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THE ETHICS OF FEMINISM

THE ETHICS *of* FEMINISM

A STUDY OF THE REVOLT OF WOMAN

BY

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" Marriage is the beginning and the acme of all culture."—GOETHE.

" Paradise is at the feet of the mother."—MOHAMED.

" The perfect woman is a higher type of humanity than the perfect man, and also something much rarer."

" Marriage; so call I the will of the twain to create the one that is more than those who created it."—NIETZSCHE.

TO

THE MEMORY

OF

MY DAUGHTER,

RODA,

IN WHOM I HAD HOPED TO SEE

THE VIRTUES

OF

MY MOTHER AND MY WIFE

LIVE AFRESH.

PREFACE

A FEW years ago there appeared in the columns of a popular Bombay journal, edited by Miss B. L. Palamkote, a series of articles from the pen of a talented lady graduate. They breathed the usual spirit of feminism, and when I happened to express to the editress my dissent from some of the views of the writer, she prevailed upon me to write a reply. I contributed some articles under the pseudonym of "A Conservative Liberal." I gathered that my reply was read with great interest, and the editress was requested by many to reprint it. I was unwilling to permit this, as I felt that my reply itself was essentially fragmentary and somewhat uncritical. But its success led me to believe that there is room for a work which would give a general survey of feminism in a critical and constructive spirit. Feminist literature in recent years has become very vast, but most of it is confined to an exposition or criticism of particular phases of feminism. I think there is room for a work which seeks to study the foundations and take stock of the effects of feminism, and this is the only justification I can plead for venturing to write this book. I cannot pretend to have written anything strikingly original, and nowhere is mere originality more dangerous than in the realm of sex. I can but say what an author, from whom I have learned more than words can tell, Dr. Bernard Bosanquet, has said in the preface to his *What Religion Is:* "I have nothing to say that has not been said by thousands of better men, but every crisis has its own demand for the right question and the right answer." Feminism has succeeded so far, but its success has within it seeds of future disruption. A free and open critique of it may at least serve to prevent a premature fossilisation of immature feminist ideals.

I have done what I could. But I know my work is far from being perfect. I am fully conscious of defects. Many of them I have tried to overcome, and

some I have been loath to overcome. At times there is some repetition of argument and language alike, but as a teacher I believe that "reiteration is the secret of conviction." A kindly friend has also objected to my quoting so often from Meredith. Here, too, I prefer to remain unrepentant, for nowhere in recent literature do I find such a clear grasp of the many-sidedness and the baffling soul of woman as in the pages of Meredith.

Feminism, as we have come to know it, is essentially a product of the West, and the bulk of my book inevitably deals with the West. But the East is to-day not so rigidly divided from the West as it used to be. Ideas travel fast, and a study of the West may be a guide to the East.

I owe so much to the authors who have written on feminism, that it would be invidious to mention a few in preference to others. But this does not affect my immense indebtedness to them all, especially to those from whom I have quoted. More particularly I must express my deep gratitude to those of my friends and colleagues who have gone through this book in manuscript. I owe a good deal to their suggestions, and even when I have not been able to accept their criticism, it has enabled me to recast my argument so as to make it at least clearer, if not stronger. The book bears the stamp of many an entertaining discussion I have had with my good friend, Mr. V. Subrahmanya Iyer, in the cool of Mysore evenings. It has also had the happy fortune of undergoing a close scrutiny at the hands of Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Mackenzie and Professor Clement C. J. Webb, the *guru* of my Oxford days. Dr. Mackenzie has taken an almost paternal interest in the publication of this book, and to thank him adequately is impossible. My best thanks are also due to my friends, Professor B. M. Srikantiah and Mr. N. Narasihma Moorti, for correcting the proofs and making many suggestions, and to my pupil, Mr. M. V. Krishna Murti, for preparing the index.

I trust the readers of this book will generously overlook its defects, for the sake of the cause it has at heart.

A. R. WADIA.

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PART I

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

THE WOMAN QUESTION

"All the idols are overthrowing,
Man the end of his reign descries,
Maids are clamouring, wives are crowing,
Widows thrill with a wild surmise.

* * * *

Pulpit and platform overflowing,
Ready the scheme of things to revise,
See them eager, militant, knowing,
Write, plead, wrangle, philosophise,
Answer papers and vote supplies,
Wield a racquet, handle a cue,
Paint, fight, legislate, theorise,
Nothing is left for man to do."

W. E. HENLEY.

NEVER in the history of our universe have so many events been crowded into the short space of a hundred and thirty years as has been the case since the French Revolution. For centuries Europe had been content to bear the yoke of the priest and the prince, but one great day the Bastille fell, and the freedom of Europe began. Since then the world has dropped its notions of a snail's-pace progress, and the Europe of 1920 is farther removed from the Europe of 1789 than the Europe of 1789 was from the Europe of Charlemagne. Science has achieved wonders. Steam and electricity have revolutionised industries. Dumb masses have become vocal. The religion of the Bible, which once seemed to have been built on a rock fathoms deep, is slowly receding into the background, shorn alike of its prestige and its power. The example of Europe has not failed to affect the other parts of the world. The East is roused from its heavy slumbers and is pulsating with life. The Japan of feudalism and the Samurai is already a thing of the past. The Hindu and the Mahomedan are fired with visions of freedom, that

seek to remould the laws of Manu and Mahomed to suit changed conditions. A passionate unrest surging over the world found its manifestation in the great war just ended, and the world is groping for ways and means whereby it could achieve peace and give full rein to its thirst for liberty. Surprising and revolutionary as have been the manifold changes, there has been nothing so surprising and revolutionary as the efforts of women to shake off the yoke of men and achieve freedom. Few impartial students of human history will venture to deny that womanhood has not always received that consideration which is its due. The inferiority of woman to man has been an axiom with all races of mankind, sedulously cultivated by male law-givers, and zealously upheld by men. The French Revolution, the fruitful mother of all revolutions, did not fail to arouse new hopes and fresh visions in womankind, which found expression in a startling challenge boldly thrown out by the pioneer feminist of England, Mary Wollstonecraft, in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. She pleaded passionately for the right of women to be educated, and even threw out a hint that she was prepared to demand political suffrage for her sex, but she was true to the conception of motherhood. Since her day the cause she launched has culminated in the complete legal equality of womanhood, which might under any circumstances have been inevitable, but has certainly been hastened by the war.

If a monk of the Middle Ages were to be reborn in our century, nothing would surprise him, and even shock him, so much as the Woman Movement. The despised sex, studying at Oxford and Cambridge, pleading in law courts, working in hospitals, sitting in parliaments, refusing to marry, growing absolutely amaternal, or wilfully limiting the number of children, soaring above housekeeping, putting self above family or race, would fill him with blank dismay for the future of humanity. Feminists may choose to laugh at these fears, and in the day of their pride and success their right to do so cannot be questioned. At the same time there are certain fundamental ideas which have always controlled the evolution of humanity, and among them marriage and motherhood have always been in the front rank. Nothing is so disheartening as the

revolt of modern woman against the demands of her sex, and as no other question can be so important for humanity as this, we propose to study the whole Feminist Movement, take stock of its achievements, and try to understand its effects on the future development of humanity. It may be true to say that institutions like rivers cannot flow back towards their source, and that feminism—or at least that phase of it which has sought to discredit the whole institution of the family—cannot be made to re-establish it as it was, nevertheless its weaknesses and failures may at least tend to serve as warning-posts to the vast masses of women outside Europe, who, dazzled by the beauty, wit, and power of their European sisters, may seek to imitate them in the worst tendencies of feminism.

Feminism in its earlier stages had right on its side. For want of education the woman had been rendered incapable of growing to her full height. As we shall see in the following chapter, she had been for centuries a victim of the whims of man and of man-made law, and humanity itself clamoured for her rights. But like all great movements it had its fanatics, its iconoclasts, with a violent sense of destruction, with nothing to replace the old order of things but empty visions and impossible ideals. There are men so obsessed with the idea of "progress" that they welcome any change merely because it is a change. But mankind has learned to its cost that the teaching of fanatics has often been more productive of evil than good, and humanity in self-defence has had to tighten its hold on old institutions. Conservatism is as essential as radicalism, and the measured march of both has been the guarantee of stability. Revolutions are due more to the grievances of people than to the idle agitators. Feminism in its origin was the effect of man's selfishness and injustice rather than of the blind perversity of women. Men had had their innings, and out of a sheer spirit of competition the demands of women began to outrun the limits of discretion or of possibility. The full growth of feminism has been too recent to allow any dogmatic assertions about its success or failure. But it has not failed to make its existence felt; it has been responsible for certain effects, which are the crying evils

of Europe. It is the object of this book to study these effects with a view to discover whether they are the essential accompaniments of feminism, or whether they are accidental excrescences which do not affect the wholesomeness of the movement as a whole. In connection with this the main force of discussion will necessarily apply to conditions in Europe and America, for the rest of the world has been but slightly tinged by feminism, although there is a distinct trace of feminist ideals invading the sanctum of even the harem and the quadrangle of Hindu households, so that the influence of Europe, for good or for evil, is great both directly and indirectly.

The importance of the Feminist Movement is not to be seen merely in the vast amount of literature it has given birth to, or in the catching hunger-strikes of suffragettes, or in their stone-throwing and "militancy." Its real effects are to be seen in a widening of woman's activities, and the accompanying depreciation of family. We see this in the decrease of marriages, with the corresponding increase in prostitution and illegitimate births. Mons. A. Bertillon puts down more than ten per cent. of the couples in Paris as living in free union, while he also bemoans the lateness of the age of marriage. In France only 0·29 out of 1,000 marry before the age of 25 ; in Belgium only 0·20 out of 1,000 ; in Italy 232 men out of 1,000.[1] These figures speak for themselves. A distaste for marriage is further intensified by a marked disinclination on the part of married people to produce children. "In 1908, out of a total of over eleven million French families, in nearly two million there were no children, and in nearly three million there was only one child. The general decline in the European birth-rate during the years 1901–5 was only slight in Switzerland, Ireland, and Spain ; while it was large not only in France, but in Italy, Servia, England, Wales, and especially in Hungary. Since 1905 there has been a further general decline throughout Europe, only excepting Ireland, Bulgaria, and Roumania. In Prussia from 1881–5 the birth-rate was 37·4 per 1,000 ; in 1909 it was only 31·8 ; while in the German Empire as a whole it is throughout lower than in Prussia, though somewhat higher than in England. In Austria

[1] Letourneau's *Evolution of Marriage*, p. 352.

and Spain alone of European countries during the twenty years between 1881 and 1901 was there any tendency for the fertility of the wives to increase. In all other countries there was a decrease, greatest in Belgium, next greatest in France, then in England."[1] Things are not any better in America, where a century ago there used to be an average of four to five children in every family. By the end of the last century the average had dwindled to between four and a little over one. Since the date of these figures the war and the influenza epidemic have claimed a heavy toll, and Europe stands face to face with a colossal population problem. Men have been ready enough to make themselves fodder for cannon ; it is to be seen if they will also be patriotic enough to shoulder the burden of marriage and contribute to the health and strength of their country.

In the course of ages nothing seemed so well established as the sanctity of home life with its welcome labours and attendant comforts. To-day, however, we find an extreme feminist saying : "Domestic work is the most elementary form of labour. It is suitable for those with the intelligence of rabbits. . . . For Heaven's sake let us take away this unpleasant job and give it over to the specialist to organise as a trade process."[2] That this is not the opinion of an isolated individual is clear from the rapid increase in the habit of sleeping in apartments and dining in restaurants.

Such are the facts of the age. It is not a question to be dogmatically answered whether they are to be treated as diseases of the age, or as the symptoms of a happier age. They demand a close study, which we shall undertake in Part II. In the meantime it would be necessary to study the status of women as it was and as it has been developing. Further, the whole feminist position at least in its extreme form rests on certain conceptions—more often assumed than discussed—like liberty, independence, individuality, and personality. These would also have to be studied so as to enable us to judge how far they afford a stable basis for the advocates of radical feminism.

[1] Havelock Ellis, *The Task of Social Hygiene*, p. 136.
[2] Mrs. Colquhoun, *The Vocation of Woman*, pp. 211–12.

CHAPTER II

THE PASSING AWAY OF OLD IDEALS

" In the beginning when Swashtri came to the creation of woman, he found that he had exhausted his materials in the making of man, and that no solid elements were left. In the dilemma, after profound meditation he did as follows. He took the rotundity of the moon, and the curves of the creepers, and the clinging of tendrils and the trembling, and the slenderness of the reed, and the bloom of flowers, and the lightness of leaves, and the tapering of the elephant's trunk, and the glances of the deer, and the clustering of rows of bees, and the joyous gaiety of sunbeams, and the weeping of clouds, and the fickleness of winds, and the timidity of the hare, and the vanity of the peacock, and the softness of the parrot's bosom, and the hardness of the adamant, and the sweetness of honey, and the cruelty of the tiger, and the warm glow of fire, and the coldness of snow, and the chattering of jays, and the cooing of the *kokela*, and the hypocrisy of the crane, and the fidelity of the *chakravaka*, and compounding all these together he made woman and gave her to man. . . . Then man said: What is to be done? For I cannot live either with or without her."—F. W. BAIN'S *Digit of the Moon.*

WOMAN has often been conceived by the poet and the novelist as a being full of contradictions. Her complex psychology has been the endless theme of human thought, and Mr. Bain's language beautifully illustrates this complexity. With the ascetic and the cynic she has stood as the very embodiment of evil, or as " a sphinx without secrets." Woman herself has often gloated in pride over her powers of attraction and persuasion. Despised by law, she has yet through her charms and genius swayed the destinies of the world, and inspired a Dante and a Shakespeare, a Goethe and a Browning. This great influence has not been confined to the West. Among the teeming millions of Hindus Sita and Draupadi, Savitri and Damayanti have been living ideals in their lives, while Chand Bibi and Ahalyabai have ruled over vast tracts, and Nur Jehan and Jijibai, the mother of Shivaji, wielded an influence which twice changed the destinies

of India. It is a common matter of boast with Christian missionaries to compare the free movements and life of the European women with the cramped home life of Hindus and Mahomedans, and they have not been slow in attributing the superiority of Europe in this matter to the influence of Christianity. How untrue this is has been effectually exposed by feminist writers themselves, who have rightly traced the degradation of their position to the Biblical mythology of Eve's transgression, and the consequent aversion of fanatical celibates, who, dubious of their own strength of character, sought to make their own peace with Heaven by condemning the brighter half of mankind as the enemies of man's spirituality. None would venture to say that the status of a Hindu or Moslem woman is superior to that of a Christian, yet the Code of Manu and the Koran have passages so exalted in their conception as to outstrip by far the cynical and senseless diatribes of the Church fathers against all women. "Where women are honoured," says Manu, "there gods rejoice; but where they are not honoured, there all rites are fruitless."[1] And the great Prophet of Arabia declared: "Paradise is at the feet of the mother."

The attitude of the Christian Church in the Middle Ages was a marked contrast to these sentiments of "pagan" Asia. St. Paul is represented by Clement of Alexandria as warning: "But above all it seems right that we turn away from the sight of women. For it is sin not only to touch, but to look; and he who is rightly trained must especially avoid them."[2] And Tertullian in his *De Cultu Feminarum* writes: "And do

[1] Code of Manu, iii. 56.

[2] Quoted in Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 163. Professor Clement Webb denies that this represents St. Paul's real views, and draws my attention to Gal. iii. 23, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." I think, however, that this passage refers to equality in Christ or in the kingdom of God. But in the kingdom of man inequality of man and woman is tacitly assumed, e.g. by St. Paul himself when he denies to her the right to speak in assemblies for public worship. I may add that in Mahomedanism too the spiritual equality of man and woman is recognised, yet a Mahomedan woman hardly enjoys real equality with man.

you not know that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt must of necessity live too. *You* are the devil's gateway; *you* are the unsealer of that forbidden tree; *you* are the first deserter of that divine law; *you* are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack; *you* destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of *your* desert—that is death—even the Son of God had to die."[1]

It is necessary to dwell on these views, for they explain the utter merging of a woman in her husband's personality, and their intensity explains the intensity of reaction, which may have taken centuries to come, but which, in the interests of a higher morality, was bound to come. The history of the status of women in Europe has passed through three definite stages: (1) In the pre-Christian days of the Roman Empire woman had already achieved her freedom from the *patria potestas* of her father or husband, and successfully asserted her right to possess property and claim divorce. (2) During the dominance of the Church the freedom she had achieved was at first tolerated, till the Church loomed so large that it had the power and the prestige to capture the soul of Europe, and gradually deprive women of their freedom and bring them under the sway of men in the name of the unity of marriage partnership, a partnership, however, in which the husband, merely a portion, in defiance of all mathematical common sense, was regarded as equal to the whole, and the woman was, as Mr. Hardy puts it, merely "a fraction always wanting its integer." (3) Even the Reformation did not affect the status of women, although by his manly encouragement of marriage Luther raised the sanctity of an institution which had received only a patronising acceptance at the hands of the Church. The growth of political ideas and the shattering of the Biblical infallibility at the hands of scientists, like Galileo and Darwin, threw women into a ferment of dissatisfaction,

[1] Quoted in Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 163. Even though Tertullian ended his life outside the regular Church, he was essentially Christian, and so his views must carry a certain weight.

which we have now come to recognise as the Woman Movement with its new ideals, which in destroying the narrowness of the Christian conception also tends to brush away the true and the necessary. Thus it is clear that the superiority of European women to the women of the East is far from being due to Christianity. It has been achieved really in spite of it. Not content to be the "verbs passive" of the marriage alliance, the leaders of the movement like Frau Mayreder, would fain repudiate the whole institution of marriage. Europe will have to face this situation with courage and with thought, or else it must go down between the Scylla of orthodox Christianity and the Charybdis of a revolutionary feminism.

That for centuries the woman in Europe used to be confined to her family and household duties is nothing exceptional, for all over the world the same fact has held from times immemorial. But that a woman after marriage should lose the right of possessing property, or of keeping her earnings, has its roots in the Christian conception of marriage as an indissoluble sacrament, through which the husband promises to love and to cherish his wife, while she on her part promises to love and to obey her husband till death. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it . . . so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." [1] This sounds a very fair division between love on the one hand and obedience on the other. Unfortunately, in practice, man has been more prone in exacting his wife's obedience than in loving her, even as the partnership between Christ and the Church has not prevented the latter from committing crimes in His name, from which His gentle soul would have recoiled with disgust. When St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, goes to the length of exhorting the fathers

[1] Eph. v. 22–33.

to keep their daughters virgin rather than marry them: "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better" [1]; when the same Apostle could write: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man,"[2] and thus show how much he leant towards the Hindu view, which makes a god of a husband; when St. Jerome could write in one of his letters: "A husband may be an adulterer, or a sodomite, he may be stained with every crime, and may have been left by his wife because of his sins, yet he is still her husband, and as long as he lives she may not marry another" [3]; when a Church Council could solemnly excommunicate a monk (Jovinian) because he had denied that virginity was more meritorious than marriage [4]; when a Church Council could solemnly sit in conclave and discuss whether women have souls, it is not surprising that through her passive partnership in marriage she ultimately came to be looked upon as mere property. This crude conception may have tended to be embellished with all the hollow courtesy of chivalry, or all the beautiful elegance of twentieth-century life in Europe, but in reality the inferiority of woman has been writ large in all the legal codes of Europe. A woman may fall but once, and her husband can divorce her. On the other hand, a man can commit any amount of adultery, but if he only has the decency to refrain from cruelty to his wife she had, till recently, no case against him in Christian England. The lusts of men have destroyed the sanctity of family life, but they insist on a one-sided compliance with their marriage vow on the part of their wives. Whatever else may be the evil effects of feminism, it has undoubtedly contributed to the growth of morality by opening the eyes of women to their rights as moral

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 1–4, 7–16, 25–40.
[2] 1 Cor. xi. 7–9.
[3] Quoted in Goodsell, p. 175.
[4] Vol. ii. p. 411 in Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas.*

personalities. It is either the indifference of the gods of Epicurus, or the utterly dulled sensibility of a lawyer to the truly moral that can account for Blackstone's self-complacent language: "Even the disabilities which the wife lies under are for the most part intended for her protection and benefit. So great a favourite is the female sex of the laws of England." The whole attitude of the law of the Catholic Church, demanding celibacy from her most promising children and allowing marriage as a mere concession to the passions of the generality of mankind, is admirably summed up in an old Bologna saying that "Woman is paradise for the body, purgatory for the soul, hell for the purse." It must be allowed, however, that the clergy often interfered in the interests of women to protect them from the abuse of paternal authority. They often fought against coercing a maiden into a distasteful match, but this protection was often accompanied by persuasion of her to take the veil, and bury alive her living womanhood.

The days of chivalry marked a change for the better, and the beauty of woman exacted that homage from men, which law and Church alike withheld from her. It resulted in an ostensible worship of woman, gorgeous tournaments, and a race of troubadours who kept alive the flame of love. There was much devotion on the part of knights, which found vent in the days that were rough and brutal, and the demands of the flesh weighed more with the barons than the commands of the Church and the dictates of conscience. On the other hand it would be vain to deny that in spite of all the glitter and parade of purity, the age of chivalry was impure, and vows of chastity were as easily broken as sworn. Yet if there is a marked distinction between the women in India and women in Europe, it lies in the social equality of the latter with men, and this equality was undoubtedly due to the age of chivalry, when the bright eyes and the ruby lips of high-born damsels inspired youthful knights to heroic deeds, and the beauty of the Queen of Tournament and the valour of her devoted knight were celebrated together in song and poem. An orthodox Hindu woman dare not walk in the front of, or even by the

side of her husband; she cannot eat anything till he has dined, and then too, nothing but the leavings of his plate. A lifelong servility to her husband almost amounting to an unreasonable worship of him marks her life. And the Moslem woman, doomed to live behind high walls, protected from strangers, and excluded from any contact with the realities of life, fares likewise. A wise Providence has ordered things otherwise in Europe. Woman has achieved her freedom to move where and when she likes, to dance and sing and correspond with whomsoever she likes; she is the presiding deity in the house; marked deference is paid to her; her wants and her needs have to be attended to first; and men vie with one another in doing a hundred things to gain her eye or win her good-will. Does she drop a handkerchief? half a dozen men will be on their legs to pick it up. Has she to step into or out of a carriage? A masculine hand will be stretched forth for her to lean upon, even though she be ever so much stronger than he whose rickety arm she condescends to take. Has she to go to the dining-room? She must needs be respectfully conducted to it arm-in-arm by a man with a starched shirt front. Does she enter a room? Immediately all the representatives of the sterner sex leap up from their seats like so many jacks-in-the-box, and with profuse bows and smiles more chairs are offered to her than she can conceivably utilise. Does she enter a crowded bus or tram-car? Immediately a man springs up to his feet, off goes his hat, and the lady with a sweet "thank you" takes the seat. Does a beautiful woman enter a drawing-room or a ball-room? Instinctively she sheds a radiance around, and a thousand male eyes feast on her, and their owners would pretend to be dying for her. A hundred such civilities sweeten social intercourse and throw a gloss over the legal inferiority of her position as it used to be not so long ago. It would be useless to discuss whether these civilities are due to the beauty or the weakness of the fair sex; but they undoubtedly date from the time of chivalry, when men courted and loved in set phrases, and social etiquette took the first place in the thoughts and training of men. Whether this heritage from the

past will survive the wear and tear of competition and equality in the feminist regime is a secret hidden in the womb of time.

The enhancement of the social prestige of woman found in the course of time a powerful support in the Reformation. Luther with a sound instinct proclaimed the sanctity of marriage and raised it to the dignity of a necessity, not a merely tolerated evil. Through the advancement of marriage conceptions woman has always gained in status. Whatever its other shortcomings, Christianity contributed magnificently to the cause of womanhood by insisting on monogamy, and holding it up as the highest ideal of sexual union. But as we shall see later on, the essence of marriage was strangely missed for ages, its divorce from love led to its becoming a soulless fossilised institution, and the present revolt against it—making allowance for the exaggeration which characterises all reactions and all revolts—is at bottom due to the failure of marriage to keep pace with the widening souls of men and women. Once for all a deadly blow has to be dealt to the pernicious view which keeps love away from wives and reserved only for mistresses, which rests on the dead though " time-honoured " principle that the husband must command, even a rake, an imbecile or a drunkard though he be, and a wife, however his superior, must be content to obey. Countless misery so easily avoidable has sprung from this brutal selfishness of man, and desolation has found a home, where laughter and happiness might have easily reigned supreme. But more of this anon in our study of marriage. At present it is enough to point to the real cancer of social life : marriage without love, and to point to the future evolution of humanity as dependent on marriage with love. In the history of the past love had often to breathe a subterranean existence in the haunts of evil. In the history of the future it will have to be universally consecrated on the very hearth of domestic life.

CHAPTER III

THE FEMINIST REVOLT

" At a Scandinavian meeting on the woman's question, a cantata was sung which proclaimed that the human race under the supremacy of man had triumphed in darkness and crime. But the race was now to be newly born from the soul of woman, sunrise would scatter the darkness of night, and the advent of the Messiah was certain."—ELLEN KEY'S *Love and Marriage.*

THE Feminist Revolt is not the result of a day ; it has gathered its present volume through steady work extending over a century and a quarter. Its creed has varied at the different periods of its history. For a number of years from the days of Mary Wollstonecraft onwards, feminists were content to plead for a wider education, which could dispel the narrowness of their outlook and their cramped existence. The effect of education was a desire to make use of it, and the struggle of women to enter the professions began. The opposition of men, not always carried on with calmness and equanimity, or even with fairness, led women to feel the injustice of man-made laws and man-made institutions. They felt that their cause could not advance until they had got the power to make their voice felt in the councils of nations, and an agitation for the securing of the franchise began. J. S. Mill's famous essay on *The Subjection of Women* was an earnest philosophical attempt to vindicate a woman's right to be the equal of man. Feminists themselves are wont to regard the essay as one of the most masterly statements of their cause. Hence it is all the more instructive to find that it is a most moderate statement compared to the radical views to which we have been in our time accustomed. Mill pleaded for a wider education for women, for their right to enter any industry

or profession, and above all, for their right to play a direct part in the politics of their country. Yet he was not blind to the real function of a woman in society and to the importance of motherhood in general. His radicalism had sanity enough to admit that "Like a man when he chooses a profession, so when a woman marries, it may in general be understood that she makes choice of the management of a household, and the bringing up of a family as the first call upon her exertions, during as many years of her life as may be required for the purpose, and that she renounces, not all other objects and occupations, but all which are not consistent with the requirements of this."

But the feminism of to-day has outgrown the feminism of Mill. Broadly understood, all feminism stands for the furtherance of the cause of womanhood. Few would venture to deny the justice of the movement, whose gospel, as stated by Mrs. Philip Snowden, is contained in the phrase: "The recognition, full and complete, of the humanity of women."[1] But the humanity of women stands for various conceptions held by different groups of feminists. With some the humanity of woman seems to be coeval with her political emancipation, as with Mrs. Pankhurst and her militant suffragette associates. With others it stands for complete freedom as mothers, as with the eminent Swedish reformer, Ellen Key. With others it means an unblushing selfish individualism, which would foster a type of an asexual, non-maternal woman, whose whole life is dominated by the single passion of furthering her own interests and her own capacities. These are but dominant types, within which again there are as many views as there are leaders. It would be interesting briefly to recount some of these views, so bold and so Utopian in their conceptions.

The logic of socialism demands the complete equality of man with woman, which is frankly conceded by socialists like Bebel and Mr. H. G. Wells. When it comes to the question of complete freedom for man and woman alike to contract or to put an end to their marriage just as they choose, we are in the midst of a chaotic free love, the dangers of which are, however, shocking enough to

[1] *The Feminist Movement*, p. 9.

evoke a definite repudiation of it from Mr. Wells.[1] What he wants, like Mr. Bertrand Russell, is the public recognition of motherhood as a public duty worthy of being rewarded by the State. Mr. Edward Carpenter and Ellen Key are looking forward to an era when marriage as a legal institution becomes a superfluity, with this difference, that while the former emphasises the element of personal individuality, the latter emphasises motherhood and the claims of children. Their views we shall discuss later in connection with our study of the institution of marriage. At present we must concede in favour of this type of feminism, that it is, after all, true to nature, and seeks only to harmonise the claims of nature with the conditions of human society.

There is another type of feminism, which too is not so far apart from the feminism of motherhood. This second type finds its exponent in Mr. W. L. George, who seeks to destroy all vestiges of male monopoly in the economic sphere, and does not hesitate to declare that "the feminists have designs upon the most fundamental of human institutions, marriage and motherhood." In opposition to "freedom of love," as advocated by Wells and Key and Carpenter, he sets up the ideal of "free love," and hopes that its excesses would be curbed by "some deep need" whereby human beings would tend to live in couples. It means the complete abolition of wifehood, and a race for its preservation has only to look to the chance eroticism of a man and a woman.

If these two types of feminism exalt and give a more or less free rein to the sexual impulse, there is a third type, whose representative is Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Her main desire is to give a secondary place to sexual relations and put in the forefront of her programme a complete economic freedom for women, which in essence amounts to a complete destruction of "home" as we have known it for centuries. Thus a wife has work outside home just as a husband has, on the plea that "the woman who works is usually a better reproducer than

[1] "I do not think there is at present among English and American socialists any representative figure at all counselling free love" (*Socialism and the Family*, p. 48).

the woman who does not,"[1] and that the "over-development of sex caused by her economic dependence on the male reacts unfavourably upon her essential duties. She is too female for perfect motherhood."[2] Her ideal is to see a huge building divided into flats and blocks, whose inmates all mess together, a common kitchen under the direction of an expert chef, serving them all with meals in a common dining-room. The rooms, too, would be swept and cleaned by expert maid-servants, while children would be under the care of expert nurses.

We have briefly brought together these views in order to bring out the leading tendencies of the Feminist Movement as a whole. Feminists are so divided among themselves that it is not easy to say what is essential to feminism and what is not, apart from what one conceives the Feminist Movement ought to be, and it would be possible to criticise these schemes only from some positive standpoint. Fortunately or unfortunately, since the days of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, the genius of man has so remarkably succeeded in subduing nature beyond the dreams of Bacon, that he may well be tempted to imagine that there is nothing in the universe which may not be changed at the sweet will of man, and that this change under the impetus given by the doctrine of evolution must somehow be *ipso facto* considered a change for the better.

Rightly conceived, both these conceptions are far from being true. There are palpable limits to human ingenuity and invention. Man may generate steam and electricity out of coal and water, he may harness rivers, bore through mountains, fly in the air, kill men and destroy cities fifty miles off. But all this merely amounts to discovering

[1] Cf. *Women and Economics*, p. 191.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 182. How fallacious this view is can be borne out by the normal experience of every individual. We may quote in this connection the authority of Galliani: "Women only have intervals of health in the course of a continual disease," and of Havelock Ellis (*vide* his *Man and Woman*, p. 347): "We see, therefore, that instead of being an isolated and temporary process, menstruation is a continuous process, and one which permeates the whole of a woman's physical and psychic organism. A woman during her reproductive life is always menstruating, as Dr. Harry Campbell puts it, just as the moon is always changing."

undreamt of uses of things, and does not give him the power to change the essential nature of things. He may breed excellent dogs and race-horses, but he cannot hope to generate a dog out of a sheep, or a horse out of an ass. No more in human affairs has he got the power, however strong his wish, to change the essential nature of human beings. Nature herself has made woman different from man, and no amount of human manipulation and stone-throwing can change a woman into a man any more than the extraordinary custom of couvade in New Mexico or Abyssinia[1] can change a man into a woman. Human societies may have varied in their attitude towards males and females, sometimes honouring the females rather than the males, more often honouring the males rather than the females. But in every age the functions of the two sexes have been kept apart. It was only during the nineteenth century that Europe entered on a colossal experiment of treating men and women as if there were no insuperable organic difference between them, and it is certainly open to question whether this experiment has proved a success. The word equality has had a hypnotising influence on the minds of men, and it is but natural that it should draw within its charmed circle the earnest mind of women too. But the word is so ambiguous as to require a very delicate handling. There is a sense in which a horse and an elephant are equal, inasmuch as both as nature's children have a right to existence, both have their uses in the economics of nature, and even from the human standpoint they may well claim equality since they have both contributed to the power and comfort of man. But this equality begins to be unmeaning and dangerous as soon as a horse begins to demand to be treated exactly as if it were an elephant, and an elephant begins to sicken because it cannot keep pace with a race-horse. So too with man and woman. If equality means that law should regard them as equal, not decreeing different punishments for the same crime; that law should safeguard equally the person, the property, and the self-respect of both; that law should not insist on one standard of morality for males and on another for females, there is no doubt that man-made law has dealt very unjustly

[1] Letourneau's *The Evolution of Marriage*, p. 316.

with one-half of humanity, and high-souled women have done nothing but right in wholeheartedly condemning the law as unjust and men as selfish. But if the feminist demand for equality means merely a demand for a woman to be treated exactly as if she were a man, it degenerates into a meaningless vagary. Mrs. Gilman may complain that the sexual differences have been "overemphasised," but history and present experience alike go to show that with the given differences between man and woman, a difference in their functions is inevitable. Nature has endowed woman with the functions of nourishing in her womb and then at her breast a helpless child, conceived without its consent; and it has a right, as great as a woman's, to the best treatment it can get. A nurse's hired milk cannot carry within it the vitality of a mother's milk. Gestation and lactation extend over such a long period as to incapacitate her from undertaking regular work outside home without injury to her vitality and capacity as a mother. The whole nineteenth century has suffered in the aggregate from the exploitation of woman labour. Mrs. Gilman and her like may try to distort the physiological growth of woman, but cannot thereby hope to bring humanity out of darkness into light.

A feminist would be on a far surer ground, if she were to protest against the stigma of inferiority under which women have suffered through centuries. It has been positively unmanly on the part of men to have taken a mean advantage of their own physical strength, and condemned their womenfolk to a practical serfdom. Man has not performed any work which can in the least bit rank above the travail of child-birth or the little comforts of home so laboriously achieved, which have made it the symbol of human happiness for ages past. There is something exquisitely beautiful in an equal partnership of man and woman, working hand in hand for the preservation of the race. All the activities of mankind, all their past achievements and their future possibilities rest on an unbroken continuation of race, and this is the sacred task which nature has imposed on woman. She has willingly borne her burden in the past under often very humiliating conditions. She can rightfully demand that in future the worth of her task should be recognised

on its own merits, so that she may not be forced to claim equality by making her ape the activities of man, and be a creature of imitation, a hybrid without the strength of man and without the power and tenderness of woman. Equality can and ought to have only one meaning: equality before law, not equality in functions. Woman has been often considered inferior to man; with greater justice and greater truth she may be considered superior to man. But his equal in any absolute sense she is not. To talk of man's superiority is as absurd as to talk of the superiority of the roots of a tree to its trunk. Where both man and woman are indispensable, and indispensable only through their differences, an artificial annihilation of their different functions can but lead to a disastrous racial suicide, and in a sickly and decadent society the feminists will suffer as much as the tyrant of the ages—man.

There is one truth, however, in Mrs. Gilman's complaint that women so far, in spite of their being confined to home, have not proved very exemplary mothers. The reason for this failure is not to be traced to the lack of out-of-home work, but rather to the lack of training and education which go to make high-souled mothers. The society of the future will have to give a new vigour and a new colour to family life, by reconstructing its very foundations on the basis of mutual love, and not on the relation of male superiority and female inferiority. Justice, not might; love, not fear; confidence, not suspicion; frankness, not hypocrisy; the strength of experience, not the meekness of prudery—these should be the virtues of family life, the child standing as the representative of the race, the family serving the race through its care of the child. This is the dream of the true feminists, who seek for the development of a woman's personality in the growth of her powers and capacities *as a woman*. Herein lies "the recognition, full and complete, of the humanity of women," as Mrs. Snowden would have it, the humanity of women as women, not as men. All else is like the glitter of mirage, or beautiful shrubs that hide a treacherous hollow.

To regard every change as progress is a dangerous illusion, for human civilisation advances not so much in

a rectilinear direction as in curves. The first outburst of the Industrial Revolution drew within its net thousands of women and children. That was a marked change from the humdrum existence familiar for centuries, yet who would care to say that the change benefited either the women or the children? Those feminists, especially women, who protested against the Factory Acts were so much in the grip of Mammon that they must have lost their delicate sensibility, their sense of moral tenderness, which has been the royal heritage of womankind. Revolutionary changes are easier to carry out than to sustain ; it is this which constitutes alike the strength and the weakness of the revolt of woman against marriage and family. It is impossible to say, except dogmatically, what its ultimate effects would be ; it would be easy, however, to point out the evil effects that have already made themselves felt. Before tracing them it is desirable and necessary to study certain basic conceptions, which have lent a specious plausibility to feminism as a revolt against the family.

CHAPTER IV

THE BASIC IDEAS OF FEMINISM

" Lady, there is a truth of settled laws,
That down the past burns like a great watch-fire,
Let youth hail changeful mornings, but your cause,
Whetting its edge to cut the race in two,
Is felony: you forfeit the bright lyre,
Much honour and much glory you ! "

GEORGE MEREDITH.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, by aiming at a deliberate revolt against marriage and the family, feminism—or at least one type of it—is putting itself in the wrong. Frau Mayreder definitely regards sex as an impediment in the development of woman, and it is always a sign of unhealthy degeneration when perfectly natural and necessary instincts come to be looked upon with suspicion and aversion. The effect of this unnatural outlook is already making itself felt on public morality just as much as the " celibacy " or " chastity " of medieval monks and nuns. No creature can transgress the law of its being without a moral and intellectual and physical loss. It is rather unfortunate that the shortsightedness of men's selfishness and love of power made women from the earliest days of feminism imagine that their only salvation lay in fighting for political power. The exaggerated emphasis on this has consumed much precious feminine energy and made it deviate into channels, where the interests of the race have naturally in the heat of strife sunk behind the interests of the individual. But this much must be conceded to earlier feminists from Mary Wollstonecraft to J. S. Mill, that they were not blind to the claims of the race upon woman. In recent years this has come to be forgotten, or at least regarded not as of primary importance. This phase of feminism is so strikingly opposed to the fundamental needs of society

that it ought to be combated by every means in our power. The original source of this phase can be easily traced to the past, and one might even a hundred years ago have foreseen that the much-wanted "economic freedom" would inevitably lead to the neglect and ultimate breakdown of home, and in its fall would be involved a loosening of the marriage tie, and a disastrous increase in immorality, which feminists of an advanced type hail as the new morality. There are four basic conceptions which underlie this revolt, and which deserve a full elucidation. These conceptions are freedom, independence, labour, individuality or personality.

In England, with her general individualistic bias, the conception of liberty as freedom from constraint has always been popular except with philosophers like T. H. Green and Bosanquet, who have fallen under the influence of German Idealism. It has had a certain amount of historical justification, as English liberty from the early struggles of Wilfrid of York down to the English Revolution had been gained piecemeal, and generally in the negative form of liberty to do what one wants to do. Even in the last century the anti-Corn Law agitation and the history of trade unions illustrate the same trait. The classic statement of the creed in Mill's *Essay on Liberty* can still be found reproduced in such recent works as Professor Hobhouse's *The Metaphysical Theory of the State,* and Mr. Bertrand Russell's *Roads to Freedom.* Under these circumstances it would be surprising if at least the English leaders of the Feminist Movement had not fallen under the sway of a conception, which has had such an intellectual and historical background. Yet the conception itself suffers from a patent instability, for liberty to do what one likes—or putting it in its usual though more negative form: freedom from constraint—would speedily degenerate into license, if each individual did not take into consideration the feelings and requirements of his neighbours. But this very consideration imposes a restraint on one's will, and negatives the idea of perfect freedom. If the idea of perfect liberty is

qualified by the statement that it has to be limited by the right of all others to perfect liberty—and this is usually done, e.g. by Mill—the difficulties of this position only increase, hence arise all the inconsistencies of English individualists. The logic of social life makes even the individualism of Herbert Spencer more of a show than a reality, and Mill's demand for state interference in controlling marriage and introducing compulsory education brings out a latent flaw in the whole English conception of liberty. The flaw may be more cogently exposed through a few crucial questions: is a man free when he drinks and leaves his family starving? Is a woman free when out of economic necessity she "willingly" accepts a wage that is out of all proportions low, relative to her worth and work? Is a child free when it begins to smoke and drink and tyrannise over a weaker or younger child? The most confirmed individualist would have to pause before he is consistent with himself and answers these questions in the affirmative. Perhaps he may even be tempted to admit that a man may be free to do evil; but it is undesirable to allow that freedom. If so, it means that a state, having as its aim the preservation of individual liberty, would yet be guilty of a wrong if it fostered that liberty even when it leads to the injury of him who misuses his liberty. Fortunately the English sense of compromise has always been stronger than its sense of consistency, and the theory of individual liberty has not led to any relaxation of Criminal Law, and has not prevented it from safeguarding the interests of women and children by restraining their own freedom as well as the freedom of exploiters. It is instructive to note that the sternest living English upholder of individual freedom is found to recognise the necessity of state intervention in the regulation of sanitation, sale of noxious drugs, and a just system of distribution.[1] In other words it means that he does not recognise the right of an individual to be dirty in his habits and mode of living, and make himself or his house a nursery for cholera or typhoid bacilli; nor his right to experiment with dangerous drugs on himself or on others; nor his right to undersell himself or to exploit another in the

[1] Bertrand Russell's *Roads to Freedom*, p. 144.

sacred name of economic freedom. But this noble inconsistency of English thinkers and of English Government only points to the really ethical nature of liberty. Liberty is meant to be used for moral purposes, and apart from morality there is no use for freedom. A man in being drunk is not manifesting his liberty, but only his inability to use his liberty aright. Herein lies the strength of the idealistic conception of liberty, as freedom to be true to our nature, freedom to be moral, freedom to moralise our environment. It has reference to our abiding self, as distinguished from our passing whims and fancies. Our abiding self is our moral self, and liberty has its roots deep down in this moral self. But our morality flowers only in society, whose highest manifestation is the state. The state itself as a condition of our morality is a moral personality, and since its end is to foster the moral growth of its individual members, it would be justified even in compelling men, if it can, to be moral. But true morality is inward, and cannot be coerced. Hence the state cannot compel men to be moral, yet it can certainly create conditions to facilitate an unconscious and a conscious inward growth of moral principles. Herein lies the justification of a criminal law, a marriage law, a law of property, and compulsory education. Indirectly the state is forcing its members to be free, and to regard this force as constraint is to mistake alike the nature of freedom, of morality, and of the state. Gœthe grasped the moral nature of law when he said: "Only the law can give us freedom." Hence the highest liberty is to be gained through the highest system of law, which giving enough room for the growth of inward morality, yet seeks to impose on its members an ideal of social relations, wherein none is too poor or too rich, and the weak are not oppressed or exploited by the strong. Law in its ideal perfection does not seek to map out or to direct an individual's life in all its details as in Plato's *Republic*, but to create conditions, and if necessary even to impose conditions under which an individual may so order his life as to realise his ideal, so that through his family he may further the aims of his own state and of humanity at large. This is the conception of law and the state, slowly developing generation after generation, to whose

growth each generation contributes its share. Law evolves; revolutions but tend to produce equally violent reactions. It is in this capacity for an ordered development that Rome shone, and England and Japan shine. It is a guarantee of stability, an outward symbol of inward morality.

The real nature of liberty has to be considered only in connection with law and the state. But the English conception of liberty has always shown an open suspicion of the state. Mill's essay was penned as a warning against the growing strength of the state, and Mr. Russell's book openly seeks a way out of the clutches of the state. This hostility between the individual and the state is the result of an entirely misconceived relationship between the two. The state has hitherto been far too much identified with the narrow interests of an Established Church, or a selfish capitalism, or landed interests, or a proud aristocracy of birth, so that it has not succeeded in gaining the good-will of all its members, and thus failed to be truly representative of all its members. But in course of time it will obey the law of its evolution, and with the development of the masses, it will be itself thoroughly democratised, and the conflict between the state and its members will be but a superseded stage in its evolution.

The inferiority of women has in the past found an open sanction in the laws of the state, and it is intelligible that with new ideals gushing in their veins, the women of to-day feel an instinctive antipathy to the state, and in their enthusiasm tend to develop ideals inconsistent with the aims of the state. They have been captured by the creed of their early champion, J. S. Mill, and they have accepted the conception of liberty as involving primarily freedom to do what one likes, unhindered by law and unrestricted by conventions. In times of great social unrest, individualism generally tends to be predominant. The war-cry of democracy: liberty, equality, fraternity, is passed from mouth to mouth, and liberty often gets a predominance which is hopelessly inimical to equality and even more to fraternity. The whole Feminist Movement is a splendid example of this. Rising with a demand for equality, it struggled and struggles

still for perfect liberty of action, and with a view to its realisation ideals have been held and schemes devised which are foreign to the very essence of society. A passionate desire to be free from all control, and with a view thereto to achieve economic independence, a growing aversion to motherhood and its responsibilities, a growing sense of self-centredness, these have been the predominant effects of individualism in feminism. If rigidly and consistently carried out, they tend either to lax sexual connections, not resulting in motherhood, or resulting in illegitimate births on one hand, and an asexual selfishness on the other hand. Either tendency tends dangerously to a decrease of population, and no vigorous healthy nation can look with silent contempt on this movement. Modern Europe has long been exhibiting these undesirable characteristics, but they have received a great impulse from the war, which, like every war in history, has deadened the moral sensibilities of people, giving rise to a specious worship of the khaki and the blue, and to passions aroused by war finding satisfaction in many unhealthy ways.[1]

[1] As this war has been so much praised for having hastened the breakdown of the last barrier against the equality of women in England, it may be as well to consider some of its most disgusting evil effects. People in England and visitors to it have been painfully shocked by the growing laxity of morals there. In the *Times of India* of May 17, 1919, the Rev. Walter Carey, naval chaplain and Principal-elect of Lincoln Theological College, is reported to have said: "There were a good many women, who although not professionally wicked, yet lent themselves to the undisciplined passions of men from the most silly, foolish and wrong idea that in these times of stress these things did not matter, and that because a man was in khaki or blue he had a right to take liberties with morals which never would have been taken in ordinary life."

Still more thought-provoking is an article from the pen of Miss Edith Sellers on "Boy and Girl War-products: Their Reconstruction," in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, of October 1918. Only one quotation will speak volumes for the nature of this individualistic liberty we have been criticising. Speaking of conditions near a huge camp she says: "The great majority of the women and girls in that place behaved themselves as well as the men. It was only the young girls, the flappers, with their hair down their backs many of them, with whom it was otherwise. Some of them certainly behaved themselves very badly, simply pestering the younger of the soldiers by their '*forthputfulness*,' lying in wait for them, seizing them by their arm as they passed. I once saw some young Colonials running for

The Ethics of Feminism

II

Closely akin to liberty is the conception of independence, since both trace their common descent from a pernicious individualism. Idealism looks at things as concrete wholes, and hence considers everything as a part of a whole, apart from which that part can have no significance. Individualism on the other hand—like its counterpart in metaphysics, realism—considers everything as existing in and for itself, so that whatever relations it may enter into with other things, its distinctive characteristics are not thereby affected. This difference in outlook has a very striking effect in politics. An idealist values an individual's action from the standpoint of its possible effect on the well-being of the state. An individualist values the state only as a necessary means to prevent any encroachment on an individual's liberty. Hence if an individual insists on doing just what pleases him, irrespective of the needs of the state, individualism will have no justification in curbing him, and so it suits very well the needs of a rebellious party. Thus feminists too find a justification of their anti-social ideals in an individualist creed.

They feel that working in the quiet hearth light of their homes, they have to be dependent on their fathers

their very lives to escape from a little company of girls. One might have thought, to see them, that they had tigresses at their heels. Another day I saw some English Tommies, who were being pursued by girls, spring into an omnibus for service. The girls sprang in after them, whereupon the boys promptly betook themselves to the top, although it was raining in torrents at the time." Surely we have here an exemplification of Mr. Bernard Shaw's theory of woman as the hunter and man as the hunted!

In the same issue of the journal there is an article on "The Changing Moral Standard," by Mrs. Neville Rolfe. It, too, contains most shocking instances of the growing laxity of English girls. It speaks of a well-educated business girl who *telephoned* for information as to where facilities for treatment of venereal diseases could best be obtained: "because I was kind to a friend who came home on leave the other day, and now my fiancé is reaching London next week, and we are to be married." In another case a girl of nineteen in the presence of a country-house party openly boasted of promiscuous immorality: "Oh, I was at —— and had a topping time," and we are further told that the majority of the house-party felt nothing "out of the ordinary."

or husbands or some male relatives. The very idea of dependence is hostile to individualism, and they seek to put an end to it by achieving their economic freedom. There is something beautiful in this idea. A capacity and willingness to earn money certainly conduces to one's self-respect, while, adding to the income of the family, it may conduce to a better mode of living. But more than anything else—except, of course, in the case of poorer classes—the decisive factor is the feeling of independence which a possession of money never fails to engender. But this very feeling of independence is the manifestation of a desire not to be "obliged" any more to the male earning portion of their family. It is also the manifestation of an uneasy consciousness that one is not doing one's bit for the household. In spite of the widespread feelings of this sort, there is no doubt they are at bottom absolutely morbid. This desire would be justified in the case of the idle parasitic type of womanhood—but in their case there is no sense of self-respect. It ought to find no place in the thoughts of a housewife who, over and above undertaking the burden of child-bearing, also has to look after the most economic and the most efficient management of the household. As will be pointed out a little later, the whole movement for economic independence is partly due to an utterly one-sided conception of labour, which leaves household work out of consideration altogether. However much it may be desirable for a woman to earn money on her own account and through her own labour, it is equally and even more essential for the house to be looked after, and if there is a conflict between the two, as there invariably is, it is the household as a concrete whole that should win, and not a woman's sense of artificial self-respect. The healthy condition of the roots of a tree is not more essential to the life of that tree, than the unobserved silent labour of women keeping their homes clean and fresh is to all that is best in humanity. There is nothing so misconceived as the sense of woman's dependence. By fulfilling her allotted task in keeping up a household, she is performing work as important as, and certainly more useful than, earning a pound in a post office or a workshop. To say otherwise is to be guilty of the capitalistic fallacy, which measures everything in terms of money.

In fact the whole individualistic talk of independence has never been able to withstand any sustained criticism. The whole economic structure is based on a widespread division of labour and mutual wants. Organised labour in recent years has caused frequent shocks to the self-complacency of capitalists, and the "independence" of capitalists has crumbled like a house of cards. So, too, the talk of the mutual independence of parent and child and husband and wife is sheer thoughtlessness. Men and women have always worked hand in hand during the ages past, and the feeling of independence is a disintegrating force in the solidarity of the two halves of humanity. The partnership whose most magnificent manifestation has been the family, depends for its continuance on the feeling of mutual dependence among its members. Advanced feminists complain of this dependence, and yet any honest man would admit how utterly dependent he is on his wife or mother even more than on his employer, and in the case of her absence or her being incapacitated from work how desolate he feels. He may not be fully conscious of her worth so long as things go smooth, but in moments of crisis or self-analysis he comprehends how helpless and weak he feels without her, how by himself he sinks into insignificance, and has nothing precious to live for, a mere round of pleasures which sicken him and ultimately cause pleasure no more.

Feminists seek to escape from the tyranny of men. Yet the tyrant man, do what he will, is not able to break through the silken chains which bind him to womankind. Every man can truly say: "I, for one, feel ever dependent. It was due to my dear mother that I was ever born. It was due to her alone that I was not starved. It was her love alone that sustained me in my disappointments. If I have enjoyed any comforts in life, I have owed them to her and other kind beings of her sex.

> "O Woman, in our hours of ease,
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
> . . . . .
> When pain and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou!"

To continue the woeful tale of my dependence; since I lost my mother I have had to depend for my comforts

on my better half. From the moment of my birth till this day I have not been independent for a day."[1]

In human affairs mutual dependence is the law. Mutual capacity and willingness to serve is what lends a beauty and grace to human relations. To be dependent without being useful is the utter negation of independence. To be useful without being also somehow dependent is impossible. To pretend to be utterly independent is unadulterated priggishness, and priggishness is the one cardinal defect from which a good deal of feminist literature suffers. To neglect duties at home and to sweat outside home is a choice which is detrimental to the highest interests of mankind. Real independence lies in a capacity to work, and so long as a woman fulfils her duty to her home and society she is truly independent in the highest sense of the term.

[1] The keen humour of Mr. Bernard Shaw has exquisitely ridiculed man's "independence" through the sane lips of Candida: "Now I want you to look at this other boy here—my boy—spoiled from his cradle. We go once a fortnight to see his parents. You should come with us, Eugene, and see the picture of the hero of that household. James as a baby! James as the captain of his eleven! . . . Ask James's mother and his three sisters what it cost to save James the trouble of doing anything but be strong and clever and happy. Ask me what it costs to be James's mother and three sisters and wife and mother to his children all in one. Ask Prossy and Maria how troublesome the house is even when we have no visitors to help us to slice the onions. Ask the tradesmen, who want to worry James and spoil his beautiful sermons, who it is that puts them off. When there is money to give, he gives it; when there is money to refuse, I refuse it. I build a castle of comfort and indulgence and love for him and stand sentinel, always to keep little vulgar cares out. I make him master here, though he does not know it, and could not tell you a moment ago how it came to be so. (With sweet irony.) And when he thought I might go away with you, his only anxiety was—what should become of me! And to tempt me to stay he offered me (leaning forward to stroke his hair caressingly to each phrase) his strength for my defence, his industry for my livelihood, his position for my dignity, his—(relenting) ah, I am mixing up your beautiful sentences and spoiling them, am I not, darling?" How, indeed, could poor Rev. Morell, the "independent" man, feel anything but abashed, and what could poor Rev. Morell say but: "It's all true, every word. What I am you have made with the labour of your hands and the love of your heart. You are my wife, my mother, my sisters. You are the sum of all living care to me."

The Ethics of Feminism

III

The false sense of independence at present pervading the feminist ranks is due to the narrow interpretation of labour that generally marked the nineteenth century. In socialistic circles under the influence of Karl Marx labour has stood for manual labour, and the necessity, dignity and worth of intellectual labour have tended to be overlooked. It is only under the impetus of war that the socialists in England have admitted to their ranks those whose labour is primarily intellectual, and thus raised the ethical and economic worth of their organisation. The same narrowness has affected the feminist ranks. Labour has been so interpreted as to exclude household work, and this has occasioned a distinct distaste for what has come to be called household drudgery. It has been asked why women should be restricted to only household duties. The very simplicity of the answer has given a mystic signification to the question as if it were unanswerable. But household duties include all that can be comprehended under the term motherhood, and a *woman alone* can be a mother. Even if men were willing, they cannot undertake a woman's work. She alone can and must perform it. The only alternatives are that this peculiar work may be left absolutely unperformed with grave damage to the health of the family and society, or the routine work may be entirely entrusted to servants, but even in this case the duty of supervision remains and cannot be neglected. It is difficult to make out wherein lies the superiority of sweating in a workshop or sitting for hours together before a typewriter, to working at home. Nor must we omit to consider the evil effects of heavy outdoor work on the health of women themselves. This aspect of the question was fully recognised by J. S. Mill: "If, in addition to the physical suffering of bearing children and the whole responsibility of their care and education in early years, the wife undertakes the careful and economical application of the husband's earnings to the general comfort of the family, she takes not only her fair share, but usually the larger share, of the bodily and mental exertion required by their joint existence. If she undertakes any additional portion it seldom relieves

her from this, but only prevents her from performing it properly. The care which she is herself disabled from taking of the children and the household nobody else takes; those of the children who do not die grow up as they best can, and the management of the household is likely to be so bad, as even in point of economy to be a great drawback from the value of the wife's earnings. In an otherwise just state of things, it is not, therefore, I think, a desirable custom that the wife should contribute by her labour to the income of the family."[1]

The pioneers and the leaders of a movement have a clearness of vision and a sanity of judgment which are not shared by the rank and file of their followers. In the enthusiasm of merely moving forward, prudence is condemned as conservatism, and the barriers placed by nature herself are lightly overstepped. There is a world of difference between the physiological growth of man and woman. From the early age of twelve in the East and fourteen or fifteen in the West, a woman begins to mature, which subjects her to periodic illness. Physicians and customs of centuries have recommended perfect rest for these periods, but modern greed for employment has cast away these precepts of prudence, and the health of woman has suffered beyond question. The long period of human childhood necessitates a specialisation on the part of woman, which leaves her little time and energy for the shouldering of burdens outside home. A woman cannot both fulfil the mission of her life and achieve a spurious economic independence. Nature herself has imposed on man the duty of the bread-winner and the protector of the family, and round the child the family revolves in eternal freshness. What infinite labour is involved in the throes of childbirth! And what soul-killing office work or factory work can compare with it in intensity, or in dignity? What greater work can she perform than the beautiful work of bringing up a moral personality? The work of a mother and a housewife is beyond price, its worth beyond comparison. A positive distaste for it is a sign of perversity from the racial standpoint, and feminism, if it is to be saved from committing suicide, will have to hearken back to the call of woman-

[1] *The Subjection of Woman*, chap. ii.

hood. There are ample means of raising motherhood to a higher pedestal than it has ever been on in the past; even the household "drudgery" could be beautified and made pleasant with the intellectual and the artistic forces that are at the command of women to-day. Labour must be interpreted in its widest sense as social service, and woman's work will rank as the highest and most glorious. Recognise the human personality of a woman, instead of regarding her as a chattel, and the evolution of humanity will perfect itself. Solomon spoke well of woman when he said "her price is above rubies, for she looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness."[1] Even during the degenerate days of Imperial Rome the work of woman did not always go unrecognised, as several tombstones erected to the memory of their wives by men of simple birth can bear witness. "Short, wanderer, is my message," says one, "halt and read it. The loathly stone covers a lovely woman. Claudia her parents called her; she loved her husband; bore him two sons; she was of proper speech, and noble gait, and kept her house, and spun. This is all. Go."[2] And she was more useful than her parasitic sister, or than her modern sister slaving in an office, leading a self-centred life, or maybe married to a man whose home she neglects, and whose children she relegates to the care of a hireling nurse.

IV

There is not a healthier conception in human affairs than individuality or personality. It limits the deadening interference of the state in all the little details of life. It is the mainspring of the highest art, which is as rich and complex and mysterious as its author. It keeps afresh our interest in human life, and in each age produces a new sheaf of problems for human intellect to solve. Nature is rich enough never to repeat itself, and one man differs from another just as much intellectually as

[1] Quoted in Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 73.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

physically, and it is as well that this is so, for the richness of human intellect as of human beauty is inexhaustible, and it is a moral duty that each individual should try to be a fully-rounded person himself rather than be a mere milk-and-water imitation of others. It is individuality and character that have gone to the making of human history ; mere imitators, victims of the herd instinct, have only served as obstacles in the path of human progress, or in some lucky moments have been ruthlessly driven to the wall. But just as there is an infinite variety of human bodies, and a nose may display itself in its highest Grecian type, or in its ugliest form, without departing from the general physiological laws of its growth, so, too, however complex and different one human individuality may be from another, it must remain true to its human nature. The individuality of a man is not to develop the cruelty of a tiger, the stupidity of an ass, or the habits of an orang-outang. Hence the individuality of a man is not to be found in his eccentricities any more than the beauty of a nose is to be judged by its abnormality. Human individuality cannot be restricted merely to the male half of mankind. It is the birthright of every human being, and woman *qua* woman is as much entitled to the full development of her personality as her husband or her brother. This simple logic has been assiduously and rigorously developed by feminists. On analogy it argues that just as the activities of men are not fettered to any one sphere, and hence range large, so, too, the full growth of womanhood demands its complete emancipation from the cramping influence of home as her only sphere of activity. Even Mrs. Snowden, who cannot be identified with the non-maternal herd of feminists, pens a vigorous plea for the emancipation of woman. The feminist, she says, "asks for freedom for women in the exercise of those gifts, and in the use of those qualities of soul and mind, which are apart from the consequences of the sex-act. She objects to the pressing down of woman's personality into one channel, the directing of woman's emotion, with its specially rich quality, to one end, the confinement of woman's genius to one achievement."[1]

[1] *The Feminist Movement*, p. 15.

This is a common idea among all feminists, yet its emphasis on man's *unlimited* opportunities as on woman's *narrow* sphere is particularly misleading. A mother's work is in no sense of the term narrow; it is as wide as humanity itself. It is only the woman who first gives birth to a child, and then abandons it to the care of a nurse or a crèche so that she may idle away her time or slave at making pins' heads or at labelling bottles, that really narrows the range of her sympathies and her feminine genius. Nor again is man's activity unlimited. His main function is to be the bread-winner and supporter of his family, and for want of opportunities, or pressed by economic necessity, he has to betake himself to work often uncongenial to him and killing his individuality. Happy he who finds his personality blossoming in his work. It is not only the woman who is a fraction wanting another fraction to make an integer, the same is equally true of man. The unit of humanity, in spite of what an egoistic individualism may say, is not the man or the woman, but the trinity in unity of a child and its parents. A man by himself, whatever his activities, is in sooth a solitary spark gliding away from the ship of humanity. Nature's law is mutual dependence, self-sacrifice, development of personality through and for others, and a bachelor wants something in his life to make it a rounded whole: it is a woman and the smile of a child born of their love. This is the basic fact of humanity, and for its realisation it depends on the co-operation of man and woman. He labours outside, she labours within. Both within their spheres are supreme, and any extensive overstepping can but breed drones whom humanity repudiates as sexless ants, unnatural rebels, and unnatural growths, parasites in social economy. Thus the individuality of a woman is to be found in the fulfilment of her womanhood. The future wistfully looks to her for the realisation of human aspirations.

The Feminist Movement suffers under a great initial disadvantage. Mere conventions or the prejudices of men, however strongly fixed, can be overcome by patient steady persuasion, but the barriers fixed by nature present an insuperable obstacle. Feminists have all their energy set on the thankless task of proclaiming and trying to achieve

a spurious equality with men. Imitation is said to be the sincerest kind of flattery, and feminists in the very act of running down the man-assumed superiority of man, admit and proclaim by their action his superiority. If the individuality of a human being is to be attained by annihilating the distinguishing marks of womanhood, marks that have yielded the very highest fruits in poetry and fiction, painting and sculpture, and, above all, the infinite richness of family life, it gives rise to the paradox that humanity is to be enriched by developing just the manly type of life. Fortunately the sex-instinct is too deeply rooted in man and woman for them to be false to the needs and the nature of their sex, and the feminist extravagance will one day breed as severe a reaction as the unnatural celibacy of medieval monks and nuns often changed houses of piety into houses of disrepute. Nature has her own way to avenge any widespread revolt against her authority and her laws, and the feminist, who with a fanatical blindness sets up on her pedestal of worship the image of man, and is lost in mimicking his ways, his vices, his functions, may be reckoned as wilfully courting failure. The law of individuality is the law of the development of self, and whatever else the self of a woman may be, it is certainly not that of a man.

Man in the past enjoyed a dubious superiority due to his strength, much greater than was ever good for the welfare of his soul. It is time now for him to recognise that he has no right to his assumed superiority; that in the days of his monopoly of power he injured the cause of humanity by keeping women ignorant and degraded, and reaped the fruits of his injustice in generations of children of a stunted moral and physical growth. In the interests of humanity itself it is necessary to put an end once for all to the dominance of man in domestic affairs. Women must be given their rightful place in the home, not on sufferance or as a matter of favour, nor on the variable basis of her youth and beauty. She must be made fit to undertake with a new zest and new gusto her mission of rejuvenating humanity, and in the future she must reign as the mistress of the rejuvenated home and the mother of children, born out of the fullness of her love and nurtured through her personal care and

ability. Motherhood is the most difficult and the most elevated of professions, and man must see that this profession is duly honoured, lest a specious economic independence deviate the best of women from the paths of their sex to the detriment of their home and humanity. The woman of the future is to be mother *par excellence*, reigning supreme in her home through the right of knowledge and the strength of her tenderness. This is the Feminist Goal to which the world may give its blessing. Down with the brutality of husband and father, up with the divine humanity of wife and mother: the reign of love and knowledge. With such a creed humanity may well aspire to open a new page of its history.

" Through ages dim dull shone the star of womankind,
Through mist and dust it cast a lurid light;
Close linked with Man the Egoist a blight
It spread on home and hearth. But now with love to bind
The twain halves of mankind, new visions stir
The life of man; the star of womankind
Doth upward climb and shine in love's limpid splendour."

PART II

THE EFFECTS OF FEMINISM

CHAPTER V

IN THE REALM OF EDUCATION

" Their sense is with their senses all mixed in,
Destroyed by subtleties these women are !
More brain, O Lord, more brain ! or we shall mar
Utterly this fair garden we might win."

GEORGE MEREDITH.

IN nothing so much has the shortsightedness of man been so prominent as in his attitude towards education. The genius of Plato could see that the whole fabric of the state rested on a solid educational system, and that education is one of the two grand instruments for the uplift of humanity. But his message has not been taken to heart, and the world still waits for a thorough regeneration of its children. Female education was for ages conspicuous by its absence. Silly notions of woman's inferiority made education in her case a superfluous luxury. The intellectual brilliance of an Athenian Hetaira but accentuated the dullness of an Athenian wife. The genius of Roman matrons often made them the recipients of a high education, and in Christian Europe the foresight of an exceptional father, or a conglomeration of lucky accidents produced a learned Queen Elizabeth or a Lady Jane Grey. But as a rule female education in any extensive sense of the term hardly existed till the nineteenth century. It would be dangerous to hold man alone responsible for this state of affairs, as if he were jealous of his own monopoly in education, for instances abound to show that during feudal Europe education was looked upon with contempt even by men, and even in succeeding ages of greater peace and quiet they were not enamoured of the soft effects of education. Even so late as 1500 an Englishman could be found to say : " A curse on

these stupid letters ; all learned men are beggars. . . . I swear by God's body I'd rather that my son should hang than study letters. For it becomes the sons of gentlemen to blow the horn nicely, to hunt skilfully, and elegantly carry and train a hawk. But the study of letters should be left to the sons of rustics."[1] Things were better in succeeding centuries with girls whose fathers were rich enough to employ tutors for them. But under these aristocratic conditions only a few could have made Minerva's acquaintance. With the rank and file, female education—if such a term could be used—was restricted to the four C's : " Cooking, clothing, children, Church." But here again let it be remembered that in those centuries a Ruskin College was as impossible at Oxford as a Somerville College.

Female education on any adequate scale began only in the last century. It was the first legitimate offspring of feminism, as the sweating of women in industries was the first illegitimate one. No movement can grow apart from the force of mind behind it, and women early saw that if they were to make good their claim to equality with men, they would have to establish their intellectual capacity to compete with men with their own weapons. Their educational struggles and their educational achievements form a most entertaining chapter in the history of feminism. It displays a splendid example of dogged persistency on the one hand, and a serried mass of prejudices on the other, resulting in half-hearted compromises, which have entailed the not over-happy effects of what may well be called half-education. We cannot pretend that the direction which female education took at that time, and which has continued since then, was altogether in the right direction. It gave a wrong, though a powerful, impetus to all the unhealthy tendencies in feminism. Female education in its true sense should mean education of women as women ; in practice it has meant simply education of women. It was framed on the basis of boys' education, and as a result it has harmed the cause of women themselves as much as the cause of men. But of this more anon.

[1] Quoted in Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 286.

In the Realm of Education

The importance of education lies in its great capacity to form the ideas and the character of men. Its professional aspect is most prominent only in the case of the highest education. Its justification lies in the plastic character of the human brain, and its success has been proved by the simple fact that it is the educated nations that are the civilised nations, and it is the civilised nations that rule the world. Our times have witnessed a growing faith in heredity, which rigorously worked out may end in the fatalism of the East, but the robustness of Europe may well be trusted to curb the forces of heredity, and bring them under the control of a healthy environment, and the most powerful force in environment is education. It is a great instrument which nature has placed in the hands of men, and men cannot monopolise it without inflicting an unpardonable injury on humanity. The problem only is what this education ought to be. We have the high authority of Plato, the first of the world's educationists, for making no difference between the education of the sexes. In some classic pages of his *Republic* Socrates seeks to establish the identity of functions of the sexes. The first of his arguments is that if a woman is able to perform a function just as well as a man, her sex ought to be no barrier to her performing it. In a dog, so runs his argument by analogy, we look for watchfulness, and if a bitch is as watchful as a dog, we do not hesitate to employ her services. On these premises and analogies the conclusion logically follows that the education of man and woman should be the same, since there is no function, barring one, which a man can perform and a woman cannot. But this very exception constitutes a fatal defect in the teaching of Plato. A woman alone can be a mother, and the functions of a mother are so exacting both before and after the birth of a child as to require a severe specialisation, which effectually prevents her from dabbling in all the varied activities of men. Motherhood and marriage are incompatible with the manliness of woman. Plato was a logician enough to annihilate at a stroke marriage as an institution in order to give a free rein to the realisation of his ideal of the equality of the sexes. Nothing is bolder, more interesting, and more Utopian in the whole

range of Grecian philosophy than Plato's speculations and visionary legislation about guardians and their marriage-feasts, community of wives and of children, a reshaping of humanity away from the world-old relationship of a family. Plato's *Republic* remains an impossible ideal, and withal an undesirable one. Modern feminists, like Plato, have clearly seen in marriage and maternity a cruel barrier to their dreams of equality, and, like Plato, they are struggling either to kill family life altogether or to take away its burden by means of state-employed nurses and crèches. Whether the latter plan is any more practicable or desirable we shall see in a later chapter. That maternity cannot be killed without committing racial suicide is as clear as sunlight. People who struggle for progress must be presumed to have a very living faith in the continuity of humanity, and feminists with all their enthusiasm may surely be classed among them. If their theories are inconsistent with this primary assumption and faith, it can only be due to a flaw somewhere in their position. They do not recognise the all-comprehensiveness of maternity and fondly imagine that its claims could be satisfied, even while the mother is sweating and slaving outside to achieve her "independence." Anyway, we may proceed on the assumption that, pessimists and evils of life notwithstanding, it is somehow desirable to live and contribute to the continuity of humanity, and this assumption will ultimately colour our views of education. There is also another assumption that we shall for the present make, viz., the necessity of marriage as an institution. This assumption will undoubtedly be challenged, but we must postpone a consideration of this whole question to Part III.

If, as we have seen, the upward progress of humanity is to be achieved only through education, and if the main function of education is to prepare men *and women* for the battle and the duties of life, it follows that every educational system must have its roots in the peculiar purpose it has to serve. If the sex-distinctions are as rigid as they actually are, and this very rigidity points to the intentions of nature with reference to her, female education must have its curriculum guided by the central notion that a woman is to be the queen—*de facto* and

de jure—of her home. That education which makes her a good housewife and a good mother is good absolutely. This may be rank pragmatism, but there are worse things in the world than a sane healthy pragmatism. Even the education of a man is guided by what he aims at being. A youth who aspires to legal fame does not trouble himself with the details of medicine, and a man who wishes to be an engineer does not dabble in the abstruse difficulties of metaphysics or the hair-splitting subtleties of law reports. So, too, if the function of a woman is to rule her house, where is the necessity for wearing out her eyes at algebraical symbols?

Up to a certain point the education of boys and girls must coincide, but with the growing differentiation of their physiology at the time of puberty, the curriculum should be modified to suit the changed conditions. Among all the principal nations in the East, from the days of the Old Persian Empire downwards, a woman in her periodic illness has been regarded as an unclean being, and kept in a more or less segregated position during the time. In its extreme form this segregation may be a superstition, but it has a hygienic basis as is recognised by not a few doctors even in the West. What is primarily wanted is rest at that time, and rest is best secured by keeping at home and avoiding all strenuous work. The present system of female education makes the course for girls as heavy as boys'. As a consequence of this and of false ideas of sexual hygiene, the periodic rest becomes a practical impossibility. Nor can we fail to notice the devastating effects of a craze for examinations. In the case of boys they are an ugly necessity ; in the case of women they ought to be a superfluity. The rigour of examinations grows with increasing age, and unfortunately in direct proportion to the growing demands of the body for care. Well might Mrs. Archibald Colquhoun affirm : "The path of modern education is strewn with the dead, mutilated or devitalised bodies of women whose physical well-being has been sacrificed before the Moloch of competitive examinations."[1] The delicate machinery of a woman's organs gets easily affected by any unnatural strain on her, and bears often lifelong traces of early

[1] *The Vocation of Woman*, p. 267.

thoughtlessness. The fact is pitifully writ large on the physique of many an educated woman. A quarter of a century of masculinised feminine education in India, especially in Bombay, has already witnessed a complete wreck of health among the school-going girls, and a very large proportion of lady-graduates among Parsees have not survived the strain of child-birth. It is not very much better in the West, as many a doctor can attest. Mrs. Colquhoun effectively quotes the authoritative opinion of Dr. J. Lionel Taylor, who writes in *The Nature of Woman:* "This much we do know, that probably at no other time in history has child-birth been so difficult, so unhealthily difficult, as now, and that this has manifested itself chiefly in the last fifty years, a period marked by increasing educational strain for girls and boys, by increased gymnastic and violent exercises, such as hockey for girls, and by employment for young women outside the home."[1]

Any educational system that definitely neglects the conditions of life is at its best a mere luxury, at its worst it is most harmful to society. Now the chief function of female education is to produce good women. To make our conception of a good woman quite clear we shall briefly state whom we do not consider to be good women: whether in an ethical or non-ethical sense.

A woman whose one aim in life is simply to ape man is, *qua* woman, bad, much in the same way as a blacksmith is, *qua* blacksmith, bad if he neglects his business and aims at aping a doctor, with the result that he only succeeds in attaining the dubious dignity of a quack!

A woman who looks at her sexual nature as a mere desire to be satisfied, and not as a sacred function, is bad, for it makes her selfish and leads her to despise marriage and nevertheless drives her into immorality.

A woman who marries merely for the sake of obtaining luxuries and comforts, and deliberately avoids children and lives as a parasite, is bad, for thereby she frustrates the object of her sex and perverts the essence of marriage.

A woman who bears children but neglects their training is bad, whether this neglect is due to ignorance or to an

[1] *The Vocation of Woman*, p. 229.

insatiable longing for clubs, balls, and parties, or to a perverse zest for playing the tom-boy.

A woman who flirts is bad, for flirtation is but a travesty of love. It always singes, sometimes even burns her victims. It is this trait in her which poets and novelists have seized upon and made her a being of contradictions or a "sphinx without secrets."

A woman who is *not* bad has always the interests of family and race at heart. She is the flower of humanity nourishing through her sweetness and charm and toil the highest traditions of humanity. She is the greatest teacher of man. She is the maker of human personalities. Through her the miseries of life lose their sharp edge, through her the joys of life are heightened, she is the source of artistic inspiration, the centre of the human sanctuary: the home. Truly does the poet sing of her as "one half woman and one half dream."[1] It is an evil art which, instead of enhancing the beauty of life, makes it an eye-sore. It is an evil education which mars the plan of nature, and seeks to make an imitation-man out of a woman. Woman is born to be a mother, a teacher, the head of a family. And her education must be such as to fit her for these heavy tasks.

But let us guard against two possible misconceptions. The education of a mother is not the minimum of education; it is not narrow; it must be as wide as the manifold interests of a home. Hence at several points her education will be wider than a boy's. It must comprise arithmetic and unlimited literature, hygiene, housekeeping (including cooking, knitting, and embroidering), some one of the fine arts that are so conducive to the beauty of life and so necessary to the growth of our soul, physiology, a knowledge of sexual facts, delicately and impressively imparted, above all, a moral training, which would make her personality leave an unfading impression on her children. It is indeed she—more than the professional priests, many of whom in all religions are downright humbugs if not thorough-going knaves—that disseminates the pure atmosphere of religion and high ideals around her. She is the link that binds the future to the past. She is the channel in which the stream of

[1] Tagore's *Gardener*, No. 59.

religion flows, enriched by her piety and personality. Let the child learn at her knees the profound convictions of her heart, and he will ever be the living embodiment of those convictions. Even though in course of time he outgrows the ideals of his childhood, her voice will still be ringing in his ears ; her sincerity, greater than her creed, will be his rock of faith. A mother is a reservoir of inspiration. The varying characteristics of her children will blossom forth in various ways, but they will all have their common source in their mother's love : the most divine of human virtues. A mother, if she is to fulfil her work as a teacher, must have her intellect well developed, and if she knows as much as we expect her to know, she will hardly be inferior in real worth to a graduate, and certainly his superior in naturalness.

It may be conceivably protested that however extensive a course of education may be, if it is exclusively dominated by the idea of serving just one end, e.g. motherhood, it is vitiated at the very core of it, as it negatives one of the fundamental postulates of all knowledge : viz. knowledge for the sake of knowledge, which is not guided by considerations of mere material comforts as gained through pounds, shillings, and pence. If it means knowledge, which has no reference to an end, there is no doubt that the dictum is wholly false, for there can be no knowledge which has not some end to fulfil. Even a man's education, after all, is guided by practical considerations. He has to earn his living, and he has every right to aim at that profession which would suit him best, and he would perforce have to regulate his education accordingly. Only when the primary duties of life have been fulfilled can the right of a man be admitted to cultivate knowledge for its own sake. Excessive love of knowledge, as e.g. in Socrates, may be meritorious, but it does not entitle anyone to shirk his primary responsibilities. In the case of such a towering seeker after truth as Socrates, we may modify the rigour of our judgment, for his genius in its own way has done more for mankind than if he had followed the beaten tracks of an ordinary paterfamilias. A genius in himself is abnormal and a plant of rare growth. He has his own laws of development, creates his own environment. In so far as he is a genius his own ways

will not be the ways of ordinary humanity. He will again and again come into conflict with the world's conventions and even perhaps laws. Every society will judge for itself how far it will give a free rein to the erratic genius of some of its members, but it shall not judge a genius as harshly as it would judge an ordinary man. Neither Shelley nor Nelson was exemplary in domestic relations, but the worth of their work overshadows their faults, and the world must judge them on the whole. Conventions and laws are fatal to the free life of a genius, and they will have to be elastic in such cases. But an ordinary individual cannot claim an injurious freedom which is not redeemed by any conspicuous service to the cause of humanity. To say this is not to detract from the imperative character of moral laws. It is only recognising the complexity of human nature, whose higher interests are often served by breaking the conventions of life. A Newton out of deference to his life's great work may refuse to shoulder the responsibilities of a husband and a father. But Newton's privileges cannot be granted merely on demand. It will have to be earned by exceptional work and worth. In the economics of genius success is the only test. Its only measure is its capacity to persevere in the face of failures and obloquy.

In short, what we wish to drive at is that every man has his own duties to perform, and that he cannot be allowed to be educated in a way that renders him useless or in a way that blinds him to his duties, except in the case of geniuses, who are fortunately rare enough to make exceptional treatment possible. So, too, in the case of woman, we must frankly recognise her right to knowledge, but we must unhesitatingly say that a system of education which has no reference to her primary duties ; which makes her callous and hostile to the legitimate demands of social life ; which cultivates her mind at the expense of her health, her best womanly characteristics, and her capacity to serve the cause of society, bears the stamp of inefficiency and failure.

But this very insistence might give rise to a second misconception against which we must guard ourselves. We do not mean to say that every woman must, under all conceivable circumstances, marry and rear a family.

The Ethics of Feminism

If genius in a man is entitled to exceptional treatment, so must be genius in a woman too, and few will venture to deny genius to women, even though they have as yet not produced a Shakespeare or a Goethe, a Newton or a Darwin, a Mozart or a Beethoven, a Raphael or a Leonardo da Vinci. What delightful hours have we passed in the company of the gentle Mrs. Hemans, of the light satiric Jane Austen, of the melancholy yet pathetic Brontë sisters tinged with the hues of tragedy, and of the virile George Eliot! How can one ever give sufficient expression to one's admiration for the passionate intensity of Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning? Those Portuguese sonnets of hers, the most magnificent exaltation of wedded love in the whole range of English literature, what ringing passion and sincerity they breathe! What wealth of her womanly heart they contain! If any of these writers had chosen to sacrifice their genius through mere maternity, the world would indeed have been poorer. But their genius was great, essentially because it was feminine. What would Mrs. Hemans, or Mrs. Browning have been without their eminently human experiences as lovers, wives, and mothers? What would have been the genius of Charlotte Brontë but for the tragedy of her misplaced love? George Eliot, so masculine, and yet so feminine in her love! Conventions notwithstanding, there must have been something beautiful in her relations with George Lewes to have attracted even Lord Tennyson, the very embodiment of mid-Victorian respectability. George Sand's erotic experiences should not be a bit more harshly condemned than Byron's. The divine afflatus of genius, in whomsoever found, will command our admiration, even though its moral lapses must evoke our condemnation.[1]

After all, in the life of every man and woman there comes a moment when they have frankly to face the question: Am I fit to marry? Shall I best serve the

[1] The question whether a woman can ever be a genius has been discussed with a brilliant extravagance by Dr. Otto Weininger in his *Sex and Character*. His facts are the victims of his theories, and his wholesale condemnation of the female sex is its own condemnation, e.g. when he writes (p. 236): "No men who really think deeply about women retain a high opinion of them; men either despise women or they have never thought seriously about them."

interests of humanity by marrying or by avoiding marriage? A genius will not necessarily answer this question in the negative, for love is not hostile to genius, nor is parenthood at war with one's social usefulness. Spenser and Milton were great poets, though they were men of affairs, and a woman's genius need not be marred by marriage as many a feminist pretends. How many feminists who have poured vials of wrath on maternity can pretend to half the abilities of the great women geniuses we have named above, or to a tenth of the deep influence that these great souls have wielded?

To come back to the main point of the chapter, female education must be an education that is fitted for the generality of them. Exceptions there will be. But for the off-chance that a woman Newton or Darwin may be produced, to force boys' education on all women is a great injury to their nature.[1] The vast majority of women must look forward to marriage and maternity, and their education must fit them for this vocation. If there be some who can feel the call of a higher social destiny drawing them away from maternity, they may be left to imbibe higher education in all its stages. Further, there will be those whom nature has marked out as barren or physically unfit to be mothers ; they, too, may claim a higher education. From the standpoint of the future they are nature's waste-products, but nature is resourceful enough to find some good work for the benefit of her most unfortunate children.

The system of female education here advocated has been tried in Germany and Japan, and is worthy of a far wider introduction than has so far been the case. Speaking of German women, Mr. Robert M. Bury says : "All of them, to whatever class of society they belong, are adepts in house-keeping, as besides the practical instruction their mothers insist on at home, there are

[1] True genius may always be expected to assert itself. Many great poets, scientists, and philosophers were rebels at schools, and gave no promise of their future greatness, for the simple reason that the mechanical routine of educational systems does not suit them. They create their own education. So, too, the genius in woman may be expected to chalk out its own development. It cannot depend on any particular system of education, still less on the system that treats the boy and the girl alike.

admirable special classes in housework connected with all schools. Well-frequented household economy schools for women have been established in Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemberg, where girls and women receive instruction in cooking, preserving, washing, ironing, house-cleaning, gardening, poultry, bee and small animal breeding, milking, hand-work, cloth-cutting, gymnastics, and singing, botany, chemistry, hygiene, and household book-keeping. Even at the theatre and concert it is a common sight to see German girls and women knitting stockings or doing crochet-work."[1] This is a fair sample of German thoroughness before her ambition for *Welt-Macht* led to her *Untergang*. The scheme in its entirety may be far too comprehensive, but it can easily lend itself to adaptation.

In *Japan* by the Japanese Professor Jinzo Naruse, the founder of the first university for women in Japan, says: "Our dormitory is made up of seventeen homes, each containing not more than twenty-five students. They look upon their matron as their mother, and feel towards one another as sisters. Cooking, washing, setting tables, decorating the rooms, the economical management, and everything that concerns the house is under the control of the residents."[2] This is an aspect of female education which has unfortunately been neglected far too much in various countries, and may well insist on its claims being heard. An educational system divorced from the practical needs of its recipients inevitably gives rise either to an aristocratic idleness or a discontent, which lives in a visionary world and frets for what it cannot get. Any system worthy the name of female education should have its basis in a right conception of the dignity, position, and function of a woman in society, and it will be successful only in so far as it has this right basis. The physical needs of women demand periodic rest, which makes boys' education and a craze for examinations absolutely suicidal to her interests.[3] The present system and ideals demand

[1] *Germany of the Germans*, p. 185. [2] Chap. xxxi. p. 607.

[3] Havelock Ellis in his *Man and Woman* quotes Englemann (p. 345): "Mental energy and acumen are, as a rule, diminished during the first days of flow at least, as is affirmed by perhaps 65 per cent. of the many questioned who state that mental exertion and study at that time is more difficult and wearying and requires greater

drastic changes. A nation's welfare depends on its educational system, and a system which does not prepare a woman for her life's work, or worse still, positively incites a repugnance to marriage and fosters anti-marital ideas, cannot be said to be really wholesome in character.

That woman's intellect is fitted to imbibe the highest education has been established beyond doubt. There is nothing particularly surprising in this, as there is no more difficult or intellectual function than the duties of a mother, and nature would have been at fault if she had neglected to endow woman with as fine a brain and intellect as man's. People who have had the advantage of training girls and young ladies must have found how much more receptive they are than boys, while their powers of inventiveness and originality of thought may be developed in course of time.[1] Any qualitative or quantitative increase in the intellectual powers of humanity is something for it to be congratulated upon, but it is possible to buy this increase at too heavy a cost. It would be disastrous for a nation to breed only Shakespeares and Kants ; it would be equally disastrous to breed a generation of asexualised women more intent on Goethe and Kant than those primary duties of life, which alone make it possible for a Shakespeare or a Molière to produce work for the delight of untold generations. In fact, if the present system of masculine education did not tend to produce an unhealthy aversion in women to the elementary facts of life, we could hardly find a justification for condemning it so absolutely as we have done. These disadvantages were clearly foreseen by the early opponents of feminism. Unfortunately these forebodings have come true, although feminists and especially many women educationists have stoutly denied that education has had any evil effect on the physique of girls, or rendered child-birth in their case excessively difficult. But against their lay verdicts must be cited the authority of doctors, who alone are in a

effort, precisely as the working girl—only in a larger proportion of cases, 75 per cent.—expresses impaired ability of work, saves herself, and relies upon her mates to complete some part of her task."

[1] All attempts to prove the inferiority of women on the ground of the smaller size of her brain have failed. It has been generally admitted, as e.g. by Broca, that differences between men and women are due purely to educational differences.

position to judge, for they have witnessed, and are thus able to compare the travail of child-birth in the case of educated women with that of women who are comparatively uneducated. It may, of course, be that even educated women may turn out perfectly healthy if they have displayed the prudence of attending to the peculiar needs of their physiological structure.[1] But this very attention would effectually prevent a fair and an equal competition with boys.

But far more invidious than this deterioration of health is the growing general aversion to femininity, which has produced what is called the third sex, which is really sexless. It has been noted that in America "two-thirds of women who have gone through college do not marry, and find in club life a compensation for domestic life."[2] Ellen Key further writes: "While study or work often makes European women in outer sense less womanly, although her soul always guards its full power to love, in America the reverse is the case: the outer appearance is bewitchingly womanly, but the soul no longer vibrates for love. The sensual sterility which Maudsley already prophesied thirty years ago has been partly realised, partly chosen voluntarily. In Europe it still frequently happens that a young woman who has put love aside for the sake of study or work is suddenly seized by an irresistible passion; in America, on the contrary, this is extremely rare."[2] In France mothers complain how free from ardour and enthusiasm their daughters are getting to be. Mr. Whetham[3] notes that in the women's colleges at Oxford and Cambridge the rate of marriage is only 22 per cent., the proportion being higher among those who do not take the final examinations, or taking the examination fail to obtain honours. Further, among those who marry there is a decided tendency to limit the size of their families to a dangerous extent. Mr. Sidney Webb, through a private inquiry, found that out of one hundred and twenty families no less than one hundred

[1] Mrs. J. S. Mackenzie writes: "There would be little fear of overstrain if only the rhythm of woman's powers was kept in view. According to her state of health she can sometimes work more and sometimes less than a man."

[2] Ellen Key's *The Woman Movement*, footnote pp. 146–7.

[3] *The Family and the Nation*, p. 143.

and seven purposely limited the number of their offspring. No man or woman sincerely interested in the future of their race can look without misgiving at these facts, and the system of education which is responsible for this sorry state of things needs a complete overhauling and re-instatement on a stronger and more womanly foundation. Women who are naturally unfit for, or sincerely repugnant to, marriage, may be justified in not marrying, but it is most reprehensible for a woman not to marry merely because a soulless training has strengthened the forces of her selfishness, and filled her mind with an unhealthy manliness.

We may well be asked at this stage whether our demand for a feminine education for women does not effectually bar out the generality of women from the portals of the great universities. Yes, it is so, we would admit. But we would repeat that the portals of the universities must be open for those women who feel a call for higher studies, or who through physical defects cannot hope to follow the usual career of wifehood and motherhood. Instances are far too common where women, without any special abilities, sacrifice their health on the altar of examinations, and thus allow themselves to be victimised by the specious glamour of a university degree. Through reading and attendance at lectures a woman can acquire culture without imposing on herself the strain of examinations, which unfits her for her normal duties without enabling her to make any material contribution to the betterment of society through her hard-earned degree.

There is just another point connected with female education, and it refers to the question of educating girls and boys together. It is eminently desirable that they be educated together till they attain the age of puberty. The curriculum being the same, this co-education will lay the foundation of friendships that will be free from purely sexual thoughts. It will generate an insight into one another's character that in itself will be a great gain to the knowledge of human psychology. But after the age of puberty it would be desirable to minimise the temptations which will be inevitable in the first flush of youth. Even in advanced courses, especially in medical colleges, a co-education, except with an adequate amount of supervision, is hardly desirable. In the interests of his

theory that prohibition against consanguineous marriages is to be traced to an instinctive aversion to sexual thoughts on the part of those who have been brought up together, Westermarck mentions an interesting fact: "Even between lads and girls who have been educated in the same school there is a remarkable absence of erotic feelings, as appears from an interesting communication by a person who has for many years been the head-mistress of such a school in Finland. One youth assured her that neither he nor any of his friends would ever think of marrying a girl who had been their school-fellow; and I heard a lad who made a great distinction between girls of his own school and other real girls, as he called them."[1] These are certainly interesting instances, but they are not by any means borne out by many cases that have come within our knowledge, and very naturally too, for as has been said: "Three-fourths of the life of a youth conscious and unconscious, is sex life."[2] And "evidence gathered in the United States shows . . . boys and girls educated together show great precocity in their love affairs."[3] It is dangerous to play with fire; young men and young women need not be subjected to the strain of sexual feelings at too early an age. A time will come for their natural outlet between twenty and twenty-five. Till then the more free their mind is kept from sexual thoughts the better for them in every way.

An education that prepares us for our duties, whether we be men or women, an education that brings out our individuality and evokes the best in us, an education that infuses courage into us to brave the risks of life—this is the only education that is worth the name. All else is only half education, a shadow without substance, a husk without kernel, a river without water. Lacordaire spoke wisdom when he said: "You have written upon the monuments of your city, the words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Above Liberty write Duty, above Fraternity write Humanity, above Equality write Service. Above the immemorial creeds of your rights inscribe the divine creed of your duties."[3]

[1] *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, vol. ii. p. 375.
[2] Ellen Key's *The Woman Movement*, p. 115.
[3] Mrs. Colquhoun's *The Vocation of Woman*, p. 266.

CHAPTER VI

THE MOLOCH OF INDUSTRIES

"What seems strange to me is that women should seek fresh duties," said Sergey Ivanovitch, "while we see unhappily that men usually try to avoid them."—TOLSTOY'S *Anna Karenin.*

IT is not a matter of mere accident that the Feminist Movement, which in its extreme form has now become a revolt against marriage and family life, is closely connected with the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. The introduction of machinery put an end to home industries and led to the employment of whole families in factories. It marked the beginning of the decay of the family, which is the most prominent feature of social life in Europe to-day. To write adequately of the part women have played in the industrial history of England, e.g. in the last century, would be practically to write that industrial history itself. The Industrial Revolution has been the happy recipient of unstinted praise from economists, but it is questionable whether the historian of the future studying it in the cool light of impartiality will not find in it much to condemn. As a revelation of human inventiveness and of human dominance over the forces of nature, it truly marks a peerless epoch in the history of civilisation, but it has had its gruesome side. In its early years it was responsible for infinite misery and unparalleled crimes against infancy and womanhood. Little children of four and upwards sweated in ill-ventilated, smoky dens of factories for hours and hours. Truly might they have said with J. S. Mill—though in a different sense—that they had never been boys. Their hearts were possibly brimming with hatred for those responsible for the murder of their souls, and women, young women, pretty and healthful, that might have beautified so many happy homes with laughter and health, were brutally thrown

into sordid surroundings, exposed to temptations, and their womanly nature warped with drink and sin. The Moloch of Capitalism thirsted for his victims by thousands, and knew neither sorrow nor compunction. Out of this grave of womanhood arose the spectre of Feminism, and as a sample of human irony, Industrialism, which might have been condemned as an harbinger of evil, was hailed as the source of woman's emancipation. True, the crude excesses of the early years were put an end to by wise legislation under the leadership of Lord Shaftesbury—though not without inhuman protests from some feminists—but the trail of the serpent has not vanished. Poor women allowed themselves to be exploited as a woeful tribute to their poverty, and women of the upper classes profiting by their sacrifice invaded the professions and between them produced a philosophy which regards chastity as an overpraised and overprized virtue, and reduces marriage and maternity merely to one of the professions, and the lowest among them! How consuming is the passion for gold and the glamour of cash! With a zest for economic independence, young women even now leave the snug protection of their parents' roof and brave all the dangers of a distant city and the contagion of evil-minded men. And yet this independence in most cases degenerates into slavery to the passions of an employer or to the passing whims of night gourmands. Passing out of "paternal" dependence with open eyes, they walk into the silver net of economic "independence," and the fable of the spider and the fly has been re-enacted by human beings on an extensive scale. Where the victims display an unnatural zest for the torture of their noblest feelings, it is not surprising that employers on their part should be but only too glad to make use of them as the easiest and the cheapest tools. They are more docile, often more agile, than men. They are cheaper than men, while their youth and beauty, inviting more men as customers, are a part of a shopkeeper's or a bar-keeper's capital.

State legislatures in all civilised countries have most benignantly extended their protecting arm to the infant and woman victims of the Moloch of the industrial world. Their working-hours have been limited; the period of

maternity has been saved to however small an extent from the evil consequences of work at that time. But this is not true of all industries, and the state has only just begun to interfere with the question of their wages. Since the earliest dawn of the Industrial Revolution a woman employee has been consistently paid less than a man. But she is forced to put up with this inequality, for she knows that if she demands to be paid a man's wages he will be preferred to her. Nor can the state seek to equalise the wages, as it would only tend to drive women out of employment. Men wage-earners themselves, on the other hand, have shown scant sympathy for the efforts of their sister wage-earners. A spirit of competition has always existed between the sexes, for men have complained, not altogether unreasonably, that the influx of women into the industrial mart has tended to lower the general level of wages. The result has been that while women ostensibly work to increase the family earnings, in reality their work tends to lessen the earning capacity of their husbands and fathers. While the lowness of their wages is inherently incapable of being remedied, their employment becomes a doubtful expediency even from the economic standpoint. The low wages are an incentive to immorality, and woman's independence stands exposed in all its ghastly viciousness. "In Perth and Bungay, for instance, the women put in a bill at the end of each week, worked out on the men's scale. The cashier then divides the total by two, and pays the women accordingly. In London women are still working nineteen hours for one shilling, and shirts are still being made for seven and a half-pence per dozen."[1] Add to all this misery of low wages and a low life the uncertainties of employment, and none can fail to sympathise with the finding of the New York State Commission that the industrial life we have so confidently built up is responsible for the deterioration of both individuals and homes. "The merely unemployed man becomes inefficient, unreliable, good-for-nothing, unemployable. His family is demoralised. Pauperism and vagrancy result."[2]

But this century-old complaint about the lowness of

[1] Wolfe's *Readings in Social Problems*, p. 499.
[2] Quoted in Goodsell, p. 464.

wages has been for the present put an end to by the demand for female labour occasioned by the war. Wages have gone up at lightning speed, and women, especially single women, have earned more than has been good for them, and the result is manifesting itself in a brutal defiance of parents, vicious habits, and an increase in the number of "amateur" prostitutes.[1] This but shows that the question of woman's employment in industries is far from being purely economic. It affects the foundations of morality.

If feminism stands for the enhancement of a woman's life, and if her emancipation is the first condition of such enhancement, it is difficult to see how women's industrial slavery has contributed to its advancement. Women complain of the infinite dullness and monotony of domestic occupation. Yet how infinitely more dull and monotonous is the dreary work generally performed by women employed in industries? Some infinitesimal process, necessitated by the division of labour and specialisation, performed from year to year, is the very thing needed to dull the intellect and kill the soul of women. The "labour saving" machine, in fact, means a transmutation of labour, and not its annihilation. While it has filled the coffers of its capitalistic owners to bursting, it has not added an iota of happiness to a working man's or working woman's family. Infinite drudgery at merely making pins' heads, or bottling, or flattening something, or winding something—this is bad enough for a man, who has to put up with it in performing the duty, which nature has imposed upon him, of being the bread-winner of his family. On his monotony rests the welfare of his wife and children. But it passes our comprehension why women should go out of their way to shoulder this monotony and drudgery! How lifeless it is in comparison with the service of a living child; how ugly it is in comparison with housekeeping; how soulless it is in comparison with the warmth of a hearth! It is useless to reply that it is the very poverty and ugliness of home that drives thousands of women to factories, for their degradation has not produced any real amelioration of their poverty, while

[1] See the article on "The Changing Moral Standard," by Mrs. Nevill Rolfe in the *Nineteenth Century and After* of October 1918.

their absence from home has only tended to introduce evils more hideous than ever existed before. Even if the working woman's economic independence is thereby secured, the price she pays for it in the ruin of her health and the neglect of her home is too heavy to pay for a sentimental independence. The exultation of a feminist over a woman becoming a butcher [1] displays more than anything else the moral bankruptcy of industrial feminism. The freedom of soul and heart is no more there ; there is only a lust for gold as a symbol of spurious independence.

Even an elementary knowledge of a woman's physiology might have been of inestimable service in preventing, or at least in minimising the evil effects of industrialism on woman's health. " 'We are not to take credit to ourselves, however, as a civilisation humane and wise in this matter. We are doing almost as wicked and wasteful a thing as respects the girlhood of the poorer classes in these United States in the morning of the twentieth century. Read again what we do to our young girls between the ages of fourteen and twenty, when of all the periods of life for women there is most danger of premature death and of wasting and disabling disease. . . . In the confectionary business three thousand chocolates dipped every day at fever heat of energy. In the cracker-making trade, the girls standing or walking not six feet from the ovens, show a white faintness from heat and hurry as they handle a hundred dozen a day ; and " can't stand the work long,' as even the strongest confess. In the cigar-making industry fourteen hundred stogies a day, worked over by girls seventeen to twenty years of age, and not only that, but children, boys and girls from five to twelve years old, stripping tobacco as helpers, and the whole work so exhausting that even the older girls say that they " can't keep the pace more than six years." In the garment trades, the sewing machines speeded to almost incredible limits, the unshaded electric bulbs and the swift motion of the needle giving early " eyeblur " and a nerve strain that enables the strongest to earn only five to six dollars a week, while the goal of eight dollars, won by a ruinous " spurt," only crowds down the average wage by cutting piece-work prices. . . . In the laundries women are

[1] Ellen Key's *The Century of the Child*, p. 66.

operating machines so heavy that their whole bodies tremble with the strain of their use ; and the muscular system, drawn upon for this spasmodic effort for an isolated feat repeated as rapidly as the body can be forced to act, under the spur of a never-ceasing pressure, is often that of young girls, many of them under sixteen years of age. . . . In the manufacture of caskets and other articles where strong lacquer is used, the manufacturer often says he can't stand it more than two or three minutes in the room where the fumes of preparations are worst, but his girls work in it ten hours a day for the pitiful wage of nine dollars a week, called good pay for women.' " [1] And so this pitiful tale goes on. The poverty of the employed, and the avarice of the employer between them produce mutilated spectres of womanhood ; loss of beauty, loss of health, loss of chastity, involuntary motherhood, these are the items that overweigh all the pompous theorising of feminists. Real poverty and helplessness may make some sort of occupation an absolute necessity. Cases of this type deserve our commiseration, and point to a defect in the organisation of society, which makes unhealthy work on the part of women a necessity under any circumstances. The efforts of social reformers and feminists may well be directed towards curing these defects rather than exhorting women to become butchers and chocolate dippers at the cost of their bodies and souls. But whatever justification there may be for these victims of poverty, there is none whatsoever for those young women, who wilfully take employment so that they may not be absolutely " dependent " on their parents ; and none whatever for those parents, unfortunately not a few, who wilfully encourage their daughters in their foolishness.

Hard labour in the tender teens leaves such a permanent devitalising impression on their physique as to make maternity a period of torture. " When women in England worked in white lead factories, seventy-seven women were examined in one factory. It appeared in the time covered by the investigation that there were among this number ninety miscarriages, twenty-seven cases of still-born children ; besides, forty young children died of

[1] Anna Garlin Spencer, in Wolfe's *Readings in Social Problems*, pp. 542–4.

convulsions produced by the poisoning of their mothers. The effects of this occupation were most harmful in the case of women from eighteen to twenty-three years of age. Lameness, blindness, and other infirmities resulted from this kind of work."[1] Facts like these produce a certain sanity even in the minds of feminists. They have come to recognise the essential justice of laws that forbid the employment of a woman within four weeks after she has given birth to a child, and Mrs. Snowden even demands a longer period: "It would be an altogether beneficial thing if the prospective mother could be kept at home six months before and six months after the birth of a child. It would be better still if women could be kept at home altogether until their children themselves are working for money."[2] This would indeed be a welcome recognition of the womanhood of a woman, and in the name of poverty mothers and children alike will not be condemned to suffering born of a callous disregard for nature's requirements. It has been established that "the children of women who do not labour in factories for a period of several weeks before childbirth are heavier and more sturdy than the offspring of women who work up to the last few days before confinement."[3] Nor must we omit to mention an interesting point recounted by Ellen Key. "In Silesia, where children and quite young girls are employed in glass industry, the work has so distorted their bodily structure that when they bear children their sufferings are intense. Such unique material do they offer for the study of obstetrics, that doctors make pilgrimages to Silesia to learn from their cases."[4]

Perhaps a feminist here and there may be rudely shocked out of her theories by such facts and figures. But she may aver that these conditions vitiate only the employment of women in industries dangerous to health, over-worked and under-paid, and that there are careers, e.g. of barmaids and waitresses, which are free from such dangers, and tend to maintain the "independence" of

[1] Ellen Key's *The Century of the Child*, p. 73.
[2] *The Feminist Movement*, p. 217.
[3] Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, pp. 432–3.
[4] Ellen Key's *The Century of the Child*, p. 74.

such women. There is a facile optimism in the ranks of feminists which does credit to their nature perhaps, but which can hardly stand the wear and tear of life. Few careers are so saddening and so exposed to dangers as those of barmaids and waitresses. To what hardships they are exposed, to what temptations, to what insulting offers, to what degradation! And the end of it all in so many cases is suicide or the streets! In their case particularly, does Dr. Johnson's cynical depreciation of beauty as a fatal gift hold true.

Tolstoy's *Resurrection* starts with Nekhludov's seduction of Maslova, which ultimately led her to "that life of chronic violation of God's and Humanity's commandments, which is led by hundreds and thousands of women, not only by permission, but also under the protection of the Government that is so mindful of the people's welfare, and which ends with nine women out of ten with painful diseases, premature decrepitude, and death."[1] Nekhludov's princely resurrection did not suffice to blot out the whole series of events his perverse passion had started, and Maslova is only a type, far too common, of a poor servant, "independent" of her parents, but dependent like a slave on the favour of her master, who does not hesitate to use her as a soulless instrument to satisfy his evil hunger. Such tragedies are even more abundant in God-forsaken bars and restaurants. In England, half of all women suicides are waitresses who have not lived to see even their thirtieth birthday.[2] There is nothing abnormal or strange about this, for it is notoriously known how many a brazen-faced employer deliberately pays low wages to these unfortunate women, who have such infinite possibilities within them of rendering themselves centres of happiness radiating around in little homes, and cynically says: "You always know how to supplement your income." The tribute of ancient Babylon is heavenly compared to this, for there a woman under blind superstition prostituted herself but once in her life, and then quietly rested among the comforts of a married life.[3]

[1] Tolstoy's *Resurrection.*
[2] Ellen Key's *The Woman Movement*, p. 39.
[3] Letourneau's *The Evolution of Marriage*, p. 45.

The Moloch of Industries

The need of frequent rest for women, especially during their periods of illness and several weeks before and after confinement, is imperative and cannot be denied without grave consequences to their health. The disastrous effects of industrial conditions on their health have passed the stage of mere academic discussion. But it is questionable whether a greed for gold once fostered can be set back by the demands of health. In the life of man gold has scored unnumbered victories over considerations of health and morality, and in spite of our increased knowledge, the iniquity of industrial life places us very near savage life. Among savages it is notorious how the brunt of hard work falls on women, how early their sexual life begins, how little rest they have even at the time of their confinement, and the consequences we see in their early sterility, so that "among the Fulah it is rare for a woman older than twenty to become a mother; and in Unyoro Emin Pasha never saw a woman above twenty-five with babies. Early intercourse with the opposite sex is adduced by several writers as the cause of the short prime of savage women. But I am disposed to think that physical exertion has a much greater influence. Even from a physiological point of view hard labour seems to shorten female youth. Statistics show that among the poorer women of Berlin menstruation ceases at a rather earlier age than among the well-off classes."[1]

Nothing shows so much the solidarity of humanity as the effect of industrialism in disintegrating homes. Where women do not find time for necessary rest they have hardly any time for devoting to their children. Children born under adverse conditions are often "scrofulous, rickety, idiotic"—children who suffer in later life because their busy mothers bought their quietness with doses of brandy, just as in India women working in mills give to their little infants opium to make them sleep. Mothers often have no milk, or more often no time to suckle their young babies, and as a consequence they die under artificial nourishment; in England only one out of eight children is nursed.[2] In Nottingham, out of each thousand children

[1] Westermarck's *The History of Human Marriage*, pp. 487–8, edit. 1903.

[2] Ellen Key's *The Woman Movement*, pp. 38–9.

two hundred die. In industrial districts mortality is four to five times greater than in country districts. Miss Tennant in her *Woman in Industry from Seven Points of View* has the same woeful tale to tell. In America in the early days of industrialism, the vast majority of women workers were unmarried girls between sixteen and twenty years of age. Since 1850 the influx of married women has been of a very marked character, so that in the cotton industry of the United States the census of 1900 showed that out of the total number of women employed, 120,603, the married, widowed, and divorced accounted for 25,554, giving such a high percentage as 27. As Dr. Goodsell rightly comments on this it "means that in 1900 one-fifth of the women employed in the cotton mills of this country who were absent from their homes the entire day were home-makers, and this represents only one of the many industries in which married women were engaged."[1]

Those who have enjoyed the sweetness and comforts of a home are in a position to realise how bleak and cold a home becomes when the housewife has to work for hours outside her home. Household economy becomes a neglected art, children run wild, the father of the family shuns a neglected, comfortless home, and the local bar makes capital out of him. Far from economising, the labour of the mother only adds to the total expense without an adequate amount of comfort. When children are thus neglected, and left to grow as best they can, no wonder they easily fall a prey to evil habits and add to the volume of human criminality and misery. Witnesses of their parents' neglect of home, they lose all feeling for home. On their memory is left no smiling impression of childhood's delightful happiness. The joylessness of life, which has not failed to produce a profound godlessness and dissatisfaction with society, is the evil growth of a cramped existence in sordid surroundings at life's most happy period, and this evil is connected with the desolation of homes, which is the tribute of the modern world to the Moloch of Industrialism.

Hard though industrial life in Europe and America is, it is doubtful if there will ever be a return to the simple life of home-industries, and perhaps such a return

[1] *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 425.

is not absolutely desirable. But women are often left destitute, and it is well if they are in a position to earn their living without breaking their physique in factories or exposing themselves to evil temptations. Such means of honest livelihood are afforded by home-industries, and they need to be encouraged in the best interests of society. They have the further advantage that they are not inconsistent with the duties of women as housewives and mothers.

NOTE.

The argument in the preceding chapter eventually rests on the idea that the employment of women in industries essentially affects the well-being of homes and children, and thus creates an unhealthy environment. Professor Karl Pearson seeks to minimise the factor of environment and emphasises the element of heredity in all social problems. Thus in his *Lecture on Eugenics and Public Health* (pp. 27–8) he says: "Miss E. M. Elderton, of the Eugenics Laboratory, finds very small relationship between infantile death-rate and the employment of mothers in a great variety of districts; the influence of employment is not so great as that of breast-feeding and sensibly less than that of mothers' health . . . parental health is fifty per cent. more important than parental occupation or breast-feeding, and all four are immensely more significant than the employment of women." Thus while we have argued that the growing ill-health and mortality of infants depend on the employment of women in industries and the consequent neglect of their children, Professor Pearson seeks to establish that the disease and mortality of children are mostly dependent on the weak physique inherited from their parents. We are not disposed to quarrel with this view, for it ultimately supports our own views, as this is but a single instance of the universal action and reaction between the forces of nature and nurture. We feel sure that Professor Pearson will not deny that a weak body exposed to an unsuitable environment will grow weaker. Hence, granting that the weakness of children is primarily due to weak parents, the weakness of the parents themselves is bound to be intensified by unhealthy employment. Thus it seems to us that Professor Pearson's arguments lend a support to our thesis even to this extent, that the evil effects of industrialism are not confined to one generation, but corrode the life of successive generations.

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN AND THE PROFESSIONS

" Certain it is, if Beauty has disdained
Her ancient conquests, with an aim thus high;
If this, if that, if more, the fight is gained,
But can she keep her followers without fee?
Yet, ah! to hear anew these ladies cry,
He who's for us, for them are we!"

GEORGE MEREDITH.

THE Industrial Revolution has brought to the women of the working classes nothing but tears and agony, with a thin veneer of independence to hide their real drabness. But their misery has not failed to show to women at large the way that leads to "independence" by way of work outside home, and the lesson has not been lost on the middle and upper classes. The portals of university education once opened, the way to the professions was easy. Not that it did not entail a struggle, but the logic of the false educational principle was bound to work itself out, and it was not possible to withhold from women their right to practise the professions they had qualified themselves for by a high education. The details of the struggle do not affect the ethical aspect of it. We are only concerned with its consequences. Having established their intellectual equality with men, they proved their capacity to be lawyers and doctors, teachers and professors, journalists and architects. All these are peculiarly free from the terrific physical strain that always accompanies industrial employment. So far the feminists' argument is difficult to answer, while some of these professions at least are such as in some way peculiarly suit the genius of women and necessitate their employment. Women doctors have been of inestimable worth, while women journalists have been best able to put before the world the grievances and wants of their sex. Their sweetness

of temper, their maternal instincts, have made them exemplary teachers. Intrinsically, therefore, the difference of sex, instead of hindering their work in these spheres, is of prime importance. For ages beauty used to be the forte of womankind; at present it is the intellect that is slowly coming uppermost, although it is questionable whether, human nature continuing what it has been for centuries, the intellect of woman will ever succeed in completely ousting the supremacy of her beauty. Wit in woman has ever commanded man's respect; wit and beauty combined have held in thrall the whole being of man.

But however useful the activities of women may be in certain spheres, it is open to question whether they can justify a woman's aversion from marriage. The world is already too full of male lawyers; it would be more conducive to the peace of families if there were fewer of them. In such an overcrowded profession there is no need for women, and they could be infinitely more useful outside it. The general criterion of the fitness of professions for them can only be this: that they tend to the ennoblement of their life, or are such as men are not so fitted for as the gentler sex. Women as nurses, the noble army of the Lady of the Lamp, are indispensable. Their worth as physicians for women's and children's diseases cannot be questioned. Their gentleness, adaptability, and charm are of priceless worth in teaching, and the soft influence of the mother at home may well be supplemented by the soft influence of the women teachers as well.

But to say all this is to present one, and that the fair side of the picture only. It cannot be forgotten that for ages men have fulfilled the functions of doctors and teachers, and they will not fail to be equal to the task in the coming ages as well. But for all human activities to subsist, the perpetual flow of children is a necessity, and motherhood is woman's natural vocation. Anything that conflicts with it must be zealously scrutinised, and it cannot be denied that a physician's work and a teacher's work do come into conflict with it. In a sense physicians are worse off than persons in any other profession or industry, for they have no fixed hours of work, and in fact, cannot have them. They have to be ready to attend

a call at any hour of day and night. Meals and sleep even have to be sacrificed at times. This continued work and uncertainty cut right across the work of a mother. Not the greatest genius among women can perform the herculean task of fulfilling her duties both as a physician and as a mother. The claims of the patient and the child unfortunately clash, and the one or the other in consequence suffers. Since the period of gestation makes hard work a torture, a good physician would *ipso facto* prescribe rest to herself, and this means loss of practice. Truly a woman's lot is hard, and there is an element of truth in the radical feminists' complaint that sex is a terrible handicap in the life of a woman. It is so, but man can swear with a clear conscience that nature never consulted him in its creation of sex!

What has been said about the difficulties of a woman physician apply also, though to a lesser degree, to the woman teacher. She has the advantage of working for fixed hours, and of having vacations. But with her, too, although she performs such a useful and godly work, nature does not relax its rules, and motherhood comes into conflict with her duties. This explains why in the state of New York, and elsewhere too, a woman teacher who marries is required to give up her post. There is an apparent cruelty in this requirement, but nature's laws are inexorable, and it is cruel to those who defy the limit it chooses to set. If nature made woman for ONE function, most exacting in its nature, and consuming vast quantities of physical and psychical energy, she cannot but pay the price of her rebellion against her vocation. "Duties are bound up with rights—power, money, honour; those are what women are seeking," says Pestov in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenin*, and Prince Schtcherbatskys shrewdly replies: "Just as though I should seek the right to be a wet-nurse and feel injured because women are paid for the work while no one will take me." Surely there are limits to men's capacities too, and his swearing at heaven and earth because nobody would have him for a wet-nurse could not be more ludicrous than the frantic antics of some feminists.

Even assuming for a moment that she somehow manages to fulfil both her duties of motherhood and a

profession, it is necessary that she should be left free to create the conditions of her work. The mistake that she has so far made is to pursue a phantom equality, which in the end has always told against her. Man's physique is able to bear the strain under which she breaks and bends. On the ground of her constitution she has a right to demand preferential treatment as regards the hours and conditions of her work. The report of the health of teachers under the London Education Committee gives some instructive figures. "In 1910 leave of absence for more than one month was granted to ten men and forty-five women on account of nervous complaints, while in 1912 there were fourteen similar cases of men and one hundred and eleven of women. In the Post Office the percentage of employees absent through illness for more than a day was 49 per cent. for males, and varied from 84 to 94 per cent. for women in different departments."[1] There is nothing surprising in these figures, for they are inevitable.

And yet if lady physicians and lady teachers are so useful to society, it would be hard for us to forgo their services. It would be eminently desirable for married women to take up this work of teaching—whenever their home duties are not particularly exacting. Moreover, in a community there would always be many women who are physically unfit for marriage, or who for some weighty reason sacrifice their maternal instincts, and women who have fulfilled their duty to society and are now free to do other work useful to society. They may take up these professions and prove to the world that they are fit to be something more than mothers only. What is true of women as physicians and teachers is equally true of women as nurses and women as journalists. Free-lance journalism with its freedom especially suits them well, as does the art of writing books generally. In short, in so far as these professions tend to attract to their ranks women physically and intellectually most fitted to bear and rear children, they may without exaggeration be said to spread a baneful influence except in so far as the two duties can be carried out simultaneously. On the other hand, in so far as these professions can be

[1] *The Times* of June 26, 1913.

practised by women who are unfit for maternity, or by women who have already contributed their fair share of maternity to the well-being of the race, they deserve every encouragement, and the state would be only doing its duty, if it created special schools for women, free from the strain of unnecessary examinations and an unhealthy competition with men, paying due regard to the special needs of their sex.

The sort of special schools we recommended in the last section are a great necessity of our age. Although professions do not bear so hard on women's health as employment in industries does, yet the strain of an educational system primarily meant for boys with its continuous hours of work does not fail to leave an indelible mark on their tender constitutions, and as we have already seen, Dr. J. Lionel Taylor does not hesitate to attribute the difficulties of present-day child-births and other internal difficulties to the thoughtlessness of what passes as female education and the rigour of strenuous games like hockey and gymnastics. The health of the child is so dependent on that of the mother that her health is a social asset, and any neglect of it is a crime against society and the future generations. Feminists in their enthusiasm and learned ignorance may, in the interests of their preconceived theories, condemn as antiquated and old-fashioned all considerations of health of women *qua* women, but there are certain truths which never become antiquated, and among them is the delicate physiological structure of a woman.

The education of a girl in the inexhaustible requirements and richness of home ought to last at least till the age of twenty. From twenty to forty-five a woman should be prepared for matrimony and maternity, and once her children are grown up and her daughters or daughters-in-law can relieve her of most household cares, she may step forth into the wider world and make herself as useful to society as she can, and in whatever way she likes best. This is the only compromise possible between the sexual function of womanhood and her growing craving for wider activities.

In actual practice another "compromise" tends to be the most popular. As we have seen, both in America

and England, an educated girl tends to become asexual and prefers to live a spinster, even if she ultimately become an old maid; or if in spite of herself she falls a victim to Cupid's shafts and is committed to matrimony, she either gives up her profession and becomes an exemplary mother and housewife, or adopts the wretched compromise of seeking to continue in her profession with results far from being happy. Women may complain of the monotony of domestic work, but they cannot deny that it is exacting in its nature. Hence a professional housewife finds herself faced by a dilemma : If she attends both to housework and her professional work, she gets completely fagged; it is beyond her power ; she is unable to do full justice to either work, and both spheres of her activities suffer ; or if she gives herself up completely to her professional work, the home suffers, the children lose the benefit of a mother's loving care, and the whole ethical nature of matrimony fails to be realised. A French widow brought up her children by means of her own work, and in later life she had the mortification to hear her own son say to her : " Thou hast never loved us." In this connection we are often reminded of a remarkable cartoon which appeared in *Punch* some years ago. It depicts a dirty ragged boy in the street with a well-dressed fine lady passing herself off as a social worker bending over him with love and saying : " Who is your mother, my dear, to leave you in such a dirty condition? " The answer came pat : " Why, mammie, don't you know me? " It is cynical to say this, but it is so easy for a woman to pose as a philanthropist and to give lectures, while at home her children are strangers to her heart, and her husband is eating indigestible food. Compromises are inevitable in politics, but they are unsatisfactory everywhere else, and especially where home-life is concerned. The peevishness of a tired father is a fruitful source of complaint to his children and wife. If the mother too is tired and becomes peevish, how unendurable the home must become! Only children who have had the misfortune of having such " educated " mothers can feel the bleakness of their childhood. The incompleteness of such a mother's life and her divided personality find a faithful echo in the mutilated growth of her children.

The growth of asexuality inevitably leads to a diminution of happy homes and destruction of family life in the proper sense of the term. Family has been for ages a great institution for the development of the spirit of give-and-take, a nursery of filial virtues: obedience, respect, love, a sense of solidarity, a sense of responsibility. With the growth of feminine individualism a family ceases to fulfil its destiny, and hardness and selfishness gain the upper hand in life. Even if such individuals marry, there is no real home-life, for both the husband and the wife being professional individuals, are mostly away from home, and their children see so little of them as to derive no indelible impressions of a happy childhood, clinging to the skirts of the mother. But as this whole question of family life is important enough to deserve a chapter by itself, we shall not say anything more about it in this place.

CHAPTER VIII

WOMEN IN POLITICS

"The principles of true politics are the principles of morality enlarged."—EDMUND BURKE.

NO phase of the Feminist Movement has been responsible for so much enthusiasm, degenerating at times into pure fanaticism, as women's struggle for their political enfranchisement. It has been responsible for wild dreams of optimism, as if woman's entry into politics would at one fell blow scatter the evils of man-ruled states, and a new era of virtue would dawn on the world. Indulgence in such dreams only shows, on the one hand, how ignorant a feminist can be of history, and on the other, how far removed she is from a knowledge of the true nature of practical politics. Women have again and again wielded power over vast territories, often with consummate skill and success, but hardly ever without sinking into all the petty and disgusting characteristics which mark a politician's career. Queen Mary of England, blinded by religious fanaticism, could be as cruel as Henry VIII was to his numerous queens. Neither the chastity nor the virtues of Queen Elizabeth have been above suspicion, and the Virgin Queen exquisitely combined in herself the weakness of a woman with the strength of a bad man. Mary, Queen of Scots, soft and charming, threw her country into the throes of a civil war. Catherine of Russia—and she has not been the only Catherine with an evil name in politics—has been the byword of all that can make politics hateful to gods and men alike, while above them all hovers the fateful figure of Cleopatra with her serpentine charms, insatiable passions, and boundless ambition. Turning to political life as it is, even in these modern days of democracy, a minister can be as unscrupulous as Richelieu and as callous as Bismarck. The scrupulously raised fabric of

democracy can in a moment be pulled to the ground by an individual foreign secretary's or premier's "secret" treaty, ashamed of itself and not daring to face the light of day. These secret treaties, the tortuous ways of politicians to attain their own unhallowed ends, often screened behind the hypnotising word "patriotism," which in modern Europe has enthroned itself in the place of virtue, satisfying itself by a lip-tribute to truth, consideration for the rights of others, etc.—all these things have often made democracy a huge mockery or a cruel joke, and the profession of a politician, with the rare exceptions of a Cobden or a Bright, continues closed to all who are not capable of accommodating their principles to the demands of political life and an immoral patriotism. Nothing is truer in theory than the lofty words of Burke at the head of this chapter. But in practice it has been a mere sop to cover "national" actions, which if perpetrated by individuals would fitly and promptly be rewarded with imprisonment or decapitation. Such has been politics. It is questionable if all the virtues of women taken at their face value will really be powerful enough to do away with the stains of the past, or even to prevent a recurrence of the past in the future.

On the other hand, it is difficult to understand the zest and the obstinacy with which the suffrage movement has been opposed by many men. To-day women enjoy full suffrage, granted on equal terms with men in nearly twenty European countries, in several states of the United States, Australia, Finland, and Canada. Even the Conservatives in England have yielded, and a lady member is now sitting in the greatest legislative assembly of the world. But these victories have not been achieved without a struggle carried on with infinite bitterness. We believe historians of the future will not fail to trace it to the selfishness of men in refusing to part with a privilege they had slowly accumulated in their hands throughout the ages. It is conceivable that woman suffrage may have been opposed with sincerity on the broad principle of woman's vocation being limited to home. But this defence came with an ill grace, stained as it was with a reckless selfishness with which men in their own interests had allowed women to crowd factories and to neglect

their homes and children. Men allowed women to step outside their legitimate sphere when it suited them to exploit the cheapness of their labour. They had no moral right to withhold from women their demand for the suffrage, when they were entitled to it through a spurious independence which they had been allowed to build up for themselves. Unfortunately, the whole history of the suffrage movement in the nineteenth century shows that man's selfishness has worked in two directions: in degrading and exploiting woman, and then in withholding from her her just demands; just because women, as human personalities, paying taxes, being graduates, being wage-earners, are intimately concerned with laws regulating society, and they had a right—as much as their male counterparts—to see their interests attended to, and not trampled upon by a brutal selfishness. Both common sense and justice and the logic of facts have been on the side of women, and they have won, as they deserved to win.

But the problem goes much deeper than this bald statement of the rights won by women. In an atmosphere charged with democratic notions and resounding with the revolutionary utterances of Karl Marx, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, it is easily conceivable how women's imagination would be fired by these new visions of liberty, and how they would be attracted to the demand for their political enfranchisement, as in modern democracy it is the vote that contributes its quota to the enthronement or dethronement of governments. A vote, however insignificant by itself, has an educative value which makes it ethical. It generates a sense of responsibility, a sense of solidarity with our fellow-countrymen. It enables a thinking, moral man to put pressure on governments and check the domineering self-complacency of politicians. A vote rightly and conscientiously used is a power, and a vote is meant to be so used. In actual practice it falls short of its ethical nature. It can be bought, it can be influenced, it may be recklessly promised merely to get rid of a canvasser's harassing importunity, or it may be given as the price of kissing a beautiful woman. If a duchess could allow herself to be kissed by a butcher in the interests of Charles Fox, it is not surprising if long before the success of the suffrage movement, male

candidates willingly put forward their wives and daughters as their canvassers, and their smiles and their beauty, and their persuasive tongues gained them votes they might have otherwise lost. But with all these defects a vote has a worth which could not be denied, and it was perfectly inevitable that at one time or another women should make a bid for it. But admitting its worth, the essential question is: Is a vote the most potent instrument for elevating society? If woman can better serve society through an elevated realisation of her function and duties of motherhood, why should votes engross so much of her energy and enthusiasm? If motherhood and votes are perfectly compatible with each other, and they are so, a vote is perfectly harmless, and it should not be withheld from women. But if the voting power leads to a bid for parliamentary seats and ministerial authority, the problem becomes most complicated and rises above mere rhetoric on the one hand, and mere conservatism on the other. This question needs to be discussed on the same lines as the question of the industrial and professional employment of women.

Few questions in the last fifty years have given rise to so much literature and passion as the woman suffrage. The arguments for it have mostly proceeded on the broad basis of a woman's human personality. Men are given votes on the basis of age, income, education, property, house-rent. All this applies to women as well, and hence they must be given votes. In fact, under male suffrage even the ill-educated, half-insane, hard-drinking males can vote, why not then a woman who is a graduate, a house owner, earning an income through her own work, or paying rates and taxes? Surely an anomalous situation which has been satirised to tatters by feminists! Over and above these common grounds they have emphasised certain peculiarities in the feminine nature which are expected to be of inestimable value in politics.

Thus a good deal of stress has been laid on a woman's enthusiasm, idealism, tenderness, and intuition. But her enthusiasm just as much as a man's is very fitful and erratic in character, and at best it is a double-edged instrument which may work for the betterment of humanity or the reverse. We cannot say that women's enthusiasm

at the time of the French Revolution worked always in a healthy direction. They did not yield to their male compatriots in their insensate hatred of royalists, or in the inhumanity of their vengeance. Women's reputation for idealism and tenderness expresses but a half-truth. For generations, as the parent most concerned with the welfare of children, she has naturally evolved gentleness and sweetness that have always been in striking contrast to the hardness and the ill-concealed egoism of males. But let it not be overlooked that the very intensity of her passion for home has tended to narrow the horizon of her sympathies. What she has gained in intensity she has lost in extension. Her very devotion to home acts as a dead weight whenever her husband aims at the amelioration of the world at the expense, however trifling, of his family. Man's idealism has been of a robust type. In the interests of his broad humanitarian cosmopolitanism he has boldly defied his immediate environment, battled with social forces, and often laid down his liberty and life for the cause he fought for. In the midst of a narrow nationalism he has stood for humanity. In the midst of pampered ease he has stood for the welfare of the poor. In the midst of his devotion to books and deeds, he has despised the art of grubbing money for his sons to squander. But woman's idealism has had a very restricted range. In her eyes her home and children loom so large that she becomes insensible to the claims of a wider world. A mother to her children, she often tends to be a stepmother to others.

It would be easy to challenge this contrast by dwelling on the work of women like Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, and Ellen Key. But exceptions are the flowers that break the monotony of a rule, and on the whole, as a rough statement, it would be true to say that woman's idealism through its narrowness has preferred the interests of home to those of the nation, and the interests of the nation to those of the world. The acute racial feeling which divides the white from the black in America, and the Indian from the Anglo-Indian in India, is sedulously fostered by the white women, and their crude lack of sympathy outside their sphere has been slowly creating problems which will one day form the crux of *Welt-Politik*. The

ingrained tenderness of women has become a myth which we believe for its sweetness. But a woman has her gusts of passion and cruelty. The industrial age has not killed the Lady Macbeth in her, as this last war has, to humanity's shame, only too clearly shown. The cruelty of German women towards the captive soldiers of the Allies will long remain an unhealthy memory. But in fairness we must not omit to mention the part women in the allied countries played in fostering hatred and egging on young men to fight against their conscience. The cruelty of women tends to be cloaked, as she has the strength of her tears and her smiles to use man as the instrument of her designs. The myth of Adam, the semi-historical legend of Macbeth, and the authentic history of Catherine de Medici all illustrate the same old trait. All this makes it highly doubtful if the feminist insistence on her idealism has anything in its favour except an *a priori* tradition handed down from the insincere flatteries current in the age of chivalry. The contempt with which many conservative ladies in England speak of labourers and their aspirations, and their worship of the mailed fist have been truly sickening, and supply a poor earnest of the wonders that are to be achieved by her participation in politics.

Another characteristic of woman, very lucidly brought out by J. S. Mill, is her intuition. It is a gift of seeing through things, a gift which constitutes the essence of genius. It is contrasted with man's habit of thinking in universals, his slow, ponderous, general arguments. At all crucial times it is intuition that is of greatest worth, and woman's intuition has time and again played a most remarkable part. It is expected that this gift will be most valuable in politics. But to say this is to be guilty of a fundamental misconception with regard to modern politics. Intuition is in its place in administration which has to deal with particular men and with particular points. The centre of gravity in politics, however, is the legislature. The complexities of legislation demand far-sighted views and from all possible angles of vision. It is thought in its most universal aspect that is most essential there, and an intuition which hits merely the present moment would be as dangerous in legislation as the *ipse dixits* of military aristocracy.

But there is another point worth noting. Intuition is an innate gift, and its quickness of perception often tends to be dulled by an education which is practically the same as boys'. We see this clearly in educated women. They have not the quick temperament usually attributed to their sex, nor the sureness of grasp which is nature's weapon of self-defence for those who lack a laboriously educated foresight. The education that forewarns us and forearms us for so many foreseen emergencies does not always prove of use to us in a sudden emergency. Here it is the intuition which is of utmost use. In the rare case of a great statesman or a great general the native intuition is not overshadowed by education. But in the case of the vast generality of mankind, women included, a high education does not go hand in hand with the retention of intuition. The one or the other suffers. If education is the gateway to politics, intuition will suffer and all its merits, dubious at their highest, will be lost.

The arguments usually advanced against the extension of franchise to women have been publicly reiterated *ad nauseam*. Most of them rest on an assumed inferiority of them, or are the result of an ill-concealed selfishness. A woman's incapacity to make a good use of her vote can subsist in these days only as an exploded myth. If capacity in the strict sense of the term were a *sine qua non* of political enfranchisement, there is no doubt that democracy would be for ever doomed to remain a mere hypothetical thesis in political text-books, and it would be robbed of its proud privilege of progressing through errors and blunders. There is a considerable justification for the anti-democratic remarks of Conservatives and Anglo-Indians, like Sir Henry Maine, for the vote has often been thoughtlessly given away ; it has even been sold ; it has at times given a premium to ignorance. But with all its thousand faults it is a bulwark against the autocracy of kings and the selfishness of aristocracies. It has infused a new vigour into the life of man, and the working classes have become conscious of their dignity as human beings in a way unsurpassed since the days of republican Rome. A vote demanded by women, with full consciousness of what it has done for men, cannot be long withheld from them, since a good many of them

have a greater capacity for using it well than many male voters.

The language of bitter sex-antagonism that has so often marked the utterances of suffragettes, has provoked a retort from their antagonists that the interests of men and of women are the same, and all that injures women injures humanity. This is excellent theory, and if it were well observed, perhaps we should never have heard of suffragettes. Unfortunately the latent forces of short-sightedness and selfishness in men, fostered by an unnatural disrespect for women, cherished by different religions, have conspired against women, and men in their stupidity have sought to maintain a one-sided monogamy and the legal inferiority of women. The legislatures of so many continental countries, by the state recognition of brothels, have been guilty of encouraging prostitution as a profession. Male privileges garnered through centuries have condemned women in silent suffering to put up with all the freaks and cruelty of their husbands and fathers. Women have been openly bought and sold in the white slave market, and yet male legislatures have hardly risen to a full sense of their responsibilities. Under the specious guise of independence, they have left many good women exposed to the taunts and passions of their unscrupulous employers and male co-workers. Everywhere, in all spheres, matrimonial, maternal, industrial, the wail of woman has given out a shivering trumpet-note without disturbing the slumber of their male representatives. The weakness of all governments is selfishness, and the government of man as such has not escaped it. The only way open to the hopelessly oppressed is to rebel, and in desperate despair the women astonished the world with their window-breaking and hunger-striking campaign. One might bewail its necessity and condemn its latent assumptions, but cannot deny the injustice out of which it arose any more than it is possible for one to condemn the French Revolution merely because the beautiful Marie Antoinette fell a prey to its orgy of frenzy.

Assuming that a man is able to represent, and does represent, adequately the interests of his wife and daughters, one may be tempted to argue against the

necessity of woman suffrage. He is tempted to say, "Since I am bound to my wife in unity her interests are mine. If her political convictions are the same as mine, her vote is superfluous. If they are different from mine, her difference is a rift in our unity and is not worth encouraging." Whatever truth this dilemma contains rests on the assumption that unity in married life is necessary and that political differences mar that unity. But, as a matter of fact, it is quite conceivable that a healthy difference of opinion in politics as much as in religion would be perfectly compatible with domestic unity. It is a matter of give and take, and there is no reason why heads should be lost—any more than that they should be broken—because a wife's political ideal is other than her husband's. Anyway, a unity which subsists only by entirely negativing the voice of one partner is not the real unity that marriage in its highest sense involves.

A stronger argument against her enfranchisement rests on a psychological trait in her character, which makes her such a deep and sincere lover. This is her predilection for personalities rather than for opinions as such. She is a keen lover, and her love is bestowed without question; it is limitless in its endurance, inexhaustible in generosity. But the centre of all her love is a person, not an idea. Anti-feminists view with fear the influx of women into the political arena, for they think that the rightness or the wrongness of views and measures will be overlooked in their love or admiration for the persons who propose these measures. Perhaps this fear may turn out to be utterly baseless. As we have seen, modern education of women breeds a decided leaning towards asexuality, a starvation of love and enthusiasm, and woman voters and members of legislatures may not fail after all to have an adequate sense of responsibility in the discharge of their duties. Women are beginning a change in their nature for better or for worse, and surmises based on an old psychological reading of her nature may not be likely to stand their ground against the new developments generated before our eyes. But though women's nature may change, what about man? still persists our anti-feminist. In all ages men in the highest stations

have been the willing slaves of women, beautiful always perhaps, but rarely highly educated or gifted. Nelson's infatuation for Emma Hamilton, Napoleon's devotion to Josephine, Louis XIV's slavish whining before Madame de Maintenon, have been the making of history, and if beautiful women get themselves elected through the devoted worship of her unknown admirers, how will her male colleagues be able to resist the sway of her charms, and how will they be prevented from being carried away by her rhetorical flourishes, rather than by the solidarity of her arguments? An argument on these lines leads nowhere in particular, and may be double-edged in its effects. Men who are so susceptible to beauty as they are described in our hypothesis are hardly worthy of being representatives in great legislatures. Their weakness is in itself a sufficient condemnation of their self-assumed superiority, and can constitute no argument against women.

But there is one argument which has always been in the forefront of anti-feminist defences, and which has never been very satisfactorily answered by feminists. It relates to a fear that political life will prove ruinous to home-life. "Man for the field, woman for the hearth," once constituted a division of labour, final in its nature and incapable of improvement. There is something alluring in this cut and dried scheme of duties, and within due limits the claims of this scheme cannot be brushed aside with a mere wave of the feminist hand.

Feminists, and especially radical feminists, think it enough to say that all this talk of home is mere conservatism, now grown old-fashioned beyond redemption, and having said this with many clever epigrams, sly innuendos, and an air of superior wisdom, they proceed with their utopias, out-Platoing Plato in their visions. But the most fundamental fact about a race is its continuity, and its essence is healthy growth of men and women. As we hope to prove in Part III, this is dependent on healthy homes, and hence home cannot be conceived as merely one of the interests of men and women. It is the central thing in their lives; it constitutes the most human of human problems. A healthy home ensures a healthy race, and a healthy home demands the whole-

hearted devotion of at least one woman. Anything that comes into conflict with it is *prima facie* to be viewed with suspicion, and the root-cause of the general opposition to woman suffrage—making due allowance for selfishness and perverse exaggerations—is to be found in this suspicion. Men know from experience how exacting political life is. It constitutes such an easy path to popularity and fame. It leads to power. All these have been the motives of male politicians, and they would prove captivating enough to allure women once they have tasted the excitement of political life. The fear is real, and that constitutes the complexity of the problem. Assuming the justice of women's demands for their enfranchisement, how are we to meet it without jeopardising the permanent interests of home-life?

It seems to us that a good deal of precious energy has been wasted in opposing the demand for mere votes. After all, an electorate is called upon to vote once in five years or once in a year. It would be childish to urge that voting at such long intervals could possibly interfere with home duties. On the other hand, the possession of a vote has a supreme ethical value—perhaps the last word has been written on this in the classic pages of Mill—it is a recognition of the humanity of a woman, it makes her a power in the land, having enough strength to prevent men from turning a deaf ear to her needs and grievances, still more to prevent men from trampling her feelings and her rights under their iron heel. It will undoubtedly tend to put a stop to a heartless exploitation of the beauty of women, and using her premature lust for independence as a lever to ruin her body and soul. All in all, we may take it as an established fact that women should have votes—established, not merely in the sense that legislatures have sanctioned it, but established in the sense that it finds its justification in the reason of things.

The problem, however, thickens when it comes to the feminist demand for the right of women to sit in legislatures and occupy the highest administrative posts. These are exacting whole-time functions, which are utterly incompatible with motherhood and home duties. The alternative is categorical for a woman who is political-minded : she must either renounce politics or her husband, children,

and home, and in spite of all that feminists might say, the choice of the former would be distinctly unwomanly. All the reasons that we urged against industrial employment of women hold also in the political sphere. Let it be distinctly understood that this limitation is not due to the fact that she is a woman, but to the fact that her nature has a higher call to fulfil. Having once fulfilled her real duties, or being incapacitated from being a mother, she might well, if so qualified, take to a wider sphere and be a mother to the electorate that has sent her as their representative. Motherliness of a wider kind, brimful of love and tenderness, feeling for the woes of her sisters and the little ones whose sweetest remembrances cluster round their mother's face will undoubtedly humanise politics to some extent. A woman at fifty or a few years earlier will have fulfilled her work of procreation and training up noble children. Like a warrior resting from his sword, she might cross the threshold of her home to give a taste of her powers and her motherly heart to the millions outside. Her daughters or sons' wives will relieve her of her household worries to leave her to devote herself whole-heartedly to some work of a public character: from the membership of a school committee to the membership of a state legislature. If Dr. Mary Scharlieb and Miss Haldane can lend grace and worth to Royal Commissions, they or their like may surely give the benefit of their learning and their experience to their country at large. The risk involved in this public work even without reservations is infinitely less than that involved in the industrial exploitation of women. But with the reservations we have made there is no risk whatsoever. From the standpoint of the race and the family, a woman from the age of twenty to fifty ought to be a domestic specialist, but a specialist who has her vision ever ready to receive new impressions and who has her feelings trained to love humanity in her children, whose heart beats true to the call of nature and humanity. She will be the Modern Woman in the true sense of the term. She has the spirit of synthesis and constructiveness and service in her. The so-called Modern Woman is only a tinsel mimic, a secondhand copy of man, and as such is neither a man nor a woman.

CHAPTER IX

HOME LIFE UNDER THE FEMINIST REGIME

" Ah ! Madam, were they puppets who withstood
Youth's craving for adventure to preserve
The dedicated ways of womanhood ?
The light which leads us from the paths of rue,
That light above us, never seen to swerve,
Should be the home lamp trimmed by you ! "

GEORGE MEREDITH.

HITHERTO we have been tracing the effects of feminism in four important spheres, which had for centuries been the close preserve of the male half of mankind. All of them, however, may be synthesised into one arch-effect : the breaking up of family life. The unity and the harmony of a family depend on the mutually complementary nature of its members, but when women set their hearts on aping the ways and habits of men, and try to develop a spurious equality which conceals the essential functions of womanliness, this complementariness is destroyed, and the idol of mutual independence is set up in its place. Years ago, when Ferrero spoke of the third sex and Maudsley spoke of the sexless ants, feminists truly womanly at heart protested against these insinuations, for they felt the instinct of sex would be powerful enough to check all extravagance in feminism. But drunk with the wine of independence, feminists have come to despise the sex instinct; in the intoxication of their selfish individualism the interests of children or of race have ceased to count ; through self-control or neo-Malthusian methods they have produced an artificial sterility, which acts most unhealthily on future generations. As Plato ages ago pointed out, when fit persons shirk their duties they will have the

mortification of seeing them badly performed by their inferiors. Celibacy has been declared to be the aristocracy of the future. This was the ideal held up by Christianity in the Middle Ages, with consequences disastrous to the morality of the clergy and the chastity of wives alike. In the future, perhaps, it will succeed better—but only by weeding out the better and leaving the worse to multiply freely. In the name of independence, those who are really fit to be mothers and bring up noble children avoid marriage as a degradation and enter upon it in a spirit of mutual suspicion and distrust that makes a healthy family-life practically an impossibility. "The modern young girl," says Ellen Key, a feminist in the noblest sense of the term, "if she designs to bestow her hand upon a man, not infrequently has her pretty head so crammed full of principles of equality that she sometimes (frequently in America) by written contract establishes her independence to the smallest detail, which sometimes includes separate apartments, and the prohibition that either of the contracting parties shall have the key to the apartment of the other."[1]

It has been usual to speak of a "changing" home-life. It would be truer to say that the home as the world has known it from times immemorial is giving place to a club life. This is not a mere change, this is a thorough revolution. It would be very interesting to consider in detail the various directions in which home-life tends to break up. We may consider them under four main heads.

(1) *The Unwillingness to Marry.*—The continuity of home-life as of race depends on the willingness of young men and women to contract marriage. Mere procreation of children is possible outside marriage, permanence of home depends on the sacredness of the marriage tie. If there is such a thing as morality and the moral progress of humanity, it is the quality of men that counts, and not merely quantity. The passions of men and women may perhaps be depended upon to present the world with a plethora of children, but the moral problem is their education, a right bringing-up, and this is only possible if the parents form a partnership to

[1] *The Woman Movement*, p. 84.

maintain and train up their children. They constitute the bond of love between their parents. Their helplessness and their interests necessitate a home, hence the birth of children outside home, who are not meant to be brought up by their parents, is in itself an immorality, as it does not contribute to the ethical advance of the community. Nor does it avail to plead that our requirements can be easily fulfilled if only the mother is enabled to bring up her children, and that the residence of the father within the home is not a necessity. This is a typical argument reducing humanity to the level of bees, and men in particular to the level of drones. But if men are to be rendered superfluous appendages in a household, women will have to earn their living. We have already argued against this point as much in the interests of women as of children. No woman, whatever her pretensions, can really be strong enough to undertake the burdens of maternity, educating her children, looking after the household work, and finally devoting several hours a day to earning her own income. Truly would such a life be a burden, infinitely worse than the much-decried " slavery " of wifehood. But even if a mother is exempted from the necessity of earning her living, and the state undertakes to pay her for her services *qua* mother, the absence of her husband from home would be an undesirable omission. If a man were made merely to pay for the up-keep of his children it would be unjust too, for he has his own distinctive contribution to make to the mental growth of his child. Having had a share in the procreation of his child, he owes a definite duty to it, and any absolute relief granted to him, as contemplated by radical feminists, is to furnish a premium to the satisfaction of a passing passion and laziness and irresponsibility. A family is a trinity in unity of the father, mother, and child, and each one of these is an essential member. Take away any one of them and the family is incomplete. With all its defects it is possible to speak of a widower's home. But to speak of a bachelor's or spinster's home is a misuse of language. Home is necessitated by the interests of children.

Hence an unwillingness to marry is a direct rebellion against society, and no society can be unconcerned at

such a thoughtless challenge to its economic requirements and its deepest ethical wants. A revolt against marriage cuts at the very root of a society, and its immediate manifestation is a bachelor's home ; the home of desolation. If a consistent celibacy were the general rule among these unmarried people, there might be something at least to be said in its favour. If pure celibacy makes no positive contribution to the development of racial calibre it certainly shows a remarkable self-control, though a wasted one, since something that ought to be done remains undone. But in the vast majority of cases celibacy is merely a name to cover the utmost licentiousness in life. The evils of prostitution are important enough to deserve a chapter by themselves, and we shall soon come to deal with them. In this place it will be just enough to cast a glance at the effects of celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church, a celibacy which somehow subsists, its moral bankruptcy in the Middle Ages and the widespread scandals in every age notwithstanding. It would be fruitless to deny the capacity of at least some individuals to lead a high pure life, and in such cases, as has been already admitted, it is difficult to withhold one's admiration for them, even though one condemns it as superfluous and wasted self-control. But for the rank and file even among the educated Roman Catholic clergy strict celibacy is often more a sham than a reality. The history of medieval Europe and the medieval Church is filled with the ghastly misdeeds of the clergy, their extravagantly licentious life, their perfidy, hypocrisy and iniquity.

Popes and cardinals in olden days in their sexual extravagance could give many points to the Turk, whom a self-complacent Christianity has typified as the very embodiment of sensuality. Lea, in his *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, mentions an interesting episode, grim because of its very sarcasm. "In 1171, at Canterbury, an investigation proved that the abbot elect of St. Augustine had seventy children in a single village. During many years a tax, called by an expressive name (*culagium*), was systematically levied by various princes on priests living in concubinage. Better still, it often happened that the lay parishioners obliged their priests

to have concubines, *by way of precaution*."[1] Things could not have been so much better in the early nineteenth century, as Maria Monk's terrible indictment of the Catholic clergy in Canada bears conclusive evidence. Coming down to our own times things do not seem to have improved. "The special statistics of the little ecclesiastical world are not published in France; but M. Durny, having once had the happy thought of ascertaining from the judicial pigeon-holes the number of crimes and misdemeanours committed by the members of religious orders engaged in teaching, compared with those of lay schoolmasters, during a period of thirty months, the result of the inquiry showed that, proportionally to the number of schools, the former were guilty of four times as many misdemeanours and twelve times as many crimes as the latter."[2] A concrete picture of this is found in Zola's powerful novel *Truth*, which paints in glowing colours a hypocritical piety, which is in reality a rebellion against Nature's laws and decrees. The case of the Catholic clergy is very instructive. Their orthodoxy and the sincerity of their belief in the dogmas of their Church need not be doubted. But in the face of all this, their passions have led them astray. Their voluntary vow of chastity, the sacredness of their calling, the sincerity of their beliefs, each one of these by itself ought to be an incentive to chastity, but not even all three combined have been able to keep them true to their unnatural, asexual life. If men—and women too—of this type have failed, what reason is there to suppose that the celibacy of our modern feminists will be any better than the celibacy of the Catholic clergy? Feminists of to-day have not even the support of a religious faith, still less have they such an exalted conception of chastity as would be a guarantee of their purity. SELF is the essence of their creed, and when it suits their self neither the feelings nor the virtues of others can make themselves felt. An easy satisfaction of their passions without the responsibility of maintaining children—how simple, how seductive the picture! Joy without inconveniences!

[1] Quoted in Letourneau's *Evolution of Marriage*, p. 168 (the italics are ours).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 351.

Sleep in your club ; dine at a restaurant ; if you are ill, go to hospital, or keep a nurse ; if you want company, pick up a spectre, where

> " Souls are lost among the lights
> Of painted Piccadilly ! "

An easy gospel, ruinously simple. But what do they know of love, who have browsed only on hired lips? What do they know of the depths of a woman's heart, who have been but dazzled by the art of powder and paint? What do they know of bliss, who have never known an infant's heavenly smile? Desolation, child of a devastating selfishness, unscattered by the home-lamp trimmed by wifely fingers! But the disease of the age is : " The woman refuses to go back, the home refuses to go forward, and marriage waits," and evils grow ; infants who know not their fathers; women who hide a festering body and festering soul beneath smiles that breathe of an earthly hell; and men who are free not to marry, but willing to sip the poisoned honey and poison their own lives. Truly is nature imperious and avenges the wrongs against its laws with an iron hand, which leaves humanity weltering in misery, craving for joy, yelling in pain, and the curse of the mythical Adam works, and the woman pays. Homes suffer in desolation.

(2) *Neglect of Home owing to Industrial and Professional Life.*—Even where there is willingness to marry, and marriage does take place, the home life often suffers owing to the industrial or the professional occupation of its women members. As we have argued in a previous chapter, occupation outside home is incompatible with household work and the care of children, and in cases of the conflict that results it is invariably the latter interests that suffer. After all, cleanliness in life, wholesome food, good cooking are the fundamental needs of life, and far more urgent in their demands than a desire to earn money and be independent. When home comes to be looked upon as secondary in importance it loses that sanctity which has been its greatest bulwark from ages past. In families employed in industries there is little prudence displayed in the matter of procreating children. Mothers find

little time to look after their little ones, and it is a notorious evil how in India they give slight doses of opium to them to make them slumber for unnaturally long hours, and how in Europe mothers in the interests of their service administer doses of brandy to their infants when they themselves go to work. The world at large does not always get to know of this nefarious cause of so many infants dying. It must be an extraordinarily unnatural state of affairs that could induce women to be practically the murderers of their own flesh and blood. The infantile mortality in industrial centres is too established a fact to need any comment. If by lucky chance these infants grow up to be young children, they are strangers to their mother's care. They roam about, pass their time as best—or rather as worst—they can, fall a prey to unhealthy influences, and grow up to be men and women whom the snug world of comfort and luxury condemn outright as wicked and criminal, and the vicious circle goes on. Reformatories and prisons, or even a kindly philanthropist cannot possibly make amends for a mother's neglect, and in the meantime our feminist reformers cry out to them in greater and greater frenzy to earn their own living and be independent. Infant nature grows cramped and awry, while young mothers slave and lose their health—and often their soul—to the Moloch of industrialism. The first entry into modern industrial life is often gained by paying the tribute of Babylon to a vicious manager or proprietor, and the evil once begun hardly ends before health and youth alike are prematurely lost.

It would be but fair to say that the woes of these mothers of the poorer classes have attained this plight not so much through a spurious consciousness or will to be independent, as through the spur of poverty. It should be a sufficient condemnation of any society that its poorer women members should be forced to neglect their children and their houses in order to earn their living. Feminists would be doing admirable work if they sought to do away with these demoralising conditions. The greed of capitalists has been the scourge of modern Europe, and taken away so much joy from the superb inventiveness of the human mind. But law and public

opinion could both be brought to bear upon them, so as to guarantee really living wages which would prevent mothers from neglecting their homes. Feminists could well join hands with trade unions and labour organisations to better the condition of working-class families. Money is needed to produce better home conditions, but feminists have worked at the wrong end by trying to increase the income of the family by making women work. The same end could be attained by causing an increase in the wages of men and guaranteeing through law that an adequate portion of that goes to the *mater-familias* instead of to the public house or gambling house.

But nowhere have economists blundered more egregiously than in imagining that higher wages alone are needed to produce a revolution in social conditions. The means to produce this revolution are more ethical than economical. The problem is not so much how much to earn, but how to spend. It is a poor commentary on the social history of Europe that, though wages have risen so much, poverty as such has not decreased. More money in the pockets of wage-earners brought more profits to the pockets of the publicans than to their suffering families. Women wage-earners have been as much to blame in this as males. After a hard day's toil they are hardly fit to resist the invitation of the bar, and any increase in wages has meant a greater demand for liquor and other injurious luxuries. The absence of all moral training in the years of their childhood is now making itself felt in England, and as far as we dare say in other countries too. A writer in the *Nineteenth Century and After* of October 1918 points out the demoralising effects of high wages on young minds. "This craving for money on the part of English boys is a new development, one that is bearing fruit. Never before have boys earned such high wages as they earn now, and never before have there been so many boy criminals, thieves, petty pilferers." The same writer deplores the uncontrolled admiration of girls for soldiers, and how their increased wages have produced in them a petulant independence of their parents. If freedom means freedom from all prudence and common sense and morality, God preserve the world from this freedom, however much

feminists may be enamoured of it! In the nineteenth century it was a common heresy that the economic betterment of men would *ipso facto* make for an all-round advance. We are not far enough advanced in the twentieth century to say how far that heresy has been outlived even now, but we have had enough experience of a rise in wages to show us that a command of money without a knowledge of how to use it and without a sense of responsibility or decency is in itself a great evil. The only way to breed this knowledge lies in a mother's love and her teaching. For this leisure is necessary; the mother has to reign at home and not slave in a factory. Her chaste influence is a far greater social asset and worth more than any wages she can earn. Feminists will have to learn this lesson or face the danger of a chaotic life, which knows no law except the command of a caprice, and which mistakes rudeness and irresponsibility for independence.

(3) *Childless Families.*—If the poorer classes display a ruinous prodigality in children, the upper and even the middle classes display a ruinous prudence. It has been noted with concern that people who are best fitted by their education, position, and means to rear families of a decent size are those who scrupulously avoid having any children or restrict their number to one or two. Childless marriages are often due to the conditions of a professional life, which make child-bearing and child-rearing a regular hindrance in the even course of their life. The congregation of hundreds of thousands of people into towns has led to the flat system of residence, with its cramped area and a want of complete privacy. A huge building covering a number of souls, varying in habits and temperaments and demanding a mutual forbearance, puts a great strain on the free instincts of children. The noise and the romping of children produce an unnatural jar on the nerve-strung, pleasure-loving bachelors of modern times, and have led to the classification of children as "nuisances." It is even said "that many managers of apartment houses object to families with more than one child or to any children. . . . Recently the manager of a large and expensive apartment house in New York

proudly boasted to one of his tenants that he had got rid of every family in his house that had a baby."[1] Another writer has the same tale to tell: "At present, any man who has a home to let, be it room, apartment, or house, prefers his tenants to be without children. The home, the birthplace, the rearing-place is not built, fitted, nor managed for the benefit of children."[2]

It would be a pure exaggeration to say that these childless families consist solely of feminists. But it is a poor compliment to the intelligence of the feminist fraction of them if they are so "self-sacrificing" as to create better conditions even at the expense of their own duties, and yet leave no successors to enjoy the fruits of these conditions. In the history of men, childless marriages do not count; pitiable they are, if natural; culpable if artificial. But it is something to be thankful for, that such marriages have not as yet become very common. Even the vagaries of feminists have limits. If George Sand could bear an illegitimate child merely for the experience of it, it would be surprising if a married woman missed such an experience, which with all its travail has something sublime in it, abashing even the most hardened rake.

(4) *The Small Size of Modern Families.* — If childless marriages are not very common, there is nowadays a well-established tendency towards a strict limitation of children to one or two. For a number of years a conflict has been waging round the question whether it is justifiable to use neo-Malthusian methods to prevent conception. On the one hand it is urged that they are distinctly unnatural, and therefore they ought not to be used. On the other hand it has been argued that frequent births are injurious to the health of both mothers and children, and hence anything which tends to prevent this frequency is worthy of encouragement; and further, that a man should not have more children than he is in a position to support and bring up adequately. The old idea of "live and multiply" lingers only in unthinking, orthodox families. For the generality of educated

[1] Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 491.

[2] Wolfe's *Readings in Social Problems*, p. 532.

mankind it has been effectually knocked on the head. It is, after all, the quality and not the quantity of children that counts. In the deserts of Arabia a father may proudly boast of having thirty stalwart sons, but in the highly expensive and complex life of Europe a family of six children may not be altogether easy to support. On the whole, under the stress of modern conditions, a wholesale repudiation of limitation of families would be crudely dogmatic. But it has to be admitted that the illegitimate use of these means is far more common than their legitimate use. Their use outside marriage has distinctly led to a loss of real chastity on the part of men and women alike, while within the institution of marriage their use is influenced by considerations of selfishness, fostered by artificial wants rather than by considerations of efficiency. But here, too, it is a hopelessly difficult problem to say definitely where selfishness begins and where it ends. No common standard of comparison is possible, and expenses vary from family to family. It has been said that for a nation to maintain its vigour and numbers every couple ought to have at least four children, so as to leave a broad margin for early premature deaths of children. As it is, there are many families with only one or two children, and this small size constitutes a distinct danger to the welfare of a nation. And the worst of this limitation is that it is to be found most commonly in educated classes, so that whether from the standpoint of heredity or of environment a cultured couple tends to be the least useful. Dr. J. McKeen Cattell is responsible for the following thought-provoking statements :

"The completed family of contemporary scientific men is about two, the surviving family about 1·8, and the number of surviving children about 1·6. Twenty-two per cent. of the families are childless ; only one family in seventy-five is larger than six. The same conditions obtain for other college graduates.

"If the size of family of college graduates should continue to decrease as it did during the nineteenth century, students graduating in 1925 would have no children at all. . . . Answers from 461 leading scientific men, giving the causes which led to the limitation in the size of their

families, show that 176 were not voluntarily limited, while 285 were so limited. The cause of voluntary limitation was health in 133 cases, expense in 93 cases, and various causes in 54 cases."[1]

These figures speak for themselves, and though perhaps it would be possible to bring forward statistics[2] to show that in this respect non-college couples are as much to blame as college ones, there can be no dispute about the broad fact that families are limited through artificial means, and this to a dangerous extent. It is no wonder that governments should be seriously concerned over this phenomenon. Some time back, papers spoke of an interesting Bill to have been introduced into the French Chamber of Deputies. The proposal is thus summarised: "The state should be responsible for the welfare of the country's babes. According to the project there is to be in every department's chief town a maternity home for mothers in need of help, and in each commune a mutual help society, to which all women over sixteen years of age shall belong. An interesting feature is the provision of premiums to be granted to mothers and prospective mothers. On condition that a mother does not undertake work and remains at home during the last four months before confinement, she shall receive a daily allowance of 1s. 10d. in a commune of 2,000 inhabitants, 2s. 6d. in one of from 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, 3s 4d. in one from 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, and 4s. 2d. in communes over that size. To a father and mother are granted a premium of £24 for each of the first two children, £40 for the third, and £60 for the fourth, and £40 for each additional child. The old, who have done their duty to the state, are to be rewarded. A pension of £20 per annum for fathers and mothers having jointly from six to eight legitimate children, £40 for eleven legitimate children, and £80 for twelve legitimate children and over."[3]

It would be interesting to see how such a measure works out. It is beyond question that to a large extent it would succeed in fostering a large population. But it

[1] Quoted in Goodsell, p. 493.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 491–2.
[3] *The Times of India*, March 7, 1919.

is questionable whether it would altogether induce the educated classes to take full advantage of it, for in their case it is often the delicate health of wives and their aversion from the physical labour of parturition that are responsible for their small families much more than any want of money. The poorer classes would certainly take advantage of it, but this would solve the quantitative rather than the qualitative aspect of the population problem. An equally important reform—nay, in a sense, far more important reform—would be to foster a new spirit in female education, paying particular attention to their physical growth, and preventing the industrial employment of women. This is just the most necessary reform. Yet it is questionable if it is practicable. The united forces of a greedy, unscrupulous capitalism and infatuated feminism would prove far too strong to effect any measure that does not directly add to the amount of cash in a woman's pocket.

All the four causes dealt with above have contributed to a breaking up of a really happy home-life. Suspicion of marriage and of children have made home lose all its glory. It appears no longer indispensable. A real family meal with its privacy and its own quaint peculiarities is losing its charm, and a colourless restaurant life is becoming fashionable in large cities like Paris and Berlin and London, and a practice, which arises perhaps out of pressure of circumstances, may soon attain the dignity of fashion. Where this practice has become established one can easily imagine how little time such a family would have to be at its ease.[1] In London a guild is already training general house-workers for occupation and work under regularly established conditions. Once this movement is completed, even though marriage continues to subsist, real home-life with its many worries and many more joys and comforts will have received its death-blow.

[1] Ellen Key's *The Century of the Child*: "So many hours spent in work outside, meals taken outside home, or at best in a common dining-room of a large building, leave merely the sleeping hours to a family for any intimate conversation. Even domestic work may come to be entirely discarded by the members of the family, for as in America bureaux might supply domestic help for a fixed time for a fixed price."

This would certainly be so in cities, and accentuate the desolation of a modern home. But it is likely that in country districts, as suggested by Ellen Key, the dearth of labourers and domestic servants may force the daughters of a house to undertake work that at present they can assign to their servants. This may also tend to put a check to that exodus of healthy country girls into the poisoned atmosphere of cities with their many temptations and emissaries of evil.

In every period of the world's history cities have been notorious haunts of vice, and this inherent evil has been accentuated a hundredfold by the Industrial Revolution, by causing hundreds of thousands of men and women to congregate in industrial centres. The expensiveness of city life with its luxuries and higher standards of living deters many a healthy, vigorous man from undertaking the responsibilities of maintaining a household, and as a result they are easily tempted to welcome a temporary satisfaction of their sexual needs. This practice has increased to a shocking extent a nefarious trade in women. Youth and beauty, however short-lived, become the trading-capital of many women, and bring in a goodly harvest of money. But beneath all the pomp and glitter and beauty of these benighted women there are concealed abysses of misery and disease, which have only in recent years tended to rouse the public conscience, but the whole subject is so important as to deserve a full treatment in a chapter by itself.

CHAPTER X

DAMAGED GOODS

GEORGE DUPONT. "What one wants is some means of avoiding it (syphilis) altogether."
DOCTOR. "Oh! that is quite simple."
GEORGE. "Tell me."

* * * * *

DOCTOR. "To love only one woman, to be her first lover, and to love her so well that she will never be false to you."
BRIEUX'S *Damaged Goods*.

NOMINALLY in Christian Europe strict monogamy is the law; practically every city is a hot-bed of vice. A deliberate revolt against marriage has shattered its prestige, and M. Bertillon calculates that in Paris alone 40,000 couples live without any marriage tie. But the dangers of such unions are nothing compared to those involved in the promiscuous intercourse that has become so common in Europe through prostitutes. Late marriages or no marriages at all have brought into existence a large number of women who find it lucrative in their palmy days of youth and beauty to satisfy their erotic needs promiscuously. The irresponsibility and freedom and elasticity of such a life form a net round women, out of which a good many of them are loth to emerge. Prostitution is an institution—if such a term could be applied to it—which *prima facie* shames its women members, but it is clear that the real shame of it clings to men, and not to them. Its vast army has been brought into existence only in response to an unending demand of men, and for every one bad woman there must be at least half a dozen bad men. "The Vice-Commissioners of Chicago concluded after a careful inquiry that the annual profits of prostitution in the city of Chicago alone amount to between 15 to 16 million dollars, and they regard

this as an ultra-conservative estimate. . . . If we confine ourselves strictly to the earnings of the girls themselves, it is found to work out at an average for each girl of 1,300 dollars per annum." [1] That is, a prostitute can earn as much as over £20 a month, wages which an honest woman working for ten hours a day would be far away from earning. It shows the amount of money that men are prepared to spend, and do spend, on low women, while for one specious reason or another they avoid matrimony as if it were an unholy reptile. "The prostitutes in disorderly houses," continues Mr. Ellis, "known to the police—leaving out of account all prostitutes in flats, rooms, hotels, and houses of assignation, and also taking no note of clandestine prostitutes—receive 15,180 visits from men daily, or 5,540,700 per annum. They consider further that the men in question may be a quarter of the adult male population." [2] How low the morality of men in the West is can be gauged from the opinion of Dr. Otto May and other experts that at least 80 to 90 per cent. of the men in Great Britain, and a higher percentage in Latin countries, have some premarital experience.[3] From 1914 to 1917 the police arrested and charged 20,000 women in London alone for soliciting. In New York City there are estimated to be from 30,000 to 40,000 prostitutes; and the statement is made by conservative authorities that out of every 55 inhabitants, including men, women, and children, one is a prostitute. Statistics of this type could be multiplied *ad nauseam*, but they will not give an exhaustive idea of the enormity of the evil, for they relate only to those women who trade in their bodies. There is another large class of women, who not caring for money at all, freely give themselves to whomsoever they like. This increasing class of amateurs is about the most shocking culmination of shocking theories of free love that have in recent years emanated from the ingenious brains of over-enthusiastic feminists. "In analysing 118 cases of venereal disease contracted by soldiers, it was found that

[1] *The Task of Social Hygiene*, by Havelock Ellis, p. 298.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 301.
[3] "The Changing Moral Standard," by Mrs. Neville-Rolfe in the *Nineteenth Century and After* of October 1918.

90 of the cases were contracted from this class, and no financial transaction took place."[1]

Those who can read these facts and figures, and still more those who have witnessed in the streets of London and Paris immorality reduced to a fine art, without feeling perturbed about the future of humanity, must have lost all sense of decency and decorum. An apostle of woman's dignity and self-respect, the late Mr. Stead, started a campaign of publicity, exposing to public view the moral ulcers of European society, nearly forty years ago, and since then a vast amount of literature, uncanny and harrowing in its details, has been published without having sensibly reduced the numbers of victims of modern Babylon or of men who feast like vultures on these unfortunate outcastes. It is a serious problem affecting the happiness of family life, the health of society, and the future of the race, and no effort should be spared to tackle the evil firmly and relentlessly. Man-made laws, including the licensing system or the bare tolerance of the evil as lying outside the sphere of state activity, have pressed heavily on the gentler sex. We may hope, however, that the extension of political power to women will find its first justification in creating conditions which make prostitution impossible—or at least reduce it to its lowest limits—in the future, and which will offer some redemption to those who have already been victimised. To deal effectually with this evil we must study the causes that have extended it to such a devastating extent.

The economic law of demand and supply works out with fatal rigidity in this department. Hence the causes will have to be studied from the double standpoint of men and women. So far as the former are concerned, we have already spoken of the evils of marriage at an abnormally late age, or of not marrying at all. Long before this, however, the sex-instinct becomes fully matured and continence requires a strong self-control, a self-control which is generally conspicuous by its absence, and hence is welcomed any opportunity of satisfying it. Action in the line of least resistance wears always a seductive aspect. But in reality there is no necessity for this deviation from the right path. In the majority

[1] *Nineteenth Century and After* of October 1918, p. 724.

of cases self-control is possible and within reach. It is often only a vicious habit contracted long before the sex demands are fully matured. Thus many students in the universities lose their chastity very early. As Dr. Scott forcibly put it: "In accordance with the ribald teachings of loudly boastful and coarse men, youths too often assume to believe that the sooner they throw away their virtue the better, thinking that they see in the tobacco-stained mouth, in the whiskey-laden breath, in the oath-polluted lips, in the blustering swagger, or in the other gross indelicacies of the rough, those qualities which will make them manly and gain for them their ambition to be called: 'men about town' and 'men of the world.'"[1] A spirit of false emulation leads young men astray, and, a beginning once made, they find it hard to stop in their career of pleasure, ignorant as they are of the diseases they help to build up in themselves. In Berlin especially, 25 per cent. of the students are declared to be suffering from venereal diseases.[2] The spuriousness of the claim cynically advanced that if marriage is not possible sexual experience is anyhow necessary is effectually exposed also by the fact that the demand is created by the faithlessness of so many husbands. In their case it is the polygamous instinct which manifests itself, but a life of whims and caprices is not the life of a civilised or a moral man. Perhaps the only justification for this dangerous life is to be found in the case of those unhappy men whose married life is blasted, and release from the marriage bond is not legally possible. The only remedy for this class of men is to be found in a reconstruction of the whole institution of marriage so as to place it on the firm basis of love.[3]

There is no doubt that somehow an idea has been set afloat that sexual life is an absolute necessity in the case of all young men, and this idea has had the unfortunate authority of many physicians behind it. It is refreshing to find this attitude and moral perversion

[1] Dr. James Foster Scott's *The Sexual Instinct*, p. 130.

[2] Appendix XXVIII to the Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases.

[3] *Vide* the chapter on "The True Marriage," in Part III.

vigorously combated by Dr. James Foster Scott, whose admirable book on *The Sexual Instinct* ought to find a place in the hands of every young man and young woman. Nature's bequest to man of an instinct will undoubtedly, sooner or later, claim an outlet. Human experience thereof has led to the evolution of marriage. It is within marriage that the joys and duties incidental to sex must have their being. Most reasons for avoiding marriage are an ingenious cloak for selfishness. All artificial hindrances to marriage should be removed by the foresight of statesmen. Habits of economy are a great desideratum in this age of meaningless luxuries.

There is one profession which makes marriage and sexual continence alike a difficulty, and that is the profession of the army and navy. Governments are selfish enough to pay low wages to soldiers, and thus both directly and indirectly prohibit marriage to them. Their laxity has been notorious through ages, and their existence in the midst of a society is always a danger. Hence even for them marriage should be made possible, or better still, in a wiser age of peace and freedom, the profession of soldier may be reduced to its lowest limits, and preserved merely as a specimen in the museum of human selfishness, aggressiveness, and barbarism. However necessary under present conditions a soldier may be, there is no justification that for the benefit of him and his companions so many pure women should be reduced to the level of human dregs, reservoirs and disseminators of disease. Governments by this nefarious solicitude for their soldiers' pleasures render themselves accomplices to Nietzsche's idea : "Men for war, women for men."

The vast majority of men, pseudo-bachelors, widowers, faithless husbands and unhappy husbands, soldiers and sailors who patronise these women, are normal healthy men with average sexual cravings. To say anything to the contrary would be a gross libel on mankind, and there is nothing to justify such a libel. It is only in the cases of a comparatively few people, discovered by pathologists, and fully described by such standard authors as Mr. Havelock Ellis and Forel, that sexual instinct is so over-powering or so perverted as to be beyond control and merely human persuasion. With such cases

prostitution will be a perennial institution, but a state with any claim to be eugenic will have to deal with these cases with a firm hand, by preventing them from marrying and procreating children. Or better still, the heroic remedy of Rentoul's operation might have to be used in their case, as it has been already used in some of the American states with reference to hardened criminals.

On the whole, it may be taken as a well-established fact that a demand for prostitutes has risen to a formidable height, and as a consequence no means have been left unused to keep the supply at as high a level as possible. Circumstances at times have worked heavily against many women, and they find in the worth of their bodies a temporary palliative to their miseries. In other cases they have been the victims of sheer human brutality and deceit. The causes of the supply may be dealt with under five heads :

(1) *Poverty* is the one cause that immediately suggests itself, and it is certainly the most unjustifiable one. Women have been brought up usually, as has been said cynically, for only one profession : marriage. Hence, in those sad cases where women prematurely lose their natural protectors and find themselves helpless in a cruel world with no relations to turn to, or no profession to fall back upon, they are easily thrown on the streets. Though poverty is undoubtedly leading many women to such a life, it is doubtful whether it works to a really very wide extent. A single woman, however helpless in these days, may count upon getting some work, at least, if only she is prepared to exert herself instead of wishing for a slothful life. Cases of extreme poverty leading to prostitution are rare, though perhaps real enough to afford a theme for a novelist or a dramatist. But even these rare cases are sad enough to force any healthy-minded man to admit that in a good society they should not be possible. Individualism must be rampant to a nefarious extent if neighbours are not neighbourly enough to lend a helping hand to a destitute girl and save her from herself. It is not so much real poverty as a wish to look better and dress better than she can afford to that is the real reason, and this brings us to the second cause : luxury.

(2) *Luxury* has always been the one weakness of women, but in our day it has had a powerful, though an artificial stimulant in the exposure of tempting wares in the shop-windows, and of costly fashions in theatres and other places of amusement. A weakness for finery is a rift in a woman's otherwise beautiful and healthy temperament. By a fatal law of economics, luxuries are always costly, and the wages ordinarily earned are eaten up so much by the necessaries as to leave no margin for luxuries. A demand for higher wages evokes a cruel retort from the employer: "You know how to increase your income!" Temptation is so severe, money is so easily and so plentifully earned, and the respectable shop-girl, who was so daintily polite and obliging in the morning, may be found tramping the streets at night, waiting for her customers. Gaily decked, uglily painted to cover up her scars, she wears herself out night after night in a mad scramble for the dainties of life. We wonder if even a single feminist could be found to put in a plea for this goad of luxury and pleasure.

(3) *The Lure of Independence.*—The independence for which the feminist struggles is not always earned by honest industry. Sincere feminists plead for a woman's right to labour in all spheres, so that she may establish her right as an all-round useful member of society. The independence they aim at, however distorted and exaggerated, has after all not a few elements of nobility in it. But as often happens, the message of the leaders is twisted by the followers to suit their wishes. Independence as an end is remembered, and justified; the means to it are taken in a wide sense. A woman claims an absolute right over her body, so that she can give it to whomsoever she likes and whenever and however she likes. The theory often leads to practice, and prostitution is the result, though paraded in the form of independence and freedom from conventions. The whole of theatre-land is covered with such "independent" women. "Both in Europe and America," says that noble writer, Dr. Scott, "these so-called actresses—the chorus girls and dancers—are classified *en masse* as loose women, and they are known by the medical profession to be more uniformly infected with venereal diseases than are

any other class of women. The modern stage is the hotbed of impurity and divorce, and the actress of note who is not a divorcée or who has a clean reputation is the exception."[1] Exceptions, of course, there have been, and there will be. A profession which produced Sarah Siddons cannot be rightly condemned altogether. The stage has its geniuses too, and these can claim the privileges of their class. If "enhancement of life" be the only test of a person's love, and fructification of genius require more than one love, the loves of actresses, as of poets and painters, may be winked at, though not entirely condoned. But in the case of the rank and file, with their pretty puppet faces, serving as chorus-girls or mute decorations to glut the eyes of men with scenes of voluptuousness, no such justification exists. Their low life is too heavy a price to pay for any society. It requires a great moral force for a young country girl to come alone to large cities, allured thither by the glamour of theatre-land, and thrown into the company of gay young men, whose real liaisons are as plentiful as the rôles of lovers they play on the stage, and yet maintain her virtue. As Mr. Wells puts it, our modern girls are too free for their innocence, and too innocent for their freedom. The ulcers and the leprosy of their life cannot be hidden by the accident that a pretty face now and then hooks a baronet or a peer. The prizes are few, the blanks are many, and a young girl who joins the stage with visions of diamonds and motors often ends as a repulsive hag at thirty or fattens as Mrs. Warren. Truly may these wasted devotees of pleasure be said to be "walking morals," broken relics of a happy wife and mother that might have been. So many shattered lives in "painted Piccadilly" are so many sign-posts of wasted womanhood. Their beauty, their gaiety, and their atrophied goodness might have flowered in the shelter of a home, in the persons of their bairns. It is questionable if the most brutal husband's treatment could equal the insults and assaults and the poisoning of souls so common in theatreland.

(4) *The White Slave Traffic.*—The insensate craving for luxury and independence serves as a sort of net for

[1] *The Sex Instinct*, p. 159.

the white slave traffickers to catch young women in. Within the last twenty years the public has been slowly made to understand the complex organisation which clever but abandoned men and women have established to supply the sex market with new recruits. Few women can be persuaded with ease to follow a line whose tortuous ways end but in misery or premature death. Hence they have to be decoyed from distant places through false advertisements for all sorts of posts, which the ignorant country girls mistake for genuine offers, and exultingly leaving the shelter of their homes unwarily walk into the trap so dexterously set up for them. Once having lost their virtue through fraud and force, she finds the grip of Mrs. Warren and her male bullies tighten round her soul, so that she sinks lower and lower, and her glowing youth is burned up on the altar of men's most brutal passion. Against her will she becomes an outcaste ; the tragedy of her life is smothered in hysterical excitement, and modern Babylon wags on. The corruption of police and the apathy of governments have conspired against the innocence of womanhood until the evil has become so widespread as to hang like a shadow over the pride and insolence of European civilisation. In the white slave trade pity does not exist, generosity is unknown. It is only cash that is worshipped, and here, too, it is only a little that goes to the pockets of those who may be said in a way to have earned it. It goes to fill the pockets of soulless middlemen. Like an octopus, it has gripped society and renders beauty and youth a dangerous snare. Parents who think it elegant to let their young daughters roam at large in quest of posts and independence may well pause and ponder on the risk to which they are exposed and the harm they are inflicting on society.

(5) *Ignorance.*—It has been an odd irony that girls are allowed perfect freedom of movement and yet left in woeful ignorance of sexual physiology. At an impressionable age, when love looms so large on the horizon, this innocence becomes a curse. Combined with an ardent girl's trustful nature, it makes her an easy prey of a philanderer's or a rake's pantomime love-making. A good deal has been written in praise of woman's intuition, but goodness knows where this intuition evaporates at the

most psychological moment of her career. She falls such an easy prey to a coxcomb's refinement. She is so dazzled by the superb graces of a tailor-made man and the glamour of skin-deep gentlemanliness that her intuition slumbers, and she believes in the smooth-tongued compliments of her lover as if they were the utterances of a Dante's soulful love. That astute observer of humanity, Madame de Staël, is credited with the profound observation that "Love is the history of a woman's life; it is but an episode in the life of man." Few women realise this, and their virtue is at the beck and call of an experienced love-maker. This is a most fruitful source of women's tragedies. They have been a perennial source of inspiration to poets, novelists, and dramatists. Goethe's Gretchen and Dickens's little Emily, and George Eliot's Hetty Sorel are but types of real moving tragedies, and many girls who began their careers with visions of roses have lived but to be cut and bruised by their thorns. With a baby in hand, without a husband, they represent martyred motherhood, and the woman deeply wronged swells the army of street-walkers, her tender love metamorphosed into a consuming hatred of men. Maddened by revenge, she becomes a scourge, a channel for the propagation of disease, an unconscious cause of suffering to many innocent beings. The seed of sin sprouts into a tree of misery. The man goes free, it is the woman that pays. If only women knew that coxcombs and knaves are not the heroes they picture them to be, if only they knew the possible consequences of a single lapse, how many social tragedies could have been prevented, how many young hearts brimming with love could have been kept free from turning into vessels of rancour and revenge! How many women have had cause to utter the agonised cry of Mr. Hardy's Tess, as she threw herself, no more a virgin, into the hands of her mother: "Oh, mother, my mother, how could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why did not you tell me there was danger in the menfolk? Why did not you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks, but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me."

(6) All the causes we have mentioned above are not beyond redemption. There is no iron law connecting any one of them with prostitution. With ordinary prudence and foresight, with only a little of humanity and a sense of others' right, the mighty evil of prostitution could be easily avoided. There is only one exception to this. There are, like men, some women so depraved from birth that to them chastity and moderation are perfect strangers. The pages of books on sexual pathology are crammed full of such ugly facts, and they probably make an entire annihilation of prostitution in the immediate future practically an impossibility—unless, of course, men grow wise and seriously follow the advice of Mirabeau, who, when asked at which age he would begin a child's education, replied: "I would begin twenty years before he is born by educating his mother," or of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who wisely said: "If you want to reform a man, begin with his grandfather." There is little cause to doubt—as shown by the notorious history of the Jenks and Jukes of America—that heredity is at bottom mainly responsible for these sexually abnormal people. As we have already said before, in dealing with them we must forgo all meaningless pity, and display Platonic sternness in sterilising them, so as to save future generations at least from the spectacle of bestiality that degrades the annals of our own times. Prostitution has already taken a heavy toll in the modern world. A war to the death has to be waged with it, and the sooner it begins the better.

(7) There is another curious reason assigned at times for the steady increase in the number of prostitutes: the inequality in the number of the sexes so as to produce a preponderance of females over males. It is argued that in a strictly monogamic country where this inequality prevails there is bound to be a certain number of women for whom there are no husbands available, hence their erotic needs goad them on to prostitution. It is interesting to note that this argument would at best apply only to Western Europe, especially to England, for it is only in Western Europe that females are in excess. "In the south-east of Europe they (females) are in a marked deficiency, and in some of

the Balkan States the deficiency is almost as great as it is in India."[1] The same phenomenon is to be found in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and several Australian colonies. Yet in these countries, especially the United States, the social evil is as marked as in any country of Western Europe. Hence it is clear that inequality of numbers entirely fails to explain or justify prostitution. Even with reference to England mere statistical inequality would prove, if scrutinised, very misleading. The number of men and women of marriageable age would have to be shifted so as to include only those who are really healthy enough to marry. Moreover, it has to be noted that this inequality of numbers can be easily explained, since far more men emigrate to the colonies than females, and hence in the colonies there is a preponderance of males, who would be only too anxious to have wives. Thus women in Western Europe, who are supposed to be driven into prostitution by their erotic needs, have an easy chance to find husbands, if only they would leave their mother country, and few would deny that colonial life with all its hardships is infinitely better than the acute misery of a wandering life. Nature is wise enough to produce in her own mysterious ways both the sexes in equal numbers. It is only when men create artificial frontiers round marriage, as e.g. in the case of many subcastes in India, that this inequality creates a problem. "Though the causes determining sex are still obscure, it is well known that the proportion of female to male births also varies from time to time. In England in 50 years it rose by 15, and in France in 100 years by 26 per mille. These variations have been examined by one of the best known of recent writers on sex (C. Düssing), who concludes that the proportions are in a sense self-regulating, so that disturbances tend to bring about their own compensation."[2] Hence we may conclude that this last so-called cause has really very little to do with the extent of the evil.

Coming to speak of the effects of prostitution one is tempted to utter but a single word: *Circumspice*. The

[1] *Census Report of India*, 1911, p. 209.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

tragedy of a white slave is writ large on her face. It is a patent hieroglyph expressing her whole history. Philanthropists and others interested in them, who have known them best, assure us that vestiges of their childhood's innocence and the warmth of their womanly heart may yet be found lingering in these social outcastes, and yet their very patrons shun to recognise them openly, still less to extend to them a friendly hand. They are but instruments used as if they have no souls. Their own parents disown them ; their own brothers and sisters turn away from their faces as if they carried a leper's infection. Hundreds use them ; hardly one loves them. A brief flame of passion and hectic joy, their beauty radiates for a span, and then all is ashes.

But loss of beauty, premature old age, and an early grave are but the least of the evils dogging their steps. The loss of moral energy is incalculable. Each woman of the streets means a family less, and often serves to break up happy families. But in an age which finds nothing sacred except "independence," when marriage and family are looked upon as hindrances that need to be swept away, when chastity even in females is not an "overprized" virtue, arguments against prostitution based on those conceptions are absolutely thrown away. But men, who are dead to qualms of conscience, cynically insensible to the rights of others, and who treat women as if they are worse than dogs, are yet amenable to the physical sufferings bred by their evil life. Nature is an experienced task-master, and knows well how to chastise those who transgress her laws. Venereal diseases, as nature's scourge against her rebels, have undoubtedly a moral aspect. But their very infectiousness constitutes them a danger even to innocent people, whether they be wives, children, nurses, or companions. The ravages of these diseases are fearful in their extent, and commensurate with the huge army of prostitutes, and a still more huge army of faithless husbands, experience-hunting students, and milk and water hypocritical bachelors, the number of people suffering from them may be stated even *a priori* to be enormous. The evil has in recent years become marked enough to have necessitated the appointment in England of a Royal Commission on Venereal

Diseases, whose report will for long serve as an awe-inspiring warning to erring humanity. Ibsen's daring experiment in dramatic art: *Ghosts*, and Brieux's *Damaged Goods*, a merciless and powerful exposure of the social evil, though inferior in art to the Norwegian's work and Mr. George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, have each in its own way done a good deal to rouse public conscience, and educate public opinion in the matter. A few extracts from the Report of the Royal Commission will suffice to show how these diseases lash mankind.

"Sir William Osler considers that of the killing diseases syphilis comes third or fourth. . . . The evidence we have received leads us to the conclusion that the number of persons who have been infected with syphilis, acquired or congenital, cannot fall below 10 per cent. of the total population in the large cities, and the percentage affected with gonorrhea must greatly exceed this proportion."[1]

"An infant suffering from this form of ophthalmia (neo-natorum) may infect the mother, the nurse, or other children, and infection may be conveyed by the use of a towel which has been in contact with the patient. The disease so communicated may spread, and it was stated in evidence that in one year at the Foundling Hospital in Vienna fifteen nurses each lost an eye from this cause."[2]

The Commission recommend that a card of instructions should be distributed, which should contain *inter alia* the following warnings:

"The infection may last several years. It can be conveyed to others by sex-intercourse, by kissing or by using the same eating or drinking utensils or tobacco pipes, etc., and no one who has, or has had, syphilis should marry without permission of the doctor; otherwise there is great danger of giving the disease to wife and children."[3]

Such is the disease, and such its dire effects. When one comes to think of it seriously, it is most astonishing that any man should risk his own health and that of his innocent wife and posterity by yielding to a temptation

[1] P. 23, para. 68. [2] P. 31, para. 96.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 40, para. 121.

that at its best brings in a fleeting pleasure, and still more surprising that any physician with all his knowledge and opportunities of experience should wilfully recommend any of his patients the dangerous expedient of extra-marital intercourse. But unfortunately such physicians [1] are not unknown. The direct effects of these diseases, awful as they are, are by no means the only ones to be considered. So many innocent children are born blind through gonorrheal ophthalmia, so many innocent wives become lifelong invalids and barren, while the researches of the famous Japanese Noguchi have led to the establishment of some connection between paralysis and syphilis, and the case of an advanced syphilist becoming an idiot and the father of idiots has become notorious. A knowledge of these gruesome facts must be spread far and wide; even young men and young women cannot be acquainted too soon with this knowledge, whatever the noodles may say who wail over decency and innocence, while innocence is exploited and decency exists nowhere except in name. An accurate knowledge of these facts is the first step in the task of social hygiene. The second is to make a treatment of these diseases as extensive and as compulsory as possible. The third is to make it a crime for such diseased people to marry. The fourth step and the most important is to have prostitution annihilated root and branch. Any mere tinkering with it

[1] *Vide* Tolstoy's powerful indictment of doctors in his *The Kreutzer Sonata*. "Thus, I had never heard it said by my elders, whose opinion I valued, that this (debauchery) was bad. On the contrary, I heard from people whom I respected that it was good. I heard that my struggles and my sufferings would cease after it, I heard it and I read it; I heard my elders say that it was good for health; and I heard my companions say that it was meritorious and dashing. Thus, in general, I could foresee nothing but good in it. The danger of disease? Even that was foreseen. The paternal government takes care of that. It watches over the regular activities of the houses of prostitution and makes debauchery for gymnasiasts safe, and the doctors watch over it for a stated salary. So it ought to be. They affirm that debauchery is good for health, and they provide a well-regulated, accurate debauchery. I know some mothers who in this sense watch over the health of their sons, and science sends them into houses of prostitution.

'How does science send them there?' I asked.

'Who are the doctors? Priests of science. Who debauches the youths, insisting that this is necessary for their health? They.'"

is worse than useless, for it engenders a false sense of security. The licensing system with its periodical examination, which is so much favoured on the Continent, has completely broken down, as Dr. Scott brilliantly argues. A weekly examination does not prevent a woman contracting the disease within an hour after the examination, and during the following week she can infect many healthy men, who in turn spread the infection. In the very nature of things where there is promiscuous intercourse as in prostitution, where the gain of money is the only aim and no awkward questions are asked of visitors, the risk of infection must necessarily be very great. With reference to this question Dr. D. Havenith in his evidence before the Royal Commission said: "This question was carefully examined and discussed at the first conference at Brussels, and to some extent at the second. The conclusion arrived at was that regulation as it is generally practised has in most countries only given illusory results."[1] Dr. Scott is, if anything, even more emphatic in his denunciation of the regulation system, since it engenders an unwarrantably false sense of security, and hence almost invites even the uninitiated and the chaste to a bad life; "Better the polygamy and the harems of the Mahomedans than the devices of the modern God-defying anti-Christians who are more than eighteen centuries behind the times."[2]

Considering that gonorrhea breeds sterility in women and blindness in children, and syphilis breeds madness and paralysis, and both so undermine the constitution as to make it a breeding ground for all sorts of disease to germinate, none can deny that they are *absolutely* to be condemned, whether from the qualitative or even the purely quantitative aspect of humanity. The most radical feminist must admit that "enhancement of life" is not to be attained through these scourges of nature. Theories of free love find their greatest enemy in them, for it more often than not degenerates into mere bestiality. Hence, in condemning the restraints and decorum of marriage one must not omit to consider how with all its faults it affords a bulwark against the dangers of promiscuous indulgence.

[1] *The Minutes of Evidence*, p. 80. [2] *The Sexual Instinct*, p. 220.

Damaged Goods

On the basis of the false conception of freedom that we dealt with in a preceding chapter, the bond of marriage has been interpreted as a sort of cramping influence clipping the wings of life, and by way of contrast the freedom of unions outside marriage has been extolled as giving rise to real love. It has even been argued that prostitution is the institution which alone makes the chastity of our wives and daughters possible; it is the outer defence of our homes; it bears the brunt of the hardest blows; the ruins of it lie broadcast at the feet of humanity, but this is only the price we pay for the purity of home-life. If this be a true statement of facts, who would be so cruelly selfish as to deny that the chastity of our homes demands far too heavy a price? And it would be hardly worth buying at so terrible a sacrifice of youthful beauty and precious souls. In not a few writers on sexual problems is to be found a distinct note of sympathy for these truly benighted women often at the expense of hard-hearted snugly-protected "women of virtue." The reason is not far to seek. The ranks of these women contain a good deal of human gentleness and kindness, and the tragic beginnings of their downward careers are enough to force tears from anyone who has not yet ceased to believe in purity and chastity as among the highest virtues in the midst of us. But this sympathy, or the crooked view which sees in prostitution an inevitable appendage of marriage, should not detract our attention from the central problem: the unadulterated evil of their life, so evil as deserving to be eradicated root and branch.

A brief consideration of the Hetaira of ancient Greece,[1] apart from its intrinsic interest, will tend also to give us some idea of the weakness in our marriage system, which makes prostitutes so much sought after by men. The Hetaira of old was certainly not a prostitute in the ordinary sense of the word. She was in Athens a stranger-woman, who entered into free unions with Athenians, who were prohibited by law from marrying them. "Many of them were women of high moral

[1] For the information made use of in this paragraph I am indebted mostly to Dr. Donaldson's *Woman; Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome.*

character, temperate, thoughtful, and earnest," while their beauty was of course the magnet which drew the best men, and their accomplishments retained them. Diotima of Mantinea was the inspirer of Socrates, and the Symposium of Plato with its immortal delineation of love is said to have been the inspired product of her personality. Few great Athenians were without their Hetairæ. Pericles heads the list with the renowned Aspasia, who formed the centre of a coterie of distinguished men, the like of whom the world has hardly seen. The profound Socrates, Phidias, and Anaxagoras, and even perhaps Sophocles and Euripides haunted her presence. "Indeed, never had any woman such a *salon* in the whole history of man. The greatest sculptor that ever lived, the grandest man of all antiquity, philosophers and poets, sculptors and painters, statesmen and historians, met each other and discussed congenial subjects in her rooms. And probably hence has arisen the tradition that she was the teacher of Socrates in philosophy and politics, and of Pericles in rhetoric. Her influence was such as to stimulate men to do their best, and they attributed to her all that was best in themselves." But if Pericles was fortunate enough to have won for himself the love of such a talented woman, who, by the way, may be noted, was not particularly beautiful, other great Athenians' names are not unconnected with those of other Hetairæ: Plato and Archeanassa, Aristotle and Herpyllis, Isocrates and Metaneira, Menander and Glycera. If these were intellectually superior, in sheer beauty it was Phryne that reigned supreme. Apelles painted and Praxiteles immortalised her as the Cnidian Aphrodite. Her beauty still looks down on us, and at her face artists slake their thirst as at a fountain. Ancient Greece has left behind her the living memory of only two classes of women, the Spartan mother and the Hetaira of Athens. If a reason be sought for the cruel anomaly that, while the Athenian wife is forgotten or only lives with the shrewish reputation of a Xantippe, it is the Hetaira that formed the core of Athenian life, it is not far to seek. The Athenian wife had not the advantage of education; she was a home-bird with the duties of a mother and housewife rendered as dull as possible. She

was even expected to wear a veil in the streets. She was a stranger to any healthy intercourse with the world at large, and she grew up to be as dull and insipid as possible. In contrast we have the beauty and brilliancy of wit and intellect in the Hetiara, and the latter triumphed, for men at bottom are ardent admirers of women of wit, as Meredith has well observed: "A witty beauty is a power." The Dianas of the Crossways in our midst are as much sought after as were the Hetairæ of Old Greece. But it is a curious fatality in men that while willing to be slaves of witty and intellectual women, they have a suspicion of them, and hence they would prefer to marry dull women and go to witty women for relaxation! This curious inconsistency, by no means the only one in masculine texture, would explain many a domestic tragedy. A beautiful dull wife adorns the home, but the intellect and charm of another woman not half so beautiful has taken possession of her husband's heart. This arrangement is on the face of it so artificial as needs only to be pricked to burst into nothingness, but conventional ideas have rendered the pricking difficult, and before our very eyes tragedies in embryo are enacted on many a wedding day. Men must learn that wit and chastity are not incompatible with each other. Women must learn that their wit does not give them any right to be immoral. The temperament of a butterfly is not the soul of wit. A woman of the butterfly species is excellent to be looked at through a glass case, but her single touch is enough to cause all the high categories of human civilisation to evaporate. There is no earthly reason why a wife should not be as witty and as interesting as a Hetaira. The ancient Athenian divided women into two broad classes: the dull and the witty. As a compensation the former were given the dignity of a legal position. But in things that mattered it was the illegal union that had the honours of victory. There is only one way out of the clutches of the white slave market. It is to render our homes as beautiful as possible, and a home cannot be beautiful where the housewife is a dull, decorous, virtuous nonentity. She must be a living personality. Only a living wife has a hold on her husband. What is wanted is a re-establishment of home-life on the

foundations of love and knowledge. Beauty that shines with all the radiance of knowledge, knowledge that has all the charm of beauty, these alone furnish a broad basis for a happy household with sympathy as the cement that holds the two together. It is the weakness of home that lends enchantment to excitements outside home. Those happy husbands who find love, enjoyment, and intellectual company at home are not easily victimised by the daubs of paint and sickly smiles and soulless grimaces that tramp the streets at night. It is because our marriage system is faulty that prostitution finds a chance for subsistence. It is so hostile to marriage, and the connection between the two is merely a subtlety to defend the indefensible. Far from the chastity of wives and daughters being protected by prostitution as a safety valve, their health stands in eternal risk of being poisoned by the diseases that prostitution breeds. Put together the gradual break-up of home due to the industrial occupation of home; a false sense of independence actuating the modern Ann Veronicas, often leading them straight into the hands of the white slave traffickers; the false motives of marriage; the uncontrolled polygamous inclinations of men, fostered by false ideas of masculine bravado and evil friends—put together all these, and we can understand why prostitution constitutes the greatest social problem of the age. But not one of these causes is really such as to be absolutely irresponsive to sanity and education—and herein lies a living hope for humanity.

PART III

MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD

" The man who takes away marriage from the human race, takes away the household, takes away the state, takes away the human race."—C. MUSONIUS RUFUS.

CHAPTER XI

THE EVOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

"You must leave the women and other rubbish together with the superfluous baggage of your army behind."—TIPPU SULTAN OF MYSORE IN A LETTER TO BURAHAU-UD-DIN.

IN the previous page we have had to note again and again the feminist tendency to break through the trammels of marriage, and to assert the freedom of sexual life. Hoary institutions cannot be battered very easily, and so far the institution of marriage has shown vitality enough to resist the feminist assaults. But it is a problem if it will continue to do so indefinitely. Signs are not wanting to show that marriage in its usual sacramental form is slowly but steadily losing its sanctity. Shall we ever be able to do without marriage? Or at least, what form will the marriage of the future assume? These are questions that constitute the very kernel of a study of feminism, and we shall have to address ourselves to them. But in order to prognosticate about the future, it is necessary to study marriage as it has so far been in the history of humanity. The varied experience of the different ages and different peoples may well be trusted to throw luminous flashes on the future evolution of marriage.

Marriage in Europe has been now for some decades exposed to a disintegrating process, which has been brought to a head by the low morals which usually accompany great wars. Is there any historical or ethical justification for this change? How far is it permissible to yield to this fashion of the age? What are the conditions which ought to regulate the marriage relations of the future? These are questions of an absorbing nature, and clamour for a solution. The revolt against conventional marriage has been further accentuated by the

anthropological researches of scholars, who have unearthed most surprising marriage customs, that were once common or are still common, and which clearly show that strict monogamy, the ideal of civilised nations, is no more "natural" than polygamy and polyandry, that marriage ceremonies are all at bottom conventional, and their sacramental character, as taught by Hindus and Roman Catholic Christians, is merely a device to impress the people and keep them on a certain regulated path of sexual relations. So long as Europeans were sincere Christians they unhesitatingly accepted the dictum of Matthew xix. 6, and Mark x. 9: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Morally and legally a monogamous marriage alone held the field. Its dissolution was regarded as a sin, and for long made almost impossible. At an age when priests were prized at their face value and their word was law, the whole emphasis was thrown on the religious ceremony, which was made the core of marital relations. Thus it was that the essentially personal character of a marriage relation came to be overshadowed, and this took away a good deal from its moral worth. A relationship actually brought about by the authority of parents and guardians, often asserted with a brutal callousness to the wishes of the partners themselves,—and confirmed by a priestly ceremony—was dubbed as divine in spite of its flagrantly human origin. So long as this artificial flavour of sanctity stuck to marriage people meekly submitted to it. But growing knowledge has dispelled the illusion, and if the sanctity of marriage has yet to be maintained, it can no longer be by quoting Biblical scraps. New arguments are needed to meet new conditions, and marriage in the interests of morality will have to be established on foundations that bear their own authority within them.

It is a matter of history that the ancient Hebrews attached no religious importance to marriage. Betrothal and nuptials alike were private matters. Neither civil nor religious authorities took any part in them. It was only late in the Middle Ages, probably under Christian influence, that the presence of a rabbi came to be a feature of Hebrew marriage. The religious feature came

to be an additional security to the legal requirement, which had come into being a century before Christ, whereby every husband had to sign a deed before nuptials conveying to his bride some portion of his estate in case he died or divorced her without due cause. So, too, among the ancient Greeks, the presence of a priest was not required at a marriage. The presence of the father alone was needed, thus clearly proving that marriage with them was essentially an inter-family affair. With the growth of secularism in Imperial Rome the Roman marriage came to be considered a purely private matter requiring no religious rite. There is nothing to be surprised at, if this view continued to linger even in the early days of Christianity. The Church in those days did not hesitate to accept the Roman customs of betrothal and nuptials, that is to say, it recognised the free consent of the contracting parties, and merely contented itself with the right of blessing the union. Right down till the late Middle Ages the private character of nuptials among several Teutonic tribes was an established fact. It was only the famous Council of Trent that made the religious ceremony a *sine qua non* of a valid marriage.

With all these historical antecedents, the purely religious character of marriage can no longer be maintained, and it stands to reason that the civil marriage should be a part of the laws of every civilised state, and that the Royal Commission on Divorce should have explicitly recognised the legality of civil marriage.

Thus far we should have to concede the contention of feminists that the religiousness of marriage is only a later growth, and hence its laws have no special sanctity attaching to them, so that changing conditions justify a change in marriage relations.

The essential conventionality of marriage is still further established by the widely differing customs which the industry of scholars like Letourneau and Westermarck has familiarised us with. It would not be time misspent if we briefly reviewed the leading types of marriage, so as to study the reasons which may justify their existence. Such a study necessitates some definite sense in which the term marriage is used. Westermarck's definition of it is sufficiently wide to embrace its varied

forms. He defines it "as a more or less durable connection between male and female, lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of the offspring." It is a conspicuous merit of this definition that it transcends the mere sexual relation, and emphasises its ethical character as somehow affording a protection for the wife and child. It is true even in the case of animals, as showing that the sexual desire is not an end in itself, and that the ethics of marriage centres round the birth of an offspring and the continued maintenance of a race.[1]

An ample justification for Westermarck's definition is afforded by the animal world at large. The duties of the male do not end with the act of procreation, but they embrace the task of protecting the female and the offspring as well as of providing food. Surprising as it sounds, most birds pair for life, so that Dr. Brehm is constrained to exclaim: "Real genuine marriage can only be found among birds."[2] Letourneau unhesitatingly declares birds to be "far superior to most men in the matter of conjugal fidelity."[3] The love of the male is

[1] In an interesting paper on "Birth-control and Biological Ethics," which appeared in the *International Journal of Ethics* of October 1916, Professor Warner Fite maintains: "While for nature the sex-relation is only a means, for those intending to marry it is the first and most important part of the end. As a personal relation marriage is its own justification." From this he concludes that within the limits of health and safety we are justified in employing all the resources of knowledge to render marriage futile or not as we choose. This is an individualistic argument we had to criticise in Part II. If children do not constitute an essential factor in marriage, there is no need for marriage; a universal prostitution screened under the name of free love will fulfil the end Professor Fite has in view. It must be added that the learned professor is only trying to justify childlessness. He himself does not regard it as a virtue.

[2] Quoted in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, p. 11.

[3] Letourneau's *Evolution of Marriage*, p. 27. On the same page he writes: "Nearly all the rapacious animals, even the stupid vultures, are monogamous. . . . With the female Illinois parrot (*Psittacus pertinax*) widowhood and death are synonymous, a circumstance rare enough in the human species, yet of which the birds give us more than one example. When, after some years of conjugal life, a wheatear happens to die, his companion hardly survives him a month. The male and female of the panurus are always perched side by side. When they fall asleep, one of them, generally the male, tenderly spreads its wing over the other. The death of one, says Brehm, is fatal to its companion."

often genuinely touching, guarding and feeding his mate during incubation, and at times even sitting on the eggs with love. Though this high type of conjugal affection is not universal among animals, even among the mammals the male and the female are found to live together for a period sufficiently long to enable the progeny to survive and attain self-maintenance, and sometimes for life. Thus it is clear that marriage really involves the institution of family, and that family constitutes the unit of social organism. It has been, nevertheless, questioned if family is really indispensable. Ants, bees, and termites have been pointed out by Letourneau as instances where family is swamped in the community, and social love becomes the moving spring of their activities. But he himself admits the superiority of family as adding to the chances of the survival of a species.

It is worth while appreciating these simple facts of animal life, for they show that whatever be the duration of marriage, its essence is social and ethical, and that even in the case of the most highly evolved animal, man, his sexual life cannot be purely personal, and hence, however conventional marriage customs and marriage ceremonies be, marriage itself in its purity and in its essence is a natural institution. It follows, as will be shown still further in later chapters, that the feminists who revolt against marriage take up an unjustifiably unnatural attitude, since they thereby strike at the very roots of social life.

It has been an interesting point of discussion among anthropologists whether there ever was a stage in the evolution of humanity, when promiscuity in sexual relations was a general rule. Promiscuity as an original state of humanity has been upheld by many eminent scholars, like McLennan and Morgan, Bachofen and Kohler, to mention only a few. Letourneau hesitates to deny its truth altogether, but adds that "we are warranted in believing that the very inferior stage of promiscuity has never been other than exceptional in humanity," while Westermarck brings a wealth of erudition to deny the validity of the theory of promiscuity. Humanity has to-day so far advanced as to make absolute promiscuity a mere tale of the prehistoric past, and it is to be hoped

that this forgotten phase, if ever real, will never again become a living reality. So far the discussion among scholars has been of a purely academic character. But the widespread rumour about the Bolshevik nationalisation of women in Russia raises the question whether civilisation is not rapidly drifting into barbarism. A general nationalisation of women would indeed breed promiscuity, and hence a discussion of it is at once raised to the dignity of a practical question. It would be worth while showing how human conditions make a long-continued promiscuity a practical impossibility.

Before our discussion can in any way be fruitful, it is necessary to clear away an ambiguity in the term promiscuity. Does it mean an utter freedom of sexual relations so that the male, after the act of procreation, simply disappears from the life of the woman and her offspring? Or does it mean merely an absence of a lifelong union of a male with one or more females so that the male and the female alike are free to form a number of unions, simultaneous or successive, but lasting for some definite period and limited in choice only to the members of a certain group? Promiscuity in the former sense exists even to-day in the form of prostitution, which, however, is a negation of marriage, and thus admittedly anti-social and suicidal in character. It is an aberration from normal life, and with its brutal callousness towards the racial aspect of sexual life it asserts its impossibility as a general rule of sexual life. Westermarck is convincing in his arguments that promiscuity of this type could never possibly have existed. Human infancy with its inordinate length demands a long-continued fostering care at least from its mother, if the race is to survive, and though it is not inconceivable that a mother alone should shoulder the burden of upbringing her children, this presupposes a social condition which allows a mother to live in peace. Such a condition is a negation of Hobbes's state of nature, and involves co-operation between human beings of both sexes. As soon as the males, either individually or collectively—as in the so-called group marriages as among the Kamilaroi tribes of South Australia, where the men of one division have as wives the women of another

division—make themselves responsible for the safety of their wives and children, we are already on the threshold of a rudimentary marriage, and promiscuity in the first sense is already left behind.

The second sense in which the term promiscuity can be used is very misleading, since such a promiscuity marks the beginnings of marriage and family life. In such a promiscuity we have a definite union, however limited it may be in time, where a male and a female live together, and accept the responsibility of rearing children. As an instance, we may mention the Sighe wife in Persia, who is taken in marriage "for a certain legally stipulated period, which may vary from one hour to ninety-nine years."[1] Bedouins, forty-five years old, have been known to have had more than fifty wives, and many men in Egypt in the course of two years have been found to marry as many as twenty wives or even more. Similarly, some women have had a dozen or more husbands successively. Even in the Punjaub "cases are known in which a family of three brothers has three or as many as four joint wives."[2] Such cases may savour of promiscuity to a civilised monogamist. But there is a real difference between an irresponsible promiscuity and such marriages, however vague and uncertain their boundaries be. Similarly, the curious custom of "hand-fasting," which was common in the Scotland of Pre-Reformation days as "an unrestrained freedom before marriage," may be more aptly regarded as an orgy of youthful passions rather than as real promiscuity. The temporary unions which many Europeans form with the native women in Burma and India rise above promiscuity as they constitute genuine families with this difference that they are outside the law, and both mother and children are ever exposed to the risk of abandonment.

Now the very uncertainty of such casual unions, and the consequent instability of social relations, made the intervention of custom and law inevitable. In order to ensure a safe upbringing of children the different types of marriage have come into existence, the chief of which

[1] Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, p. 519.
[2] *The Census Report of India*, 1911, p. 241.

are polyandry, polygamy, and monogamy. Widely differing from one another they are yet all ethical in character, as they constitute the foundation of family life, which in its turn is the nursery of the whole social and moral life of man.

It has been the usual tendency of monogamous persons to condemn every other type of marriage as immoral. It would be more consistent with the spirit of history to recognise the contribution each of these leading types of marriage has made to the growth of morality. The actual ethical worth of each of them can be measured only by considering which of them best answers the purposes of humanity. Starting with the conception of man as a social animal, we may speak of the purpose of humanity as the evolution of a society in which the sense of social solidarity is so developed that each individual member seeks to develop his best faculties in order to use them for the welfare of humanity. There is only one way to a peaceful development of such faculties, and that lies through the portals of sex-relationship, which initiates and controls every type of social relations. Hence the growth of morality itself depends on the marriage ideals. From this standpoint we may say that monogamy marks the highest ethical ideal of marriage, and that polyandry and polygamy are merely steps to it, stages merely of moral education in marriage. Since monogamy of a rigorous type has been virulently assailed by many feminists, and we are most of us far too advanced to nod a complacent yea to mere religious dogmas and dicta, it is all the more necessary to establish on rational grounds the claims of monogamy as the highest marriage conceivable. To do so necessitates a review of polyandry and polygamy.

Amongst people reared in patriarchal families, and familiar with this institution as dating from the days of ancient Hebrews and Romans and Hindus, it is difficult to imagine that any other type of family could possibly have been in existence. Yet we may take it for granted, on the authority of most distinguished anthropologists, that McLennan's matriarchal theory has been satisfactorily established, which goes to show that the patriarchal family has to be taken as a later offshoot of matriarchy.

It is not difficult to understand the reason for this. Even during historical times it has taken some thousands of years for the monogamic family to establish itself. In the early days of social life, family relationships could not have been of a very definite type. Their fluctuations and looseness must have often found paternity doubtful. But maternity in any case is beyond doubt, and it must have supplied a fulcrum of stability in a badly organised community. Thus naturally must have come about the supremacy of the mother as the head of the family. Her male lovers may have enjoyed the rights of husbands, and many have contributed their quota to the maintenance of their establishment. Such a relation gives a certain looseness of responsibility to males. In order to put an end to it and to lessen the inequality of burden as borne by women, at one stage or another custom must have interposed and evolved a definite type of polyandry.

There are two distinct types of polyandry: the matriarchal, where the husbands are not necessarily related to one another, and the fraternal, where they are brothers or perhaps cousins on the paternal side.[1] Polyandry of the fraternal type has been well known in India for ages, since the classic case of the Pandav brothers celebrated in the Mahabharatha. To-day it is unknown among the highest classes. But it is yet found among the Todas in India and the Thibetans, among whom the brothers of a family have one or more wives in common.[2] Among the Reddies of South India a young woman is married to a boy of five or six years, but is allowed to live with some near relation on the maternal side, e.g. uncle, or with her own father-in-law.

Generally polyandry prevails only in less civilised

[1] *The Census Report of India*, 1911, p. 239.

[2] With reference to the Todas, Dr. Shortt says: "If there be four or five brothers, and one of them being old enough gets married, his wife claims all the brothers as her husbands, and as they successively attain manhood, she consorts with them; or if the wife has one or more younger sisters, they in turn, on attaining marriageable age, become the wives of their sister's husbands or husband. . . . Owing, however, to the great scarcity of women in this tribe, it more frequently happens that a single woman is wife to several husbands, sometimes as many as six." (Quoted in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, p. 452.)

communities, but this statement does not apply to the highly intellectual community of the Nayars on the coast of Malabar in India. Although Hindus, they are not governed by the Hindu Law. Perhaps, as a relic of their original Hinduism, a Nayar girl is married before puberty, and this ceremony is known as the *Thalikethu Kalyanam* (*tali*-tying ceremony). It is absolutely formal in character, and gives no permanent marital rights to the husband. The ceremony is primarily meant for the purpose of the defloration of the bride, so that thereby the girl may become fit for actual marriage later on. The bridegroom may, with the consent of the bride's parents, continue to be the permanent husband, but as a rule on the fourth day after the *tali*-tying ceremony, there takes place the severing of the cloth, which signifies the dissolution of the marriage-tie. After this the girl is free to enter into a *sambandham* with any man of her choice, provided he belongs to the Nayar community, or is a Nambudri Brahmin. She stays at her mother's house, where she is visited by her lover-husband, and only occasionally visits her husband's house. The remarkable characteristic of *sambandham* is its terminable character at the will of either party. Customary presents on special occasions are expected from the *sambandham* husband, but he is in no way responsible for the maintenance of the children of this union. Hence follows another curious provision of the *Marumakkathayam* Law, that the property of a man is not inherited by his own children, but devolves on his sisters and sisters' children. In former times it was usual for a pretty Nayar woman to have *sambandham* with three or four Nayars, who jointly supported her and her children, whose paternity under the circumstances could hardly have been a matter of certainty.

It is possible to argue *a priori* from these circumstances that the Nayars must be addicted to a vast amount of immorality, and that the facility with which a *sambandham* could be put an end to must be leading to a number of *sambandhams*. But in actual practice the *sambandham* is generally a lifelong union, and the Nayars of to-day consider it "real marriage, *de facto* and *de jure*." Although, again, in strict theory it is

open to either party to terminate the union whether wantonly or for some good reason, in actual practice no dissolution takes place unless the case is considered by the guardians and relatives of the parties. In this connection we have the authoritative statement of Mr. Logan, who was collector of Malabar for a number of years :[1] "This part of Malabar has, in the hands of unenquiring commentators, brought much undeserved obloquy on the morality of the people. The fact, at any rate of recent years, is that although the theory of the law sanctions freedom in these relations, conjugal fidelity is very general. Nowhere is the marriage tie, albeit informal, more rigidly observed or respected, nowhere is it more jealously guarded or its neglect more savagely avenged. This very looseness of the law makes the individual observances closer, for people have been watchful over the things they are most liable to lose. The absence of a ceremonial has encouraged the popular impression, but the ceremonial, like other conventionalities, is an accident, and the Nayar women are as chaste and faithful as their neighbours, just as they are as modest as their neighbours, although their national costume does not include some of the details required by conventional notions of modesty."[2]

Thus it is clear that polyandry has been a recognised custom in some communities. It has a natural origin if we connect it with matriarchy, while under certain primitive conditions it may even be allowed to have a certain justification. Anthropologists like Dr. Düssing attribute it to the poverty of the soil wherever it prevails, since the niggardliness of the soil accentuates the struggle for food, and people in self-defence seek to limit their population. In their ignorance of the neo-Malthusianism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they may have resorted to the easy device of lessening the number of possible mothers by assigning one woman to several men.

Again it has been said that nature has not always been so farsighted as to maintain an absolute balance

[1] Quoted p. 37, *The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, by L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, B.G.L.

[2] The last allusion is to the Nayar custom of keeping their breasts uncovered.

between the sexes, so that each man can find a wife, and each woman a husband. Where there is a paucity of women, the sexual rights of every man can only be satisfied through polyandry. There is considerable force in this argument, but it is open to question if the inequality of number in sexes can really be so great as is assumed. It has been painfully demonstrated in the history of poor countries that infanticide has been very common, and infanticide always victimises girls.[1] Thus the paucity of women may really be due to a cruel human expedient, for which nature cannot be held responsible.

Either or both of these reasons may be satisfactory explanations of polyandry in bleak Thibet and among the poverty-stricken Todas, and other polyandrous savages. The custom of the Reddies can only be regarded as a sexual perversion, originally due perhaps to some historical accident, as e.g. in the case of the Aliya Santana Law, governing some fishermen, agriculturists, and toddy-drawers.[2]

The case of the Nayars, however, stands all by itself. Malabar is by no means a poor country, nor is there any paucity of women. The Nayar women are numerous enough, not merely for the males of their own caste, but also for the junior members of the Nambudri families. Amongst Nambudri Brahmins it is a custom that only the eldest son should marry a Nambudri woman; the younger sons forming *sambandhams* with Nayar women, whereby they escape the responsibility of supporting their children, since these would have to be maintained by their maternal uncles. A further consequence of this ingenious arrangement is that many Nambudri women never get a chance of marriage, for they cannot marry outside their caste, and the number of the eldest sons is naturally limited. Many of them die at an advanced age as virgins—a phenomenon unique in Hindu India, where every woman must find a husband before she

[1] As *The Census Report of India*, 1911, shows, infanticide of girls has not ceased to exist even to-day. *Vide* pp. 217–18 of the Report.

[2] The origin of this law is ascribed to one Bhutal Pandya, who inherited his kingdom from his maternal uncle, and hence as a mark of gratitude made inheritance from a maternal uncle the general law in his kingdom.

attains puberty or court eternal infamy!"[1] The real reason of the Nayar polyandry is to be found in the perversity of the Nambudri Brahmins, who for their own selfish ends gave a religious sanctity to their immoral practices. Thus they quote the *Smriti*: "The Sudras' appointed path to Heaven is serving the Brahmins," and interpret this to mean "The practice of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, having sexual intercourse with the servile women is in accordance with the *Sastras*. If a Brahmin wish to have sexual intercourse with a Sudra wife the Sudra is bound to gratify his wish." Before the Malabar Marriage Commission several eminent witnesses deposed in all good faith that "in Kerala a non-Brahmin or *Marumakkathayam* woman need not be chaste, and she is not forbidden to consort with more than one man."[2] It is but natural that such a pernicious interpretation of the Sastras, so degrading to the self-respect of Nayar women, should be warmly repudiated by the educated Nayars of to-day. But in such an abnormally conservative country as India customs die hard, and there is no reason to doubt that Nayar polyandry will continue to flourish long after its initial cause, the arrogant impudence of Nambudris, will have passed away.

A discussion of polyandry has an aptness in a book on feminism, for feminists often point to primitive matriarchy as their rightful position of which they have been deprived by the greed of man. The institution of *sambandham* may almost afford an historical justification for the policy of "free marriage and free divorce." The extreme looseness of the American Laws of Divorce has already brought marriage almost to the level of a *sambandham* without the customary checks and restrictions, which have made *sambandham* unions possible in spite of their theoretical license. It may indirectly and plausibly show that monogamy is by no means the last word in marriage relations.

It is against such insinuations that we have particularly to guard. In so far as *sambandham* is a lifelong union, it is indistinguishable from monogamy. In so far as it

[1] *Vide The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, pp. 198–9, by L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, B.A.L.T.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

has no permanence it is open to all the objections that we shall have to urge against laxity of divorce in a subsequent chapter (Chapter XIII). It is clear that a system which does not hold the father legally or morally responsible for the maintenance of his children lacks essentially in morality, for it tends to breed a sexual carelessness and thoughtlessness that makes the moral development of a male very precarious, while the children, uncertain of their paternity, lose the loving care of a father. Among the Nayars the place of the father is taken by the *karanavan*, i.e. the maternal uncle. His position is odd. His responsibility for his nephews and nieces may so engross him as to lead to a neglect of his own children. If he is a good father he may not have the means or the will to discharge his traditional duties to his sisters' children. It is this difficulty which vitiates *sambandham* in its theoretical freedom and legal consequences, as is clearly attested by Mr. L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, who has had ample opportunities of having a first-hand knowledge of Nayar institutions. With an admirable acuteness he thus lays bare the weakness of *sambandham* :[1]

"It is to the woman that the fortune of the family belongs, and yet she is not the mistress of the house, but one of many joint members dependent on the *karanavan*. The females and the junior members pass their lives in utter discontent and misery if the *karanavan* happens to be unsympathetic and tyrannical. The father is not the legal guardian of his children, for whose training and education the *karanavan* is responsible. In families where there are many boys and girls the chances are that he educates none of them, on the plea that he cannot afford to educate them at all, nor can he make any invidious distinction. The family in certain cases becomes the seat of envy, hatred, and dissensions, and not a day passes without some dispute or other among the members. It is said that with the advancement of civilisation the system becomes more and more unworkable ; it offends against every principle of economy, healthy life, and natural affection. By freeing a man from the obligation of maintaining his wife and children,

[1] *The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, pp. 50–1.

it sanctions the reckless propagation of the species, destroys the motive power for prudence and foresight, forces up the population to the very point where it must be kept down by actual want of means of subsistence. It 'huddles together' as a family a number of distant relatives, not necessarily drawn to each other by any bond of natural affection. It makes home-life impossible, for the father is a casual visitor, and mother and children are but units in a heterogeneous flock, dependent on a practically irresponsible guardian, who from a mere accident of his being the eldest of the flock is expected to be able to regard every member with an impartial eye, and at the same time preserve the interests of his wife and children."

Polyandry is not inconsistent with a simultaneous polygamy. But the effects of such a co-existence can be more easily imagined than described. It places a premium on mere sensuality, which makes children an avoidable nuisance or an unwelcome intrusion. With the neglect of children we place ourselves outside marriage as an ethical idea, and sink back into a barbarism most selfish in character. A woman that lets herself be wooed by several men at a time cannot expect to retain the affections or gain the protection of them permanently. There is an uncertainty in her life which forces her to become economically independent, with all the disastrous consequences we studied in Part II. For a highly civilised community actual polyandry is both undesirable and impossible. Its sensuality is inconsistent with intellectuality or morality. The eminence of the Nayars is not due to their polyandry, but to the fact that they have endowed *sambandham* with all the sanctity of a monogamous union.

Polygamy is as common as polyandry is rare. It would be no exaggeration to say that the vast majority of males are polygamous, whether by law or in practice. Khan-i-azam Mirza, the son of Akbar's favourite nurse, is reported to have thus justified polygamy: "A man should marry four wives: a Persian woman to have somebody to talk to; a Khorassan woman for his housework; a Hindu woman for nursing children; and a woman from Turkestan to have some one to whip as a

warning to the other three." Schopenhauer uttered a blunt truth when he wrote: "There is no use arguing about polygamy, it must be taken as *de facto* existing everywhere." The same truth is found in Meredith's subtle satire: "Men may have rounded Seraglio Point; they have not yet doubled Cape Turk." It is the undoubted glory of Christianity that it is the first and the only one of the great religions of the world that has insisted on strict monogamy as the marriage ideal. But who would venture to assert that it has been observed in practice as it has been insisted on in theory? The Christians themselves would be the last to deny the brutal frankness of Schopenhauer in saying: "Where are there any real monogamists? We all live, at any rate, for a time, and most of us, always, in polygamy." Prostitution in Europe has always dogged the footsteps of wedded families, and introduced evils, before which the grossness of polygamous people shades into insignificance, as many a white slave can tragically assert. What are the causes of its widespread prevalence? Is it an expression of nature's law or a perverse instinct of humanity?

All the great civilisations of the world—including the European in practice though not in theory—have been polygamous, whether we consider the glories of ancient Iranians and Hindus, or the triumphs of modern Saracens. The growth of morality owes a good deal to these great movements of human thought. Zarathustra's insistence on truth, the Hindu's devotion to *Dharma* constitute some of the highest peaks of human morality, while the sturdy Moslem of the age of the Caliphs could teach many a lesson in chivalry and love [1] to the power-worshipping European. If civilisations of this type have recognised the legality and morality of polygamy, it cannot be brushed aside as an altogether immoral institution.

While polyandry artificially restricts population, polygamy makes for its increase. Agriculturists find a number of wives and many children a great help in their work. The length of a man's sexual life bears a vivid contrast to the short span of a woman's sexuality. His freedom from a woman's periodic illness and the long periods of

[1] *Vide* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

rest necessary for her in connection with childbirth produces a discord in the rhythm of her sexual desire. All these reasons undoubtedly lend a physiological, if not the highest moral, justification to polygamy. Even in Christian Europe, in the days of a depleted population, the legality of polygamy had once to be recognised. Soon after the peace of Westphalia bigamy was allowed in some German states, where the population had been largely reduced during the Thirty Years' War.[1] Even so austere a Christian as St. Augustine saw nothing wrong in polygamy, while in our own day polygamy, as a possible means of making up for the terrific losses of the last war, has not been left undiscussed. Both Dr. Le Bon and M. Letourneau do not at all think it unlikely that polygamy may once again come to receive the approbation of law.

Nor can we omit to mention on the credit side of polygamy the remarkable fact in the career of many a genius in literature and art: their capacity to love more than one person at a time with a gushing enthusiasm, which builds its own permanent memorials in words, or canvas, or marble. Goethe's genius could hardly have blossomed in the love of his wife alone. Who knows but the erratic eroticism of Shelley and Byron may have been so essential a part of their genius that a truncating of the one might have led to the annihilation of the other?

But from the feminist standpoint nothing that we have said so far can afford a sufficient justification of polygamy. It can be brushed aside as extenuating or exceptional in character. A few women perhaps may be tempted to acquiesce in polygamy, if polyandry on their part were equally recognised. But the vast majority of women, in Europe at least, brought up in a monogamous family, with all the intensity of their love would prefer a monogamic union. Polygamy is utterly inconsistent with the equality that women claim, and rightly too. In her moments of intense suffering when the birth of one life endangers her own, she would feel her misery lightened by the thought that she alone filled her husband's heart, and that her love will not be immediately forgotten in the

[1] Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, p. 434.

living smiles of a co-wife. The single-hearted devotion she lavishes on her home she expects to be rewarded by her husband's love. She denies the urgency of a man's sexual desires, which could brook no periodic rests of a shorter or longer duration. Barring a few cases of an innate depravity in men, an average man is perfectly capable of leading a regulated sexual life. It is the temptations of the street-walkers, the lewdness of talk, and a perverted sense of the necessity of an early sexual life, unfortunately fostered by medical men and students of sexual perversity, that lead to polygamy in action. It is a dangerous practice to draw rules for normal life from abnormal cases, but this is just what sexual pathology seeks to do. Cleaner social conditions, a cleaner attitude to problems of sex, and a will to lead a pure life—this is all that is necessary to take away from polygamy, legal and illegal, its supposed necessity and misleading glamour, and who would say that these conditions are beyond the power of men?

Even in the case of a genius, a feminist may deny the indissolubility of its union with an erratic eroticism. She could point to the heavenly radiance of Dante's love, the puritanic severity of Milton, the childlike simplicity of Scott, the strength of Browning's wedded love. Even the great Goethe, in spite of his numerous loves, fervently prayed that in another existence it might be given to him to love once only, while the passionate loves of George Sand cast but a sickly light in the presence of the purest of the pure intensity of Elizabeth Browning.

The existence of such cases gives a dignity to love, and commands our homage. But even if it were otherwise, i.e. even if genius could blossom only if love were luxuriously scattered in different directions, polygamy would not be sufficiently justified. A feminist of the type of Ellen Key, who recognised the enhancement of life as the only justification for a man's polygamy or monogamy, and recognised the validity of both, had in fairness to admit that the wealth of love which geniuses can command cannot be "the spiritual soil or climate of humanity at large."[1] The vast majority of men cannot be prodigal in love without debasing it, without growing

[1] Ellen Key's *Love and Marriage*, p. 38.

weak, physically and morally. The flame of a prodigal love cannot burn indefinitely. With most men its place is soon taken by a lawless lust, wildly seeking artificial stimulants and leading a frenzied life, from which joy and exuberance have long since departed.

Women complain that all marriage, as the world has known it, and especially polygamy, has been the result of the economic greed of man, using the wife and the family as instruments for the protection of property, Dr. Goodsell going to the length of asserting that the economic purpose has been "fundamental from the dawn of history to the latter half of the nineteenth century."[1] The cynicism with which women have often been classed with servants and chattels, as in the quotation from Tippu Sultan's letter at the beginning of this chapter, lends plausibility to this economic interpretation of marriage. But in sooth, every form of marriage has been guided more or less consciously by ethical motives, as is seen, e.g., even in the curious custom of the Levirate,[2] which imposes on a man the duty of marrying the widow of his brother, where the primary motive is the protection of the widow's person. Judged from this standpoint, polygamy must acknowledge its inferiority to monogamy. Where a husband is equally devoted to all his wives, the intensity of his love for any one of them must suffer, while in monogamy the protection of a wife's personality is at its highest.

If, on the other hand, the polygamous husband's love is unequally divided, as is more often the case than not, mutual jealousy among wives is the inevitable result. How intense the jealousy of a woman can be has been the universal experience of mankind. Westermarck has collected in a few pages many instructive examples of how jealousy works among wives. "Franklin tells us of an Indian woman who committed suicide by hanging herself in a fit of jealousy; another woman threw herself into the Mississippi with her child when her husband took a new wife . . . and when a Fuegian has as many as four women, his hut is every day transformed into a

[1] Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 304.

[2] *Vide* Letourneau, pp. 263 f.

field of battle, and many a young and pretty wife must even atone with her life for the precedence given her by the common husband.

"In the islands of the Pacific similar scenes occur. The missionary Williams's wife once asked a Fiji woman, who was minus her nose, 'How is it that so many of your women are without a nose?' 'It is due to a plurality of wives,' was the answer; jealousy causes hatred, and then the stronger tries to cut or bite off the nose of the one she hates."[1]

It is not difficult to imagine the disastrous effect upon the minds of children brought up in such an unhealthy, quarrelsome, polygamous family. In royal houses of India the jealousy of wives has been a fruitful source of continuous intrigue. The peace, social harmony, the mutual love of parents, that is such a valuable asset in the moral education of children, are all wanting in a polygamous union, and thus from the highest ethical standpoint it stands self-condemned. Perhaps its solitary justification lies in cases where the first wife is found to be incurably barren.

There is still another indictment to be levelled against polygamy. If it is to be worked with any sense of fairness, it has to presuppose a superabundance of women, a condition which, it need hardly be said, is but rarely fulfilled. Generally it enables a prince or a rich man to indulge in the luxury of a number of wives, while many a poor man is left without even a single wife. If, in actual life, such a condition is not found to be common, we may safely attribute it to the economic inability of most men to support more than one wife, and to the robust common sense and a fine healthy feeling that generally prevent them from having more than one wife at a time, even though they have a legal right to do so. Thus it is that among polygamous Hindus and Moslems monogamy is much more common than a merely theoretical study of their religion and laws would lead us to believe.

For all these reasons human marriage inevitably gravitates towards monogamy. If most of the advanced civilisations have allowed polygamy, we may partly

[1] *History of Human Marriage*, p. 497.

account for it on the ground that they have been principally man-made civilisations, and the convenience and selfish interests of men have done more to build up institutions than purely ethical considerations. Very often the purity of sexual relations among savages stands in marked contrast to the laxity of civilised men. The Wyandots and the Iroquois and the Veddas of Ceylon are all monogamous, while the Nicobar Islanders "have but one wife, and look upon unchastity as a very deadly sin."[1] In the Andaman Islands bigamy, polygamy, polyandry, and divorce are unknown. The immorality which is so usually associated with the name of savages is due to the corrupting influence of foreigners.[2]

If monogamy can be so rigidly observed by savages, civilised races with their superior culture ought to be all the more able to exercise a control on their passions and lead a pure sexual life. In so far as the civilised peoples for one reason or another have failed to do so, they must admit their inferiority to the savages' capacity for faithfulness. Anyway, one conclusion is clearly established: if pure monogamy is possible for savages, it must be equally possible for civilised peoples. Through ages polygamy had all the plausibility of a natural institution since the inferiority of women was taken for granted. To-day this dogma no more holds. Here and there a Weininger may press with remarkable brilliancy the superiority of the male over the female sex, but for all practical purposes the majority in Europe and America have outgrown the dogma of feminine inferiority, and have been committed to accept the legal equality of the

[1] Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, pp. 435–6.

[2] Westermarck's *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, vol. ii. p. 424: "In several cases the wantonness of savages is largely due to foreign influence. The pioneers of a higher civilisation are very frequently unmarried men, who go out to make their living in uncivilised lands, and though unwilling to contract regular marriages with native women, they have no objection to corrupting their morals." In *The White Slaves of London*, by W. N. Willis, it is said on pp. 160–1: "Until quite recently among the Zulu tribes, if a young man and woman were caught in the act of adultery it meant death to both. If a native man molests a native girl it means—or rather did mean, when the savages were not interrupted by Christian rulers—death. Long before the Dutch got their grasp upon South Africa, the Chiefs always inflicted the punishment of death for illicit intercourse."

sexes at least. The main consequence of this equality must be monogamy, or a toleration of every form of marriage, including temporary marriage, which is nothing else but legalised concubinage, most detrimental to our highest interests. Whatever the practice of men, monogamy stands to-day for the ideal in marriage relations. Christianity led the way for this momentous reform, and to Christianity—in spite of defects in the marriage law of Christians—must we pay our homage as the greatest pioneering agency in the history of human marriage.

CHAPTER XII

THE FAILURE OF MARRIAGE

" Not till Nature's law and man's are one,
Can marriage of the man and woman be."
MEREDITH.

IN the last chapter we found monogamy to be the most desirable form of marriage from the ethical standpoint. It ensures the deepest affection for, and devotion to, the husband on the part of the wife, while the husband finds the highest realisation of his erotic capacities in the love of one woman, and becomes the head of a united, and not a divided family. From the standpoint of the children, a monogamous union enables them to be brought up in peace and love, and not midst the squabbles and petty intrigues of a polygamous household. *A priori* it is possible to argue that such a union is bound to succeed, and that " monogamous " Christendom ought to be full of smiling homes and well-brought up children. But *a posteriori* this forecast is found to be merely a happy illusion. Many a European family is patently unhappy, and many a thinker on social problems has revolted against the conventionality and hypocrisy of modern marriage, " a wedded lie," as Meredith puts it. If mere contentment is the measure of happiness, there is no doubt that the percentage of happy marriages in the East would be any day greater than in the West. But the comparison would be unfair, as in the East women are deliberately kept so secluded and ignorant that their happiness consists in blindly yielding to the caprices of their husbands. Divine discontent is a stranger to them, and happiness of a sort is always open to them. But conditions are different in the West. Women are far too educated, too refined, too experienced to let their individuality be utterly merged in the pompous arrogance of a husband,

a rake, a scamp, or an idiot though he be. The assertion of the woman's individuality and her right to love, rather than the compulsion to obey, often cause a rift in the lute of marriage, producing discordant notes which may ultimately lead to divorce proceedings. Education has opened out to them vast vistas of their possible worth : the range of their happiness has hopelessly outdistanced the smug self-complacency of an Eastern woman. But this very growth has made marriage a much more difficult problem than it ever was before. To the extent that marriage can attain such a height as to produce a fusion of two souls vibrating in unison, to that extent does it hold out possibilities of misery, when the two souls fail to respond to each other. Education in love is so difficult that it is not surprising if most marriages suffer more or less from varying shades of discontent and unhappiness. Men and women of to-day have lost the naïve faith in marriage which characterised past ages, and the result is a critical spirit before which marriage stands self-revealed in its many defects, in spite of its theoretically infinite potentiality for happiness. The novelists of a generation or two ago delighted in picturing the difficulties which marred the even course of love, until in a happy moment they vanished, and the hero and heroine married and lived happily ever after. To-day the tale is different. Novels do not begin with youth and end in marriage ; they begin with marriage and trace the growing disunion of hearts that once dreamed of endless peace. What a novelist can do to rend the veil from the institution of modern marriage has been done by Meredith and Hardy in England, and by Tolstoy, the philosopher-anarchist of Russia. Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* are the tragic monuments of a marriage system from which the soul has fled and only a ritual remains. His discontent crystallises itself in a pithy epigram : " a good wife is good, but the best wife is not so good as no wife at all." What a withering scorn of marriage runs in such a passage as this : " The landlord of the lodging, who had heard that they (Jude and Arabella) were a queer couple, had doubted if they were married at all, especially as he had seen Arabella kiss Jude one evening when she had

taken a little cordial, and he was about to give them notice to quit, till by chance, overhearing her one night haranguing Jude in rattling terms, and ultimately flinging a shoe at his head, he recognised the note of ordinary wedlock, and concluding that they must be respectable, said no more."[1] Or again, consider the fiery denunciation against marriage which Tolstoy has penned in his *Kreutzer Sonata*, and pictured in the greatest novel of the world: *Anna Karenin*. He makes Pozdnyshev sum up his married happiness in these burning words: "We should have been two mutually hating prisoners, fettered with one chain, poisoning each other's life, and endeavouring not to see this. I did not know then that ninety-nine out of a hundred married couples live in the same hell, and that it cannot be otherwise."[2] It is true that Tolstoy's denunciation is almost hysterical in its intensity, and his message of a total abstinence from sex relations is utter moonshine. But he stands nevertheless as a spokesman of the age in its revolt against marriage. Jokes against marriage have been known to every age. In ancient Greece, Hipponax, the satiric poet, said that a man has only two very pleasant days with his wife—one when he marries her, and the other when he buries her. But the treatment of marriage has passed beyond the stage of pleasant jokes, and is marked by a tone of anger and sullen defiance, or open contempt, as in the pages of novelists like Hardy and Tolstoy, of dramatists like Ibsen and Shaw, or of social reformers like Edward Carpenter and Ellen Key, Mrs. Gilman and Mr. W. L. George. They may be right or wrong, but they breathe the spirit of the age, and hence their importance.

That they are not stray voices which represent nobody's views but their own is clearly proved by the actual decrease in the number of marriages, to which we have already referred in Part II, and which is no more a matter of dispute.[3] As a direct consequence there has

[1] *Jude the Obscure.*

[2] *The Kreutzer Sonata.*

[3] Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, pp. 145–6: "Passing to the peoples of Europe we find, from the evidence adduced by statisticians, that modern civilisation has proved very unfavourable

been a steady decline in birth-rate, which constitutes a grave problem in Europe to-day.[1] A desperate measure of the sort sought to be introduced in France could only be justified by the extreme situation created by a widespread unwillingness to marry at the proper age. There might have been something to be said for this state of affairs if this decrease in the number of marriages meant a genuine sexual abstinence, but unfortunately, as was pointed out in Chapter X, the decrease in marriage has been accompanied by a steady rise in prostitution and the enormities of white slave traffic. This does not show a growth in morality, but a callous individualism in men which seeks an outlet for the cravings of their nature without undertaking the responsibilities that normally ought to follow from that satisfaction. The period of a person's life when he or she ought to marry is often passed in an illegitimate and irresponsible union. Ellen Key complains that in Sweden "6,340 illegitimate children were born of mothers between 20 and 25 years old, while those born of mothers under 20 were 2,028, and of mothers between 25 and 30, 3,857." Figures like these only show the futility of Tolstoy's anti-sex campaign, and point to a proper marriage as the only

to the number of marriages. In civilised Europe, in 1875, more than a third of the male and female population beyond the age of fifteen lived in a state of voluntary or involuntary celibacy. Excluding Russia, the number of celibates varied from 25·57 per cent. in Hungary to 44·93 per cent. in Belgium, and among them there are many who never marry. In the middle of this century Wappäus found that, in Saxony, 14·6 per cent. of the unmarried adult population died single, in Sweden 14·9 per cent., in the Netherlands 17·2 per cent., and in France 20·6 per cent. Of the rest many marry comparatively late in life. Thus in Denmark, only 19·43 per cent. of the married men were under twenty-five, and in Bavaria (in 1870–8) only 16·36, whilst the figures for England and Russia look more favourable, being respectively 51·90 per cent. (in 1872–8) and 68·31 per cent. (in 1867–75). Of the married women, on the other hand, only 5·09 per cent. are below the age of twenty in Sweden, 5·40 per cent. in Bavaria, 7·44 per cent. in Saxony, 14·86 per cent. in England, etc.; but in Hungary as many as 35·16 per cent., and in Russia even 57·27 per cent. The mean age of bachelors who enter into matrimony is twenty-six years in England, and 28·40 in France, that of spinsters respectively 24·07 and 25·3."

[1] *Vide The Times of India*, March 7, 1919, quoted in Part II, Chapter IX above.

palliative from the standpoint of men, women and children alike.

The sexual need of men and women is as great to-day as it ever was. The way to marriage is open, yet people avoid it, and court a casual life with all its risks of disease and an utter absence of genuine love. What can be the cause or the causes of such a repugnance to marriage? What are the reasons which have made a failure of marriage? If marriage is the solution of the sexual problem, it must be reinstated in popular favour, and to do so requires a cure of the evils, which have sapped the foundations of married life.

Not an infrequent cause of unhappy married life is an utter incompatibility of temper. There is no strong tie binding the pair. The marriage is brought about by parents or guardians irrespective of the wishes of the girl, and often even of the son. The man and the woman agree to marry just to please their parents, and the result is often disastrous. What else can we expect? How can two such persons live together for a lifetime, when all the time there is a feeling of constraint on either side, and a feeling, whether vague or well-defined, that they ought never to have married each other. The result is an apathy, a listlessness which produces an all-round weariness of soul. Husbands have yet to realise that a lavish expenditure on their wives cannot buy their happiness, still less their love. In Ibsen's *Doll's House* Torvald Helmer complains : " Why, Nora, how unreasonable and ungrateful you are! Have you not been happy here? " Nora categorically denies her being happy, and when he is surprised, she bursts out : " No, only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our house has been nothing but a play-room. Here I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I used to be papa's doll-child, and the children in their turn have been my dolls. I thought it fun when you played with me, just as the children did when I played with them. That has been our marriage, Torval." A forced marriage is really a contradiction in terms, and yet this is the phrase that would aptly describe the vast majority of marriages in the world. The pre-puberty marriages among Hindus are forced ; the Moslem marriages arranged behind the

purdah are forced. Even in the advanced countries of Europe and America the breed of parents is not yet extinct who count it their unquestionable right to marry their children to whomsoever they like. Things indeed are improving, and therein lies the hope for the future. Marriage to be genuinely happy must be free. We cannot afford to choose wives by the weight of their purse, for gold cannot give personal attraction, or ensure real happiness. In actual marriages money counts, family connections count, dynastic considerations count, a sense of gratitude, or a will to please some third party counts, and yet for a genuine marriage as a communion of souls none of these things need really count. Most marriages are compromises, and thus expose themselves to the charge of legalised prostitution.[1] How women's wishes are apt to be entirely disregarded is curiously illustrated by an old Roman example, which would doubtless have its counterpart in every country. Hortensius, the famous Roman orator, was very anxious to be related to Cato. He wished to marry Cato's daughter Portia, who, however, was unfortunately married to Bibulus. Cato's obliging spirit knew no bounds. He offered to give up his own wife Marcia, provided her father agreed. Hortensius married Marcia. When he died, Cato remarried Marcia. Evidently at no stage of this friendly transaction were Marcia's inclinations considered.

Thanks to the growth of education and self-respect among women, this sort of high-handedness becomes rarer and rarer, in Europe at least. Marriages founded on force and convenience afford an excuse for extra-marital relations, which reduce the marriage tie itself to a mockery. Parents must make up their minds that they should not be the contracting parties to the marriages of their sons and daughters. Marriage is the concern mainly of those who are parties to it. Force, whether physical or moral, must disappear *in toto*. So long as it reigns it will further the chances of unhappiness in married life. Mutual sympathy, mutual attraction, mutual love are too delicate plants to bear the heavy hand of

[1] Ellen Key in her *Love and Marriage*, p. 25, defines prostitution as "all trading with one's sex, whether this traffic is carried on by women or by men, who from necessity or inclination sell themselves with or without marriage."

so alien a product as force. They sprout into existence by themselves, and they feed on their own unhindered growth.

In the flippancy of women novelists have found another source of marriage failures. Her psychology has been described as insolubly mysterious, but the mystery most often lies in its nothingness. It is a charm of women that the very lightness of their talk constitutes their attraction. Men are content to adore them, to take them for what they appear, and do not care to analyse them. As Oscar Wilde beautifully put it in one of his dramas : " A woman's life revolves in curves of emotions." It is just these emotions that rebel against the dictates of reason, and make any rational explanation of their behaviour so very difficult. The tenacity, e.g., with which white slaves ruin themselves and earn money for their " lovers," who are really nothing more than pimps, is truly mystifying. How blindly infatuation works in them ; how much slaves they can be to men who kick them and humiliate them in every way! How easily a girl is taken in by the wiles of a man! How cynically it has been said that her chastity is worth but a box of chocolates! With what extraordinary perversity they fall in love with the bully, the scamp, the soldier! How easily can a scamp like Vronsky gain the love of an Anna Karenin! How brutally is the purest love of a man, honest but humble, poor but industrious, often treated by a woman, immeasurably inferior to such a character! A woman cannot always be trusted to be wise in the selection of her lover.

> " Great poets and great sages draw no prize
> With women : but the little lap-dog breed
> Who can be hugged, or on a mantelpiece
> Perched up for adoration, these obtain
> Her homage."

Thus complains Meredith, and rightly too! Consider the divorce proceedings! More often than not the co-respondent is immeasurably inferior to the aggrieved husband; a low, lustful, brutal nature captures her imagination, and the very virtues of her husband become odious to her. But the very intensity of her emotions, which lead her away from virtue, constitutes her strength as a wife, once she has secured a husband who has commanded her love.

Here, again, Ibsen, who has probed the deepest depths of a woman's soul as no other poet save perhaps Shakespeare has done, unerringly puts his finger on the right point when, in his *Lady Inger of Östråt*, he makes Elina exclaim to her lover, Nils Lykke: "My love is no exchange for that you give me. No, no; I love you, because your every glance commands it like a king's decree." Growth of education, the experience of a wider world, will inevitably blunt the extreme emotionalism of women. Their flippancy, their worship of dress, may be expected to be brought under control. Women will then be in a better position to distinguish the notes of a genuine lover from the honeyed poison of a well-dressed tempter. Having selected well her partner, who loves her for her own sake, and whom she loves with all her strength, she will be building up her own happiness, and not feel miserable over the honest poverty or the stern rectitude of her husband.

Men of the world are given to have a cheap sneer at what they choose to call impatient idealists. The world's idealists constitute a noble race, but their very sensitiveness to pain or ugliness makes them miserable where a man of the world would regard it as a normal incident of life. Thus it happens that an exaggerated idealism makes marriage happiness very precarious. Idealists fail to know that love is "a thing of moods," and not of laws. A spirit of give and take, a spirit of preparedness to expect differences of opinion in matters great and small, and an equally generous spirit to forget words hastily spoken—these constitute the capital which ensures happiness. Where both husband and wife have an individuality of their own they cannot be expected to think or act alike in everything. Their little differences should no more cause diversion than every little gale need cause a shipwreck. Yet, unfortunately, men and women are often so unreasonable as to expect the impossible, and then feel miserable and talk of separation and divorce. Many a wrecked family would have been saved by a little reasonableness, but an unpractical idealism often defeats its own ends by making its own realisation impossible.

Love is infinite in its capacities. It does not blossom in all in one and the same form. With this difference in love arise differences in the eroticism of men and women.

This is also a factor to be taken into consideration. Love is jealous, but it has also to be tolerant and broad-minded. A narrow love is egoistic at bottom. It is such a love that generates that "green-eyed monster" jealousy, on the altar of which the wedded bliss of many a couple has been ruthlessly sacrificed. A desire to meet the wishes of the other party as far as possible, or as is desirable, serves as fuel to the fire of love and keeps it ever bright and burning.

All the reasons that we have mentioned above have caused marriage failures during ages past. But with modern conditions there has come into existence another cause, and that is the galling sense of inferiority under which women have had to suffer. In previous ages women themselves took their inferiority as a divine imposition, against which it was thought a sacrilege to rebel. But to-day the sanctity of Biblical dogmas, and the dogmatic egoism of man are treated with scant respect, and rightly too. With this growing enlightenment old forms of religious marriage ceremonies have become anachronisms. Not a few men are perfectly prepared to-day to admit women's equality, and to respect their rights as moral personalities. But with the rank and file, as well as in the slow-moving East, the words of Mr. H. G. Wells have a pathetic truth: "Every intelligent woman understands that as a matter of hard fact, beneath all the civilities of to-day, she is actual or potential property, and has to treat herself and keep herself as that. She may by force or subtlety turn her chains into weapons, she may succeed in exacting a reciprocal property in man, the fact remains fundamental that she is either isolated or owned."[1] In less serious language, the shrewd wit of Mrs. Poyser laid bare the egoism of man: "That's what a man wants in a wife mostly; he wants to make sure of one fool as will tell him he's wise."

It is this sense of inequality and inferiority that makes many women feel marriage to be a soul-killing humdrum monotony, where they have to repress their highest capacities to preserve the semblance of their inferiority. There is considerable truth in the feeling, yet there is also another side to this. The beauty and intellect of

[1] Wells's *Socialism and the Family*, p. 29.

women and their motherliness have always made them sovereigns at home. In this respect practice has far transcended theory—and for the better. The legal inferiority of women in ancient Rome did not prevent the recognition of their worth as *Romanæ Matronæ*, and men did not fail to make way for them in streets. The elder Cato, bursting with all the pompousness of man, once complained, "all men rule over women, we Romans rule over all men, and our wives rule over us." Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, is said to have declared: "In this state of England wives commonly have a greater sway in all our affairs than in other nations, Germany excepted." Although a Hindu is deeply lost in the age-long tradition of "men for gods and women for men," and makes no secret of the infinite contempt in which he holds her, he has nevertheless to bow to her authority at home. Even amongst the savages of Australia and the Banakas and the Bapukus—as noted by Westermarck—the authority of wives in their own sphere is unchallenged.[1] Thus for all practical purposes the legal inequality of women does not press unduly hard on them, but the law itself is galling, and one can thoroughly sympathise with their efforts to have their worth and status recognised by law as it has been in practice by their husbands and fathers.

The last and the greatest cause, the one which accounts for the greatest number of failures of marriage, is to be sought in the faithlessness of men. The ease with which a man gives vent to his polygamous instincts, even though he has a most beautiful woman as his wife, affords an ample justification for Oscar Wilde's brilliant epigram: "Men represent the triumph of mind over morals," or for another of his ideas he puts into the mouth of Lady Windermere: "We make gods of men and they leave us. Others make brutes of them, and they fawn and are faithful." A frank recognition of woman's equality and her moral personality is so essential, just because men are prone to exercise their superiority in a way that savours more of a heartless tyranny than of reason or good feeling. Accustomed to a certain dominance for centuries, they think they owe no fealty to their wives,

[1] Westermarck's *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, vol. i. pp. 630, 637.

although they do not hesitate to murder the intellectual life of their wives and daughters, lest their purity be endangered. How many husbands profess these principles, which mark so-called "gentlemen" of polite society, who are more scrupulous in the payment of their gambling debts than their tailors' bills, who may have scruples to lie to a man, but none whatever when it is a question of ruining a woman's honour, or betraying the trust of their wives! It is men of this type who are the leaders of fashionable society, and who are sought to be bagged by thoughtless mothers and daughters, far more keen on luxuries than on the morals of their lovers. It is this which excites the wrath of Tolstoy, who has castigated in memorable words [1] this unabashed worship of wealthy immorality in his *Kreutzer Sonata*. What a brutal recklessness is displayed by men in courting diseases, which leave their stamp on his innocent wife and children. Under their thin veneer of monogamy there is unrestrained polygamy. The faithlessness of the husband always causes bitter tears to trickle down the furrowed cheeks of his wife; sometimes it leads to an open revolt on her part, as she could always find a lover as unscrupulous as her husband. The result is an open catastrophe, and who suffer most? The guiltless children. They pay for their parents' sin, a sordid spectacle, that, alas, does but too frequently disfigure humanity.

All the restraints of law, religious morality, hygiene, have not sufficed to curb the primitive polygamy of man. This by itself constitutes a sufficient proof of the impracticability of Mr. Edward Carpenter's ideal of a free marriage, that knows no compulsion of law. That age seems to be far distant, when man's law will synchronise with nature's, and man will marry for love and be true to that love alone. How precarious a wife's position becomes even in the twentieth century England was

[1] *The Kreutzer Sonata*: "Consider what it ought to be and what it is! It ought to be that if, in society, such a gentleman comes up to my sister or daughter, I, knowing his life, ought to walk over to him, to call him aside, and quietly to say to him: 'Dear Sir, I know the kind of life you lead and with whom you pass your nights. This is not the place for you. Here are pure, innocent girls. Go away!' Thus it ought to be; whereas, in reality, when such a gentleman makes his appearance and dances with my sister or daughter, and embraces her, we rejoice, if he happens to be rich and has influential connections."

recently shown by a case, hard to beat for mere caprice. A man married a girl against her mother's consent. A day after the marriage he had a deed of separation drawn up by a solicitor, and caused his wife to sign it without the contents being explained to her. Then she was told to go, but she would not. He gave up talking to her, as did the professor in Anatole France's *The Wicker-work Woman*, and she had to go to her mother's.[1] To such a pass can things be brought by the faithlessness of a man, and this evil will continue till a man imagines that he can marry one woman for her money or her family, and love another. The remedy for man's duplicity lies with women themselves. Let them treat with contempt the double dealer, and man's duplicity will end. So long as women are gushing about a tailor-made man, his very vices will be at a premium, a perpetual danger to the health and virtue of women.

These are the rocks which endanger the happiness of mankind. None of them is really unavoidable, yet it would be futile to expect them to be so easily eradicated as to leave marriage an institution without a blemish. Such a happy state cannot be realised till the nature of all men and women is so completely changed as to bring them nearer the ideal of a glorious humanity, where law will not be needed, for morality will have taken its place. But that day is far away, if ever it will be. In the meantime we can but regard marriage as an institution with possibilities of both good and evil. It may aptly be compared to a besieged city, where the people without wish to get in, and the people within wish to get out. This alone marks its extreme necessity. As the common sense of Dr. Johnson put it: "Even ill-assorted marriages are preferable to cheerless celibacy," for "marriage has many pains, but celibacy no pleasures." If such a fundamentally necessary institution as marriage has not proved an absolute success, it behoves us to discover what magic touch is needed to raise marriage above mere sensual passion and make it glow with a spirituality deep and pure. But before we do so, we should consider divorce as an instrument of readjusting the moral relations of the parties to an unhappy marriage.

[1] *Vide The Bombay Chronicle* of May 14, 1920, where this case, which occurred in Willesden, is reported.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ETHICS OF DIVORCE

" Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast
Soul to soul while the years fell past;
Had you loved me once, as you have not loved,
Had the chance been with us that has not been."

SWINBURNE.

MARRIAGE has been always described by Roman Catholics and Hindus as a sacrament, and from that they conclude that a marriage once performed is indissoluble. From their standpoint divorce is neither desirable nor permissible. On the other hand it is maintained that marriage is essentially a contract, and as soon as for one reason or another the object of the marriage contract—whether it be the production of children or enhancement of life for the parties themselves, or both—fails to be realised, the contract ought to end, and divorce is the means for it. From the former standpoint divorce is an evil. From the latter standpoint divorce is itself a symptom of a desire to put an end to a " wedded lie " and make a fresh beginning on better foundations. This is hailed as true morality, and the vast increase in the number of divorces, e.g. in the United States, has been regarded as displaying a higher morality, a conscious revolt against a mere hypocritical conventionality.

Prima facie there is something repulsive in the idea that two people who have ceased to love each other—perhaps never loved each other—two people who loathe each other, one of whom or both have been long transgressing against the vow of fidelity, that such a couple should yet be forced to be each other's spouse until one of them dies and sets the other free to contract another marriage on better foundations. To speak of the indissolubility of marriage as something which God has made is adding insult to injury, when the whole world

knows the purely material circumstances and purely human agencies which brought about that marriage. All feminists are agreed about the desirability of a divorce and even its morality under certain conditions. The intricacies, dilemmas, and hypocrisy of married life have been laid bare with a master's hand by Meredith's genius in his *Modern Love*. Some one has said that he began to appreciate the significance of the woman Suffrage Movement after he had read Meredith's *Egoist*. It may even with greater truth be maintained that his *Modern Love*, with its ghastly picture of a couple

> "League-sundered by the silent gulf between,"

is a vindication of the morality of divorce. Consider the tragic intensity of lines like these :

> "Like sculptured effigies they might be seen
> Upon their marriage-tomb, the sword between,
> Each wishing for the sword that severs all."

or

> "A kiss is but a kiss now! and no wave
> Of a great flood, that whirls me to the sea,
> But, as you will! we'll sit contentedly,
> And eat our pot of honey on the grave."

From one standpoint—the wish of the parties concerned—there appears to be nothing more natural than a divorce. A marriage ceases to be living, the husband begins to love another. There appears to be only one way out of this immorality, and that is divorce from his wife, so that he may be able to legalise the position of the woman he loves. There is a fatal facility in this way of putting the case in justification of divorce. But it looks only to the desires of the guilty party, the husband, e.g., who has transgressed his marriage vow. Supposing the wife still continues to love him and hopes that she may yet regain his love, why should she be compelled or expected to institute divorce proceedings? Surely her wish, as the party who has virtue on her side, ought to be preferred to her husband's. This hitch may be tided over if the unoffending as well as the offending party is willing to seek divorce. But here again the will of the husband and the wife cannot be the only factor to be considered, for there may be children of

their union. They have a right to the love and protection of both parents, and parents cannot be at liberty to form new unions without jeopardising the interests of the innocent children. It is just here that the extreme complexity of the divorce problem arises, and acrimonious discussions take place. One thing at least is quite clear, that marriage *per se* cannot be taken as indissoluble. In our opinion it is equally clear that there can be no such thing as an absolute right of divorce, for a divorce is not always moral. A person who continually transgresses the morality of marriage is really unfit to enjoy the rights and privileges of marriage. St. Jerome is said to have stated "that he himself had seen a man in Rome living with his twenty-first wife, who had had twenty-two husbands."[1] Such a man who can change his love so often must really be incapable of love in its genuine sense, and in such a case it would be a pure mockery to say that divorce is really moral.

The grounds on which divorce could be obtained vary in different countries, and an historical review would throw a flood of light on the complexity of divorce.

Among Chinamen sever causes of divorce are recognised as valid: barrenness, lasciviousness, inattention to the husband's parents, loquacity, thievishness, ill-temper and inveterate infirmity. These reasons ought to make divorce fairly common, but we are assured by competent authorities like Mr. Medhurst that divorce is rare in China. Even in Japan, where sexual freedom is allowed to both sexes to an extent which has made Japanese morality of a highly dubious character, according to Professor Rein, the privilege of divorce is seldom made use of, especially when there are children of the union. But the infrequency of divorce can be regarded as a true measure of morality only if sexual looseness is genuinely abhorred, and not if it is openly allowed as in Japan. In Burma, among the Buddhists, marriage is regarded as a civil contract, and either side can annul it. "A woman can obtain a divorce on such grounds as that her husband is too poor to be able to support her, that he is idle, or a cripple, or a chronic invalid,

[1] Goodsell's *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 173.

or incapacitated by old age. Similarly a man can obtain a divorce on such grounds as that his wife has no male children, or that she does not love her husband, or that she visits houses, or friends, against her husband's wishes."[1] Perhaps these causes of divorce go as far in making marriage as unstable an institution as is possible. If this looseness is equalled at all by any other law, it is by Mahomedan Law, which recognises the right of the husband to divorce his wife whenever he likes. It is true this theoretical right is not always wantonly exercised, and the authority of Mahomed himself, who said: "The curse of God rests on him who repudiates his wife capriciously," makes for a stable marriage. With orthodox Moslems these words have due effect, but the rank and file make a free use of their legal right, and this divorce law of Mahomedans is one of the weakest points in an otherwise noble civilisation.

Among the Jews a marriage to be valid had to be based on the full consent of the marrying parties. If the woman had not given her consent the marriage became *ipso facto* null and void. Later under the influence of the Romans, a wife had the right of claiming a divorce from her husband for various reasons, e.g. his importunity, change of religion, extreme dissoluteness, refusal to support, continued ill-treatment, commission of a crime followed by escape from the country, and affliction with a loathsome disease or pursuit of a disgusting trade, both acquired after marriage. Dr. Goodsell notes the absence of adultery on the part of the husband in this list of causes of divorce.

Among Christians the law of divorce varies enormously in different countries. In England, e.g., the divorce law has been very rigid. Apart from the costly machinery of law, it weighs heavily against woman. A wife, who has been guilty of adultery even once can be divorced, but adultery on the husband's part gives no such right to the wife, unless it is also accompanied by cruelty. In recent years there has been a good deal of agitation for an easier and cheaper divorce, as a consequence of which a Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes was appointed in 1909. Both the Majority and

[1] *The Census Report of India*, 1911, p. 246.

Minority Reports agree in recognising the equality of the sexes, and the necessity of cheapening the cost of, and limiting the publication of divorce proceedings. But the Minority Report in all other respects insists on maintaining the rigour of the existing law. The Majority Report recommends absolute divorce on as many as six grounds: adultery, desertion for three years and upward, cruelty, incurable insanity, after five years' confinement, habitual drunkenness, found incurable three years after a first order of separation, and lastly, imprisonment under a commuted death sentence. It goes still further by declaring marriages null and void in cases of unsound mind, epilepsy and recurrent insanity, specific disease, or a condition which renders a woman's marriage a fraud upon the husband, or a wilful refusal to perform the duties of marriage. A note of the most strikingly feminist nature is struck when the report goes on to say: "In our opinion it is impossible to maintain a different standpoint of morality in the marriage relation without creating the impression that justice is denied to women, an impression that must tend to lower the respect in which marriage law is held by women." Now that the war is ended, and questions of domestic policy can once more receive due attention, a bill has been passed by the Parliament which seeks to carry out the recommendations of the Majority Report. It remains to be seen how it will work. In the meantime it has to be admitted that an acute difference of opinion prevails even in advanced circles. It has been feared that an increase in the causes of divorce may lead to an unhealthy increase in the number of divorces as in the United States.

The United States indeed present the spectacle of a museum of divorce laws, for they vary in the different states. There are states in which divorce is so easily obtained as to scandalise most thinking people. It has been found that "the United States stands first among civilised lands in the number of divorces granted annually by its courts. As early as 1885, more marriages were dissolved in this country than in all the rest of the Christian world combined, the figures being as follows: United States, 23,472, Christian Europe, 20,131. . . . From 1890 to 1900 there was an increase of 66·6 per

cent. in the number of divorces. During 1887 to 1906 one native marriage was dissolved for every 15·6 marriages solemnised. In 1900 the number of divorced males of fifteen years and over was 84,230, while divorced females numbered 114,647. In 1910 the divorced males stood at 156,162—an increase of more than 85 per cent.—while the divorced females were 185,068, an increase of more than 61 per cent." [1]

Some of the states seek to counteract the evil effects of divorce by requiring, e.g., that the guilty party may not marry again for three years after divorce, as in Massachusetts and Vermont, or for five years, as in Kansas. The State of New York and Louisiana forbid the guilty party to marry again during the lifetime of the other. But such wholesome checks could be easily evaded by a temporary migration to a state like Nevada, which requires a residence of only six months on the part of the plaintiff, and where divorce is very easily obtainable. This points to the extreme desirability of having a uniform divorce law in the United States. Such an important question of family solidarity ought not to be left to the capricious whims of different state legislatures.

In spite of the extreme frequency of divorces in America, it is possible to argue in favour of the necessity and desirability of an easy divorce. But all in all an impartial review of these American divorces would force on us the conclusion that the divorce facilities in many cases have been grossly abused. Such a vague cause as incompatibility of temper leaves room for countless abuses, and the whole procedure may be brought to an absurdity by asking for divorce, because one party is in the habit of picking his teeth, which causes a nervous shock to his wife.

The one fact that stands out prominently from the review of divorce laws is that except in the United States—where the wife is the petitioner in 66·6 per cent. cases—a woman is placed distinctly in an inferior position so that her responsibilities far outweigh her rights. This is markedly so among Mahomedans, but even England with all her advancement cannot escape this rebuke of legalising an outworn medieval dogma that woman is man's inferior. Nowhere has the selfishness of man-made

[1] All these figures are taken from Goodsell's *The Family*, pp. 457–8.

laws been so glaring as in the tacit assumption that man's infidelity by itself is not a sufficient cause of divorce, while a wife's single lapse exposes her to all the shame of divorce proceedings. But this complaint is bound to disappear. Now that in most advanced countries women have achieved political equality, they may be trusted so to amend the law as to do away with the double-standard morality, whereby different codes of judgment are applied to men and women, although they are guilty of the same offence. In this connection modern legislatures may well follow the example of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, who, while allowing a husband to divorce his wife guilty of adultery, insisted on the proviso: "Provided always it is established that by your life you gave her an example of fidelity. It would be unjust that a husband should exact a fidelity he does not himself keep."

If in the past women have not made a full use of their rights against faithless husbands, it was not because of their inferior sense of honour, but because they felt the extreme dependence of their position. A divorced wife would find it hard to maintain herself, and hence she stooped to the necessity of having a roof over her head and a crust of bread in her mouth, instead of openly resenting and exposing her husband's behaviour. The remedy is not to be found in a futile economic independence earned by labour, but in throwing upon the guilty husband the burden of supporting his wife for her life even after the divorce has been allowed. There is an excellent rule among the Manipuris—worth being taken up by all other nations—that "a wife who is put away without fault on her part takes all the personal property of the husband, except one drinking cup and the cloth round his loins."[1] Any divorce law which, while allowing a woman a right to divorce under certain conditions, fails to make adequate provision for her in the future, may be safely declared to be really incomplete and at bottom inequitable.

The real objection against easy divorce laws is that they lessen the sense of responsibility involved in marriage. Where divorce is difficult there is a *prima facie* presumption that every man and woman contemplating

[1] Westermarck's *The History of Human Marriage*, p. 531.

marriage will consider whether they love each other enough, and whether their temperaments agree enough to give reasonable chances of a wedded life that would be happy on the whole. But where divorces are easily procurable, people begin to think that happiness or unhappiness in marriage is an even chance, and if it turns out ill, it could be easily dissolved. Even here, if a divorce affected the fortunes only of the man and the woman concerned, it would be difficult to argue against an easy divorce. But a marriage—at least a normal marriage—ensues in children, and as soon as children are born the parents forfeit the right of their wishes alone being considered. A child once brought into existence has a right to all the love and care of its parents, and there is nothing in this world which can take away the imperiousness of this right—not even the will of the parents to put an end to their married life, and contract fresh unions. The right of the child must control the rights of the parents. There is only one circumstance which would justify divorce even when there are children, and it is when the father's or mother's depravity is so great, whether through adultery, continuous cruelty or habitual drunkenness, as to be intrinsically demoralising for children. Conditions like these constitute an unhealthy environment for young children, and it is for their own advantage that the divorce of their parents put an end to such an environment. We have only to repeat in this connection that a divorce need not also put an end to the right of the guiltless parent and children to be maintained by the guilty party, or at least receive an adequate compensation from him.

Logically it ought to follow that the validity of our argument against an easy divorce does not hold in case of childless marriages. We would admit this, but add the proviso that the marriage should be genuinely childless, and not through neo-Malthusian practices. A childless marriage, where children are possible, is really no marriage at all, any more than a river without water can be called a river. People who screen their sensuality behind the veil of marriage and desecrate its name cannot claim the privileges of a law, which has its ultimate justification in the well-being of children. Abuses there will be, the purity of law is not always observed, but

the spirit of the law cannot allow itself to be a party to anything which encourages pure sensuality. Its aim is ethical, and must be ethical. Marriage is contracted for the sake of continuity of life, and the law of divorce must be controlled by the same consideration.

It has been boldly argued that divorce and continuity of life are not so irreconcilable as we have so far assumed. The continuity of social life depends on the birth of children, and hence it is the function of the society to look after children. Individuals may copulate as they choose, but the state or society must take up the burden of maintaining and educating them. Thus the individual rights of men and women will be compatible with the continued existence of society. Here we come across the trail of "free love" in its unrestricted or restricted form. It rests on the assumption that the family is a mere accident of historical society, and not an essential constituent of human society. In a previous chapter we have already tried to show that family in one form or another is an integral part of humanity, and that all in all a monogamous lifelong union best answers the moral purposes of humanity. These considerations affect equally the problem of divorce.

The question now remains: What are the limits of a divorce? What are the causes justifying it? These questions receive their answers from the general principle, that a divorce is desirable, when home conditions are such as to make the moral up-bringing of children an impossibility. These conditions are well specified in the Majority Report of the Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes. The six causes of divorce specified therein, and noted above [1] come within the scope of our principle, and to them may be added the seventh cause: venereal diseases.[2] If any elaborate justification were wanted for this condition, it could be easily supplied by the illuminating report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases. Their extremely infectious nature imperils the health of children and their moral turpitude—except in the case of innocent victims of the disease—needs no emphasis.

[1] P. 175.

[2] It is open to question how for the inclusion of epilepsy as one of the cases of constituting the nullity of marriage is justifiable.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRUE MARRIAGE

" Love that is flesh upon the spirit of man,
And spirit within the flesh when breath began,
Love that keeps all the choir of lives in chime,
Love that is blood within the veins of time."

SWINBURNE.

IN the celebrated case of Hyde *v.* Hyde, Lord Penzance defined marriage as " the voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others." Few would question the soundness of this definition, and yet few would deny that in actual practice the emphasis does not fall so much on " voluntary " as it ought to. The marriage ceremony, which is in reality an outward symbol of a real inward unity, comes to be looked upon as the most essential part of marriage, and thus all marriage comes to be looked upon in a conventional light, or invites such a withering description as George Sand's " lawful ravishing " or " prostitution under vows." Such a conception of marriage paves the way for genuine immorality. Where a marriage is forced, or not based on love, it leaves room for loving outside marriage with all its attendant evils. Mr. Hardy is right when he condemns the compulsion that is involved in marriage and pleads for the freedom of love. True marriage can have only one basis, and that is love, so that lovers may flower in each other's love, and spring to birth in each other. It is such a love, mystic in essence, indescribable in words, that is always open to every man and woman, and it is such a love that has inspired the poets of every age and every clime, whether it be Valmiki or Kalidasa, Dante or Maeterlinck, Shakespeare or Browning. Love constitutes the one absorbing topic of poetry and fiction, and the love of poetry is taken by many to be an idle

creation of a poet's wandering imagination. But those who know humanity, know full well that there comes a time in the life of every normal man and woman when love fills the entire heart. Many succeed in smothering it, many find in a conventional marriage a humdrum substitute for it, while a few so abandon themselves to it as to fire the imagination of artists, and find in love returned the fruition of their soul's desire.

The gospel of love constitutes the new morality of the feminists, and finds a classic expression in Richard Dehmel's verses :

" Liebe ist die Freiheit der Gestalt
Vom Wahn der Welt vom Bann
der eignen seele."

The marriage vow, if it is not to be lifeless, must breathe love, and that alone constitutes a guarantee for its sacred observance. Everything else is a mere makeshift in marriage.

But what is love? With Tolstoy's Pozdnyshev many would ask with an ill-concealed sneer as to its possibility. Love is nothing, he would argue, but pure sensuality, and marriage is nothing but a series of misunderstandings and quarrels interspersed with periods of sensuality. Divorce court proceedings would show how a couple that started their love with love-letters of a grotesque intensity, ended in mutual suspicion and loathing. The initial fire gets quenched with its satiety, and there remains nothing but a lack of genuine love in its ghastly nakedness. It is here that we come across the fatal ambiguity of love. With the ignorant, the innocent, the cynical, love is confounded with mere lust, and any bright face that creates a sexual desire is dubbed as the object of love. Most tragedies of this so-called love can trace their origin to this, alas ! too common mirage of youth. It has been commonly observed how young men just awakening to a sense of new life fall in " love " with women considerably their seniors in age, or how young women in the freshness of their youth feel attracted by grown-up men fit to be their fathers. In many cases the illusion ends soon enough, but in those cases where marriage is hastened on such a slender basis, the founda-

tion is laid of a lifelong misery, a haunting sense of something that ought never to have been, a sense of something that might have been. Or again, the innocence of youth fresh from love romances revels in the language of love, and hollow compliments are mistaken for the cry of the yearning heart. All such "love-marriages," having their foundation in pure sensuality, become conventional with the satiety of sensuality, and the lovers drift apart.

From cases of this type it is ungracious to argue against genuine love-marriages. True love is an inner sympathy, a mutual admiration, a sense of blossoming in each other, a sense of void that one has without the other, an unending communion of souls. It is this love that never suffers from satiety, for every day reveals some freshness in the beloved object, and with the growth of days there is the growth of love, for time makes mutual presence a necessity greater than ever. This love is not sensual, yet it is not without sensuality. Only in its case the sensuality is a symbol of their drawing near each other, and means of forging new chains of love in the shape of offspring. It is the love of Dante for Beatrice, of Sita for Rama, of Satyavan and Savitri, of the Brownings. The essential characteristic of such a love is that it grows. It cannot possibly come full-fledged at one stroke. Time is the very essence of it.

It is because of this that youthful passions lost in sensuality constitute a mere stage in the soul's search after an object it could truly love. Happy the individual whose youthful intensity of passion is absorbed, when the time comes, in the love of the right object. That is why it has been observed that marriages hastily contracted in the first gush of passion prepare their own unhappiness, while marriages made in class-rooms of schools and colleges tend to be more permanent and happy than one made in the whirling intoxication of a ball-room.

Those who doubt the possibility of such a lifelong love must be singularly blind to the absorbing love that animates many a house, or peculiarly unfortunate in their experience of married friends and relatives. The curious words which Mr. Hardy puts in the mouth of

Sue Bridehead: "It is as culpable to bind yourself to love always as to believe a creed always, and as silly as to vow always to like a particular food or drink," can be taken merely as a cry of despair, a confession of bankruptcy on the part of human love. But there is no need for despair. The marriage of love has not yet had a chance to prove its worth. In the past it has been sporadic. In future it must be the rule.

If our argument is correct, it follows that only a marriage of love is ethical, for it ensures a life of harmony, a life of union, and a beautiful atmosphere for children to breathe in. It further follows that a woman who marries a man she does not love or cannot love merely for the advantage of his position and wealth, is not far removed from a prostitute, who, too, sells her body for the sake of money. Similarly, a man who marries a woman he does not love, merely because of her money or her father's position, declares thereby his immorality in using a woman as a mere instrument for making money. A conventional marriage is at bottom a hypocrisy, a lie, which has won the advantage of having law by its side. But the essence of a true marriage is the free consent of the parties, and this consent must be based on a feeling and conviction that by temperament they are fitted for a lifelong union, and that their love is strong enough to resist a chance misunderstanding, and that they are fit to be the generators of healthy children, whom they could also bring up to lead a good and noble life. From the standpoint of love, the grossness, the lie of the conventional marriage stands self-condemned.

Not content with these conclusions it is possible to argue that a marriage based on true love is its own guarantee of permanence and loyalty, and hence a marriage ceremony—it has been argued—is doubly useless and indefensible. It cannot add to the inward purity of love, and what is worse it betrays a suspicion of love, and thus seeks to bind it in legal shackles. Hence, true marriage should be free without any mixture of law. It is its own justification. Ethically it is at its highest when it is most self-dependent. There is a certain grandeur in such a conception, and Mr. Edward

Carpenter and Ellen Key have stood sponsors to it. But their high authority notwithstanding, for many a day to come—as even they have reluctantly to admit[1]—the marriage ceremony, whether in the religious sense or its legal equivalent, will have to be a necessary adjunct of even a marriage of love. It is no use arguing that the feeling of compulsion is responsible for unhappy marriages, and that the sense of freedom would make even permanent unions bloom with happiness. There is nothing to bear this out. In marriages that have sprung out of heart-felt love, the marriage ceremony has not taken away even a tittle of happiness, while free unions of the most unconventional type have more often tended to pall than to enhance the bond of love. The history of free unions is mostly a history of abandoned women and abandoned children. Man's word is often writ in water, and lovers' vows are often forgotten. It is for this reason that human experience suggests the absolute necessity of some kind of publicity in connection with every marriage. Ceremonies and the signing of the marriage register are alike devices to proclaim to the world the fact of a marriage. Even the *sambandham* of the Nayars—technically an unconventional free union—has its own publicity. In the interests of women who make themselves responsible for the birth and training of children, and in return expect to be supported to live in comfort, as well as in the interests of children whom nature has cast in a dependent mould, a man must publicly record the fact of his marriage and ensuing responsibilities so that with changing circumstances and changing moods of love he may not repudiate his wife

[1] Thus says Edward Carpenter: "Since the partial dependence and slavery of woman must yet for a while continue, it is likely for such a period that formal contracts of some kind will still be made."

Ellen Key: "The present time acknowledges the necessity of temporarily limiting freedom, though only by means of laws which will form an education in love.

"Such a love must, for the sake of woman's liberty, deprive man of certain of his present rights; for the sake of the children, limit the present liberty of both man and woman. . . . Those who believe in the perfectibility of mankind for and through love must, however, learn to reckon not in hundreds of years, and still less in tens, but in thousands."

and children as his whims dictate. This is the simple justification for the publicity of marriage, and the man who truly loves and desires to marry ought not to shrink from frankly avowing the fact before the public, and true love can know no diminution under such circumstances.

But the radical feminists' opposition to marriage is something more than a mere repugnance to the publicity involved in it. It is against the vow or promise to love for lifetime the wedded spouse. Even so sane a feminist as Ellen Key does not hesitate to write: "A person can therefore no more promise to love or not love than he can promise to live long."[1] But to say this is to confound love and lust. A genuine love does not decay, it must grow. The analogy of love and life is both instructive and misleading. It is possible to nourish a love, just as much as an invalid supports his weakening frame and postpones death out of love of life. On the other hand, it is misleading, because life as such is physical, not mental. A mere desire to live does not add to our life, but even a mere desire to love increases love. We repeat that the mutual repugnance of so many marriages is ultimately to be traced to the initial lack of love, an unjustified faith that when two persons are married, somehow love will come to bless their union, a faith, alas! as blind and perverse as the alchemist's faith to change a stone into gold, and infinitely more disastrous. Men and women have yet to realise that neither money nor position can generate love, nor can they compensate for the loneliness of a loveless heart. Let none marry till time has shown whom the heart truly loves, and once this conviction dawns, there is a *prima facie* presumption that the marriage will be a success. The very intensity of love holds out the hope that the love will not fade, and this hope justifies the sacred vow that is the essence of marriage. It would be presumptuous to say that the love of a particular couple would never fade. But no promise can ever rest on the certainty of the future. Its justification is the certainty of the present, and the possibility that this certainty will hold for the future too. Such a certainty exists, or ought to

[1] *Love and Marriage*, p. 310.

exist, in the case of genuine love, and that is an absolute justification for the marriage vow, which becomes an unadulterated hypocrisy only in cases where people vow to love, although their hearts are strangers to this noblest possession of humanity. If in the future circumstances arise—and love may have a rift—which destroy love and make marriage a wedded lie, and its continuance an evil greater than its dissolution, divorce may put an end to it. Even this does not make the original vow a lie, so long as it was originally sincere, any more than the promise involved in a legal contract, signed, sealed and delivered with all the devices that ingenious lawyers have forged, can be expected to stand against all eternity. Under circumstances which make its performance impossible—as every sane legal system allows—even such a promise comes to nothing, and law supports the breach. So, too, a marriage vow—the vow to love for life—may become impossible to uphold. If one party to it breaks it wantonly, the sin of it must lie upon his or her head. This breach absolves the other innocent party from her or his vow. The Hindu and the Roman Catholic view of an indissoluble marriage victimises the innocent party. A humane marriage law seeks to maintain its sacred character up to a point, beyond which—as laid down in the previous chapter—the sanctity ceases. Thus a marriage vow, though not absolutely beyond the possibility of a breach, can at least have the merit of being sincere, and its sincerity will seek its maintenance according to the psychology of suggestion. It provides a fulcrum on which the love is kept in balance. Take away the ceremony with the vow, and you are landed in all the chaos of "free love." Feminists with an advanced sense of honour and a delicate perception of moral relations, may imagine that free love will never sink to the level of bestiality, but the sober and the thinking portion of humanity know through experience how easily lust is mistaken for love, and how easily men can blast the lives of women by masquerading as "lovers," when all they seek is enjoyment without responsibility. Love in its purity is moral in the highest degree. By itself it can disdain the alliance of law or religion. But in any concrete case the very simplicity of its morality becomes

its insecurity, and hence the necessity of a public alliance it could otherwise disdain. This is the justification of marriage as centuries of human history have known it. This is why even the great Goethe, although a sinner against his marriage vow, had yet courage enough to declare: "He who strikes at matrimony, he who by word or deed undermines the very foundation of all civilised society, let him have it out with me; and if I cannot convince him, I will have no more of him. Marriage is the beginning and the acme of all culture."

CHAPTER XV

THE EUGENIC MARRIAGE

> "Make no more giants, God,
> But elevate the race at once."
> BROWNING.

So far we have emphasised the element of love in a true marriage, but love by itself can ensure only the personal happiness of the wedded individuals. It is no guarantee for a healthy progeny, and thus needs to be supplemented by other considerations than the personal devotion of a husband and wife to each other. These considerations may roughly be summarised as eugenic in character. They relate to the fitness or the unfitness of two individuals to marry and rear a good progeny. A consumptive person may conceivably fall in love with, and even be loved by, a certain individual. But the question may very relevantly be raised whether in view of his health he is in a position to beget children, who would be strong enough to resist the inroads of tuberculous bacilli.[1] Such a couple may, from eugenic considerations, prevent the birth of any offspring to them, but it need hardly be said that from the standpoint of our thesis such a prevention would be a stultification of the real aims of marriage.

It cannot be said that in the past history of marriage eugenic considerations have always been neglected. The general prejudice against a man's marrying outside his tribe, caste, community, or race, has a eugenic foundation. But such a rule generally degenerates into a fossilised custom far removed from genuine eugenics. The general antipathy, e.g., cherished by European aristocracies

[1] The general tendency of medical opinion seems to be that what is directly inherited is not consumption itself but a feeble constitution peculiarly exposed to infection.

against a member of their class marrying a woman of the middle classes—not to mention the still lower classes—is a case in point. How many unhappy marriages have even in recent years marked the royal line of the Hapsburgs, and all because the birth of the bride or the bridegroom was alone emphasised. The rigidity of the caste system in India must originally have been based on eugenic considerations, but how mutilated and unreal it has become in the course of ages. In Hindu India no man dare marry a girl outside his caste, and in most cases outside even his sub-caste, without exposing himself to all the terrors of excommunication, and yet within the caste itself the marriage of any two individuals may be brought about without any relation to their health, mutual fitness, or their capacity to marry and rear a family. Infant marriages have made the marriage of even an impotent man possible. The result is a fruitless marriage or the pardonable unchastity of the wife.

In fact, it would have to be admitted that not a few marriages have been failures personally for the parties concerned through want of love, and also from the standpoint of humanity, for hasty, ill-suited unions often end in giving birth to weak, diseased, or feeble-minded children, who grow up to be notorious failures or equally notorious criminals and prostitutes. Even in the twentieth century, how many lovers pause to think of the eugenic aspect of their holy passion? But it would be most unfair to emphasise this point, for eugenics is but a science of recent growth, far from being complete or authoritative even at the present day. It is something at least that it has been definitely ushered into existence, and even more definitely established. It has already cast a flood of light on the problem of heredity, and no student of marriage to-day can afford to neglect its teachings. It has, to a considerable extent, become possible to lay down general principles, which are far from being negligible, even though they have not yet attained the dignity and universality of scientific laws, or even of the laws of economics. Hence it would be worth our while to take stock of the general position of eugenics at the present day, and to draw the pertinent conclusions regarding the central problem of marriage.

Eugenic ideas are scattered in the works of Plato and Aristotle, but it was only in 1883 that Galton coined the term "eugenics" in his now famous book, *An Inquiry into Human Faculty*, and in a paper read before the Sociological Society in London in 1904 he defined eugenics as "the science which deals with all the influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage." In 1908 his munificence established a Chair for Eugenics at London, and since then his pioneer work has been enthusiastically continued by a band of earnest followers. The whole inquiry is to be rigorously tested before being practically applied on an extensive scale; but we may take it that its foundations are sound. Thanks to the work of Darwin and the other leading evolutionists, from Spencer and Wallace to Bateson and Weismann, the fact of evolution has been well established, and in its train it has brought a scientific recrudescence of belief in heredity, and thus made eugenics possible. For eugenics is essentially an inquiry into the principles of heredity, the possibility and the method of governing its course. In fact national eugenics has been defined as "the study of agencies under social control, that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally."

But apart from a general belief in heredity, no definite theory of heredity has come to be established, and a serious dispute has been still going on as to the relation of heredity and environment, and which of the two is a more potent factor. The empirical generalisations of Plato have received considerable support at the hands of modern eugenists. With laborious learning, as far back as 1869, Galton accumulated evidence of hereditary genius in his well-known work of that name. With a stately array of the names of eminent relations of the world's most eminent men he sought to prove that genius, or rather abilities, as he later preferred to say, runs in the blood of certain stocks. Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander; the Scipios and the Cæsars of ancient Rome; the scientific genius of the Boyles, Darwins and Watts; the music that flowed from the Bachs and the Bendas; and the paintings that ensued from the Bellinis

and the Vecellis—all these instances seem to point to an unknown flow of genius binding the members of certain families. Galton has even cast his net as far as India and adduced the instance of Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan of Mysore. With greater justice and greater cogency he might have adduced the instance of the great Moghuls : warriors, statesmen, men of letters. No royal line in the history of the world has been so markedly gifted as the race of the Grand Moghuls of Hindustan. From the memoirs of the sturdy Babar to the last of the Moghuls, who could express the tragedy of his fall in an exquisitely sweet *gazal*, there was a continuous literary gift which failed to blossom only in the case of Akbar, but he made up for it by being a patron of poets and thinkers.

In spite of all this array of names, however, the argument of Galton's *Hereditary Genius* fails to be convincing. The "eminence" that he adopts as his touchstone of genius is often of an illusory character, and almost always of an unequal degree. By eminence he means the achievement of a "position that is attained by only 250 persons in each million of men, or by one person in each 4,000" (cf. p. 9). The test of eminence is taken to be the public reputation or the success achieved. There is a danger in this, since success in the economic sphere has been often taken to be a sign of mental eminence. Yet it would not be difficult to prove that most millionaires owe their wealth to chicanery, cunning and a perverse blindness to the interests of others. Eugenics would only defeat its end if it strives to perpetuate such stocks, and thus sets a premium on immorality. Galton seeks to avoid this danger, and he excludes cases of mere notoriety, or the examples of statesmen and commanders, who have "got on" merely through the patronage of their more eminent relatives. Even with these exclusions, however, the region of eminence is not of a convincingly high order. The conclusions which Galton endeavours to prove are that "men who are gifted with high abilities easily rise through all the obstacles caused by inferiority of social rank," and that "men who are largely aided by social advantages are unable to achieve eminence, unless they are endowed with high natural gifts." The latter con-

clusion is easier of acceptance than the first; a subtle quality of eminence seems to be running, e.g., in such great English families as the Churchills, and the Cecils, and the Russells, and there can be no doubt that Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Bertrand Russell, without the possession of natural abilities, would not have come to the forefront of public life in England. But it is an open question how far these abilities can be said to be absolutely hereditary. What is it that has prevented the other Churchills and the other Cecils and the other Russells from achieving the same eminence, although all of them have had the advantage of being descended from the same eminent ancestors? Putting the question in this form we come to see the enormous complexity of the whole problem of heredity, and why it is that heredity has not been universally accepted as a fact. The reason lies embedded in the very theories of heredity that have been developed since the early efforts of Galton.

The work of Galton has brought to the forefront two most important questions: (1) The relation of heredity and environment, or the conflict between nature and nurture; (2) the possibility of furthering the healthy stock of humanity, and weeding out the undesirable portion of humanity by a judicious discrimination of marriage unions.

The second problem depends on a solution of the first, and hence eugenics has been hitherto taken up with the task of establishing a theory of heredity. The two schools of heredity accepting the fact of heredity, but totally opposed in their theories, are the biometricians and the Mendelians. The former, under the leadership of Professor Karl Pearson, the most intimate follower of Galton, maintains three fundamental biological ideas:[1]

"(*a*) That the relative weight of nature and nurture must not *a priori* be assumed, but must be scientifically measured; and thus far our experience is that nature dominates nurture, and that inheritance is more vital than environment.

"(*b*) That there exists no demonstrable inheritance of organised characters. Environment modifies the bodily

[1] Cf. Pearson's *Groundwork of Eugenics*, pp. 19–20.

characters of the existing generation, but does not modify the germ-plasms from which the next generation springs. At most, environment can induce a selection of germ-plasms among the many provided, determining which shall be potential and which shall remain latent.

"(*c*) That all human qualities are inherited in a marked and probably equal degree."

The ultimate source of Professor Pearson's views is Darwin's theory of pangenesis, as developed by Weismann in his theory of germ-plasm. Darwin's theory recognised the existence of certain minute particles, or "gemmules," circulating in the body and finding their abode in germ-cells. These gemmules often exist in a latent form, and yet are transmissible, so that a descendant may display certain characteristics because of the development of the gemmules he had received from the ancestors, but which, in the case of these ancestors themselves, had never developed. Weismann distinguished between the body-plasm and germ-plasm, but according to him the essential continuity of generation is to be found only in germ-plasm, which afterwards becomes converted into body-plasm. It is only the germ-cells that can be transmitted and never the body cells, and hence acquired characters cannot be transmitted. Germ-plasm forms part of a cell; it is found in chromosomes which contain a vast number of units, each of which stands for some definite hereditary character. But the cell-division involves a loss of half the chromosomes, and thus the union of male and female sex-cells admits of so many permutations and combinations that in any particular case it would not be easy to say in what proportion the various qualities would be inherited. For each chromosome contains all the determinants necessary to constitute a complex individual. Hence the variation of individuals is dependent on the quality and quantity of the particular chromosomes transmitted in germ-cell. But in so far as all these variations are variations from a definite type, this type constitutes the average. Professor Pearson proceeds on this basis by studying a large number of cases to formulate a law of averages in heredity. By means of mathematical formulæ he claims to deduce the various chances of a certain number of individuals of a family inheriting certain

characteristics. But the game of probability cannot carry us very far in regenerating humanity. For the possible heredity of some characteristics we cannot slacken our efforts to produce a better environment, even though the biometrician affirms that heredity is ten times more potent than environment. Professor Pearson himself admits the potency of a good environment, and in his second fundamental biological principle he recognises that environment does modify bodily character, and that it can induce a selection of germ-plasms determining which shall be potential and which shall remain latent.

The whole foundation of his work has been vigorously challenged by the rival Mendelian hypothesis. Its dominant idea is that each germ-cell has its own unique character, which cannot blend with any other; it is either transmitted as a whole or not at all. The transmissibility of any particular cell is again a matter of chance, but the importance of the theory from the standpoint of heredity lies in this, that any one organism is found to be made up of a number of definite, separately inherited cells, each bearing a particular quality, which may sprout and thus become dominant, or be latent and become recessive. But even recessive cells are capable of being transmitted to the offspring, in whom they may become dominant. Hence no individual can be wholly like any of his ancestors, but will resemble his different ancestors in various different particulars.

The difference between Professor Pearson's views and the Mendelian views is thus found to be very profound. On the former view, because of the inevitable blending of the paternal and maternal germ-cells, and also because of the complex nature of these germ-cells a man is bound to display the characteristics of his parents, and in a remote degree of his ancestors. On the latter view it is an even chance that the germ-cell of a particular quality of the parent may not be transmitted at all, and thus there is no intrinsic necessity why an individual should resemble any one particular ancestor in any one particular characteristic. The future seems to belong to the Mendelian hypothesis, for it synchronises with our every-day experience of the glaring unlikeness even between parents and children, and brothers and brothers.

There is the possibility of inheriting some particular quality, bodily or mental, but no chance of blending, and hence there can be no talk of mere averages.

In spite of these fundamental differences, however, both the rival schools agree in this respect that they establish the fact of heredity and the practical conclusions to which they come remarkably coincide. On both theories the influence of ancestry varies inversely as the remoteness of it. On both theories the immense variation of individuals is inevitable; in the one case through the infinite blending of germ-cells; in the other case through the possibility of the dominance or the recessiveness of the different cells. The birth of great men to commonplace parents is explained by Professor Pearson on the principle of chance, viz. "that commonplace pairs of parents are two hundred times as frequent as pairs of exceptional parents, and that accordingly the small chance of an exceptional son occurring to any commonplace pair is made up for by the far greater number of such pairs."[1] Long before Galton had expressed a similar view in his *Hereditary Genius*:[2] supposing a child acquires only one-tenth of his nature from individual variation, he would owe nine-tenths of his nature to his ancestors, nine-tenths of this nine-tenth would be due to his parents, i.e. $\frac{81}{100}$, nine-tenths of $\frac{81}{100}$ would be due to his grandparents, and so on. So that the influence of all his ancestors beyond the fiftieth degree would be only one five-thousandth of his whole nature.

We have been lingering on these theories, for they constitute the ultimate foundation of the whole of eugenics, and its practical worth depends on the possibility of applying these theories to a conscious selection. None would deny the desirability of this, for natural selection works in its own ruthless way. Whatever may be the wisdom of nature in the vast fields of vegetable and animal life, it has not been always found in its dealings with man. Cataclysms like earthquakes and floods, plagues and famines, have certainly had the effect of keeping down the population of the earth, but the work of destruction has been carried on again and again to the detriment of the healthy, the vigorous and the noble

[1] Cf. *The Groundwork of Eugenics*, p. 356. [2] P. 356.

just as much as, if not more, to the detriment of the feeble and the vicious. Even in the piping days of peace death does not claim as its earliest victims the old, the diseased, but it lays its bony hand on the beautiful, the young, the good, and seems devoid of any discrimination. We cannot trust merely to the ways of nature, and we find it necessary to employ the power of our intellect in combating death and disease, to do what we can towards the production of a good and healthy progeny. Herein lies the opportunity of eugenics, and although our knowledge of heredity does not justify Professor Pearson's depreciation of the environmental influences, we cannot fail to see that environment is not the last word for the improvement of humanity. Education is a power, but there is a limit to its utility ; it cannot produce in a man more than he has a capacity for. The profound differences which mark the members of the same family and the fellow-students in the same class, inevitably point to inborn differences, and the reign of evolution in the whole universe points to heredity as the residuary explanation of these differences. Even if heredity is a matter of chance making it impossible for us to foresee the issue as rigorously as an astronomer can predict an eclipse, it is open to us to direct the course of these chances : positively we can further the cause of selection by encouraging the union of desirable individuals ; negatively we can prevent the generation of undesirable people by preventing the union of undesirable couples. Thus we get two branches of eugenics, happily termed constructive and restrictive by Mr. Crackenthorpe.

Galton's endeavours were rather in the line of constructive eugenics. He had a faith that an inborn genius must manifest itself in whatever adverse circumstance it may be cast, and he triumphantly pointed to the case of D'Alembert. D'Alembert, the famous encyclopædist of France, was an illegitimate son picked up by a man of poor means. He early showed a zest for literature, and persevered in this in spite of the taunts and the ridicule he was subjected to by his foster-mother, and ultimately rose to be a great leader of thought. But a hundred instances of this type can furnish no guarantee for the blossoming of the other " mute inglorious Miltons,"

who never had the chances that even D'Alembert had. A decent environment is the first desideratum of a human soul, and the curious attempt of the school of Professor Pearson to prove the futility of a good environment to profit human nature is merely the off-shoot of a misguided enthusiasm in favour of an exaggerated heredity. It would not be difficult to adduce innumerable instances of the influence of environment. We have particularly in mind a vast majority of men—the untouchables of India—who were born in the lowliest of conditions, yet by being converted to Christianity came under good human influences, and rose infinitely above their original environment. Even in the case of those notorious families, the Jukes and the Kallikaks, which have been adduced as instances of hereditary feeble-mindedness and criminality, cases of individual members have not been unknown who were brought up in a healthy environment, and who thus turned out normal individuals.[1] Miss Madeleine Doty, in her very interesting book, *Society's Misfits*, recounts what a healthy environment and a judicious handling can do in reforming children with criminal proclivities, and as an instance dwells on the methods of the Little Commonwealth at Dorchester, which is a reformatory of a better type. Even if it be true that bodily and mental capacities are hereditary endowments which would blossom, whatever the environment be, the moral principles seem to be wholly under the influence of environment. Morality differs from age to age and clime to clime, and the child drinks in with his mother's milk the ethos of his people just as easily as he imitates the ethos of his foster-parents in a foreign land. Environment in the sense of decent food, plenty of air and light, cannot but fail to strengthen the physical organism, and along with it the germ-plasm. Nature and nurture are but the two supplementary phases of one continuous process, and to set up a conflict between the two is not more absurd than to regard the male and female cells as being fundamentally antagonistic to each other.

Constructive eugenics, so far at least, is not much

[1] Cf. "The Social Significance of Hereditary Feeble-mindedness," by H. H. Goddard, reproduced in *Readings in Social Problems*, edited by A. B. Wolfe, p. 189.

more advanced than in the days of Plato ; a good deal of spade-work will have to be done before nature will be forced to yield to our knowledge the secret of the birth of her great men, and perhaps not even then. Nor can we say that there is any urgency about this. We are not in a crying want of geniuses. Nature produces her great men at critical moments, and their achievements constitute veritable landmarks in the history of humanity. Alexander and Cæsar, Napoleon and Moltke, were not the products of eugenic experiments, and nature may be trusted to create the Shakespeares, the Raphaels, the Beethovens of the future. Perhaps it is as well that the procreation of geniuses is beyond the call of our sweet will. A world where every man was a genius would be an uncomfortable world to dwell in, for every man would be so engrossed in creating beauty that he would have neither time nor inclination to appreciate the worth or the work of his fellow-geniuses.

Nor can we afford to avoid recognising the fact that genius is generally bought at a great price, whether in the form of weak health, mental torture, or even insanity. Without going so far as to say with Nisbet that all genius is but a species of insanity, none can refuse to see in the lives of geniuses a certain instability of mind, a perverse morality and great unhappiness. The works of art that have delighted countless generations of mankind often cost their authors intense misery, an acute agony of soul, for artists sing what they have felt, and tragedies cannot be written without experiencing the thwacks of life. If geniuses constitute a race of weak or neuropathic men—and they often do—we cannot breed merely a race of geniuses without serious detriment to the future of humanity. Hence it is fortunate that geniuses in their very nature are few. The vast majority can but form units in the great indispensable army of workers. It is with the common run of average men that eugenics can be and will be useful. To keep up normal health, normal wits, normal morality, is not altogether beyond the powers of humanity. One effectual mode of bringing about this result would be to prevent the propagation of weak, diseased, feeble-minded individuals. This is the great task that lies before restrictive eugenics, and

The Eugenic Marriage

America has been the first to take the bold step of legislation on eugenic principles.

All eugenists are agreed that it is the quality of human life that matters, and not the mere quantity. But the world, which has for centuries revelled in the feast of procreation, cannot be easily made to see the necessity of discrimination. Human life, good, bad and indifferent, has come to have an artificial value attached to it. This is one of those *idola fori* which will have to be dethroned. But there is a danger that by minimising the quantitative aspect of population an impetus may be given to an unhealthily low birth-rate, which may ultimately prove suicidal to the race. Dr. Bateson, the eminent Mendelian, regards the decline in the birth-rate, which has been the chronic feature of Europe for the last half a century as "the most prominent omen existing for the happiness of future generations."[1] But to say this is to look at only one side of the picture. It is eminently desirable to encourage the parentage of the normal healthy individuals and definitely to prohibit the parentage of the notoriously criminal or feeble-minded.

There are certain diseases, insanity and venereal diseases, e.g., which have been declared by competent medical authority to be transmissible to children, and in such cases parentage is an unpardonable crime against society. The marriage of such persons should be made impossible without a medical certificate, and such a recommendation has been made by competent experts in their evidence before the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, a fulfilment of what Plato had thought desirable to say in the *Laws*.[2] "The judge shall consider and determine the suitableness or unsuitableness of age in marriage; he shall make an inspection of the males naked, and of the women naked down to the navel." If it be objected that the prohibition of marriage in such cases leads to secret immorality, the further suggestion of Plato with reference to the doing away with bastard infants, provided they are really diseased, may have a justifiable application, or Rentoul's operation is a conceivable way out of the difficulty. Unreasonable sentiment is the most

[1] Cf. *Biological Fact and the Structure of Society*, p. 23.
[2] V. pp. 312–13.

hostile foe of these ideas, for men are proverbially short-sighted, and the supposed ill-treatment of an individual touches them more than the numberless and the needless woes caused to the progeny of the undesirables and the society at large.

Another disease which has been generally taken to be hereditary and thus rendered subject to eugenic considerations is epilepsy. But we have often wondered if the case against epilepsy has not been somehow grossly exaggerated. In the list of epileptics can be found such great names as those of Julius Cæsar, St. Paul, Mahomed, Petrarch, Charles V, Richelieu, Molière, Peter the Great, Swift, Handel, Napoleon, Wellington, Flaubert, Dostoieffsky and Swedenborg.[1] If such men could be epileptic, surely epilepsy, far from being a curse, is quite capable of accompanying the loftiest genius in all the departments of human activity. Nor are the cases unknown in which epileptic people have been the parents of eminent geniuses, as, e.g., the novelist Dumas, whose mother was an epileptic. We have personally known epileptics who led quite a healthy, virtuous life, bread-winners of families, highly educated and well-built. On the other hand, we have come across epileptics so much subject to fits as to be unable to do any continuous work, and such persons soon become physical wrecks. Perhaps in such cases there may be a justification in preventing them from raising a progeny.

In all human societies criminals have been looked down upon with great hatred and fear as very dangerous men. But it has been recently discovered that there are two types of criminals: the first type is recruited from those who have a normal intellect, but have fallen under perverse influences; the second type consists of people, not insane, but mentally defective, who have no real self-control, and are thus easily led into wrong paths. The former may be reformed through punishment or educative influences. But the latter are inherently incapable of being really educated, and thus automatically drift into wrong-doing. In such cases again the only weapon a society has against them is the prevention of their propagation. Even

[1] Cf. Lombroso's *The Man of Genius* and Nisbet's *The Insanity of Genius*.

on the basis of our present knowledge of heredity it is suicidal to allow two feeble-minded persons to marry, for the chances would be all in favour of procreating feeble-minded offspring. The grim tragedy of hereditary feeble-mindedness has been ably brought out by Mr. H. H. Goddard in his fascinating study of degeneracy in *The Kallikak Family,* in which he discusses the hereditary feeble-mindedness of a girl, Deborah Kallikak, whose original ancestor was one Martin Kallikak. We may briefly give the ancestry in the author's own words: "When he was a boy of fifteen his father died, leaving him without parental care or oversight. Just before attaining his majority the young man joined one of the numerous military companies that were formed to protect the country at the beginning of the Revolution. At one of the taverns frequented by the militia he met a feeble-minded girl, by whom he became the father of a feeble-minded son. This child was given by its mother the name of its father in full, and thus has been handed down to posterity the father's name and the mother's mental capacity. This illegitimate boy was Martin Kallikak, and from him have come down four hundred and eight descendants. One hundred and forty-three of these, we have conclusive proof, were, or are, feeble-minded, while only forty-six have been found normal. The rest are unknown or doubtful.

"Martin, on leaving the Revolutionary Army, straightened up and married a respectable girl of good family, and through that union has come another line of descendants of radically different character. These now number four hundred and ninety-six in direct descent. All of them are normal people. In this family and its collateral branches we find nothing but good representative citizenship."

Here we have a most interesting history giving us an opportunity of studying two stocks descended from a common ancestor, but one tainted with the feeble-mindedness of the senior Kallikak's illicit love affair. This degenerate branch has produced a number of criminals, prostitutes, and keepers of houses of ill fame. Deborah's own mother was particularly feeble-minded, given to a life of brute passion without any sense of

decency, any sense of social responsibility. The small number of normal individuals in the degenerate stock seem to have been saved from an evil life by a better environment, but even they can hardly make amends for the evils for which the tainted members were responsible. Under circumstances like these there is a grim poetic justice in making marriage or even illicit propagation impossible. Dr. Rentoul's famous book on *Race Culture or Race Suicide* boldly recommends surgical sterilisation of those who are hopelessly defective or incurable. The operation has the merit of dispensing with Plato's heroic method of doing away with the undesirables. Such sterilisation has been legalised in the case of the imbecile, the insane, and the criminal in Indiana (1907), California (1909, amended in 1913), Connecticut (1909) and New Jersey (1911). In 1909 Washington legalised it in the case of rapists only; in 1912 Nevada applied it to the rapists and the habitual criminals. Iowa, in 1911, New York in 1912, North Dakota in 1913, Michigan in 1913, Kansas in 1913, and Wisconsin in 1913 have followed suit, and thus restrictive eugenics has found a legal recognition.[1]

There is no doubt that if this restrictive law is sanely but rigidly observed the chances are that society will be gradually purged of its worst elements. But it is possible that eugenic experiments carried out in haste may have to be repented at leisure. The inevitable result of such a law will be a marked decline in the birth-rate, and a declining birth-rate, in spite of Dr. Bateson, may be taken as a sign of degeneracy. During the last half a century this decline has been pronounced and attributed to various causes, already discussed in previous chapters, e.g., increase in the age of marriage, unwillingness of educated women to marry or to rear large families, an undisguised use of neo-Malthusian methods, and an increase of prostitution. It is clear that the restriction of births as at present practised is selective in the wrong direction. Those classes who are intellectually and physically fit to rear large healthy families are just the persons who avoid them. It is the lower inferior classes who multiply. From the eugenic standpoint there is something pre-

[1] Wolfe's *Readings in Social Problems*, p. 164.

posterous in the existing state of affairs, and a time will come when, in the interests of constructive eugenics, marriage by a certain age will have to be made compulsory. And herein we see the profound insight of the first of eugenists, Plato himself. He rigorously recommended capital punishment in the case of hardened incurable criminals, and recommended exposure of all undesirable infants. But to make up for the quantitative loss to the strength of his state he made marriage compulsory for all who are fit. And in the case of healthy normal marriages it is a matter of sacred duty to rear a large family. The wisdom of Plato is justified. And we find to-day eugenists like Professor Karl Pearson vehemently pressing for a preferential treatment of all healthy, good married individuals, whether it be in the matter of income-tax, death duties, or estate duties. Endowment of motherhood, provided the tests of legitimacy and health are satisfied—tests as old as Plato again—and special provision for every increase in the number of healthy children are the further reforms urged on the state from the eugenist platforms. Discriminative encouragement and discriminative restriction of marriage are the two great bulwarks of eugenic reform, and every progressive state will have to look to both, for both of them are at bottom a recognition of the priority of the state, and a tribute of homage to the purity and immortality of the best life which is possible only in a state.

So far as our present knowledge of heredity extends, constructive eugenics will inevitably tend to be restricted to bringing about the union of normal males with normal females. But if the day ever comes when that knowledge will enable us to breed any sort of human beings as now we breed race-horses or prize-cattle, the problem will inevitably arise whether even constructive eugenics should devote itself to breed a high aristocratic race, or whether it should even then be merely satisfied with the maintenance of a high respectable average. Galton's enthusiasm and bias in favour of breeding a race of high geniuses have been well known. In an article published in 1873 he declared his aim to be the building up of "a sentiment of caste among those who are

naturally gifted,"[1] and thus to form a solidarity of feeling amongst all the individuals of the greatest merit. Dr. Bateson sums up his critique of democracy in these telling words: "The essential difference between the ideals of democracy and those which biological observation teaches us to be sound is this: democracy regards class distinction as evil; we perceive it to be essential."[2] He fears that the power of the majority "will be invoked against men of extra power," and that thus a deadening of all the high activities of humanity will ensue, which will set back the clock of progress. This fear is echoed even by a socialist—or at least an advanced radical—like Mr. Bertrand Russell. Intellectual and æsthetic interests, it is surmised, will suffer in a communistic regime where a false and exaggerated sense of equality dominates the hearts of all. But it need not be forgotten that if inequality is nature's law, it is bound to assert itself in course of time. A thoroughgoing communism is the empty dream of an idle day. The polity of the future will only seek to safeguard the right of every citizen to live in decent comfort. The craving for beauty which has made the mute marble eloquent, or produced the thrill of music out of mere sounds is the birthright of humanity; it is an endowment which time cannot lay its withering hands upon. It will always blossom as it did in the rudest epochs of human history. "What the poet cannot sing of does not last." Nor will the need for hero-worship die of inanition, for the most communistic of communities will need leaders and heroes. Natural inequality is nature's bequest to humanity and cannot be disowned. The wild utterances of many socialists to-day do indeed give rise to a fear that in the pursuit of equality the claims and rights of the élite of humanity will be ruthlessly crushed to death. But we must not forget that the present socialistic outcries are against the claims of an aristocracy of mere birth, an aristocracy of the moneyed undesirables who have attained their present eminence through the sweat and the blood of other men. It is this artificial aristocracy, a pseudo-aristocracy that would fain trot out its claims under the

[1] Quoted in Wolfe's *Readings in Social Problems*, p. 140.
[2] Cf. *Biological Fact and Structure of Society*, p. 31.

desecrated banner of eugenics, that the present discontent of the masses thirsts to shatter, and who shall say that justice is not on their side? In these troublous times, when the world groans under the birth-throes of reconstruction, which have their parallel in the mighty scenes of the French Revolution, the course of the future depends on the statesmanship and foresight of the ruling classes to-day: whether they are prepared to move with the times, or whether they would prefer to wage a battle royal over their defunct privileges. Out of chaos order shall come. When men's demands for a decent existence shall have been satisfied, and their passions cooled down, the inequality of nature's aristocracy of intellect and virtue will assert itself, and the phantom fears of an unæsthetic, unintellectual, irreligious democracy will evaporate, and the dawn of a new era will unfold new visions before the eyes of humanity. But before those visions are fulfilled, one grand obstacle in the path of humanity will have to be overcome: the innate selfishness of man.

Supporters of the effete aristocracies of to-day, whether in the East or in the West, will find no champion in Galton. "I look upon the peerage as a disastrous institution," says he in *Hereditary Genius*,[1] "owing to its destructive effects on our valuable races. The most highly-gifted men are ennobled; their elder sons are tempted to marry heiresses, and their younger ones not to marry at all, for these have not enough money to support both a family and an aristocratical position. So the side-shoots of the genealogical tree are hacked off and the leading shoot is blighted and the breed is lost for ever." It is clear that what Galton really wants is, as did Plato, an aristocracy of intellect and virtue. He is conscious that a close interbreeding of the intellectual classes "produces a marked effect in the richness of the brain power of the more cultured families."[2] He also admits that "it produces a still more marked effect of another kind at the lowest step of the social scale," and quotes with approval passages from the work of Mr. C. Booth as to how from this class "come the

[1] P. 132.

[2] Cf. his paper on "The Possible Improvement of Human Breed."

battered figures who slouch through the streets and play the beggar or the bully. They render no useful service, they create no wealth ; more often they destroy it. They degrade whatever they touch." If the production of such a class is the inevitable corollary of the interbreeding of the highly intellectual classes, would it not be tantamount to breeding a race of superior men at an unconscionably heavy cost?

In face of such facts, to breed a race of superior men as Galton advocates is really an act of high treason against humanity. What we really want is an upward raising of all the classes of a "community," and this can be done in two ways : by preventing the propagation of the feeble-minded and the hopelessly diseased ; and by allowing free intermarriage among all who are normal both in body and in mind. Eugenic selection must concern itself not with the degree of eminence, but the degree of efficiency of individual members. Nor must we omit to consider another danger which dogs the footsteps of a close interbreeding, and that danger is infertility. The house of the Ptolemies of Egypt was founded by a son of Philip II of Macedon. After the death of Alexander the Great he became King of Egypt, and had twelve descendants, who reigned as successive kings. It was a notorious practice of this family to marry sisters or nieces, but most of these marriages were unfertile, and "the inheritance mostly passed through other wives."[1] The last of the race was Cleopatra, who excelled in beauty and vigour, but was not markedly fertile. Galton himself is constrained to admit[2] that "as giants and dwarfs are rarely prolific, so men of prodigiously large or small intellectual powers may be expected to be deficient in fertility." A support is further given to this view by his study of English peerages, and the causes of their frequent extinction. He refers, of course, to the old peerages conferred because of some conspicuous merit, and not to the mushroom peerages created during the last century owing to the exigencies of party politics. He found the general tendency in a peer to marry an heiress and "such marriages," as he

[1] Cf. Galton's *Hereditary Genius*, p. 144.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 321.

says, "are peculiarly unprolific."[1] He, it is true, tends to deny the idea that great men are not prolific, but we have found this idea strongly urged by several authors, especially Ellen Key, who regards the immortal achievements of great men as their greatest offspring, making up for the deficiency of mortal human children. Lombroso[2] notes that "many great men have remained bachelors; others, although married, have had no children," and quotes the curious passage of Bacon from his essay on *Parents and Children:* "The noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men, which have sought to express the images of their minds where those of their bodies have failed. So the care of posterity is most in them that have no posterity." It is certainly a curious fact that so many of the great English men of letters have no posterity surviving till our day: e.g., Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton, Otway, Dryden, Rowe, Addison, Pope, Swift, Gay, Johnson, Other great men like Balzac, Flaxman, Baron, Michael Angelo, J. S. Mill, left no children. Apart from the case of great men, it is a matter of common psychological experience that men given to brain-work are not so virile as men given to purely physical labour. Their powers of procreation are affected, and this is a danger that faces the educated. In the list of celibates there occur a perfect galaxy of geniuses, who evidently felt no shafts of Cupid strong enough to have drawn them off from their work. Galton would indeed bewail this, but the fact is, the following great men never married: Kant, Newton, Pitt, Fontenelle, Beethoven, Gassendi, Galileo, Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, Bayle, Leibnitz, Malebranche, Gray, Dalton, Hume, Gibbon, Macaulay, Lamb, Bentham, Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus, Reynolds, Handel, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Camoens, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Flaubert, Foscolo, Alfieri, Cavour, Pellico, Mazzini, Aleardi, Guerrazzi. Most of these names are indeed most famous. With reference to those great men who did marry, in many cases their life was neither particularly happy nor particularly fertile. As Professor Carveth Read so wittily puts it: "The home of creative

[1] Cf. *Hereditary Genius*, p. 125.
[2] Cf. *The Man of Genius*, pp. 13–14.

art has often been in Bohemia."[1] Flaubert, who has created in his novels women of passionate intensity, could yet write to George Sand: "The muse, however intractable, gives fewer sorrows than woman. I cannot reconcile one with the other. One must choose."[2]

When eugenists take such a short-sighted view as to recommend a close interbreeding, we ought to take into consideration the facts of celibacy and low fertility of great and even educated men. For in the course of generations such a highly selective breed may ultimately die out, while the race of inferior men will drag on its humdrum career. As mentioned before, the birth of geniuses may be left to nature. In the past nature has been generous in fecundating the parentage of even low but honest men with geniuses. "Pasteur was the son of a tanner; Priestley of a cloth-maker; Dalton of a weaver; Lambert of a tailor; Kant of a saddler; Watt of a shipbuilder; Smith of a farmer; Faraday of a blacksmith. Joule was a brewer, Dang, Scheele, Dumas, Balard, Liebig, Wohner were apothecaries' apprentices."[3] In India we could point to Tukaram and Ramdass, and so many others as men born of the people, and we may also note that the highly intellectual caste of Brahmins is not so fertile as the lower castes, who are more or less free from brain-work. It would be ever so much better if the range of good birth were widened, if each superior male or female were to unite with an inferior, than if they intermarried and brought almost an unfertile precarious concentration of their abilities in a few individuals. How profoundly did Plato anticipate this simple consideration! In the *Laws* he makes the Athenian stranger say: "We will say to him who is born of good parents, O, my son, you ought to make such a marriage as wise men would approve. Now they would advise you neither to avoid a poor marriage, nor especially to desire a rich one; but if other things are equal, always to honour inferiors, and with them to form connections. This will be for the benefit of the

[1] Cf. *British Journal of Psychology*, May 1919, p. 282.
[2] Cf. *Lombroso*, p. 14.
[3] Cf. *An Introduction to the History of Science*, by Libby.

city and of the families which are united, for the equable and the symmetrical tends infinitely more to virtue than the unmixed."

We have covered a wide range of ground in this chapter, and it may be as well perhaps to sum up briefly the few important conclusions which we wish to establish :

(1) Heredity is an important fact to be considered, but it is not absolutely above being influenced by environmental conditions.

(2) The hopelessly weak, diseased and feeble-minded, are to be gradually weeded out under the guidance of expert physicians through the merciful Rentoul's operation, and thus their marriage effectually prevented.

(3) Marriage of the healthy and the normal should be made compulsory, or at least should be regarded by all as a sacred duty they owe to the society that has nourished them.

(4) A close interbreeding is to be avoided as far as possible.

Thus we are forced to the conclusion that though a true marriage has its basis in love, it needs something more to become perfect even humanly speaking, and that something more is a capacity to select the right partner : one who is fit in health and mind to fulfil the duties of a good parent. True, this is a task not easy to fulfil, but nothing worth achieving has ever been easy. A progressive humanity must be prepared to pay the price of its progress : wisdom in selecting marriage partners. Education in love, as Edward Carpenter has said, is most difficult, but the difficulty must be faced and the researches of doctors, scientists and eugenists must guide the sociologists, and through them the rank and file of mankind.

CHAPTER XVI

MOTHERHOOD

"In that one word—mothers— is comprised the system of the whole world's education. You must train us mothers who know how to educate their children."—NAPOLEON TO MADAME CAMPAN.

THERE was a time in the evolution of marriage when childlessness was looked upon as a curse, and as a sufficient justification for the husband to marry again, often at the instance of the first wife herself. Such a stage we have not yet got over in the East. But in the West in many circles a childless marriage has come to be looked upon as a desideratum. It constitutes a new phase, and is known as intellectual and social companionship. The husband and wife are both professional people, who have neither the time nor the inclination for rearing a family. Both return home in the evening after a tiring day, and they seek to rest and recoup their energy in each other's intellectual company. Nobody can fail to appreciate the sweetness of such discourse, but it is difficult to understand why it should be spoken of as marriage. It is a relation with which the world is perfectly familiar—the relation of two friends, or the relation of two brothers, or the relation of two cousins. In no essential respect does this relationship differ in any way from the one we are considering, which at best closely approximates to a most intimate friendship between two persons of different sexes. Why such a Platonic union should bind itself with legal bonds it is not easy to understand, when such a companionship is open to them in a free, unfettered way. If their purpose is a gratification of their passions with neo-Malthusian methods, they can do so without cloaking their sensuality behind the respectability of marriage. It is really immorality with the mere semblance of morality.

It is not difficult to show wherein the immorality of such a union lies. The avowed historical object of marriage is the procreation of children, and when a couple takes the trouble to undergo all the publicity and religious or legal formalities connected with a marriage, it raises a presumption in the public mind that they mean to be parents. If there is a tacit understanding between them that they shall prevent conception, it is a fraud upon the public. It is certainly open to them to choose to be parents or not, and if they decide not to be parents they have no moral right to marry with all the formalities. Further, a deliberate desire to be childless, except from eugenic considerations, betokens a high degree of selfishness, while it also leads to a stunting of their moral nature, for no woman that has undergone the experience of motherhood can deny its moral worth, its close relationship to humanity. A voluntary barrenness marks the lowest ebb in the love for humanity. Hence a childless marriage can be spoken of as marriage only through courtesy. Wifehood and motherhood are really inseparable from each other. All we have said in favour of marriage applies with equal force to the genuine nobility of motherhood.

It must be admitted that even in the most barbarous ages woman has been much better appreciated as a mother than either as a wife or a daughter. In ancient Sparta all the women were deliberately trained to be excellent mothers. Every healthy woman was compelled to marry, and the spirit of the Spartan mother is eternally enshrined in the words: "Return with it or on it," uttered as she buckled the shield on the arm of her warrior son. It was this spirit that made Sparta the strong arm of Greece for four to five centuries. The Roman *matrona* constituted a term of the highest reverence, and her spirit blossomed forth in the noblest types of Roman womanhood, as exemplified in Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi; Julia, the daughter of Cæsar and wife of Pompey; Cornelia, Pompey's second wife; Octavia, wife of Antony; Agrippina, the mother-in-law of Tacitus, the great historian; Calpurnia, wife of the younger Pliny, and a host of others.

Even in such polygamous civilisations as that of the

Hindus and the Moslems, woman's inferiority is lost in the docile reverence accorded to every mother. So great is the respect and obedience to mothers, that even men who have been moved by the new ideals of the West and have ceased to believe in their traditional faith, fight shy of breaking through the crust of customs, lest they offend their mothers! An exquisite sentiment, but one that has fearfully retarded the progress of social reform.

Through long ages motherhood has been the proud boast of womanhood. A mother's love has become synonymous with the most touching, the most beautiful emotion in human life. It has been a theme to inspire poets. In the person of Mary motherhood stood in its sublimest aspect, and even to-day the cult of the mother is not dead so far at least as the major portion of humanity is concerned.

For extreme conservatives and woman-haters like Schopenhauer, it is fashionable to urge that no woman has ever attained a world-wide fame comparable to man's in any department. Women can point to no female equal of Shakespeare or Milton, of Leonardo da Vinci or Goethe, of Kelvin or Pasteur, Kant or Hegel. But she can retort with justice that she has sacrificed her talents for various lines of activity in order to give her whole self to her home and children. Thus it is that she has not created a Hamlet or written an epic, but she has created *men* in the truest sense of the term. Every life she gives birth to is at the risk of her own. Out of her sacrifice humanity is maintained. Through her the greatest men have achieved greatness, and many of them have gratefully acknowledged it. Hence it does not lie in the mouth of man to talk of a woman's innate inferiority. It is rank ingratitude on his part to talk of males as the natural rulers of females—a divine dispensation against which women dare not rebel. A higher outlook on life is necessary, and the worth of motherhood must be recognised by all. A mother is the noblest of creators, and her task of training a child is itself a work of art.

To-day those who have been struck by the Malthusian fear of overpopulation, and Darwin's theory of a ruth-

less natural selection resulting in the survival of the fittest, look upon motherhood as an exaggerated virtue, and talk of the duty of restricting the birth of children. We see this in connection with women who have received university education and do not marry at all, or restrict maternity. This is a phenomenon which is most widespread in all advanced countries, and has resulted in a low birth-rate. But the wisdom of this movement is of a doubtful character. It is an attempt to separate wifehood from motherhood, which cannot fail to injure humanity through its depreciation of maternity—a position which we have already had to criticise in a previous chapter, and so we need not say anything further about it.

While there is one school of feminists who assert the independence of woman and her right to refuse to be a mother, another school, headed by Ellen Key, insists on the woman's duty of motherhood. But they seek to make her independent of any male support by making the state responsible for maintaining mothers—a proposal certainly better than the Platonic device of bringing up children in a crèche. They argue that since the well-being of a state depends on a birth-rate considerably higher than the death-rate, it is the duty of the state to encourage procreation of children. This can be done by making motherhood itself a profession, important enough to be maintained by the state, and thus free it from the caprices of individual husbands and fathers. Maternity insurance has been widely recommended, while several states in the United States have provided for a minimum income for mothers. Conceivably there is nothing inherently impossible in such a scheme, especially in a socialistic regime with unlimited powers of taxation. But a motherhood which is thus independent of wifehood gives rise to a peculiar family, which consists only of the mother and the children. It has no room for the father, who sinks to the level of a drone. His function is only to procreate and to pay taxes—heavy inevitably—in order to enable the state to remunerate mothers. But what zest can there be in such a life? It becomes shorn of all personal responsibility, all opportunities of a deep personal love. Children are deprived of a father's care,

while the state is too impersonal to gain the children's love, even though it faithfully supplies their needs in a mechanical way.

It is permissible to question whether all these revolutionary changes are really necessary, and to argue their futility and undesirability, if the surviving institutions can be so modified as to fulfil the requirements of the traditional family, and at the same time to meet the new ethical requirements of the age. How far is any compromise possible between motherhood as it has always been known and the two present-day tendencies mentioned in the last paragraph? So far as motherhood is taken to be a nuisance, an impediment in the path of a woman's development, there can be no real compromise possible, except to this extent, that a woman may be so extraordinarily gifted as to shine in some sphere of activity, in which case she ought not to be hindered in her development by the responsibilities of maternity. But this can affect only an infinitesimal portion of womankind, and hence for all practical purposes motherhood may be taken as the one most outstanding experience of womanhood. The tendency to revolt against marriage can be taken, not as a sign of advancing civilisation, but only as a bloom upon decay. Such a studied revolt can come only from highly gifted individuals, and if they court childlessness it means that their gifts will die without being transmitted to a new generation of individuals.

The second tendency has as its object the reconciliation of the economic independence of woman with her responsibilities as mother. The object is good, but it could be equally well attained in the triune family. It has been already suggested before that a wife should be declared to have a legal right to a certain portion of her husband's income as a state recognition of her motherhood. This has the advantage of recognising man's responsibility for the continuance of society, instead of making him a casual incident of sexual life, as a pure state maintenance of mothers would undoubtedly tend to do.

We are not unconscious that a strong objection can be taken to this suggestion. It can be maintained that we are actually degrading family life by bringing it more

and more within the pale of law. By introducing compulsion we are reducing the morality of family life. To argue thus is to betray a totally false conception of law. Man's freedom is found in law, for law alone is the guarantee of that freedom. Law never has any compulsive force except on those who are in need of compulsion. Law may deter a man consumed by hatred or greed from committing a murder, but its weight is not felt by the normal average man, who has never felt and never cares to feel the impulse to murder. So, too, a man with healthy family instincts will discharge his duties as a responsible father and husband, and the requirements of law would be superfluous in his case. But in case he is, e.g., a drunkard or a spendthrift, and neglects his wife and children, it is but fair that law should compel him to make provision for those dependent on him, and it would be absurd to argue that by such a requirement his freedom would be curtailed.[1] The chief aim of law is to secure certain necessary relationships either by commanding or prohibiting certain actions. A father is expected to perform certain duties, and if he fails to do so, compulsion may be legitimately imposed on him to carry them out. Hence the justification for a law establishing the wife's claim to a definite portion of her husband's income, or the children's claim to his adequate protection.

From the foregoing argument a very important conclusion follows, viz., a legal recognition of the rights of motherhood must also involve a legal enforcement of the responsibilities of motherhood. Hitherto the general tendency has been to consider that the parents have a full right to bring up their children in any way they like. This principle has been encroached upon by compulsory education and total or partial prohibition of children in certain industries, and deserves to be encroached upon still further. If the state is intent on encouraging motherhood, it must be all the more intent on encouraging good motherhood, and hence any neglect on the part of the parents to take proper care of the health and morals of their children should be an adequate cause for depriving those parents of their rights over

[1] *Vide* Part I, Chapter IV.

their children. Similarly, since prevention is better than cure, it is the duty of the state to see that the parties contracting a marriage are really fit to undertake the responsibilities of parenthood. In America, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and several other states have already passed laws requiring that along with the marriage licence there should be issued a health certificate that the applicants are not suffering from epilepsy, tuberculosis, or venereal diseases, and that they are of a sound mind. It is yet open to question how far epilepsy and tuberculosis ought to be thus penalised. But this is a question of detail. What is important is the principle, and few would say that such a health certificate is not necessary. To appreciate the justice of this, one has only to remember how venereally affected people ruin their innocent partners. The principle of a health certificate does not really militate against love-marriage. Physical defects of a grave character will be detrimental to the parties themselves and also to their children. Hence, from the broader standpoint of society, even love in such a case is not worthy of being perpetuated in the form of marriage. Genuine love must be prepared to recognise its own limitations, and must forgo its own satisfaction in certain cases.

The principle of regularly punishing a mother for a bad performance of her maternal duties has been recognised in Switzerland. "I once found," writes Miss Edith Sellers, "in a Swiss penal colony, a very respectable-looking woman, who had been sent there for two years by the local authorities for not bringing up her children well, not keeping them under proper control."[1] Many children to-day go astray and become bad citizens, because initially they were not fortunate enough to receive proper training from their mothers. The mother of the future must be a responsible, self-respecting, tolerably educated individual, for she is the centre of human existence, and on her depends the future of humanity. That is why Napoleon wanted mothers to be trained up, and that also explains why one elementary schoolteacher, when he was asked how boys and girls could

[1] *Nineteenth Century and After*, October 1918, "Boy and Girl War Products: Their Reconstructions," p. 714.

be bettered, bluntly replied : " By shooting their mothers and fathers."[1] It is remarkable, though not complimentary to humanity, that the noblest and most important work of motherhood has been allowed to drift, as if it were the easiest, when in reality it is the most difficult and taxing work a human being can be subjected to. The words of Coleridge will never cease to be true :

" A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive."

[1] Quoted in *Nineteenth Century and After*, October 1918, by Miss Edith Sellers. Mrs. S. A. Barnett in her paper on " Widows with Children under the Poor Law," p. 712, reproduces instructive figures from the Poor Law Commissioners' Reports. Mothers are divided into four classes—(i) good ; (ii) mediocre ; (iii) very unsatisfactory, i.e. slovenly and slipshod ; (iv) bad, i.e. drunkards, immoral, wilfully neglecting their children.

The percentages in the rural districts were 19 per cent. in the third class, and 6 per cent. in the fourth. " In the towns conditions were, as a rule, much worse. In one urban union 18 per cent. came under class (iv). In another great union the appalling percentage rose to 22 per cent."

CHAPTER XVII

THE CLAIMS OF CHILDREN

" There is nothing so beautiful on earth as the smile of a child."—ANONYMOUS.

ALL throughout the preceding chapters we have been emphasising the necessity of conserving children so as to build up a strong and healthy generation of adult individuals. In view of this a special chapter on the claims of children may appear quite superfluous. So it is in a way, nevertheless it would give us an opportunity of presenting our argument for a truly feminine feminism from the standpoint of children. Few things are more puzzling or more saddening in life than the degree of helplessness or the amount of suffering that most infants have to undergo. There is an element of grim justice in the way in which Clement of Alexandria interprets the birth-wail of an infant : " Why, O mother, didst thou bring me forth to this life in which prolongation of life is progress to death? . . . Dreadful, O mother, is the course of life, which has death at the goal of the runner. Bitter is the road of life we travel with the grave as the wayfarer's inn." *Prima facie* in the process of its birth a child is a helpless entity. And therefore the responsibility must lie with all the greater force on those who have been instrumental in giving it birth. Few parents who have had a genuine experience of children will venture to deny that it is a heavy responsibility, entailing hard work not unmixed with a splendid delight. How can this delight be known to those who are so lost in a selfish whirl of pleasure as to look at every child as a " little nuisance "?

It is needless to dwell on the many ailments of children, or on the supreme need of regularity and care in the feeding of children, or on the most complex of

complex problems: rearing a child with the maximum of health, good breeding and morality. It is a task more exacting than any profession, for it can have no fixed hours, it cannot discriminate between night and day. That is why motherhood cannot be a part-time occupation, and needs all the time to itself. The whole history of the industrial and professional employment of women goes to show that wherever women are in the habit of being employed during their delicate condition, or during the period of suckling, there has always been a great loss of infant life. It is remarkable that in such industrial centres as Northampton, Halifax, Burnley, Blackburn, Derby, Leicester, Bradford, Oldham, Huddersfield and Bolton, where there is an exceptionally large proportion of married women engaged in factory work, the fall in birth-rate between 1881 and 1901 is most striking, while in mining districts, where the employment of women is rare, the birth-rate remains high.[1] Miss Tennant has done great service by collecting in a handy form the opinions of authoritative judges about the evil effects of the industrial employment of women on the health of children in Appendix I to her essay in *Woman in Industry from Seven Points of View*. In Appendix II she shows how children who are denied their right to their mother's milk are ever so much more exposed to disease and death, while in Appendix III she seeks to show how breast-feeding is really incompatible with the factory employment of women.

The history of the industrial employment of women and children has constituted a grim episode in Europe and America. "In Russia in the bast-mat weaving industry, children of three or four years have been found at work, and masses of children under ten working as much as eighteen hours a day."[2] Things, of course, are much better to-day, and factory legislation has served

[1] Whetham's *The Family and the Nation*, pp. 199–200. Miss May Tennant in *Woman in Industry from Seven Points of View* says: "Nearly fifty years ago a close relationship was established between infantile mortality and the industrial employment of mothers. Nearly fifty years ago it was shown that the system which dealt so swiftly with the infant, dealt as cruelly though more slowly with the child, and dealt perhaps most hardly of all with the mother."

[2] Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child*, p. 325.

to throw a veil of decency over the fundamentally wrong principle of employing women and children in industries. We have yet to learn completely to separate motherhood from industries, and in the interests of humanity that day must come. Woe to the nation that sacrifices motherhood to the convenience of capitalists and industrialists.

The feminists who are rigidly addicted to the idea of a woman's right to sweat in the factory, and yet are constrained to admit the necessity of motherhood, seek to reconcile these two ideas through state maintenance of children, which would mean large nurseries under "experts." How bleak and soulless the bringing-up of such children would be it is quite easy to imagine. But its most vulnerable point is the definite cleavage it makes between children and their mothers. A mother's milk, a mother's care, a mother's love, are lost, and in their place we have hired nurses, utterly indifferent to the future of the children entrusted to their care.

There is a specious plausibility in the words of Jude to Sue, when he says: "The beggarly question of parentage—what is it, after all? What does it matter when you come to think of it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care. That excessive regard of parents for their own children, and their dislike of other people's, is, like class-feeling, patriotism, save-your-own-soulism and other virtues, a mean exclusiveness at bottom."[1] There is indeed a superb altruism in this, and there may be a few men and women here and there who can rise to that great height. But with the rank and file of parents their own children will appear sweet, beautiful—although perhaps ugly—and their love for them will be infinitely greater than for other children. Nature is wise in intensifying thus a mother's love. It is a guarantee that no child will be utterly neglected, and it is a guarantee which has, on the whole, worked with success. To-day the suggestion of huge nurseries and the substitution of "experts" for mothers has no human experience behind it. To act upon it would be to institute a dangerous experiment, dangerous to the extent of dehumanising

[1] Hardy's *Jude the Obscure.*

humanity, and where is the call for it? To sacrifice motherliness for a phantom independence or a vague altruism is the maddest feat humanity can be guilty of.

The increasing sense of self-respect in women is a most healthy sign of our age. It conduces to a higher morality which is bound to react on the moral growth of children. From the standpoint of children it is the duty of the state to see that they get the full advantage of their mother's love and care, even though it imply certain restrictions on the supposed right of a woman to do as she pleases. It may, and even ought to, assist, wherever necessary, families in the discharge of their duties by their children in the form of maternity bonus. The state must further cut off all chances of children being exploited by interested unscrupulous employers. But the duty of the state does not end there. It ought to supply great opportunities of education so as to fit them to be loyal, law-abiding, morally progressive citizens. That is the cry of the children, and the future of humanity demands that it shall be listened to. This is the awakening of our age, justifying Ellen Key's adoption of the striking phrase : " The Century of the Child."

CHAPTER XVIII

WOMANHOOD IN THE EAST

"Have you really, really understood the sadness of life to us? Have you felt what a crime it is to rouse sleeping souls, and then crush them, if they try to soar; what a shame it is to reduce women to the passiveness of mere chattels? Tell them, Andre, that our lives are smothered in sand, are one long death."—PIERRE LOTI'S *Disenchanted.*

IT would be highly misleading to take these words of M. Pierre Loti as expressing the attitude of the Eastern women generally, but they certainly express the feelings of the few women who have fallen under the influence of the West, and thus chafe under the restraints of a narrow creed that looks down upon them as essentially inferior creatures. Most women in the East are kept away from the blessings of education, pent up within the precincts of their homes. So far as the vast majority is concerned, they are absolutely ignorant of the very idea of feminism, and thus continue willing slaves of men. The very thought of asserting their rights and displeasing their husbands and fathers is repugnant to them. But these conditions are slowly changing. Steam and electricity have annihilated the vast distances that separate the East from the West, and the advanced notions of the West cannot have failed to percolate even to the ranks of the veil-hidden women of the East. Thus it is that during the last few decades, in India and Japan there have arisen women graduates and women doctors, women journalists and women authors. It is they who are striving to achieve the emancipation of their sisters from the benumbing influence of the past, and on all hands signs are not wanting to show that time will ultimately crown their efforts with success. But the feminism of the West is yet far away. A good deal of spade-work will have to be done, killing the deep-seated idea of an Eastern man about his superiority before a

truly widespread Renaissance of Eastern womanhood is possible.

It is with this notion that we propose to review briefly as types the status of women among Hindus, Moslems and the Parsees. In India at least, the Parsees have been the pioneer feminists, but as we shall show, their influence has not been of a universally healthy character. The growth of Hindu womanhood has been severely stunted by caste prejudices and customs, and yet paradoxically enough the chief support of caste is to be found in the ignorance of women. The progress of Moslem women again is bound up with a saner interpretation of the tenets of the Koran, which are capable of bearing a markedly feminist interpretation.

Hindu Women.

The fabric of Hindu social life rests on the injunctions laid down by the great law-giver, Manu. The laws of Manu represent one of the most complete offshoots of the human mind in the domain of law. Empires have come and gone in India during the last two thousand years, but the code of Manu has not lost its grip on the life of millions in India. It has given a stability to Hinduism, which it could never have maintained otherwise. Its very utility has contributed to its rigidity, and all that is good and bad alike in Hindu society to-day can be traced back to the authority of Manu. In his attitude to women Manu presents many conflicting sides. From passages like iii. 56—"Where women are honoured, there the gods rejoice; but where they are not honoured, there all rites are fruitless"—we may be led to imagine that women enjoy in Hindu society the dignity of earthly goddesses. But other passages go to show his deep-rooted suspicion of womankind, as in v. 147–8, and in ix. 3, where it is categorically laid down that a woman at every period of her life should be under the will of some male, whether it be her father, husband, or sons, and that she should never enjoy her own will.

Her individuality is completely crushed in that of her husband. A good wife is bidden to worship her husband "like god," even though he be "of bad conduct, or debauched, or even devoid of (good) qualities (x. 154).

According to v. 155, "for women there is no separate sacrifice, nor vow, nor even fast; if a woman obeys her husband, by that she is exalted in heaven." In vii. 149–50 a king is advised to be careful not to deliberate before women, as they are liable to disclose secret counsel. Naturally in such a state of society obedience and chastity came to be regarded as the woman's two cardinal virtues, and the ideal of chastity and perfect self-abnegation as depicted in the great heroines of Hindu epics, Sita and Draupadi, or in Savitri of the Mahabharat episode, has not by any means lost its hold on the womanhood of India. The bitterest critic of Indian institutions will yet have to give a meed of praise to the devotion of a Hindu woman to her husband and her house.

It must also be admitted that Manu expects the chastity of a wife to be rewarded by the fidelity of her husband. "Let there be mutual fidelity," he says in ix. 101, "ending in death (alone); this, in few words, should be recognised as the highest law of duty for man and wife."

But this is an ideal, which loses its practical worth, as it is coupled with a recognition of polygamy, giving a wide right to the husband over the person and the will of his wife. Wife, son and slave are declared to be without property. "Whatever property they acquire is his to whom they belong" (viii. 416). Yet in a later section, ix. 194, her right is recognised to property in certain cases, and even to-day the *stridhan* or the marriage portion belongs to the wife, the husband's right being confined to supervision and his consent in its use (ix. 199).

So far the Hindu attitude to women has much in common with what is to be found—or used to be found—in the rest of the world; a mutual fidelity insisted on in theory and yet apt to be unobserved by the males; women's chastity sought to be secured by a rigid seclusion; keeping her down through ignorance, maintaining her in abject dependence. Yet there is one point in which the Hindus' respect for womanhood is unmatched in the whole world, and that is to be found in his adoration of motherhood. Manu's language in ii. 145 rises with Oriental eloquence when he says: "A teacher surpasses in venerableness ten sub-teachers; a father,

a hundred teachers ; but a mother (surpasses) a thousand fathers." All through the course of centuries the Hindu has not lost his mother-worship. He may despise the female sex in general, he may treat his daughter with scant love, and his wife with a scant respect or a distant reserve. He may even sink to be a craven bully knocking about his wife here and there. But in the presence of his mother he is a veritable lamb, willingly sacrificing his best ideals lest he displease her, willingly bearing the yoke of her ignorance. Shivaji, the founder of the Mahratta power, and the greatest Hindu leader born during the last thousand years, owed all his enthusiasm to the inspiration of his mother, Jijibai, whose blessings he never failed to invoke. The greatness of the Hindu mother is writ large in the history of Hinduism. But it would also have to be admitted that the present low condition of India is due not a little to the power of the mother. Her ignorance has fed her conservatism. Hindu society has lost all elasticity, all healthy craving to move with the times. For years social reform as a rule has not passed beyond the stage of platform orations and pious resolutions. Even its most ardent admirers were forced to move in the old conservative grooves, for their mothers were unbending. Hitherto their power has been an obstruction to the best political interests of India. But we need not despair. With advancing education the old outlook is bound to be changed, and the power of the woman, that has been a great stumbling block in the path of liberalism in India, will be the chief instrument in achieving a rejuvenated India. Female education is the bed-rock of all reform in India, and until it comes India must plod along, an old worn-out country, vainly expecting the world to bend its knee in silent homage before her mighty civilisation, and yet without any zest to assert her position in the present comity of nations.

The feminist ideals of the West are foreign to the spirit of India, nor is it desirable that they should ever completely take possession of Indian women. But there are two directions especially in which feminism must work and must conquer, i.e. it must bring about the cessation of infant marriages, and of the pernicious injunction which restricts all widows from remarrying.

(1) *Infant Marriages.*—India of the Hindus is a regular museum of marriage customs, and no rule holds universally of them all. In many communities post-puberty marriages are customary, but generally speaking, it would be no exaggeration to say that pre-puberty marriage, especially so far as the females are concerned, is rather the rule than an exception. Such marriages tend to suffer from two severe defects. Two persons tend to be married for life—Hindus do not recognise divorce—without the wishes of the parties being taken into consideration, and hence, in course of time much misery often results, and especially so in cases where a very beautiful or a clever girl is wedded to a man immeasurably her inferior. Especially in recent years it is no uncommon occurrence for an educated wife—sometimes a graduate—to feel discontented with a husband, for whom she has neither love nor respect, and yet to whom she was married when she was not in a position to assert her will. Many a husband chafes under the compulsion of having a wife, whom left to himself he would never have married.

Admirers of infant marriages, however, assert that such unions by themselves tend to breed mutual love, that they give full opportunity to two plastic souls to adapt themselves to each other, whereas once they are grown up, and their characters and tastes are formed this adaptability becomes very difficult. They do not fail to point exultingly to the fact that in the past such marriages have contributed to a genuine conjugal happiness, and the love of a Hindu couple is one of the happiest traits of a Hindu household. None can deny the justice of this remark on the whole. But this does not affect our main criticism. For in the past women with rare exceptions were kept ignorant and more or less secluded. The outlook of a wife was bounded on all sides by her husband's family, and she was content with whatever fell to her lot. The husband, on the other hand, trained in the school of Manu, was content to have a home-abiding wife with restricted interests, and never felt the lack of this or that accomplishment in her. Moreover, in a society which legalises polygamy and condones—if it does not positively encourage—concubinage,

the husband has had the means of satisfying his needs and tastes where such satisfaction was lacking in a wife. But times have changed since the epoch of man-made laws and male assumptions of superiority. The worship of the husband as a god is not likely to survive the growing sense of self-respect in Hindu women. The Western education of males and females alike breeds expectations and ideas of conjugal happiness, which tend to be disappointed by early marriages.

But a still worse defect of such marriages is the too early parenthood they involve. A Hindu girl at the age of fourteen is already a mother. It is a terrible strain on her imperfectly developed body. Mentally too, she can hardly be expected to be fit to fulfil her great rôle in society. Her education is but short ; her mental growth is nipped in the bud. She has to be a mere vessel of ignorance and superstition. Here and there one can come across a heroic figure shouldering her burden of motherhood and yet continuing her studies. But it is an exception so rare as to be negligible in a population of millions. The physique of an average Hindu girl is not so strong as it might otherwise have been. Weak mothers giving birth to weak children have contributed to the gradual deterioration of the race.

No wonder that most educated Indians feel the necessity of checking this evil, and although most of them do not practise what they preach, for they themselves are in bondage to their ignorant mothers and wives, and they feel that the girl once allowed to attain puberty without being married may find it hard to get a suitable husband, nevertheless it is hopeful that the evil is felt, and in course of time with a generation of more or less educated mothers it may not be difficult to have post-puberty marriages. The day may even come when the wish of the girl will be paramount in the choice of her husband, and she will not be a mother till the age of eighteen or twenty at the earliest, when she will be in her full physical bloom and power, and thus revive the happy traditions of the Vedic and the epic ages long gone by.

It has been admitted by all that in ancient India woman enjoyed a great freedom. She moved about freely,

chose her husband and took part in discussions. Sita and Draupadi were not recluses. How high their social status must have been can be easily imagined from the great veneration paid to goddesses. Wealth was personified as the goddess Luxmi, and even learning and music found their fit embodiment in Sarasvati. Even Manu's authority is against pre-puberty marriages. In ix. 90, he definitely says : "A girl having reached the age of puberty should wait three years (for a husband) ; but at the end of that time she should (herself) choose a husband of like caste." That pre-puberty marriage is quite against the teaching of Hindu Shastras has been shown in a very convincing manner, and with great learning, by Mr. R. Raghunatha Rao, in his book on *The Aryan Marriage*.[1] But the Mahomedan conquest of India seems to have caused a great revolution in the status of Hindu women. In unsettled times the might of the soldier's arm tended to be the only law. The Moslems of that age were a virile race flushed with the intoxication of success and blinded by religious enthusiasm. Against their passion the Hindus sought to erect a barrier. They saw that their Moslem conquerors had a profound reverence for the teaching of their Prophet, and the Prophet had said : "You are forbidden to take to wife free women who are married, except those women whom your right hand shall possess as slaves. Such is the law of God" (Sourate iv. 28). No wonder if the Hindus sought to secure the chastity of their daughters through making them wives at as early an age as possible, and a pre-puberty marriage became a sacred institution. That the Mahomedans were responsible for the innovation among Hindus is further shown by the fact that in Rajputana and in Malabar, where the Moslems never penetrated as resident conquerors, post-puberty marriages are still common, and in Malabar at least even to-day women enjoy a freedom and a prestige that are absolutely unknown elsewhere in Hindu India.

If, then, infant marriages came into being merely as a matter of historical accident, in the newer conditions of the twentieth century, when the power and the fanaticism of Mahomedans have alike waned, it may be hoped that

[1] Published by Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras.

the Hindus themselves will make up their minds to revert to the more ancient, more natural, and more ethical marriage ideals of ancient India.

(2) *The Position of Widows.*—Infinitely more cruel than immature marriages is the position of a widow in Hindu society. Nothing can be more inhuman, more heart-rending than her miserable plight. Her degradation and misery are not a question of historical accident, but it is the studied result of the inferiority of woman in Hindu society, however much that inferiority may be sought to be glossed over by high-sounding praises in theory or by her authority in practice. Marriage is a sacrament, and hence a marriage bond is unbreakable. A woman can be given in marriage once, and once only, so that her individuality is linked up with her husband's even after his death. There would be, perhaps, something fine in such an ideal if it were recognised that a widower too cannot take another wife. But such is not the case. In some Hindu communities there is a pernicious custom requiring a widower to be betrothed on the fourth day after his wife's death. If it is argued that only a widower who has no son [1] should marry again, even this points to a patriarchal conception of society, which regards woman merely as an instrument and not as an equal partner in the act of procreation.

It would be fair to recognise that the prohibition of widow remarriage may not have worked very harshly in ancient India, and this for two reasons. Marriages of that age were post-puberty, and hence every wife may be expected to have enjoyed married life, and even in her widowhood she must have been generally faced with the responsibility of bringing up her children. Or her high sense of devotion to her husband may have persuaded her to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. The ideal of *sati* was once a living ideal, and where *willingly* lived up to, it marked the supreme divinity of Hindu wifehood.

But circumstances have changed. Sati has become

[1] Yet there is no absolute reason, from a religious point of view, why a man must procreate a son. Manu himself in v. 159 says: "Many thousands of Brahmans, chaste from youth, have gone to heaven without leaving children to continue the family."

a crime. Post-puberty marriages are not universal. Hence in a community where infant marriage is the rule it is inevitable that there should be many who become widows even before they attain puberty. Virgin widows, cruelly condemned to a perpetual negation of their sexual needs, constitute an anomaly, which has ever remained an unpardonable blemish in a social regime, which is otherwise and in many ways so intrinsically beautiful. According to the Census Report of India, 1911, widows number 17 per cent. of the total number of females as against only 9 per cent. in Western Europe. Further, while in Western Europe only " 7 per cent. of the widows are less than forty years old, in India 28 per cent. are below this age, and 1·3 per cent. (the actual number exceeds a third of a million) are under fifteen, an age at which no one in Europe is even married."[1] If every widow were capable of living up to the high ideal of chastity we can at least stand before them in mute admiration. But as a matter of fact many of them are seduced or allow themselves to be seduced, and many an infant so conceived has been done away with. It is a flagrant scandal for which poor widows are not themselves so much to blame as their relatives and friends, who in the name of religion condemn them to a living death, and yet do not scruple to exploit their helplessness.[2]

[1] *The Bombay Chronicle* of May 14, 1920 (Dak Edition), contained instructive figures, prepared by Mr. K. M. Khandwalla, as published in Navjivan.

Age.	Married Women.	Widows.
0–1	13,212	1,014
1–2	17,753	856
2–3	49,787	1,807
3–4	134,105	9,273
0–5	302,425	17,703
5–10	2,219,778	94,240
10–15	10,087,024	223,032

Thus in India there are 250,000 widows below the age of fifteen, out of whom 17,000 widows are below the age of five.

[2] The custom of levirate seems to have been recognised by Manu, for in ix. 69 he ordains: " If the (intended) husband of a maiden die after troth has been plighted, her own brother-in-law should marry her according to the following rules." This rule is that this practice be continued " until a child is conceived." This custom has completely died out now, so that a virgin widow is expected to die a virgin.

Womanhood in the East

The British Government has passed a law legalising the marriage of widows. Although the law is merely a permissive one, it was opposed most violently by the orthodox. A few, indeed, have had the courage to avail themselves of the law, but in spite of the spread of education and a widespread feeling of sympathy with the plight of widows, the number of their remarriages is disappointingly small.

These are the two defects which feminism in India must first grapple with, for they are customs unworthy of any great country. Once these defects are overcome there will be time enough for feminism to make further desirable conquests, e.g., freedom of marriage, right to divorce, and freedom of owning property. All these consequences will come of their own accord once education has succeeded to a considerable extent.[1]

Moslem Women.

Mahomedans, like Hindus, are as a rule most conservative in their habits, and their life to-day seeks its inspiration in the Koran just as much as it did a thousand years ago. There is no question that Mahomed was a great reformer, and that in every direction he was responsible for momentous changes, and nowhere more so than in his attitude towards womanhood. Before his day women in Arabia counted literally as mere chattels. The Prophet gave them a status and a prestige, the importance of which, in spite of defects, cannot be overestimated. No Mahomedan institution is so well known or so exposed to attack as polygamy. Yet even this was a marked

[1] There are other defects, too, which the sooner they are done away with the better. Such, e.g., is the *jus primæ noctis* claimed by certain religious heads. It is a disgrace against which chaste women and educated men within such communities are themselves rebelling. Fortunately this custom is restricted only to a few communities. It would not be fair on the part of a European to condemn all Hinduism as immoral because of this custom, for Christian Europe herself was not entirely free from this pernicious custom a few centuries back. The curious reader will find mention of this in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, pp. 77, 78, 80; Letourneau's *Evolution of Marriage*, p. 48; and Goodsell's *The Family*, p. 262. Prostitution as a hereditary institution is another evil, and stands exposed to all the criticisms that can be levelled against the institution of caste in general.

reform, for Mahomed strictly limited the number of legal wives to four only, instead of leaving the number of wives unrestricted, as in Arabia before his time, and in other polygamous communities even to-day. We can accept the defence of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Syed Amir Ali, when in his *Islam* (p. 29–30) he says: "A Mussulman is allowed to marry one, two, three, or four wives, provided he can deal with all of them with equity. If that be not possible, he can marry but one."[1] But it is mere unjustified and unjustifiable rhetoric when he proceeds to claim that "in Mussulman countries untainted by foreign social ideas," the profession of the Hetairæ has been "effectually stopped in Islam." The Moslem countries are no more free from the canker of prostitution than Christendom, and if it be argued that the Prophet himself never countenanced it, it could be retorted that Christ never countenanced it either, so that this mode of attack and defence does not carry us very far. But it is interesting to note Mr. Amir Ali approvingly writing: "In India hardly more than two per cent. of men have more than one wife; in Persia it is about the same, while in Turkey polygamy is extremely rare."[2] This means that Mr. Amir Ali welcomes the rarity of polygamy. In fact, it will have to be unhesitatingly accepted that polygamy rests on the fundamental assumption of woman's inferiority.

While this inferiority is fundamental in Mahomedanism, Mahomed must be praised for having safeguarded her interests in a number of ways. Mr. Amir Ali notes that in Mahomedan Law a woman enjoys privileges unknown to her Christian sister till very lately. Thus she can hold property in her own right, and in fact at the time of marriage the bridegroom has to settle on his bride a *mehr*, which belongs absolutely to her. She has a right to retain her own earnings. She has a definite share, fixed once for all, in the inheritance of her father, husband, or sons. She has a right to seek divorce in a Court of Justice, and the Koran says (Part II, chapter ii, section 228): "and they (women) have rights similar to those against them in a just manner," though it goes on to say: "and the men are a degree above them."

[1] Koran, Part IV, chap. iv, sec. 3.

[2] *The Legal Position of Women in Islam*, by Syed Amir Ali, p. 29.

These are, indeed, rights which have come to be accepted in Europe, e.g., only after the persistent demands of feminists.

A genuine Moslem looks upon women with great respect, and it has been asserted by Christians themselves that the extreme courtesy which was the distinguishing characteristic of European chivalry was really learned from the Saracens. A Mahomedan wife and mother are as influential over the male members of their family as a woman can be. Mr.—now Sir—T. W. Arnold, in his *Preaching of Islam* gives several instances of the part played by Moslem women in propagating their faith,[1] e.g., Fatima and Nafisah. Their charm, beauty and intelligence have been the inspiration of poems and romances.

But when all is said and done, Moslem women suffer from two drawbacks: the fatal facility of divorce and their seclusion.

(*a*) It is a popular idea that among Mahomedans divorce can be easily given. While this is so to a certain extent, in actual practice there are wholesome checks, e.g., a pregnant wife cannot be divorced; further, there is a period of waiting, during which love may reassert itself and a divorce be prevented; this is why distinction is made between the first, second and third divorces, and it is only the third divorce that is really final and irrevocable. Moreover, the rule requiring the full payment of the dowry to the woman acts as a sort of check, as the amount is really large enough to be deterrent in its effect. Above all this, the authority of the Prophet seems to have been against wanton divorces. "The curse of God," said the Prophet, "rests on him who repudiates his wife capriciously." But this high ideal which regards divorce as a necessary evil to be resorted to in extreme cases to put an end to unhappy marriages, has not been lived up to, and many who have had experience of Mahomedan countries have put it on record that the right to divorce has been again and again wantonly abused, especially on the part of males, so as to leave the women in the poorer classes very often in a destitute position after leading them straight into prostitution.[2] True, no law-giver himself can be re-

[1] See especially pp. 234, 410–11.

[2] Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, pp. 533–5.

sponsible for the low use made of his laws. Nevertheless, it must be noted as a defect of the Mahomedan divorce law that it does not rigidly lay down the reasons under which, and which alone, a divorce could be granted. It gives too much freedom, and leaves too much to men's sense of honour to be truly equitable.

(*b*) The leading characteristic of a Mahomedan country is the strict seclusion in which women have to live. Here, too, it has been maintained, e.g. by Mr. Amir Ali that the institution of purdah is not native to the religion of Mahomed, and that in the early history of it women were able to move about with great freedom, and that "at Cordova and Granada the Saracen lady was an undisguised spectator at the frequent jousts and tournaments which enlivened the two great cities of Moslem Spain."[1] His belief is that this custom arose later on as a safeguard against "Byzantine license and Persian luxury." Mr. Maulana Mahammad Ali, the learned translator of the Koran into English, tries to show that the language of sections 30–1 in Chapter xxiv of Part XVIII of the Koran is quite inconsistent with the practice of seclusion, and hence concludes that the authority of the Koran is against that seclusion, which has undoubtedly led to a cramping of the powers and the intellect of Moslem women. In Turkey and in Persia women are free to move about and to do the necessary shopping even. But in India women are kept behind high walls, and are not free to move out except in curtained vehicles. Such a custom stands in the way of their education, keeps them away from all healthy intercourse with the world outside, and tends to foster habits of petty jealousy and intrigue. Worst of all, it brands the female sex as essentially inferior, essentially evil, so that they have to be closely guarded like prisoners. The Mahomedan influx into India has certainly done one incalculable injury to the cause of Indian womanhood in general, and that is because the Hindu suspicions of Moslems made them, in self-defence, keep their women in seclusion too, and the old healthy traditions of ancient India had to be given a go-by. Thus throughout the whole of North India, where the Mahomedan dominance was the most marked, the institution of purdah is universal, so that

[1] Amir Ali's *The Legal Position of Women in Islam*, p. 34.

as an eminent Bengali once put it : the streets of Calcutta lead one to believe that there are no women in Calcutta!

The institution of infant marriages is entirely foreign to the spirit of Mahomedanism, but they are by no means unknown or uncommon among Indian Moslems, particularly in those communities that were originally Hindus. As among the Hindus, so among the Moslems, the defects we find in their attitude towards womanhood are mostly accretions due to foreign influences. This raises a hope that with a rise in the education of both sexes these defects will be seen in their proper perspective, and serious efforts made to overcome them in the interests of the future of India.

PARSEE WOMEN.

Numerically, the Parsees of India, mostly congregated in the City of Bombay, and numbering not more than 100,000 in the whole world, are absolutely insignificant among the teeming millions of India. But their intellect, business acumen, wealth, philanthropic disposition and their great inheritance of the Zoroastrian civilisation of ancient Persia, have given them a position in the communities of India quite disproportionate to their numbers. Originally refugees from Persia at the time of the Arab conquest of Persia in the eighth century, they settled on the shores of Gujarat in Western India. They seem to have soon fallen completely under the influence of the Gujarati Hindus, whose language and dress and marriage customs they came to adopt. For centuries they led a quiet existence, until they first came to be well known as brokers of European firms in Surat and Bombay. They achieved distinction and amassed wealth, which continue till the present day. Their remarkable gift of adaptation to changing circumstances soon made them realise the advantages of English education. It was this that gave them a lead in the public life of India in the nineteenth century. During the Hindu era polygamy was allowed, but it was put an end to by legislation in 1865; child marriages were common, and a certain amount of seclusion was imposed on women. With the advent of English education all this became a matter of ancient history, and in the beginning of the twentieth century Parsee women in their habits and in

their outlook find themselves much nearer their sisters of the West than their fellow-countrywomen.

While polygamy was neither unknown nor discountenanced in ancient Persia, women seem to have enjoyed great freedom and initiative. Some of them even distinguished themselves on the field of battle, and some reigned as queens. Zoroaster held women in such esteem that he wrote his fifth Gatha as a marriage-hymn on the occasion of his daughter's marriage, and it ranks as one of the sacred writings of the Parsees. The institution of marriage has always been held in high veneration, morbid asceticism and monkish seclusion being alike condemned as evil. In the Vendidad (iv. 3) it has been said : " The man who has a wife is far above him who lives in continence ; he who keeps a house is far above him who has none ; he who has children is far above the childless man." These ancient traditions have never been forgotten by the community, and although in these days of Western education unmarried Parsee ladies as well as unmarried Parsee women of lower rank are not unknown, yet this condition is due to peculiar circumstances standing in the way of marriage rather than to any settled aversion to marriage. Thus, while the duty to marry is recognised, there is room for healthy exceptions. In cases of unhappy marriage, the Parsee Marriage and Divorce Act of 1865 allows a loophole of escape. It is mainly based on the English Law of Divorce, and thus reproduces the main defect of it, viz., a double standard of morality, e.g., a man's adultery with a prostitute not entitling his wife to divorce, while a single lapse on her part exposes her to all the odium of divorce court proceedings. There is already a movement in the community seeking to do away with this anomaly, and to bring the divorce law into harmony with the women's growing sense of self-respect and equality.

The present prosperity and status of the Parsee community are due mainly to English education, but this education has not been by any means unmixed with evil. It has bred a false sense of superiority, not without a tinge of the snobbishness of the English upper classes and Anglo-Indians. It has bred luxurious habits, which have undermined the physique of the rising generation. It has bred a distaste for clean household duties, and

an exaggerated emphasis on costly dress, clubs and gymkhanas, a superficial veneer of respectability, shallow skin-deep enthusiasms, and, above all, that useless parasitic type of women—that used to be so common in Europe, and is not unknown even yet—ever pursuing rich young men, keen on spending money recklessly, without any high domestic ideals or high social ideals, all of whose actions are governed by a passionate desire to rivet admiring glances or to fish for compliments. Of course, the number of such people is still very limited, but an evil example is always a danger.

It is not to be wondered at, if the thinking portion of the community look with dismay at this gradual decay of the simple Zoroastrian ideals and are afraid lest the prosperity of the community under English influences lead to its ruin, while during centuries of adversity they clung tenaciously to the old creed of Zoroaster. This unhealthy influence of the butterfly species of humanity has already percolated to the upper strata of Hindu society in Bombay, and the hollowness, greed and stand-offishness of the European aristocratic and capitalistic society may breed social diseases that may work havoc in India. The feminist ideal of economic independence has already shown its head in the Parsee community, and once it takes a deep root with the attendant evils of aversion to marriage, free unions and neglect of children, the annihilation of such a small community is merely a matter of time. The degeneracy of the so-called aristocracy of Europe has found an antidote in the level-headedness of the middle classes and the growing sense of self-respect of the labouring classes. Such an antidote cannot sufficiently exist in a small community like the Parsees. The ranks of the labouring classes have been thinning very markedly. The middle classes are impelled to ape the idle rich. The sense of adaptation to the needs of the day and a revival of old ideals may yet serve to put a check to a movement which is usually honoured with the name of progress, but which in reality is only progress "in the direction of the tail."

This brief review of the status of women in the East will suffice to show how different—barring the case of Parsees—the problems of feminism in the East are from those in the West. In the West motherhood has to

be saved from the ravages of individualism. In the East motherhood as such is so far secure, but it has to be made instinct with a high ideal, of how to bear healthy children and how to rear good children. Of course, Western notions of feminism are just making their appearance, especially a demand for education and a demand for the suffrage. A few women may even be found who are radical feminists. But, take them all in all, the masses are yet unaffected to any appreciable degree. A good deal has been written and much more said—to show how different the East is from the West. There are such differences, but they are not so unbridgable as is often supposed, and all of them could be accounted for through differences in environment and in ideals. At bottom, both in the East and the West, the same immense forces are exerting themselves. In both love takes dubious forms ; in both there are unchaste wives as there are unchaste husbands ; in both there are unhappy homes and neglected children. The difference is only one of degree, so that it would be difficult to say whether the East is more moral than the West, or the West is more moral than the East. But there is one point in which the East, and especially India, easily scores, and that is in the purity of its students. Students in the West are freely allowed to sow their wild oats, and their manliness is measured in terms of their tobacco-stained mouth, whisky-laden breath, oath-polluted lips, and diseased bodies. Students in the East have yet remained as a class true in the main to the old Vedic ideal of *Brahmachari* : perfect purity of life during student days, and complete devotion to their studies. If this ideal has not been completely lived up to, it is due to the temptation of infant marriages. But even this is infinitely better than the Western callousness to the purity of youth. With such an ideal of a *Brahmachari*, and with a proper system of education, there are yet infinite possibilities for good in the youth of India, both male and female.[1]

[1] No mention has been made of women in China and Japan, for we have no first-hand knowledge ; so far as we can gather women are looked down upon in both countries. In China she enjoys great power as mother. In Japan there is an inexplicable mixture of contempt for women with a surprising amount of freedom which often degenerates into mere license.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

"Love is winged for two,
In the worst he weathers,
When their hearts are tied;
But if they divide,
O, too true!
Cracks a globe, and feathers, feathers,
Feathers all the ground bestrew."

GEORGE MEREDITH.

"Women have us back to the conditions of primitive man or they shoot us higher than the topmost star."—GEORGE MEREDITH.

So far we have studied the evolution of feminism and some of the evils with which it has inundated, or threatens to inundate, the world. But it is equally clear that it is a movement which in its saner aspects is most needed for the welfare of humanity. The history of the past was built on the ignorance, seclusion, and even exploitation of woman. The history of the future must be built on her enlightenment and freedom, so as to ensure the maximum amount of co-operation between the sexes on the basis of love. The emancipation of womanhood has often taken the form of an insensate craving to acquire man's outlook, man's ambitions, man's freedom and man's power. Such an emancipation may be possible, but it cannot be a genuinely feminine emancipation. For its very outlook is to transcend femininity, and its tendency is to achieve an independence, which on the one hand leads to a duplication of the virtues—and the defects—of man, and on the other to the production of an asexuality suicidal for the race. If such an emancipation has not entirely succeeded, it can be ascribed to the woman herself. For she constitutes a unique individual force in the life of humanity, having her own distinctively feminine contribution to make to the evolution of humanity.

Her sex and her whole physiological structure have rebelled against the feminist desire to disregard them, and her heritage from nature is a constant obstacle to her frantic efforts to disown her sex. Indeed, the greatest enemy—and the only one that ultimately counts—of Woman's "Emancipation" is the Woman herself.

But there is a sense in which woman's emancipation is her birthright, which may be dormant or suppressed for centuries, but which ultimately will establish itself, and must establish itself. That right may be briefly summarised as the right to place her womanhood at the service of humanity. She is the real creator of citizens. Hence she must be free to choose her partner for life as her heart and intellect dictate. Her personality should be respected and allowed to flower to its tallest height. Her self-respect need not be killed, merely because she depends on the earnings of her husband. She has an intrinsic right to those earnings—or a portion thereof—as a working partner in family life. On her falls the most arduous portion of a man's or a woman's training. She has to set the mark of her personality on her children, mould their budding intellect, shape their character. This is a work which she can fulfil if she is herself prepared for it by a fit training. Her education, her vote as the symbol of her living citizenship, her capacity as the maker of clean homes, her capacity to use her gifts for the welfare of humanity in so far as she can do so without any grievous injury to the duties she owes to her own family—all these capacities constitute the very kernel of her emancipation. It is this emancipation for which the world has waited so long, and it is in this emancipation that we find the promise of a rejuvenated humanity.

The significance of this emancipation lies in its emphasis on the nature of woman, and the outstanding feature of it centres round the conception of sex. Even in the case of man his sexual needs play no insignificant part in the formation of his character. An untutored sexuality has been the undoing of many a man. In rare cases a few men, through a sense of pious enthusiasm and asceticism, may rise above the thoughts of sex. But for the vast majority sexual cravings are a part of their

physical endowment, and the wise among mankind have provided a healthy outlet for it in marriage. If in man sex does not overshadow and compass his whole conscious being, it is only due to the fact of his varied interests. There are numerous outlets for his energies: academical, professional, civic, religious. His ideal is not centred round sex. There is a sense of proportion, a balance which marks his life. There may, indeed, be men whose whole being is centred in sex, but they are few and far between. The generality regard it at their best as a sacred function, at their worst as a mere relaxation from the burden of life, an interlude of pleasure in the midst of toil.

But it has been utterly different with woman. The best portion of her life is dominated by sex. With her it is not a mere pleasure, but a stern duty, which has often demanded the sacrifice of her health, her beauty and even her life. Nature has imposed on her the burden of gestation, parturition and lactation, so that a single act of sex may breed a responsibility extending over at least four years: years of anguish, years of intense worry, yet withal years of a divine bliss. She is the great conservative force in society, and nature has endowed her with characteristic differences in her physique so as to fit her for burdens from which man is completely free. We have it on the authority of physiologists that in her "the more fundamental and primitive nervous centres and the great sympathetic and vaso-motor system of nerves generally are developed to a greater extent than in man." The periodicity of her functions constitutes a marked difference, which human effort cannot annihilate. It constitutes a distinct barrier between man and woman, a symbol of nature's decree that man and woman shall be always different, laying on both apparently unequal burdens, yet which in the long run are seen to contribute equally to the welfare of humanity. Man toiling outside home, woman toiling within, together constitute an organic unity. It is a differentiation which is not peculiar to humanity. Distinctions of sex pervade the whole universe. Mythical legends of Adam and Eve, Zeus and Hera, Shiva and Parvati, Vishnu and Luxmi, all represent in symbolic form the inward unity as well

as the diversity of two sexes. The lovely flower, the humblest insect, have in them the marks of sex. If in humanity this distinction is much more marked than anywhere else, it is due to the extreme complexity of the human organism, the extreme richness of human life, requiring specialisation extending over years. It is the price that humanity has had to pay for its dominance over the whole universe. Thus woman's life revolves round her sexual function. It constitutes the beginning and the culmination of her existence. It is her very mission in life. She cannot rebel against it, she cannot annihilate it without ceasing to be woman. Woman with man's strength, man's powers, man's cravings is a possibility, but she is an abnormality, which can never be normal without a racial suicide, wherein, indeed, man and woman must cease to be. So all she can claim consistently with her physique, her mission in life and the continuance of humanity is to preserve her womanly endowments and to be trained and fitted for the highest realisation of her duty to humanity.

Since the life of woman revolves round her sex, women can be classified chiefly on the basis of sex into mothers, courtesans, women of the intermediate sex, and asexual women. The first two types have existed since the beginning of the history of man. Woman, the mother, has been by far the commonest type, and even in Europe she still predominates. An average healthy woman has an instinctive love for children, and she finds her true bliss in bearing and rearing her children. In fact, without children she feels a void in her life, which neither love for her husband nor any sort of social service ever completely fills up. A wife may forget her wifehood and loathe her husband, but a mother can hardly forget or loathe her child. The cynicism of men like Otto Weininger, who can see nothing good in women, loses all its force in the presence of motherhood, and people who cannot see in it the tenderest and the most beautiful element of humanity really prove themselves incapable of appreciating humanity in any form.[1] The medieval

[1] The fact that there have been cruel mothers, who have even gone to the length of murdering their children, does not affect our argument. For such women come under the category of courtesans.

worship of Mary the mother was a social force which Protestant Europe has lost. The progress of human society in every age and clime has rested on the stability of mothers.

The courtesan type of womanhood stands for those who have a deep sexual craving—sometimes even to morbidity—and make its satisfaction an end in itself. They have no zest for children, and seek to separate sexuality from conception. This class is best represented by the generality of prostitutes, although it has to be admitted that even among them there are women who truly belong to the mother-class and have drifted into prostitution through force of circumstances which they were too weak to control. So, too, the courtesan class is well represented even in the ranks of wedded "respectable" wives. A wife who refuses to bear children, and only seeks to satisfy her sensuality is at bottom a courtesan. Still more are those wives courtesans who are recklessly adulterous.

Women of the intermediate sex are a scientific discovery of the nineteenth century, though probably they were not unknown in previous ages. K. H. Ulrichs, who started this discussion, found men and women capable of a romantic attachment to persons of their own sex. He spoke of them as Urnings, who are also spoken of as Uranians. Mr. Edward Carpenter and others who have written on the Intermediate Sex display a distinct note of sympathy for them, asking the general public to look upon Urnings as normal healthy individuals. Their appeal gains strength when they adduce some of the greatest names in the history of men as having been Urnings as, e.g., Socrates, Plato, Cæsar, Michael Angelo, Shakespeare, Tennyson and Walt Whitman, to mention

It is interesting to note that even divorced wives who are genuine mothers hardly ever lose their love for their children. In his *George Meredith*, Mr. S. M. Ellis has an instructive passage on the life of Mrs. Meredith, even after her separation from her husband: "All those who remember Mrs. Meredith in the last years of her life state that she was always sad and constantly in tears. Her warm, vehement nature could not meet sorrow with resignation or be softened by it. She would pace up and down the room in uncontrollable emotion. She treasured up every little relic that had belonged to her son, and always wore a lock of his hair against her heart."

only a few. But it is necessary to distinguish between two types of Urnings. In the first type there is an exalted purity, a profound desire for the companionship of an individual of the same sex, a whole-hearted devotion, literally a union of two personalities, but *without* any element of sexual sensuality. In the second type there is a sexual passion with or without a liking also for the other sex. There is nothing objectionable in the Urnings of the first type, and we can go whole-heartedly with men like Mr. Edward Carpenter, who see in this homo-sexual devotion a most beautiful human relationship. From the standpoint of marriage there is nothing reprehensible in it, for Urnings of this type can, and do, marry happily, and fulfil the usual ethical functions of married life.

But when we come to the Urnings of the second type difficulties begin. Sexual inversion has been condemned as a sin by all the great religions of the world, and punished as a crime by many law-codes. Psycho-pathologists like Krafft-Ebbing and Moll speak of them as suffering from some degenerate neurosis or from morbidity, while Mr. Edward Carpenter, although brimful of toleration and even of sympathy for them, says: "The question, of course, not being whether the instinct is capable of morbid and extravagant manifestation—for that can be easily proved of any instinct—but whether it is capable of a healthy and sane expression, and this we think it has abundantly shown itself to be."[1] He recognises with Mr. Havelock Ellis that sexual inversion, though immoral in its brutal perversions, is often congenital, and hence should not be regarded as a crime any more than lunacy can be so regarded. But he seems to admit that sexual inversion is bad, "that it needs a strict self-control, and that much teaching and instruction on the subject is needed."[2] Whether it should be rigorously punished or not, whether it should be condemned as an evil and yet tolerated like prostitution are questions for jurists and enlightened criminologists to answer. But any attempt to defend it can only be regarded as an incentive to immorality, a perversion of sexual instinct, which must be primarily considered with

[1] *The Intermediate Sex*, pp. 64–5. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

reference to race, and only secondarily, if at all, with reference to it as an end in itself.

To return again to our classification of women, the fourth class comprises asexual women. They have no sexual craving, and in fact look upon sex with loathing. In so far as such a feeling is inborn there is nothing to be done but to accept it as inevitable. But in so far as it is the result brought about artificially by a system of education as, e.g., the ascetic principle which looks upon sex as something intrinsically unclean, or the system which aims at making men of women, a revision of such educational ideals should be a prime necessity. Since true marriage is based on love, and asexual women are not capable of that craving or that attachment which is the essence of love, they are *ipso facto* unfit for marriage. They need not marry, and they can make themselves useful to society in a number of ways. But we should not on this account commit the fatal mistake of praising them as normal women. Their nature is abnormal, and they must be treated as abnormal. In recent years an interesting theory has been developed that every human being is bi-sexual, so that every man has a feminine element in him, and every woman a masculine element in her. Physiologically there are evidences of this, e.g., nipples in man, and clitoris in woman. Further, the sex of a human embryo in its early history for nearly three months is indistinguishable, thus showing a common background. On the mental side woman has proved her capacity to be man's equal. All this suggests a *prima facie* justification of the theory. Whether the feminine element is ethically and mentally superior to the male element, as maintained by Mr. C. G. Leland, or the male element is superior, as maintained with an extravagant brilliance by Dr. Otto Weininger, is a mere matter of words, of temperamental leaning, and does not affect the fundamental bi-sexuality of a human being. This theory has a suggestive explanation of asexuality in man or woman. Nature in some cases fails to evolve a harmonious blending of the two elements, one element preponderates over the other, and the result is a sexual waste.

If marriage is the normal incident in the life of an

average individual, it follows that the mother-type constitutes the highest kind. Genuinely asexual women have to be tolerated as a "sport." The Urnings, in so far as they are free from unnatural cravings and are capable of normal married life, have possibilities in them of being good wives and mothers. The courtesans constitute a social disease, degrading a sacred function, breeding either prostitutes or parasites with low ideals and a defective social conscience.

In a previous chapter we have already shown why it is socially desirable that motherhood should be linked with wifehood, and we discussed the essence of a genuine marriage, and found it to lie in love as distinguished from mere lust. All love between the sexes is grounded on a physical passion, which, however, is merely the starting point of a higher ethical attachment and devotion, transforming sensuality itself into a mere symbol of a basic unity of a married couple. The physical attraction or repulsion for a member of the opposite sex is a matter of instinct, and gives a certain direction to our affections. But it would be a mistake—and many a person has paid heavily for it—to regard it as an infallible sign of a deep love. Its importance should rather be construed negatively as pointing out what person one should *not* marry, for physical repulsion or indifference may be taken as almost a sure forecast of an unhappy union. Positively, it is a good test of the possibility of a happy union, but by no means a guarantee of it. It is a matter of common psychology that in the flush of youth a pretty face has a magnetic influence, introducing chaos into one's life. It is equally a matter of common knowledge that most people outlive their first "loves." Where people are so unwise as to act immediately on the dictates of their instinct, they often build for themselves a living tomb of unhappiness. It is this which gives a point to Mr. Edward Carpenter's wise observation that "love is doubtless the last and most difficult lesson that humanity has to learn, in a sense it underlies all others." Where does this difficulty lie? Undoubtedly in finding out whether a person who is physically attractive and promises physical satisfaction has also the capacity and will to fulfil all the functions of marriage. Compatibility

of temper, fitness to be a parent, mutual capacity to love deeply, are items that a lover cannot neglect to consider except at his or her own peril, and yet, needless to say, such questions are not easy to answer, especially when blinded by passion. Mistakes are inevitable as much as in any activity of life. Nevertheless foresight has to be used, whatever be the difficulties and struggles it involves. Love has to be educated, and this education may take a long time to come, but in the interests of a higher life humanity must strenuously grope its way to a solution of the riddles of love, so as to use it as an instrument for evolving a higher and a better race of men.

At this point our attention is naturally once again drawn to the science of race culture. It is in its infancy, but it alone holds out the promise of a healthy, beautiful and noble humanity. It is immaterial whether it is called eugenics or ontogony or erotoplastics. What matters is the marriage ideal it lays down and the conditions of such marriage. For a long time to come perhaps, eugenics may not be able to give us any positive directions in the choice of marriage partners. But even now it is in a position to tell us to some extent whom *not* to select. A member of a hereditarily criminal stock like the Jenks and the Jukes, an insane person, and a person suffering from venereal diseases or leprosy, are not fit to marry, and still less to rear a family. The taint of vice or disease cuts at the possibility of a normally healthy offspring. Unfortunately, two persons in love with each other do not always take a far-sighted view of things, and in their loyalty to love endanger the interests of the race. Some time back a girl was loving a man suffering from consumption. Her doctor advised her not to marry him, but to no effect. She proved herself a noble and loyal lover, but at what cost the future alone will tell. Occurrences of this sort are not uncommon, and are mostly due to a surprising ignorance of the physiology of sex.

In actual human society there are generally two extreme attitudes to sex. One betrays no sense of secrecy, is conscious of it as a mere pleasure and thus becomes ribald and vulgar. The other tends to look at sex as a profound mystery, which should not be talked about, and

whenever it has to be referred to, it is done in all sorts of round-about ways as if the speaker were conscious of committing a sin. The first lacks all sense of delicacy; the second is marked by an extreme prudery. Both attitudes are unhealthy and both are pernicious in their effects. Like everything else in the world, sex may lend itself to vulgar and facile jokes, and its delicacy may be exaggerated into a great mystery or treated with a reserve which savours of treating it as if it were essentially unclean. But it is in reality something sacred on which the welfare of humanity depends. It has to be studied in its physiological, ethical and social aspects. The young of both sexes should be trained to look upon it as a normal healthy function. Mystification of it leads to a morbid curiosity, which seeks equally morbid ways of satisfaction. Life-force is a precious heritage to be guarded against wastage and abuse, and it is the duty of parents—and even, perhaps, of teachers—to unfold in a tactful manner the mysteries of sex, as puberty sets in and the youth of either sex enters into a world of new emotions and new experiences. Knowledge is a power which will enable a youth to fashion his sexual life to suit his own individual needs and the needs of the race.

Of course, such a course of teaching is a novelty, and the right means of imparting it will take time to mature. Even then the evil heritage of the past generations will not be obliterated by the efforts of a single generation. Even so we must strive after the good and the true. Humanity has suffered enough through ignorance of sex. It may suffer infinitely less through knowledge, especially as knowledge may breed a sense of social responsibility, so that a doctor's certificate before marriage will come to be looked upon as a social necessity rather than as an impertinent restriction of individual liberty. Plato in his *Laws*, and Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia* expatiated upon the necessity of physical examination before marriage. In our own day the necessity for it has been painfully brought home to the civilised nations by the findings of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases. Some of the American states like Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin have already moved in this direction, requiring a health certificate to accompany every marriage licence. Persons suffering

from epilepsy, tuberculosis, venereal disease or an unsound mind are declared unfit for marriage. This is one of the right modes of meeting the ghost of Malthusian fear, weeding out the unfit, instead of asking the healthy and the fit to be sterile through neo-Malthusianism. The fear of over-population is to be met only by discriminating between the fit and the unfit to raise a progeny, and not by preaching an indiscriminate restriction to all and sundry.

If neo-Malthusianism has any ethical justification it is to be found in regulating the rate of childbirth. Physiologically it has been established that too frequent childbirths are most harmful to the mother and the children alike, and hence eugenically undesirable. Annual births exhaust the feminine system, and the last child does not get the right amount of nourishment and care. On the other hand, with the sexual nature of normal men and women, it would be too much to expect a total abstention. The only compromise is neo-Malthusianism. There is a danger of its abuse. But here again with better education, especially of race culture, a couple would realise the proper period to which neo-Malthusian practices should be confined—assuming, of course, that total abstention is not possible, but this depends on the temperament, self-control and physique of parties.

Thus we find that a true marriage must fulfil the two conditions of love and fitness, so as to meet the individual and the social ends of marriage. Where these two conditions are fulfilled there is a *prima facie* possibility of a happy union. If in one direction marriage produces a restriction of our liberty and imposes responsibilities, in another direction it expands our capacity to produce as well as to consume happiness. It links us with the future of humanity, and enables us to contribute to the civilisation of the future.

We are not unconscious of a criticism that may be levelled at our view of marriage as an institution for the procreation of children. It has been even suggested that such a view neglects other ends of marriage : the pleasure and the health aspect of sexual life ; and the happiness of an intellectual companionship. Such a criticism admits only of one answer, that these ends, if separated from the procreation of children, cease to be the ends of marriage at all. For mere physical satiety

can be sought through a prostitute or a concubine, while mere intellectual companionship can be sought for in club life or in friendship selfless and profound. Marriage in its essence is not necessary for securing such extrinsic ends. In so far as they are genuine ends of marriage, they are really inseparable from a procreation of children, for the satisfaction of this end produces the satisfaction of the other ends, and this in a way which knows no peer. The birth of a child is a link which strengthens love, and its rearing gives opportunities for co-operation and companionship which will be sought in vain in any other direction.

The institution of marriage has lost its old sanctity amongst feminists, and in countries like the United States, where divorces are as cheap as water, it has already become a farce. Recently the papers had it that the French girls who married Englishmen or Indians during the last war have not been abandoned by their husbands, while many of those who had married Americans were divorced in America, clearly implying that the Americans lightly undertook the burden of marriage, conscious that they could easily get rid of it. The problem that faces the communities of the world is how to modify the institution of marriage so as to meet new conditions, especially the awakened sense of self-respect and personality in our modern women, and yet to preserve the sacredness of marriage intact. It is not a hopelessly difficult problem, and can be met by changes in three directions.

(*a*) Married women in most countries to-day enjoy the privilege of owning property of their own, and in many cases of managing it. But this right is limited only to the rich few. As a recognition of her real partnership in marriage and of the worth of her work, she should be legally entitled to a moiety of her husband's income. In case she is forced to seek divorce, the burden of supporting her must fall on her former husband, until she chooses to marry again. France has already a law recognising the wife's right to a share in her husband's income, and other countries might well emulate this innovation.

(*b*) Endowment of motherhood is another expedient proposed. With the rising tide of socialism the state

has naturally come to be regarded as the over-parent of its members, and thus comes to be recognised its duty to look after the well-being of mothers and children alike. Hence in all cases where the means of the parents are not adequate for the expenses of lying-in or the maintenance of children, the state is expected to come to their assistance. Such a measure would be especially invaluable in the case of widows or wives whose husbands, through illness or infirmities of age, have lost the power of working and earning money. Many states in America have already legislated in this direction and set a noble example.[1]

The exact details of such an endowment will have to be worked out in harmony with the economic and social conditions of each country. It is also a matter of detail how far relatives, especially sons and brothers, may be held responsible for the maintenance of their indigent kin. Above all is the question of financing such a scheme. The cost will run up to millions, and how is it to be met? We are already in the full swing of socialism. Socialism, as Bolshevism, spells a total annihilation of capitalists and an introduction of drill into the innermost recesses of private life. If this is to be averted, capitalistic society must itself shoulder certain burdens, and allow itself to be taxed heavily for the well-being of the whole community, and thus seek to combine the energy of a capitalistic regime with the peace and content of a socialistic society.

(*c*) But once this principle of the state endowment of motherhood is recognised, a corollary necessarily follows, and that is the right of the state to control motherhood or parenthood in general. The principle of the state endowment is to be found not in any abstract right of the parents to procreate and rear in any way they like, but in the ends of the state itself, which requires a continuity of efficient, healthy children. Hence it follows that the state is not interested in encouraging the birth of children of diseased parents, who, from the eugenic standpoint, ought to have avoided parenthood.

So far the right of the parents to have a complete control over their education till they attain majority—

[1] *Vide* H. G. Wells's *Socialism and the Family*, p. 29. Ellen Key's *Love and Marriage*, pp. 367–9, and Goodsell's *The Family*, pp. 542–3.

within the limits of compulsory Education Acts—has been supreme. But it is a matter of painful knowledge that in many cases this right has been exploited by parents, not through malice certainly, but through ignorance, a criminal short-sightedness about the real interests of children. In the poor classes we find many children exposed to cruelty and thoughtlessness, which react most harmfully on the community at large. Radical socialists who do not believe in the institution of marriage or family do not hesitate to gloat over such cases, and boldly suggest that such unfortunate children would be infinitely better off under state control. There is a certain amount of truth in this, but it is unduly exaggerated. Public nurseries will never come up to the loving care of a good mother, although they have their justification so far as bad mothers are concerned. In other words, it is much better that a child should be brought up well by the state than that it should be brought up ill by a bad mother. We have all along pleaded for the right of a child to parental love and care, and in his interests we have all along pleaded for the rights of mothers. But we shall not make a fetish of these rights, where they are flagrantly abused. Where parents realise and fulfil their responsibilities more or less well, state control of parents is an impertinent intrusion. But where children are flagrantly seen to suffer, any state worth the name must step in. This is the only justification for the radical socialists' ideal. From our standpoint such an intrusion must be exceptional, just as much as living in a hospital, a lunatic asylum or a prison is exceptional. There will be abuses and defects in such state control, exceptional though it be. But such abuses in a community becoming more and more educated, enlightened and humane, are bound to grow less and less. It is in such hope, such faith—so long as it does not transcend the bounds of possibility, as so many socialistic proposals do—that all progress is grounded.

None of these suggested changes is so revolutionary as to affect a single good element in the institution of the family, while they will assuredly go far to minimise the various defects inherited from the past. The keynote of genuine progress is to be sought in evolution, and not in revolution with its infinite risks. The woman

of the past was the slave of man. She commanded respect and obedience as mother, and sometimes her beauty exacted the blind idolatry of men. But her sex was looked down upon with contempt. The woman of the future will be a highly self-conscious being, alive to a sense of her dignity and the importance of her function. We have only to guard against her extreme individualism, which may degenerate into an unhealthy asexuality or a general looseness of sexual life. In the past her interests have been narrow though deep, her talk flippant and light. In the future her education will end her flippancy ; she will refuse to be a mere parasite, she will rise to her full height and cradle humanity into beauty, truth and love. She will bear the sacrifice of maternity and yet be prepared as opportunities permit to place the wealth of her intellect and motherly heart at the service of humanity. If Abraham Lincoln suffered martyrdom in the cause of slaves, it was Harriet Beecher Stowe who had prepared the soil for his genius and superhumanity. If William Stead suffered imprisonment and calumny in his struggles against prostitution, it was Josephine Butler who had battled against heavy odds. If " Pussyfoot " Johnson is tramping the world in the cause of temperance, it was Frances Willard who had pioneered the cause. If statesmen have been keen in waging wars, it is Bertha von Suttner who raised her voice and battled against war. If scientists have supplied armies with weapons of destruction, it was the Lady of the Lamp who undertook to soothe and cure the agonies of wounded soldiers. The great seers of the past, whether it be Zarathustra of ancient Iran, or Jesus of Nazareth, Gautama Buddha or Sri Krishna of India, or Mahomed of Arabia, have always looked forward to a spirit of vast sympathy binding the units of humanity. Their ideals will fructify when women take their rightful place, and teach their children, not the brutal heroics of war, but the glories of peace; not a family selfishness, but social sympathy ; not a narrow patriotism, but a sense of international justice ; not a zest for wealth, but a zest for culture. Humanity in the past failed for lack of the right impetus from mothers. If it is ever to succeed, it will be only through mothers : They are the infinite reservoirs of human beauty, human truth, human goodness.

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