careful series of investigations undertaken by these agencies appeared to destroy self-respect and family unity in many cases.

The new legislation was intended to recognize the social value of home care for the child, and the stipend in aid of this purpose was to be granted, not as charity, but as a stimulus to a specific social service. On the other hand, the private agencies were hedged about by traditions and practices growing out of quite a different philosophy. Their services represented a gift by wealthy persons in the community to those who were less fortunate, and their elaborate series of investigations were developed to prevent deception and unjustified claims. Commendable as were their aims and services, organizations of private charity were obviously unfit to serve as the means by which social recognition of parenthood could be conveyed. Public agencies therefore appeared far more feasible; their work was begun by the Missouri law of 1911, which made provision for the legal payment of public funds to mothers of dependent children. Illinois followed in the same year with a "fund to parents" act in July which made provision for aid:

If the parent or parents of such neglected child are poor and unable properly to care for said child, but are otherwise proper guardians and it is for the welfare of such child to remain at home, the court may enter an order finding such facts and fixing the amount of money necessary to

enable the parent or parents to properly care for such child and thereupon it shall be the duty of the county board through its county agent or otherwise to pay such parent or parents at such times as said order may designate the amount so specified for the care of such dependent or neglected child until the further order of the court.¹

Similar laws were passed by other states, until in 1924 a total of forty-two states had accepted the principle of public aid to dependent children in their own homes. These laws were properly designated in the earlier period of state enactments as "widow's pensions," since the tendency at first was to restrict their benefits to women whose husbands had died and left dependent children. It was felt that if this aid were extended to mothers of illegitimate children an increase in immorality would follow, with a corresponding increase in petitions for the grants. Deserted wives were denied the pensions because of apprehension as to the effect such a course might have on the number of deserting husbands, and in many states aid was refused to mothers on the ground that such grants would be subversive of the principles of eugenics. In these cases, as in others mentioned in preceding chapters, the conservatives followed the old Hebraic tradition of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children in the forlorn hope of working reformation and a change of heart in the parent.

Deserted mothers may now receive aid in seventeen states and divorced mothers in six states. In eighteen states the mother may receive a grant if it can be proved that her husband is totally unable to work; fifteen states grant aid to mothers in cases where the father is in a state institution for the feeble-minded or the insane; and twenty states aid the mother if the father is in the state penitentiary. Only two states, Nebraska and Michigan, give state assistance to the unmarried mother. The most advanced of all of the laws is that of North Dakota, which specifies that aid may be granted to any "women who have one or more children dependent upon them for support."

¹ Thompson, Laura A., *Laws Relating to Mother's Pensions*, Publication No. 63 of the U. S. Children's Bureau.

Defects in the Present Laws. The aid provided by most of the states is generally recognized as inadequate for the support of the children if the mother is to give her full time to their care and training. In some cases this is not necessary, for if the children are of school age the mother can be employed part time and so supplement the grant which is made to her. Persons familiar with the methods of private social agencies urge that fuller investigations of the method of family expenditure be kept, and that the mother be educated in principles of household management. Since constant interference by social agencies in family affairs is of dubious value, it is improbable that such extension of authoritative control is advisable.

Maternal and Infant Welfare. In the hope of reducing infant and maternal mortality rates Congress passed in November, 1921, a law entitled "An Act for the Promotion of the Welfare and Hygiene of Maternity and Infancy." This act provides for granting federal funds to the states under certain specific conditions. These provisions are as follows: (1) the state legislature shall formally accept the federal grant; (2) the state legislature shall appoint or create an agency to coöperate with the Federal Children's Bureau in administering the funds granted; (3) the agency designated by the legislature shall submit a careful plan for the expenditure of the funds. The amounts available for the separate states vary according to the population from \$11,311.12 for Wyoming to \$89,041.78 for New York. The work undertaken has included the distribution of literature on the subject of maternal and infant welfare, the education of midwives for their task, and demonstrations of clinic work for mothers and infants at various centers. This recognition by the Federal Government of its responsibility for this phase of family welfare indicates a developing social consciousness in the matter of aid to families. All of the states except Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Illinois, and Kansas have accepted the grants. In many states the pioneer work of establishing clinics and welfare centers had already been done, but this law caused the initiation of similar work in other states

where it would in all probability have otherwise been long delayed. This legislation compensates in part for the lack of systems of state maintenance to provide medical and financial aid for mothers. In France such grants are made to a mother for a period of eight weeks at childbirth, and an additional grant is made for nursing the child. These measures effected a considerable decrease in infant mortality within a short time in Paris, and the benefits were so obvious that their application was extended to all female wage earners in France.

Rewards for Motherhood. These grants to women are of peculiar significance in that they offer recognition of a constructive contribution to the social welfare. Women are beginning to question the justice of making their reward for this important service dependent upon the husband's income. Any social measure which gives to mothers a measure of economic independence must increase considerably the general social usefulness and ability of those desiring motherhood. For too long a time women have received their reward in the cheap coin of sentiment and the fancied reverence in which they are held. Now that the biological nature of their function is more generally understood, a great deal of the mystery and appeal is lost and parturition tends to be rated in terms of the social significance of the mother's contribution and the effect which this contribution has on her own welfare and development as a member of society.

Many persons have feared that grants to families would increase the birth rate, but such results, though much desired in France, have not been achieved. In the United States, where these grants are made chiefly to mothers who have separated from their husbands, they could hardly be expected. In fact, any measures which increase the family income seem to cause an increase in the standard of living and a diminished birth rate. However, such measures may lower the infant mortality rate and thus increase population indirectly.

Australia and France give a substantial grant to all mothers. The Australian grant is given to mothers whether married or

unmarried, and Asiatics and natives of Australia alone are excepted. Such grants have the merit of being paid directly to the mother in recognition of her service. The grant is easy to administer, and it gives aid to the mother at a time when she most needs it. Upon the completion of an important piece of work for the state men are paid for their service, and there is no reason why women should not receive comparable recognition.

Some persons argue that such measures cause an increase of population among the feeble-minded. Members of this class are not deterred from reproducing by the prospect of hardship, and there is no reason to believe that they would be encouraged by the prospect of reward. Moreover, programs for normal families should not be based upon the probable effect on the feeble-minded, since those in the latter group require peculiar and specific treatment not applicable to any other element of the population.

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