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**CHRONOS**  
**OR**  
**THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY**

## TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

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of this Book*

# CHRONOS

OR

THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY

BY

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CHRONOS  
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*Preamble*

The future of the family is to be the main topic of this little book. If a wider synopsis of its contents be asked for, we may say that it will consider the effects of sexual reform on family life and education. Bearing that synopsis in mind, let us make sure what we are talking about.

*Definitions of the Family, the Home,  
and Education*

When I speak of the 'family',  
I mean a group of persons consisting



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of a father and a mother and one or or more children procreated by them, persons living together in a durable association. Like all biological classifications, this one must be elastic. One or other parent may have died. Some other near relative than a parent may function as ' head of the family '. The children in the family are not necessarily the children of both parents. There may be other reservations and modifications, but the essentials of the ordinary conception of ' family life ' are what I describe—and the term, as will be shown, is not entirely synonymous with ' home life '.

By a ' home ' I understand a group of persons consisting of a small number of adults and a somewhat larger but still small number of children living together in permanent association, the adults presiding over the upbringing

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of the children, but not being necessarily connected with these by ties of blood.

It will be seen that the home is the wider concept, and includes the concept of the family. The decay and disappearance of the family need not necessarily mean the decay and disappearance of the home. The reader will please be good enough to get that fact clear at the outset.

When I speak of 'education', the term is used in a very wide sense to include all the environmental influences which act upon the young in their progress from birth to adulthood, and is used with special but not exclusive reference to those influences which are deliberately controlled by elders. Accepting the customary legal fiction, I shall assume for the purposes of this argument that the young of the human kind become adult at the age

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of twenty-one—even though we all know that a fair proportion of us continue to think as children much longer than that, while more than a sprinkling of humanity is never able to put away childish things.

This essay, then, is concerned with the effect of sexual reform upon family life as above defined, and upon education as above defined.

### *Significance of the Title*

But why 'Chronos'? Because my main thesis is that the family, however venerable an institution, may prove fleeting in duration when compared with the durability of human society. Cronus, one of the early gods of Greek mythology, swallowed his own children.

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The identification of Cronus, the father of Zeus, with Chronos, the impersonation of Time, may or may not be erroneous, but it has the warrant of age-long acceptance. Let us accept it here, and ask ourselves whether Father Time is not about to devour his own offspring—the family.

### *Transitoriness of the Family as a Social Institution*

Is it not almost a commonplace to say that such an institution as the family is not necessarily a permanent part of human social life? At least it must be a commonplace to the readers of the 'To-Day and To-Morrow' series, which is obviously not addressed to hidebound conservatives. Most of

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them are, in one direction or another, professional disrupters of the established order of things. Many of them, certainly, are 'sexual reformers', and therefore would-be revolutionists, who wish to shatter the old world to bits, and remould it nearer to their heart's desire. They challenge some of the great tabus by which the old order is maintained. They know that the family did not exist until long after man emerged from the primal brute, that the clan phase in which children probably had no recognized father at all, and no recognized mother after the period of suckling was over, must have lasted in human history for tens of thousands of years, where the family phase has lasted only thousands. Such, at last, is one accepted theory, of which Müller-Lyer was a talented exponent.

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### *Müller-Lyer's Views*

That famous sociologist makes casual references to the transitoriness of the family in the work best known to English readers, *The History of Social Development* (in the original German, *Phasen der Kultur*). He also devotes a whole volume, *Die Familie*, to the subject ; but since that book has not yet been translated, I will quote from another work of his, a translation, now in the press, entitled *The Evolution of Modern Marriage*.

On page 165, speaking of ' the rise of the family ', he says : " As long as the clan organization was in force, man, woman, and children had their own home in the clan as well as in the family. Therefore they could separate more easily, because the

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children and the woman always found shelter in the clan. But as the clan disintegrated, the family alone had to undertake the care of the women and children, and all the obligations of their upbringing. Therefore, the family had to be strengthened by permanent marriage. Hence the State, the political heir of the clan, now supported permanent monogamy by its authority and by law. Since it rested on the family structure, it was to its life interest to turn all its powers towards establishing an orderly family life. Moreover, the interest of the military State was averse to polygamy for still another reason, namely, military interest. For in respect to quantitative production, monogamy gives the largest increase in population."

Two pages later, speaking of 'the decline of the family' he writes:

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“ The most important characteristics of the late family phase are : the . . . disintegration of the family, the introduction of divorce, differentiation in the callings of women, their rise to a higher social position, and the fall of man’s supremacy. . . . Economic development is . . . at the bottom of these important changes. . . . Above all, they are brought about by the capitalistic system which first began in the high family phase, where it grew with great speed and power, and by taking the production of goods away from the family and into society as a whole, it brings in its train the decay and downfall of the family. . . . With the lessening of family production, the domestic duties of women have lost their value ; hence women have been forced to earn their livings and attain economic independence. This



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procedure has already grown to such an extent that in Germany, for example, over nine million, almost a third of all the women, are wage-earners."

### *Bachofen, Frazer, and Freud*

Obviously a social institution subject to a 'rise' and a 'decline' cannot be regarded as a stable and essentially permanent feature of human life. The idea of the 'origin of the family' out of social institutions of a very different type is familiar. Bachofen's writings have never been translated into English, but the notion of matriarchy which he did so much to popularize has secured universal currency. Then there is another variant of the clan theory, which some know best through reading

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*The Golden Bough*, while to others it has come by Freudian channels—the theory, according to which an exceedingly disagreeable Old Man (the prototype of God Almighty) was the supposed husband of all the wives and the putative father of all the children of the tribe.

Each patriarch sat  
King, priest, and parent of his growing State.

Enough, even if my readers do not think of the family what the undergraduate in the divinity examination said of marriage, that it is 'a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God', they know that it was born in one phase of human history, and may die in another. The question I want then to consider is, whether

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the family is to-day, if not dying, at any rate on the way to dissolution, in large measure owing to the solvent influences of sexual reform. There are other causes of decay, economic causes, which are no less potent ; but I will try to keep economics and King Charles' head out of the picture !

### *Economic Aspects of the Problem*

Yet I cannot keep economics out altogether, for one of the sexual reforms I have to consider is intimately intertwined with economic changes. I refer to the emancipation of women. The break-up of the patriarchal family is simultaneously cause and consequence of the economic independence of women. As long as child-bearing women are

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economically dependent on their male sexual companions, one of the most essential pillars of the patriarchal family-edifice is intact. But when women can become independent wage-earners, salary-earners, or fee-earners, on equal terms with men, they have alternative careers to marriage, house-keeping, child-bearing, and child-rearing.

On the wage-earning, the 'proletarian' level, this became manifest, and its solvent influence on family life was pointed out by shrewd observers, long before the modern movement for women's emancipation had become a grave menace to the middle and upper class family, to 'bourgeois' family life. In a famous document, *The Communist Manifesto*, penned just before the revolutions of 1848, Karl Marx replied to the charge that com-

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munists were trying to abolish the family, by saying that the ' bourgeois ' economic system was abolishing family life for the urban working-class by taking the wives out of the homes into the factories and by setting the children to labour at the looms. On the middle-class level this was the year of the publication of *Jane Eyre*, an ' advanced ' work in its day, but one which contained no foreshadowing of contemporary developments in the life of women ; and it was ten years before Elizabeth Barrett Browning startled the smug mid-Victorian world by the writing of *Aurora Leigh*.

When those classics were written, the middle-class woman still had little thought of leaving the parental home except to enter the home of a husband. If she remained unmarried, she was an ' old maid ', or a ' professional

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aunt'. The 'bachelor woman' had still to be invented. But the war and post-war trends have greatly accelerated changes that had been going on for half a century, and self-supporting women of the 'intellectual' and other strata of the middle-class now abound.

### *The New Type of 'Unmarried' Women*

An increasing proportion of them remain unmarried, but they do not accept the position of the old-time 'spinster', and the keenest male observer will often nowadays find it difficult to guess whether a woman he meets for the first time is married or unmarried. Many of the women of the new type are probably 'un-

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married ' only in the legal and technical sense, only in so far as they do not cohabit openly with a sexual partner in order to found a family. What is certain is that these economically independent women have sexual needs, no less than their married sisters. How far the process of sexual emancipation has gone hand in hand with economic and social emancipation, there are (from the nature of the circumstances) no statistics to show. But whether we approve or disapprove, there must be general consent to the proposition that it has gone a long way. The contemporary press, novels, and films (to say nothing of the diatribes of the champions of the old order) combine to prove that the ' *mores* ', the ' ethics ', the ' customs ', of women in sexual matters are rapidly changing ; and that the old hard-

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and-fast line between sheep and goats, the old easy classification of women into wives, spinsters, and whores, already belong to the Dark Ages. Over and above companionates (sexual intimacies between men and women who live together openly without intending to have children), there is an increasing number of sexual relationships of a more or less clandestine character between independent men and women who unite for mutual sexual satisfaction on an utterly different footing from that of the aforetime dominant male and his subordinate mistress or paramour.

Such unions are still irregular, for they have not yet secured full social recognition. Social recognition lags behind practice, while law (as always) limps painfully in the rear. Still, there are certainly enough of them to



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threaten what moralists of the old school term 'the sanctity of family life'. They have been called into existence mainly by social and economic changes ; but in the last analysis and as a widespread phenomenon they are rendered possible by another great solvent of the medieval sexual order—birth-control. It is to the effects of birth-control on marriage, family life, and education, that we must now turn.

### *Effects of Birth-Control on Marriage, Family Life, and Education*

The outstanding importance of birth-control from this point of view is that it makes companionates and sub-rosa relationships possible—sexual unions in which there is to be no family

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because there are to be no children ; and that within the family it renders feasible the reduction of the number of the children to a minimum. In a film I saw recently, one of the finest silent films ever screened, *The Lost Patrol*, a private asks the chief : ' You married, Sarge ? ' The sergeant shakes his head, and looks an answering query. The other man takes out his pocket-case, produces first a picture of ' Trouble and Strife ', a formidable-looking woman dressed in the fashion of 1900 ; then one, two, three, four, five photos of youngsters at various ages ; ending up with a snapshot of twins aged about two. The sergeant grins sympathetically, and inquires : ' Any MORE ? ' On both occasions (the film was so good that I went to see it a second time) the audience rocked with laughter. To the modern,

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there is always something tragi-comic about a large family. The change has been rapid. I am one of a family of five children. My companion and collaborator is one of eight. Those were the normal families of middle and late Victorian days. No one laughed at them then. If you go back a generation further, in our own two stocks, you will find families of sixteen or seventeen, and of nineteen or twenty, respectively. (We are not absolutely certain as to the numbers, for we were not there to see—and in such rabbit-warrens as these, the happy parents sometimes ‘lost count’.)

### *A Significant Epitaph*

At Clavering in Essex there is to be seen an epitaph to the first of the

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three wives of the squire: "Here lyeth buried Mary, wife of Haines Barke, of this parish, esquire, by whom he had issue fouer sonnes and nyne daughters, six of them died in their infancy, the last was still-born, and within five days after his birth she died, and as she was fruitful in children soe she was fully indued with the properties of a good woman and a faithful lovyng and obedient wife to her husband who happily enjoyed her neere sixteen yeares until the sixteenth daye of December, 1653. . . . She dyed in the 36th yeare of her age.'

No one saw the tragedy of such families in the bad old days, the tragedy for the women who had to bear the brunt. To us, a family of one, two, or at most three children seems to be normal; and few people

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recognize, as yet, that there is a tragic element in the modern family too—a tragedy for the child which has to grow up in so unnatural an environment. Hear Müller Lyer once more (*History of Social Development*, p. 229): ‘Man is a social being, and his education must above all things be a social one. In the large families of former times the necessary conditions were present, but in the modern family the children are frequently brought up in isolation till their school-days, and by this means is evolved the germ of that irritable and egotistical character which spoils so many lives.’

I am not fond of using the question-begging term ‘natural’ where so essentially artificial a being as civilized man is concerned; but we hardly need a psycho-analyst to tell us that

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the 'natural' environment of a child is mainly composed of other children, and that overmuch association with grown-ups (be they the child's own parents or not) cannot fail to be unwholesome. Still, the psychologists' direct evidence that the children of the one-child and two-children families have their teeth set on edge because their parents have eaten the sour grapes of birth-control, comes as a valuable reinforcement of a-priori considerations.

### *The Sour Grapes of Birth-Control*

'The sour grapes of birth-control !'  
A strange phrase, this, some of my readers may think, from the pen of one who has been a fairly enthusiastic

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birth-controller, both in theory and in practice, for four decades and more. But I have never shut my eyes to the seamy side. Beyond question, one of the great disadvantages attendant on contraception is that it makes the family, on the average, too small to be a wholesome environment for the children. No doubt if I were born in a slum, of parents whose whole domicile was a single room, I would rather be an only child ; and I should find an abundance of playmates in the street. But then, in such circumstances, I would rather not be born at all ! I am talking of people above the slum level, and below the level of the idle-rich—average sort of people in the working class and the middle-class. Well, people of that sort will to an increasing extent practise birth-control, whether it has a seamy side

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or not. What are we going to do about the seamy side?

### *Utopism Disclaimed*

Let me modify that expression : ' What are we going to do about it ? ' Much as I desire to see foresight applied to the control of human affairs, my object in *Chronos* is rather to discuss possibilities and to analyze extant tendencies—than to present a picture of Utopia, ready-made, cut-and-dried ; and to urge enthusiasts to set to work at once in order to fit reality to my pattern. I am not, as the phrase goes, ' out for propaganda '. On the other hand, to forestall criticism of certain ideas I am about to unfold, I want also to disclaim the notion that I am merely an elderly



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philosopher talking through his hat, as Plato was when he discussed family life and education in the *Republic*. One can always read that great work with renewed pleasure, but one wonders as one reads whether the author knew anything at first hand of marriage or family life, whether he had had any children, whether he had had practical experience as an educator—for his peripatetic discourses in the Academy hardly come within the scope of what we are here considering as education. For my own part, I have brought up an only child ; and for two years I was a teacher in a Japanese High School. For twenty years, too, I was in general medical practice. Young human beings are creatures I have actually handled.

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## *Fundamental Considerations*

Let me draw attention to certain things which were perhaps less obvious in Plato's day than they are in our own ; and to certain other things which, like birth-control and its consequences, are peculiar to our own time.

(1) The people who want to bear children, and the people who actually do bear children, are not always the people who are best fitted to rear children.

(2) Many people who do not want to bear children, or are ill-fitted to bear children, are eminently suited to rear children.

(3) Where birth-control prevails widely and while the methods still remain untrustworthy, an increasingly large proportion of the children born

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will be unwanted children—the children of persons who did not intend to have children at all.

(4) A good many of the children born will be the children of parents who are too 'feckless' to practise birth-control. They will in that case be children with a suspect heredity, born into a family environment that is likely to be below average in equality. If they could be removed to a better home environment they would have a better chance.

(5) What we call 'our' children are only 'our' children in a very restricted sense. Primarily they are the children of the human race. Secondly, they are the children of what H. G. Wells has called the 'over-parent', the organized community of which we are members. In the third place, they are the children

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of the particular strands of germ-plasm of which we, the actual father and mother, are merely the carriers.

(6) The 'paternal instinct' is an extremely artificial thing. Human beings have no such instinct to the degree to which many birds (for example) have it. The 'maternal instinct' is stronger and more real; but to a large extent it is a general instinct for 'mothering', like that which induces any recently delivered cat to carry to its basket stray kittens belonging to another litter. Its intensity and durability vary much from woman to woman. Nor are we entitled to assume that a woman in whom it is strong will be a wise, efficient, and successful mother. Nevertheless, the woman and the man who are to care for children, especially young children, should be endowed with a large

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modicum of the qualities we sum up under the term 'parental' instinct. People who do not like children ought not to bring up children, even if they happen to be parents.

(7) The community as 'over-parent' is to an increasing extent relieving the parent of parental responsibilities, and is assuming responsibilities which few parents have ever effectively assumed. It would be irrelevant to discuss here the merits and defects of existing State education or of extant private schools, but every one knows that the place where children from six to seven onwards till they reach the age of sixteen to eighteen now find an environment that is better for them than the home or the street, is—with all its faults—the school. There they have the necessary association with other young persons, tempered

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by contact with elders who are specialists in the educational functions, and are certainly on the average much better educators than any average parent can be. I am not talking only or chiefly of the information which is imparted at school ; I am talking of the whole environmental process whereby the child is ' civilized ' in accordance with prevailing standards. Of our civilization we may say, as Touchstone said of Audrey, ' A poor thing, my lord, but mine own '. It is better than savagery, better than Rousseau's ' state of nature '. Our children have to attain it before they can amend it, and in large measure they attain it in the school. They learn there, not ' to suppress their passions ' (as psychoanalysis has shown, that way madness lies ) ; but they learn, if I may borrow Bernard Shaw's wise phrase, ' to control

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their reflexes ' in the degree to which such control is essential to civilized life. Educationists are busied just now discussing the nature and value of school discipline. Let me say in passing that bad discipline is punishment that tries to make children suppress their passions ; whereas good discipline consists of precept, training, and (above all) example, that help them to control their reflexes wisely. The school, then, is an answer to the facile generalization that ' institutional treatment is bad for children '.

(8) Generally, no doubt, when that statement is made, people are thinking of places where children are herded in large numbers, and all the year round. Except for ' all-the-year-round ', a boarding-school is an ' institution ' in this sense. But there are good boarding-schools ; and the immense

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majority of the schools in this country are not boarding-schools but day-schools. Furthermore, a good institution is better than a bad home, or the street. This has been made very plain to me by a recent experience. A stone's throw from my own dwelling is a fragment of slum, now being improved out of existence, while the inhabitants scurry on to another slum quarter carrying their bugs and their babies with them. A girl of four, the child of feckless parents of the type alluded to above, having been removed from a one-room family habitation here to a convent school in Somerset, is blossoming like a flower, morally and physically. Another girl, a little older, the child of better stock, and doing well at the elementary school as far as intelligence went, was going wrong morally, because



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she spent her leisure time in the street—her parents, shopkeepers, being too busy to look after her. She has been sent to the same convent, and promises well. I, who am as irreligious a person as any to be found in a day's journey, am not likely to attribute the benefit to Catholicism! There are good Catholic schools as well as bad ones. This is a good one. The Catholicism is a minor issue. These girls, the children of Catholic parents, are benefiting because they have been transferred from a barbarizing environment to a civilizing one, from bad homes to a good institution.

(9) There is a period during which family life is essential, both for mother and for child. About the intra-uterine stage there is at present no option. In the last act of *Back to Methuselah*, Bernard Shaw toys with other possi-

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bilities, envisaged also in J. B. S. Haldane's remarks on 'ectogenesis' in *Daedalus, or Science and the Future*, and in J. D. Bernal's *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil*.<sup>1</sup> There is no sexual reformer but must wish that woman could be freed from the slavery of child-bearing, and that our offspring might come into the world out of a broken eggshell. But 'inter faeces et urinam nascimur' seems likely to be true for a long while yet. If we are talking 'practical politics' we shall not contemplate the freeing of woman from this part of Eve's curse. And after birth there remains a period when the mother's lot and the child's are closely bound together for physiological reasons even more than psychological. This is not merely because breast-feeding is infinitely better for

<sup>1</sup> Both in "To-day and To-morrow" series.

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the child than any known method of artificial feeding ; not only because it is in the long run less trouble to the mother ; but also because it is necessary in the mother's own interest. The mother who suckles her baby does better *for herself* than the mother who engages a wet-nurse or brings up her baby on the bottle. Nowadays, too, if she should be poorly endowed as a nursing mother, there are methods of endocrine treatment that will probably enable her to overcome this difficulty. A woman who has a baby, whether by accident or design, will, for her own benefit as well as for the child's, have to make up her mind to be its slave for a considerable time after the birth.

(10) Remains to be considered, where the child's education (please recall the definition) is to take place during

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the years between infancy and the school-age ; and, in the case of older children, during out-of-school hours and in the holiday seasons. If the family is disintegrating, and if one-child and two-children families are bad for children, what is to become of the children at these odd times ?

### *Spontaneous Decay*

Before I try to answer this question, let me repeat that I am not, in this matter, a propagandist. My ambition goes no further than to adumbrate. The problem is not fearfully urgent. Some of us are trying to reform our schools. Others are trying to reform our social system. Intelligent persons, to-day, are sexual reformers. Some of us call ourselves revolutionists ;

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and if we don't do that, we are called revolutionists by our adversaries. Meanwhile, as a result of our efforts, or independently of them, the disintegration of the family is going on, and something will have to take its place.

### *Disappearance of Sex Dominance*

We have considered what used to be called the Woman's Movement as one of the prime causes of the decay of this venerable and hoary institution, but we have to look upon that movement as itself part of a secular process which has wider implications than a mere revolt of discontented females against the old saw that 'woman's place is the home'. The saying was manufactured by dominant males and

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parroted by subordinate females, just as the patriarchal family itself and the Roman *patria potestas* were the climax of an epoch of male dominance and the fixation of private proprietary rights in the male line. Biologically considered, however, motherhood is a relationship with far more evidential value about it than fatherhood has, and it seems likely that, in certain varieties of the clan phase, fatherhood was of no account and that (motherhood being all-important) matriarchy prevailed. There certainly have been peoples among whom women ruled, although the Jews and the Romans—the ancient nations from which the traditions of European civilization are mainly derived—were so strongly patriarchal that to most of us patriarchy seems more ‘natural’ than matriarchy. Really, of course, there is nothing

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'natural' about human social institutions, for they are not, like the social institutions of the social insects grounded upon ineradicable peculiarities of our nervous systems. They are all artificial, all matters of convenience, custom, and tradition, and as such are fleeting. Now the present trend of civilized social life seems to be, not indeed towards a revival of matriarchy, but towards a balance between the sexes; and of that wider movement 'feminism' is merely one expression. But is it likely that in a world where men and women tend more and more to meet as equals and to work together at the same kind of things, an institution which involves a lifelong distinction between the man as breadwinner and the woman as family-minder can continue to hold the premier place?

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### *Divorce and the Family*

Increasing facilities for divorce unquestionably threaten the stability of the family, and the religious fanatics who resist the spread of such facilities on that very ground are justified in their contention. The patriarchal family with which for two thousand years we have been concerned in the western world has not been, like that of the Jews and Mohammedans and many other Orientals, based upon a plurality of wives or upon the frank acceptance of a multiple concubinage. When the Mormons attempted to revive this time-honoured institution in the modern civilized world, the public opinion of virtuous America proved in the long run too strong for them. We have passed Seraglio Point, even



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though we have not yet rounded Cape Turk, and the western patriarchal family was based upon the Christian conception of lifelong monogamy and monandry. The pair living in wedlock, fast bound together by the laws of God and man, formed the permanent substratum of the family, and were (barring accidents, wars, and crusades) always on hand to care for their joint offspring until these had traversed the lengthy period of human nonage. But in our own species there does not seem to be any instinctive basis for the institution of permanent monogamy and monandry, such as exists in many of the lower animals and very notably in certain birds.

The 'laws of God', as stated by persons who believe themselves acquainted with these mysteries, conflict

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with unmistakable polyandrous and polygamous trends in many persons' make-up, or with constitutional fickleness of temperament and a craving for fresh experiences ; and the result is that in modern times the laws of man are gradually being reshaped in a way that will harmonize them more effectively with the realities of our manifold nature. It may be that habit, convenience, and in exceptional instances a perdurability of love, will continue to make lasting unions the rule rather than the exception—at any rate after a good deal of experimental mating, and when the stormy years of early passion have been lived through. But no competent observer of social trends can doubt that *legally enforced* permanency of mating will soon be a thing of the past, and that the religions which insist upon such

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permanency will put an increasing strain upon the fidelity of their adherents. Therewith the legal and subsequently the religious sanctions of enduring monogamy and monandry will have disappeared, and marriage in the present meaning of the word as the foundation of family life will have ceased to exist.

### *Marriage and the Irish Free State Census of 1926*

Some recently published figures have an interesting bearing on this conflict between religion and reality. It appears that in Ireland, or rather in the Free State, men and women marry extraordinarily late, or not at all, and that the reluctance to marry

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is increasing. There may be several factors at work, but it is significant that the modern country in which men and women show themselves more unwilling than they are anywhere else to enter the bonds of holy matrimony should be one in which the predominance of a Church which holds marriage to be indissoluble is most unchallenged. It might have been expected that this comparative infrequency of marriage would make the Free State an exceptionally 'adult' country ; but, owing to the Roman Catholic attitude towards birth-control, such marriages as there are, are extremely prolific, and thus the balance is redressed. The smallness of the family, which makes it an unsuitable environment for the upbringing of children, has not so far become conspicuous in Catholic Ireland. Whether

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in other respects the State as overparent might not devise a better milieu for the rearing of its future citizens than is provided by a crowded Irish cabin, may be left an open question. Enough to remember that the Irish Free State is not the whole civilized world, and that the majority of civilized people do not take their orders from Rome any more than from Moscow. It is time for us to return to the question of a conceivable substitute for the decaying family.

### *Scattered Homes as a Possible Substitute for the Family*

But, if the family is decaying, what will replace it? Let me recall the distinction I drew in my exordium

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between the family and the home. A 'home', I said, is a group of persons consisting of a small number of adults and a somewhat larger but still small number of children living together in permanent association, the adults presiding over the upbringing of the children, but not being necessarily connected with these by ties of blood. Cannot we imagine that, as the community becomes more socialized, a division of social labour may take place in some such way? Cannot we, if we use our eyes, see indications that such a division of social labour is already beginning? Think of having all the persons best fitted to run such homes, those with a taste for it as well as an aptitude, specializing along these lines, making true homes, in which children of various ages could enjoy the advantage of growing up

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in surroundings which would reproduce all that was best in the big family of old days while scrapping its multifarious defects. A good many of the grown-ups presiding over these homes would probably have two or three children of 'their own' as part of the flock. Others would be childless people with a talent for parenthood. (Is not talent too cold a word? Many of us remember a nurse with a genius for motherhood, to whom we owed more than to our mother by blood!) I am told that, as part of the New School movement, schools which embody many of the requisites above outlined exist in various parts of the world. I know of two near London which I have myself visited: the Russells' school in the Hampshire downs, where their own children form the nucleus; and the Caldecott community at Goff's

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Oak, a co-education school for children of working-class origin, orphans for the most part, to which youngsters can be admitted at any age past babyhood, and, say the principals, 'the earlier, the better'.

Twenty years ago, when I was a Poor Law Guardian, schemes were already afoot for taking Oliver Twist out of the workhouse and putting him into a 'cottage home' conceived on some such lines. We wanted to get rid of the curse of 'institutionalism' in the bad sense. I am out of touch with these developments now, but I don't think much progress has been made as yet in that direction. When I speak of such homes, some of my readers, I know, will think of 'baby farms'; and others, perhaps, of a pitiful place like the one described in Kipling's story *Baa-baa, Black Sheep*.



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Well, these dens of wretchedness are no worse than many in which even well-to-do people bring up their own children. The dark places of the earth are full of misery. But there are brighter possibilities. Its defects notwithstanding, I value our elementary school system ; and that, as it exists to-day, might have seemed as remotely impossible to an early Victorian as my fancy of scattered homes to replace the disintegrating and dwindling family may seem to lovers of the antique. The latter sometimes remind me of the old lady (was not she in ' Punch ' ?) who, when asked to make a journey by airplane replied : ' I don't like these new-fangled methods. Give me the *natural* way of travelling, by rail.'

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### *Envoy*

In *Chronos*, then, I have wanted to emphasize my conviction that the family really is disintegrating and dwindling under stress of sexual reform, and especially under stress of birth-control and the emancipation of women.

As to Promethean possibilities, I have sketched one, and no doubt there are many others. Of this much I am certain, that, if civilization is to thrive, a substitute for the decaying and disintegrating and dwindling family must be found.

To avoid misunderstanding and to forestall a particular kind of criticism, I wish to disclaim the idea of State compulsion in this matter. Liberty is often abused, but so are powers of compulsion ; and, since the core of

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sexual reform is release from a number of needless restraints, sexual reformers should be especially careful to hold in leash the reformer's natural inclination to manage other people's lives for them. ('Be my brother, or I will slay thee!' the French revolutionists of '93 are reputed to have said. 'Liberty or death! Think it over and choose between them!' were the actual words of Joseph Fouché as one of the proconsuls of the Convention in that stirring epoch.) At the recent London Congress of the World League for Sexual Reform, one of the speakers was iterating the desirability of an enactment that would give the State power to sterilize 'the poor' who should venture to procreate more than two children! That is a much larger advance in the way of compulsory sterilization than I, who

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publicly advocated compulsory sterilization of certain types of the feeble-minded more than twenty years ago, am inclined to think expedient. Certainly I do not want the State, whether revolutionized or unrevolutionized, to break up the family by force—any more than I wish to ‘communalize women’. I am emphatic in these repudiations because, in another connexion, I have been pilloried as an ‘enemy of liberty’.

I am not an enemy of liberty, but am in general an enthusiastic champion of as much liberty as is ‘compatible with the like liberty of others’. In respect of substitutes for the decaying family, I am not contemplating any more compulsion than is at present exercised when children are obviously neglected or maltreated by their parents. I do not expect the future State

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to act 'Platonically', to seize the children of non-consenting parents—though I think it very likely that there will be some form of compulsory service for young adults, just as there was during the late war, but now to be directed towards humaner ends. That is another story.

As regards the homes I have in mind, I do not think there will be any compulsion, if development takes that course. The scattered homes—in the country for the most part—will grow in number as the decay of the family proceeds; and it will more and more become the recognized thing to send children to them when the age of suckling is over. Whether they will be mainly national and municipal, or mainly private concerns, depends on the general trend of social development, and is outside the scope of the

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present inquiry. For children of school age, they would, of course, have to dovetail into the school system. But I do not formulate any cast-iron plan. I want to launch the idea of scattered homes as things now in the making, and likely to replace the old family system, which is already growing worm-eaten and obsolete. I am not alarmed by the thought of the disruption of 'ties of blood'. Sometimes, in my more revolutionary moods, I am inclined to think that they are 'useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished'. Anyhow, they counted for little with primitive man, and perhaps will count for still less when (if ever) man becomes truly civilized.

'Ties of blood' do not make people love one another, or treat one another wisely and kindly. We must ignore the outworn superstition that they do,

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and see if a better home-environment can be found than the home-environment of unwanted children and the children in birth-controlled families. Above all during the earlier years of childhood, for we have learned to-day that these years greatly outweigh the later ones in the formation of character.

I will conclude with an item of personal experience. I am intimately acquainted with two sisters who come of a talented stock on both sides. They were born at the later end of a large family, and their mother 'had a down on them' for coming into the world at all. The family-environment, whenever they were in it, was noxious. But in the early years of childhood they were boarded-out away from home with a woman of the mothering kind. Then for some years they were

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in a Catholic convent school of the bad kind. That, and the subsequent family-environment, might have ruined them—ought to have ruined them, one would think. If they have made good, as they have, I believe it has been through their coming of good stock, through good luck, through being often in a favourable environment during adolescence, but in very great measure through having been removed from their ‘natural’ home to an ‘artificial’ one during the fateful years of early childhood.





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