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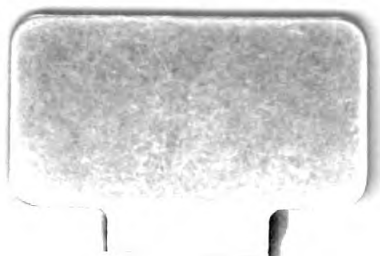
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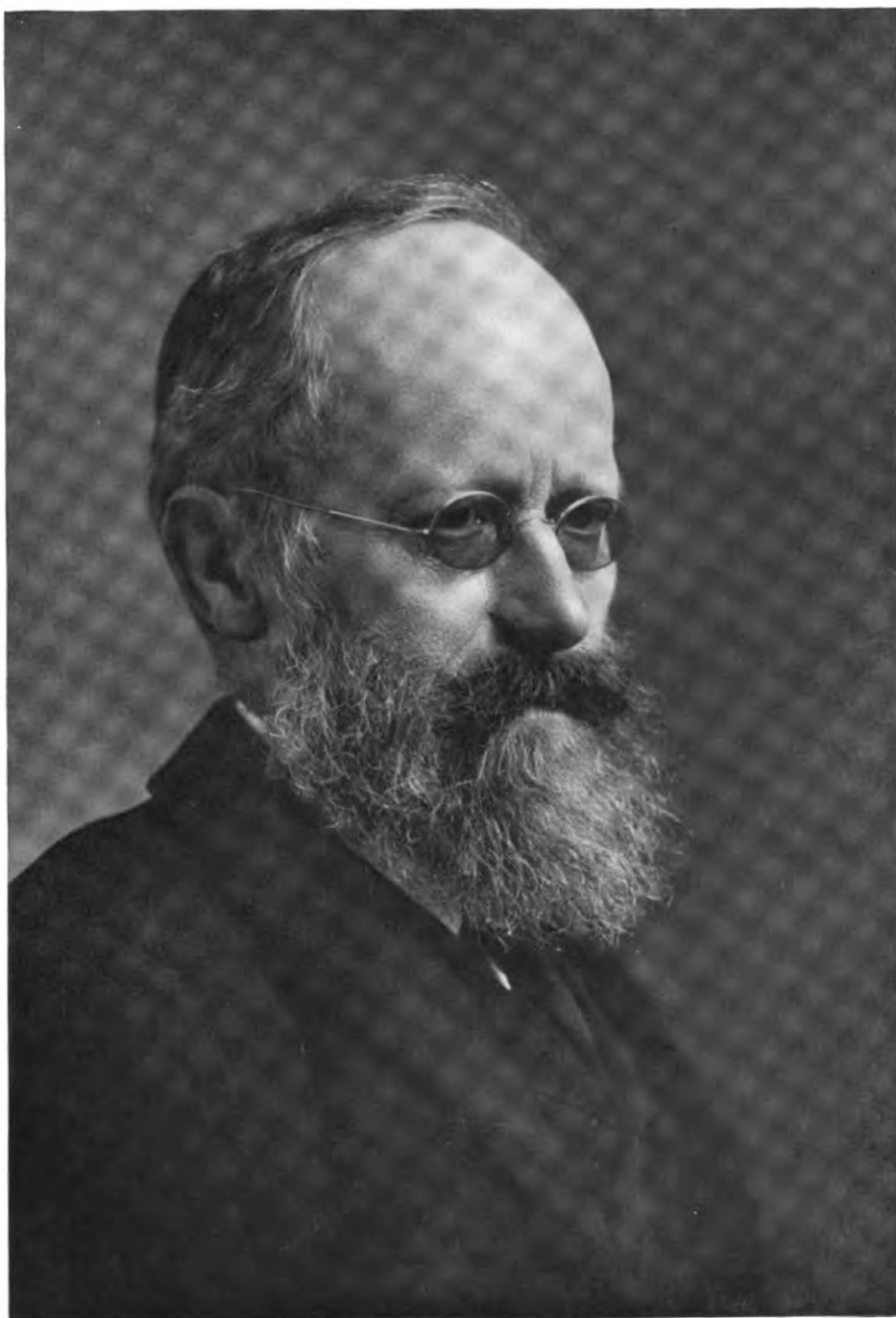


# **THE EVOLUTION OF WOMAN**

**FROM SUBJECTION TO COMRADESHIP**







GEORGE W. JOHNSON

*[Frontispiece]*

# THE EVOLUTION OF WOMAN

FROM SUBJECTION TO COMRADESHIP

BY

G. W. JOHNSON, C.M.G.

JOINT AUTHOR (WITH HIS WIFE) OF  
"JOSEPHINE E. BUTLER: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR"

WITH A MEMOIR



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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY MOTHER  
AND TO  
MY WIFE

FROM WHOM I LEARNT THE VALUE  
AND BEAUTY OF COMRADESHIP



## PREFATORY NOTE

THE Memoir of the author of this book, who finished it but did not live to see it published, has been compiled with the help of various friends and relations, to whom the compilers desire to express their thanks. The actual quotations—except where otherwise indicated—are taken from the many letters and appreciations received at the time of the author's death.



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## MEMOIR

### EARLY DAYS AT CAMBRIDGE

GEORGE WILLIAM JOHNSON was born July 5, 1857, in the historic Llandaff House, Cambridge (residence of the once-famous Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff), to an inheritance of upright, liberal Nonconformity, tempered by a keen love for literature and a typically English enthusiasm for games and politics. The deeply personal religion of his parents in a home neither sanctimonious nor pharisaical, together with an inheritance of scholastic and academic tradition, tended to direct his thoughts and conduct towards the moral and intellectual welfare of his fellow-men.

These were fighting days for Dissent, when, if no longer persecuted for their opinions, men who could not conform to the Established Church were shut out from many preferments or handicapped in their choice of professions, and socially held of little or no account.

His father, W. H. F. Johnson, the second dissenter to receive a degree at Cambridge, had to wait a further ten years for admission

to the Senate ; his uncle, George Brimley, had been vigorously urging the abolition of all "Tests" in the *Spectator* ; the minister of their family (Baptist) chapel had been imprisoned for refusing to pay church rates.

Years afterwards a friend wrote : "I was brought up in Anglicanism, and in the theory that there was no church or religion in England except Anglicanism. . . . George was the first nonconformist of enlightened literary and artistic tastes with whom I ever came into close contact," who "contributed to my education by enabling me to appreciate properly the religious balance of England."

The later movement in the universities to secure for women what had been won for Dissent was no less actively supported in his home, from the first closely associated with the pioneers in this movement.

From these influences came the demand for universal freedom of thought and for the complete legal equality of the sexes ; the continual battle against all arbitrary disabilities ; the eager instinct to help everyone despised or oppressed,—which were the mainsprings of his life and character, so fully reflected in this book.

He was decidedly precocious, with a retentive memory and regularly industrious habits which enabled him to master Euclid at the age of ten. He was educated at his father's school, and owed much to his father's

teaching ; but having outdistanced all the other boys, was, at the age of twelve or thirteen, sent for special lessons in Latin and Greek to a private tutor, who used to tell his undergraduate pupils that he was teaching a little boy who could run between their legs and who knew more Greek than they did. In the Cambridge Senior Local Examination, at the age of seventeen, he was first in all England in Classics and second in Mathematics.

The fact that throughout life everyone noticed "how young he seemed"—"a little boyish and irresponsible"—"one who made friends quite simply with young and inexperienced things"—is enough to prove that serious moral and intellectual training combined did not make him either unsociable or pedantic. He was always, in fact, keenly interested in cricket, an enthusiastic chess player, an indefatigable walker ; given to eager talk on all subjects—trivial or profound ; with a cheerful, equable temperament, a keen sense of fun and a great power of enjoying the simplest pleasures. The boy of eighteen who had experienced "the keen agony" of homesickness, when sent away for some months to the sea for his health, was neither a crusty bookworm nor absorbed in the cultivation of his own brain.

He entered Trinity College in 1876 as a Sizar, and next year obtained a Foundation Scholarship, thus gaining, as his old friend

and tutor, the Rev. Percival Frost, playfully expressed it, "the first place in the first College of the first University in the first Empire in the first planet which has a moon." He read both Classics and Mathematics; and it seems almost more than a coincidence that in the latter he should have been placed eighth wrangler, in a bracket with Miss Scott of Girton, the first woman to secure a really distinguished position in an Honours examination of any university; though not, of course, at that time, thereby entitled to any of the privileges or rewards due to success. He could not fail to be impressed by the injustice.

Meanwhile the religious features of the stricter Puritanism, already modified in his parents' generation by the influence of broad Churchmen like F. D. Maurice, F. W. Robertson, and Charles Kingsley, were both strengthened and widened for him by active participation in the work of unsectarian Adult Schools, supported by university men with every variety of faith. He came under the spell of Rendel Harris (Fellow of Clare), whose "spiritual genius attracted a wide circle of undergraduate friends"; and he also attended "a small Positivist Club," started by Homersham Cox (a brother of the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*), where the members read and discussed Comte's *Catechism* and other "bibles," not officially recognised as "inspired."

## AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE

Though not chosen at once, or without careful reflection, the Civil Service naturally offered peculiar attractions to George Johnson, with reasonable promise of usefulness and distinction. Once more his gift for doing himself full justice in examinations stood him in good stead, and in 1881 he obtained a clerkship in the Colonial Office.

Henceforth, as one of his colleagues writes, "he became a part of the Civil Service machine, a cog on the wheel, doing his share in the common work"; but even the routine executive of an Empire must involve responsibilities and interests enough to occupy a conscientious intelligence, and he, at any rate, put his whole soul into the work; even on his holidays the official Government pouch followed him about. For a long time he was occupied in the Eastern Department, but in 1904 he succeeded Sir John Anderson as head of the old North American and Australian (later transformed into the Dominions) Department; having become a First Class Clerk in 1897 and a Principal Clerk in 1900.

In 1898, as a consequence of overstrain, the sight of one eye entirely failed. For three weeks he had to lie on his back, blindfold, but it was typical of his nature that he made no complaint. He never fully recovered the use of his eyes, and for many years was not allowed



to do any continuous reading. He was able, however, to resume his work at the Colonial Office with the help of a Junior Clerk, who read aloud most of the documents he had to study or examine.

Outside regular department work he was, for a time, an Assistant Private Secretary to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Private Secretary to Sir Robert Meade, and, in 1907, joint Secretary to the Colonial Conference. He had also considerable "Committee" experience, being Secretary to the Eastern Currency Committee of 1893 and a member of the Straits Settlements Currency Committee 1902-3; also Secretary to the Pacific Cable Conference of 1905.

When offering him the C.M.G. in 1905, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, then Colonial Secretary, wrote personally: "I have an instinct that 'honours' are not a great object to you. Yet in the Civil Service they have a real meaning, and my submission of your name to the King for a C.M.G. is not an empty form, but implies on my part a sincere admiration of your work and an appreciation of the independence with which you look on affairs and impress your character upon them. If this distinction gives you any pleasure, you may be certain that I also am made happy by bestowing it."

Though "a strenuous Civil Servant," and always loyally carrying out the decisions and policy of his Chiefs with energetic ability,

there were from the first two marked characteristics which made him "as unlike as could possibly be imagined to the typical, starched, precise Head of a Department, the dried creature of forms and precedents, the bloodless thing of parchment and red-tape of the stage and the press. His juniors were permitted liberties which, though they undoubtedly made for harmonious working in the Department, would have shocked, and perhaps did shock, more conventionally minded Principal Clerks"; while, on the other hand, "there were times when his high sense of public duty and of the standard that is incumbent on the public service to maintain required him, in his judgment, to take up a line in official matters which would perhaps seem unduly severe to more easy-going colleagues."

In the second place, he never was one to delay decisions through confusing expediency with principle, or regarding the one as of equal value with the other. His mind was governed by principles well formulated and unshakeable. "His views on certain questions—for instance, those of the undesirability of the public toleration of vice, the importance of maintaining a fair treatment of the native and of preventing his exploitation, and the extreme desirability of maintaining direct financial control; his vigorous hatred of 'jobs' of all kinds, and wholesome scepticism of the sometimes supposed omniscience of the man



on the spot, were never concealed, and may sometimes have been urged, as St. Paul bids us, not merely in season but out of season. I am not sure that some of his popularity with his colleagues was not due to this circumstance, for popular he undoubtedly was."

In various directions it is clear that, apart from the general advantage of gaining experience and knowledge of public life, his thirty-six years at the Colonial Office, from which he retired in 1917, were of special value to his later, more personal activities in social reform, by giving him a wide and intimate familiarity with all executive procedure, an accurate knowledge of law and statecraft, and, above all, much inside information on various special social problems and on the practical difficulties—in the face of prejudice—of securing justice for subject races. He had acquired, in one word, the international outlook.

### HOME LIFE

In 1883, two years after entering the Colonial Office, he married Lucy Nutter, whose family had been long and intimately associated with his own.

He was never a man to keep one ideal "to face the world with" and another for the home. It was in the home that his characteristic tenderness and supremely unselfish nature were most fully revealed. His mother

once wrote : " When you were a tiny baby I used to have all sorts of great hopes and thoughts about you, and I often asked our Father in Heaven to make you a very good man." Literal answer to prayer is sometimes granted us ; and it was assuredly his goodness that first impressed, and always remained with, all who knew him. One, on hearing of his death, wrote of his friendship with those " who had no other return to make on their part than a grateful affection for all that he liberally and unconsciously gave " ; and another that his youthfulness of spirit " makes it so much easier to realise him as living still, in a fuller sort of life even than before."

For more than thirty years he put into practice that equal comradeship between man, woman, and child which is the personal side of a true ideal of absolute liberty for the individual. He could not be " the master " of the house or a stern parent. The friendship with his children, which not many parents attempted in those days, was eager and quite spontaneous. He always enjoyed telling the story of a favourite book ; he could carry you away into strange lands with the people of *Notre Dame* and *Peveril of the Peak*, though it was English Dickens of whom he talked and told most. He took an enthusiastic interest in their games, especially cricket, to their delight forming a cricket club for boys *and* girls—his own children and their young

friends—and teaching them chess. From the first he led them to take a keen interest in politics, to know about public men, to read speeches and watch elections, to understand the great principles of Liberalism which, as he believed, had won so much for the world. His zeal both for citizenship and for social reform was intimately shared with his wife and children.

He always attached far greater importance to faith and conduct than to outward forms and ceremonies, and it was literally a desire to see the Sermon on the Mount put into practice that inspired him with the energy to devote so much of his leisure to supporting various causes which he thought would help mankind. Never associating religion with a sad face, he had a rare gift for inspiring his children with ideas while encouraging and entering into their daily amusements. On Sundays they played delightful games. For instance, they used "bricks" to build up the walls of Jericho, round which he would lead them in a vigorous and cheerful march—until the walls fell. They made trenches of sand outside Babylon, building a dam at one end of her gates, that the mighty Euphrates should flow out of the proud city, wherein Belshazzar, the king, sat at the feast—and, behold, the soldiers of Cyrus were upon them, walking dryshod along the river-bed.

He had himself continued and developed

the truly broad-minded religious enquiries of his college days. For many years he regularly attended the services of prominent Nonconformists of advanced views, and finally found himself in sympathy with Dr. W. E. Orchard of the King's Weigh House Church, discovering there an unexpected appreciation of even elaborate ritual as taught and practised by the Free Catholics—a remarkable development from the precise Puritanism of an earlier generation. It was, however, in strict accord with his lifelong battle for absolute freedom that he should uphold the time-honoured right of Congregationalists not to be tied by any traditions of orthodox denominationalism.

#### PUBLIC AND SOCIAL WORK

So far as possible to a Government official, he had always been actively engaged in practical work for the many bodies of religious, educational, political, and social progress which in their different spheres were working for all the causes he had at heart. For a time closely associated with Fabians, and Editor of the *Christian Socialist*, he was for many years a valued member of the National Liberal Club; from 1887 to 1898 he was Chairman of Morley College for Working Men and Women; he served on the Committee of the Browning Settlement at Walworth, and was Secretary of the Moffat Institute Council in Kennington; for several years a member of

the Governing Bodies, first of Hackney College, and later of the amalgamated Hackney and New Colleges ; a Director of the London Missionary Society from 1906, and on its Committee from 1909, until his death ; one of the original nine Trustees, and Chairman, of the Stansfeld Trust ; an active worker for the Women's Suffrage Societies which later amalgamated into the " National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship " ; and for more than thirty years a " tower of strength " to all the leading spirits of the " Association for Moral and Social Hygiene."

The Governors of Hackney and New College have put on record their sense of personal loss, and their recognition of his " business acumen and wide experience " so cheerfully devoted to their service " throughout the delicate and difficult process of drawing up the Bill (of July, 1924, for amalgamation), and the necessary negotiations with the Board of Education, Charity Commission, and the Trustees of Denominational Trusts."

Mr. Frank Lenwood, Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society, has written a striking, human appreciation of George Johnson, as he knew him : " My first memories are connected with the picture of an official high up in the Colonial Office who had a keen interest in foreign missions. . . . He was glad enough to help, as everyone who knew him will understand, and I came away



with exactly the direction I needed. He criticised constructively, with knowledge and disarming gentleness. But the dominant impression I brought away from that rather drab apartment was of a public servant handling great world-interests, who cared for God's Kingdom before any official or personal interest, and never forgot that he was there to be consul and trustee for the common man. . . . Then as the years brought his retirement from office, he became a member and later Vice-Chairman of our India Committee. . . . His experience was invaluable in consultation. Never was a man less ridden by officialism. . . . He was for allowing to everyone as much liberty as possible. If theology came into question, and some missionary seemed too broad for certain cautious folk, George Johnson was always inclined to freedom. When a progressive policy was afoot, he would be skirmishing away on the flank of the advance, supplying all the reinforcement he could by terse, pointed, rather professorial speech. Now and then he would expose the unreality of some argument by a witty phrase. . . . He found it hard to understand that there were people who did not want to be progressive. For him Christianity was a place of broad rivers and streams, a far-stretching land, without fences or straight-cut arterial roads.

"I can see him now in Committee, a very

individual figure, with the distinction that still lingers round the universities and circles where men use their brains in planning and criticism. He was not particular about his clothes or appearance, and extreme short sight added to the general aspect of rather amusing unworldliness. . . . What I remember best is his perpetual desire to help those responsible for the business of the meeting. He moved motions when others were uninspired and reluctant to speak, he drafted phrases which might secure the end the Committee sought, and altered them with eager friendliness if they failed to meet the need. He was full of a loyal humility and affection ; one of those who, whether they carry a hod or carve a corner-stone, are bound to build. What he built will stand the fiery test of the years."

Through the acute stage of "excitements and agitation" in the Suffrage Movement he was a devoted supporter, "peculiar in combining enthusiasm with judgment," walking in the processions and helping a woman candidate for Parliament on more than one occasion. From an early period of close personal friendship with Mrs. Josephine Butler, James Stuart,<sup>1</sup> and Henry J. Wilson,<sup>2</sup> he gave of his best, for long years of untiring perseverance, to the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Stuart, M.P. (a personal friend of his), made Privy Councillor 1909.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Wilson, of Sheffield, M.P., prominent worker for the Abolitionist cause.

principles for which they stood, once summarised by Mrs. Butler herself as "the unity of the moral law and the equality of all human souls before God."

When the Contagious Diseases Acts were repealed in 1886, Josephine Butler and her colleagues transferred their support to abolitionist work in the Empire and on the Continent of Europe, forming the "British Committee of the International Abolitionist Federation," afterwards known as the "Association for Moral and Social Hygiene." In 1887-8 their main task was to secure the adoption in the Crown Colonies of the same policy which had just been accepted for Britain. In the words of Dr. Helen Wilson, the President of the Association: "It was at this stage that George Johnson came into the movement. . . . His position at the Colonial Office enabled him to render substantial service to the cause . . . he was frequently called into consultation by the leaders, and he drew up several of the manifestoes and memoranda issued at this period. . . . When he resigned from the Colonial Office in 1917, he became a full member of the British Committee, and held several offices, including that of Vice-Chairman.

"It would be difficult to overestimate the value of the service which he gave so ungrudgingly. There was nothing spectacular about it; it was honest, faithful, dogged *work*. He was always to be relied on to be in his place



at the meetings, to give careful attention to every subject and to bring to bear on it his experience and balanced judgment. . . . He believed in the work of the Association with his whole heart and soul, and gave heart and soul to it. . . . He was a member of the unofficial Commission of Enquiry, organised at the close of the war, to review English legislation and administration bearing on sexual morality, and wrote its Report—*The State and Sexual Morality*, a useful compendium of the law as it stands and the necessary amendments to make it as it should be.

“In practical support of the Committee’s chief work during the last two or three years, he drafted a Bill which was introduced by Lady Astor, M.P., in 1925. It proposed to abolish the special clauses relating to ‘common prostitutes,’ and to substitute a section making it an offence for any person to annoy another in the street, but stipulating that no prosecution can take place except on the complaint of the person annoyed. This Bill was the expression of his conviction that it is only by equal laws, embodying individual liberty and individual responsibility, that a higher social order will be attained.”

It may be added that he was chosen as one of the delegates of the Association to give evidence before the Joint Select Committee of Lords and Commons on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in 1920. He also attended

two of the Conferences of the International Abolitionist Federation, at Geneva in 1920 and at Graz in 1924. On hearing of his death in February, 1926, Monsieur A. de Meuron, Chairman of the International Abolitionist Bureau, wrote: "Il a défendu, et parfois avec une belle intransigeance, les principes dont se sont inspirées Joséphine Butler et toute la Fédération. Ainsi les vétérans disparaissent; puissent des jeunes relever le drapeau tombé des mains des aînés et continuer la lutte dans le même esprit qu'eux!"

Partly because he saw these questions as one aspect, though the most morally fundamental, of the general principles of liberty, justice, and equality, and still more from his training and well-balanced mind, he was never tempted to the unfortunate exaggerations or violence so often inspired by generous zeal. Few have given their lives to these questions with such sanity of vision, real charity—applied equally to all persons—and broad-minded, practical common sense.

It was these characteristics, combined with sound knowledge, patient industry, and administrative experience, that gave special value to his work, that stamped the man, that led to, and have governed, the comprehensive and wisely proportioned construction of his book.

He died, after a few days' illness, on February 13, 1926, at the age of sixty-eight.

No narrative of facts, however faithfully told, can completely and adequately show him as he really was. His very gentleness of character and extreme tenderness and patience could be revealed only to those to whom he was most near and dear. We cannot think of his life as in any way ended, or separated from those with whom he worked, but rather as continuing his usefulness, only with more light and a clearer understanding of the fulfilment of his Father's will.



I asked God what they were doing.

God said, "Shining on the plants that they may grow."

And I saw that some were working in companies, and some alone, but most were in twos, sometimes two men, and sometimes two women ; but generally there was one man and one woman ; and I asked God how it was.

God said, "*Where one man and one woman shine together, it makes the most perfect light.* Many plants need that for their growing. Nevertheless, there are more kinds of plants in Heaven than one, and they need many kinds of light."

OLIVE SCHREINER, *Dreams* (1912), p. 140.

Si l'homme voulait sentir davantage qu'il est *le frère de la femme*, et non pas seulement sa proie, ou qu'elle doit être la sienne ! S'ils voulaient, tous les deux, dépouiller leur orgueil et penser, chacun, un peu moins à soi, et un peu plus à l'autre !

ROMAIN ROLLAND, *Jean-Christophe*.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(USED IN FOOTNOTES)

FOLLOWING is a list of the principal books consulted. Where two dates are given, the earlier (in brackets) is date of original publication, the later is date of edition quoted.

Abrahams = Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism* (First Series), 1917.

Addams = Jane Addams, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, 1916.

Agrippa = H. Cornelius Agrippa, *De nobilitate et praecellentia feminei sexus* (1532), translated 1670.

A. L. = A. L., *A Question deeply concerning Married Persons, and such as intend to marry*, 1653.

Allen = A. M. Allen, *Catherine of Siena* (a play), 1921.

Andrews = Marian Andrews (pseud. Christopher Hare), *The Most Illustrious Ladies of the Italian Renaissance*, 1904.

Anthony = Katharine Anthony, *Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia*, 1915.

Appian = Appian, *Roman History*, translated 1899.

Ardsher (Wadia) = Ardsher Ratanji Wadia, *The Ethics of Feminism*, 1923.

Ashley = Sir William J. Ashley, *Economic Organisation of England*, 1914.

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Bailey = Cyril Bailey (and others), *The Legacy of Rome*, 1923.

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- Bennett = Henry S. Bennett, *The Pastons and their England*, 1922.
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Ditto (second version, 1887), translated.
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- Bremer = Frederika Bremer, *Hertha*, translated 1856.
- Bremner = Christina S. Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain*, 1897.
- Browning = Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Greek Christian Poets, and the English Poets* (1842), 1863.
- Bruce = Mary L. Bruce, *Anna Swanwick*, 1903.
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- Buckle = Henry T. Buckle, *Influence of Women on the Progress of Knowledge*, 1906.
- Burstall = Sara A. Burstall, *Story of Manchester High School*, 1911.
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- Butler = Josephine Butler, *Une Voix dans le désert* (1875), translated 1913.
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- Capella = Galeazzo Flavio Capella, *Della eccellenza et dignità delle Donne*, 1526.
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# THE EVOLUTION OF WOMAN

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

God Almighty made women to match the men.

GEORGE ELIOT, *Adam Bede*.

MANY have sought to discover the eternal feminine by wandering over the fields of biology, and from flowers, bees, birds, and other beasts, including human beings, have drawn imaginary pictures of ideal womanhood. Others, who are less sure about the relations between body and soul, have with equal boldness drawn from psychology other imaginary pictures of femininity. These pictures, however, from either school are so different and so contradictory, that one suspects that they are mostly reflections from the brains of the artists, who have only seen what they expected to see, and have been blind to what did not fit in with their preconceptions. A recent German writer<sup>1</sup> has collected some of these contradictions from men of science—and others—which amusingly cancel each other, and compel one to conclude that Woman (with a capital W) is as non-existent as Mrs. Harris ; or that, if she exists, she is as elusive as the Scarlet Pimpernel. On the other hand, actual women differ from one another and

<sup>1</sup> Mayreder, pp. 2-7.

actual men differ from one another, even more than the average woman differs from the average man.<sup>1</sup> Some of each sex are good and some are bad ; some are wise and some are very foolish ; some women are strong and able to hold their own against the opposite sex, while others are weak and like to be ruled, especially if at the same time they are maintained and protected.

According to Maine (1861), the primeval condition of the human race was based on the patriarchal system, under which "the eldest male parent, the eldest ascendant, was absolutely supreme in his household." This theory has not been greatly shaken by subsequent investigations of anthropologists, who have endeavoured to pierce the shades behind the back of history by the aid of a flickering torch lit from the scrap-heap of savage lore.<sup>2</sup> They have indeed revealed the widespread existence, among many peoples, of a system of mother-kin, or the tracing of descent through the mother, rather than the father ; and some of them have suggested that mother-kin everywhere preceded father-kin. It does not, however, follow that women at any time formed the ruling sex. Bachofen (1861), the first discoverer of mother-kin, or *Mutter-recht* as he called it, explained it as the consequence

<sup>1</sup> *Differentiation*, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Maine, pp. 131-2, and Note K, pp. 176-83 ; Maine (Early), pp. 192-221.



of an old-time supremacy of women ; and a certain number of persons who like to dream of a golden age in the past have accepted this theory ; but serious students of anthropology seem to be almost unanimous in rejecting the idea. Professor Westermarck says that it should be "clearly understood that mother-right is not identical with matriarchy or mother-rule."<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Frazer observes that the prevalence of mother-kin does not by any means imply that the government of the tribes which observe the custom is in the hands of women. "On the contrary, the practice of mother-kin prevails most extensively amongst the lowest savages, with whom woman, instead of being the ruler of man, is always his drudge, and often little better than his slave. . . . The theory of a gynæcocracy is in truth a dream of visionaries and pedants."<sup>2</sup>

The theory that mother-kin *everywhere* preceded father-kin is a speculative assumption, which may or may not be true. All that we know is, that mother-kin is very widespread in savage races, and so is father-kin, "whilst a large number of low tribes may be said to be neither matrilineal nor patrilineal, or rather both at the same time."<sup>3</sup> This custom is just what the common sense of the lay mind

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck, Vol. I, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Frazer, Vol. II, pp. 209, 211 ; cf. Lubbock, p. 99, and Tylor, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Westermarck, Vol. I, p. 278.



coming to the subject for the first time, unfettered by prejudices born of a knowledge of Roman or English law, would expect to find—namely, that a child is acknowledged to be related both to his mother and to his father.

As the idea of property developed, those tribes which acknowledged mother-kin, whether exclusively or concurrently with father-kin, seem to have generally allowed women, even married women, as well as men, to hold property; and so the practice of inheriting from the mother naturally followed; together with the practice of daughters inheriting in common with sons, but never apparently in *preference* to sons, of the same mother. In a recent curious treatise by two Germans, whose thesis is that Women were formerly the Dominant Sex in several countries, e.g. Egypt, Sparta, and Germany, if not everywhere, the authors impute to Tacitus the statement that the symbolic wedding present of arms, etc., given by a German husband to his bride, "passed as heirlooms only to the women."<sup>1</sup> What Tacitus really said was that the mothers bequeathed these arms to their sons, so that their future daughters-in-law might receive them as marriage gifts, when the sons married, and in their turn might pass them on to the grandsons.<sup>2</sup>

As to the origin of mother-kin, McLennan, Frazer, and others suggest that it probably

<sup>1</sup> Vaerting, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 18.

arose from a state of society in which promiscuity prevailed, when "the relations of the sexes were so loose and vague that children could not be fathered on any particular man."<sup>1</sup> Westermarck, on the other hand, who powerfully combats the theory of original promiscuity, or polyandry,<sup>2</sup> connects mother-kin with systems of polygyny, under which each "mother and her children keep together as a little sub-family." Whichever of these theories is correct, the custom did not imply any recognition of the social or political superiority of woman, but rather the reverse.

As we pass from the shades of prehistoric times to the broadening light of history, we find that polyandry practically disappears, if it ever prevailed; and that polygyny, recognised or unrecognised, is prevalent to a terrible extent in every country and in every age. It is, in fact, at once the outcome and the index of the attitude of many men towards women, an attitude of cruelty and contempt or of careless and selfish indifference.

It must be remembered that among all nations before the Christian era adultery meant irregular relations between any man and a married woman, and did not include such relations between a married man and an unmarried woman, which were generally regarded

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, Vol. II, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Westermarck, Vol. I, p. 295 ; see also Darwin, Vol. II, pp. 394-5.

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with comparative leniency.<sup>1</sup> Adultery, on the other hand, as involving interference with another man's property, was usually punished very severely. Men have always and everywhere been the ruling sex. Their greater muscular strength has enabled them to take up this position, and the desire to carry on their polygynous habits, uncontrolled, has been one of the strongest motives for their determination to maintain it. Woman has always been subordinate to man, even though her subjection has been more or less veiled in decorous clothes of chivalrous or protective customs, with which her partner has been pleased to see her adorned, and with which she has for the most part been submissively content.

The advance of civilisation, with its growing recognition of the value and power of mental and moral forces, as compared with brute physical force, has led to the slow emancipation of woman, but she will never be truly free to develop her whole personality until men honestly accept and practise the principle of the equal moral standard. Only then will men and women become true Comrades, and together march forward on the ascending paths of human progress. To climb these difficult heights needs the strength of good politics, good economics, and good morals: these three, and the greatest of these is morals, without which true happiness is unattainable.

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck (Morals), Vol II, pp. 453 seq.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ANCIENT EAST

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,  
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

SHAKESPEARE, *Merchant of Venice*.

HISTORY, perhaps because it is written by men, tells us remarkably little about women, but hints are scattered here and there in ancient records, from which we can form some idea as to their habits and social position among different peoples. It is, however, necessary to draw conclusions with much caution, and not to imagine that we have a complete picture when we only have faint and broken outlines.

One of the oldest records is the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (c. 2250 B.C.), which covers a wide area of criminal and civil law and contains several sections relating to women. It appears that the social life in Babylon was on a distinctly patriarchal basis. A man might pledge his wife, his son, or his daughter to pay off his debts by working for any period not exceeding three years. A father gave his daughter in marriage; she had no choice in the matter, except in certain special cases. A man had only one wife, but might have concubines if he wished. He could divorce his wife for any cause, but if there

had been no fault on her side, he not only had to return her dowry, but also to continue to maintain her and her children ; while he had no such responsibilities "if she has set her face to go out and has acted the fool, has wasted her house and belittled her husband." If a woman wished to leave her husband, enquiry was first made "into her past ; what is her lack, and, if she has been economical and has no vice, and her husband had gone out and greatly belittled her," she was free to "go off to her father's house." If, however, she "has not been economical, but a goer about, has wasted her house, and belittled her husband, that woman one shall throw her into the waters."<sup>1</sup> In the case of proved adultery, the man and woman were bound together and thrown into the water.

The daughters of Babylon, however, like the daughters of medieval Europe, had one way of escape from the hazards of marriage and divorce : they could become votaries to one of the gods. A votary might choose this vocation for herself, or might be devoted to it by her father, who in that case gave her a marriage portion. She was apparently vowed to perpetual virginity, and if she married, as was sometimes the case, she gave a maid to her husband to bear children for her. If she remained unmarried, she often adopted a child to care for her in her old age. The

<sup>1</sup> Hammurabi, §§ 141, 142, 143.



votaries were evidently a wealthy body, and, like other women in Babylon, were allowed to carry on business freely.<sup>1</sup> They normally lived in a convent, or common house attached to the temple, called the bride-house ; but if they lived outside, they were expected to be staid in their behaviour, and in particular were forbidden to keep or frequent a wineshop, on pain of being burned alive. Any one who slandered a votary, without being able to prove his charge, was to be punished by branding ; and those writers who said that they were temple-prostitutes deserve to be branded as gross slanderers. Nowhere in the Code or elsewhere is there any trace of the evil reputation which Greek writers assign to these votaries.<sup>2</sup>

The ancient Hebrews also lived under a definitely patriarchal system. The father had originally power of life and death over his children,<sup>3</sup> and the practice of sacrificing sons and daughters to Moloch must have persisted to a comparatively late date.<sup>4</sup> The Deuteronomic law restricted the father's power of punishing his rebellious son by death by requiring that he should first be brought before the elders of the city ; but even this restricted power, according to the Talmud,

<sup>1</sup> Myres, pp. 97-8.

<sup>2</sup> Hammurabi, §§ 110, 127.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xlii. 37 ; Judges xi. 29-40.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. xxxii. 35 ; 2 Kings xxiii. 10 ; Lev. xviii. 21 and xx. 2-5.

was never brought into force.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the exile of the Ten Tribes a father could sell his daughter as a slave and concubine.<sup>2</sup> Marriage was a civil, not a religious contract. It was lawful, even down to David's time, for a man to marry his half-sister, but it was afterwards forbidden by the Priestly Code.<sup>3</sup> A man could not marry a second wife without his wife's consent, but might have such concubines as he chose. He could divorce his wife, without assigning any cause; but the wife had no similar rights, until the Talmudists put her in a more equitable position by allowing her to demand a letter of divorce, not only if he married a second wife without her consent, but also for various other reasons, including cruelty and insufficient maintenance, or "if without reason he prevented her from visiting her parents or being friendly with her neighbours"! Moreover, if she was unhappy with her husband, she might live apart from him for a year, and if then she was still unwilling to return, she might demand a letter of divorce. But notwithstanding, or because of, these facilities for breaking the marriage contract, divorces are said to have been rare.<sup>4</sup> Under the Deuteronomic law adultery might be punished by the death of

<sup>1</sup> Rabbinowicz (Crim.), p. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Rabbinowicz, Vol. I, p. xxiv.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xx. 12; 2 Sam. xiii. 12; Lev. xviii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Rabbinowicz, Vol. I, pp. xlvii-xlix.

both the guilty parties, but this extreme penalty does not appear at any time to have been frequently enforced, and it had in the time of Jesus become obsolete.<sup>1</sup> A man's infidelity to his wife by association with an unmarried woman was regarded with leniency, except by the prophet Malachi.<sup>2</sup> The modern Jew, however, is at least as firm a believer in the single moral standard as the Christian.<sup>3</sup>

The five daughters of Zelophehad, Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, whose names deserve to be remembered as the first women who publicly pleaded the cause of their sex "before the princes and all the congregation," won for Hebrew women the right of inheriting land from their father, if there were no surviving sons. This right, however, was subsequently limited by their being obliged to take a husband belonging to their own tribe, so that none of the tribal land should pass to another tribe.<sup>4</sup>

In matters of religion, Hebrew women held an inferior position, being excluded or excused from many ceremonial observances. "Women, slaves, and minors may not be included" to make up the "quorum of ten required for a congregational service."<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew ideal of a good wife is eloquently

<sup>1</sup> Abrahams, 73.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. ii. 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> Montefiore, pp. 189-90.

<sup>4</sup> Num. xxvii. 1-11 and xxxvi. 1-12. <sup>5</sup> Cohen, p. 306.



described in the last chapter of Proverbs. She seems to have conducted the main part of the family business, at home and abroad ; she not only spun and wove, but also traded and bought land, and planted vineyards with her own strong arms. She was industrious and contented. She and her maidens arose, while it was yet night, and worked early and late. Her husband had a much easier time ; he "is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." It almost sounds as though he used to spend the evening with his cronies at the tavern, while his wife and her maidens were still working by candle-light at home.

We will only briefly refer to the position of women in Persia and India. In the former country wives lived in strict seclusion within the harem, seeing no men except their husband and their sons, and the eunuchs who looked after the harem—an added insult to the injury of their confinement.<sup>1</sup> We see in the book of Esther how the proud spirit of Vashti refused to obey the order of her drunken husband to come and show her beauty to his drunken guests, and how the king's "wise men, which knew the times," induced him to put Vashti away, lest her disobedience should kindle a rebellion among other wives and they should cease to do honour to their husbands.

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson, Vol. III, pp. 237-8.

In India, under the Code of Manu, women were at every period of their life under the absolute control of their fathers, husbands, or sons. A wife was in duty bound to worship her husband as a god, even if he was a man of bad conduct. Manu taught the adoration of motherhood, and Indians—even those who ill-treat their wives and other women—show reverence to their mothers.<sup>1</sup> Indian wives as a result of this system may develop the most perfect self-abnegation and devotion and calm contentment with their lot ; but who can measure the infinite misery all down the centuries of the millions of child-widows, who might never marry again, and many of whom had no homes to which they could return ?

The scheme of life in ancient Egypt was less crudely patriarchal and more humane than in other oriental countries. Male supremacy was tempered, though not eliminated, by customs apparently derived from the system of mother-kin ; and women enjoyed a large measure of social freedom and legal independence. There was no need to pass a Married Women's Property Act, since it appears from several wills and business and marriage contracts which have come down to us that women had from the beginning, and never lost, *equal* rights with men in the matter of inheriting, holding, managing, and bequeathing both real and personal property.

<sup>1</sup> Ardsheer (Wadia), pp. 223 ff.

But we can find no evidence forthcoming for Sir J. Frazer's statement that there was a "*preference* for women over men in matters of property and inheritance"; or for Mr. Breasted's that "the natural line of inheritance was through the eldest daughter"; or for Sir Flinders Petrie's that "*all* fixed property was in women's hands, and where a man leaves a house to his brother, the brother at once passes it to his wife."<sup>1</sup> Indeed the incident referred to in the last quotation is expanded in a later passage in the same book, from which it appears that the brother *bequeathed* this property to his wife, which shows that it remained in his own hands, and not in her hands, until he died.<sup>2</sup>

The climatic conditions of Egypt favoured an outdoor life, and women were allowed to share with men the pleasures and freedom of the open air. Only the concubines of kings and wealthy men were jealously kept, more or less secluded, in the harems.<sup>3</sup> Monogamy was the rule among the common people and priests were limited by law to one wife. The kings had only one legal or principal wife, but occasionally kings and nobles took a second (or even a third) wife for political or property reasons.<sup>4</sup> They had in addition as

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, Vol. II, p. 213; Breasted, p. 86; Petrie, p. 74; cf. Petrie (Tales), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Petrie, pp. 113-14.

<sup>3</sup> Erman, pp. 74-6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 76, 152.

many concubines as they wished or could afford to keep ; and all the children of the concubines were recognised as legitimate,<sup>1</sup> and enjoyed the usual family privileges, except that as regards inheritance they ranked after the children of the principal wife. Thus in the royal family the heir to the throne was normally the eldest surviving son of the principal wife, and if there were no such surviving son, then and then only the eldest daughter of that wife became the royal heiress.<sup>2</sup> Only one or two of these heiresses became independent sovereigns, such as Nitocris (c. 2475 B.C.) and Sebek-Neferu-Ra (c. 1790 B.C.),<sup>3</sup> but many of them became queens-consort, the husband's right to the throne being only secured through the royal or divine blood of the queen. In some cases these husbands had no royal blood at all, but in some cases they had semi-royal blood, being children of the late king's concubines. In this way arose the practice of a prospective king marrying his half-sister, which frequently happened from the earliest times down to the Persian conquest (525 B.C.). This kind of marriage, however, was only formal and nominal in the last part of the period.<sup>4</sup> The custom was originally encouraged by the priests so as to keep pure the divine blood of the royal house ; and it was resumed in the Ptolemaic age (332-30 B.C.)

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus, I, 80, 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Maspero (*Hist.*), pp. 46-7.

<sup>3</sup> Buttes, pp. 19 and 33.

<sup>4</sup> Petrie, p. 111.

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at the instigation of the priests of the Osiric cult (with its reverence for the holy marriage of Osiris to his sister Isis), whose advice the Ptolemies felt bound to follow in order to secure the loyalty of the less civilised portion of the Egyptian nation.<sup>1</sup> In a few cases the kings married their full sisters, apparently to increase *la quantité du sang divin*.<sup>2</sup> However slight was the king's personal claim to the throne, when once his position was established through the royal blood of his wife, that wife, in deference to the popular prejudice in favour of male government, almost invariably took a quite subordinate position, unless the queen-consort was a woman of exceptional force of character.

Such an exceptional woman was Hatshepsut (or Hatasu), royal heiress through the deaths of her two full brothers, and sister-wife of her half-brother Thutmose III<sup>3</sup>—the Queen Elizabeth of Egypt. During their fifteen or twenty years of joint sovereignty she was the real ruler of the country ; and when she died, Thutmose is said to have wreaked his vengeance for those years of irksome submission by ordering her monuments to be defaced or destroyed. It is not certain whether he or

<sup>1</sup> Wedd, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> A phrase of Maspero's quoted by Wedd, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Breasted, p. 267. Other authorities say that she married her half-brother Thutmose II, and that Thutmose III was her nephew and son-in-law ; and others, that she married both half-brothers in turn.



some later iconoclast was responsible for this act of vandalism ; but the balance of evidence being doubtful, we are inclined to throw into the scale the savage and sensual-looking head of Thutmose—in the Egyptian gallery of the British Museum—as suggesting that he was the kind of man who would wish to forget that for many years he had played second fiddle to a strong-minded wife.

The eighteenth Dynasty (c. 1580–1350 B.C.) was in many ways the Augustan age of ancient Egypt, and among its other merits the queens, and through them perhaps other women, seem to have reached their highest point of privilege and respect. Not only do we see Hatshepsut vigorously ruling the country, but more than in any era (previous to the Ptolemaic age) other queens-consort are represented as prominent in state affairs and on public occasions.<sup>1</sup> Two of the most influential of these queens were the mother and wife of Akhnaten, the royal preacher of monotheism, and the first—and last—pacifist king of any country. His wife, in opposition to all tradition, is shown on the reliefs upon the same scale and importance as her husband ; and a homely touch is added to these sculptures by the frequent presence of the children as well as the mother. It is the only glimpse we get into the affectionate home life of an Egyptian royal family.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, p. 330.    <sup>2</sup> Weigall, p. 186 ; Erman, p. 74.

Diodorus, writing near the end of the Ptolemaic age, says that "it was appointed that the queen should enjoy greater power and honour than the king, and that among private people the wife should rule over her husband, in the marriage contracts the husband agreeing to obey her in all things."<sup>1</sup> The first of these statements is, as we have seen, only partially true; and the second is contradicted by several marriage contracts, which have come down to us, containing clauses that the wife shall obey her husband as is proper for a wife to do.<sup>2</sup> In fact no contracts have been preserved which require the husband to obey the wife,<sup>3</sup> and it seems likely that Diodorus was mistaken as to the purport of the marriage contracts, which really only required the husband to obey his wife in all things *relating to her property*. The contracts are very explicit as to the wife's control of her property, and one of them even forbids a husband to dispose of his own property without his wife's consent.<sup>4</sup> On the whole, therefore, we find that woman in Egypt, as in other countries, was kept to her "proper" position of subordination to man, although she possessed many rights and privileges beyond those given to the women of other nations.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus, I, 27, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Grenfell (Teb.), I, No. 104, pp. 449-453, and (Ox.) II, No. cclxv. l. 13, and note thereon.

<sup>3</sup> Petrie, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Grenfell (Ox.), III, No. 496.

## CHAPTER III

### GREECE

In all friendships which depend on the principle of superiority (such as that between husband and wife), the affection should be proportionate to the superiority ; i.e. the better or more useful party should receive more affection than he gives.

ARISTOTLE, *Ethics*, viii. 8.

THE great writers of Greece, poets, philosophers, historians, and orators, tell us more about women than we can learn from most other ancient literature ; but in all their writings there is hardly a glimmering of the idea that men could feel the same respect, still less the same romantic love, for women, that women were expected to show and probably often did feel for men. Homer gives us matchless pictures of woman's tender and beautiful love in the story of the faithful wife Penelope, and in the touching farewell scene between Hector and Andromache ; but in both cases the man is distinctly colder than the woman. The heroes of Homer, moreover, paid little regard to women not belonging to their own class or race<sup>1</sup> ; and at the very beginning of the *Iliad* we are introduced to the despised slave-concubine, that dark

<sup>1</sup> Mahaffy, p. 45.



shadow which ever followed the glamour and glory of ancient wars. Aeschylus, "the unconscious feminist,"<sup>1</sup> in the *Agamemnon* grimly pictures such a woman in the pathetic figure of Cassandra; and he also tells how Clytemnestra sought to justify her own infidelity, and the murder of her husband, on the ground of his many infidelities during the Trojan wars. Hesiod sums up in one line the early Greek conception of women as mere chattels: "first of all get yourself a house and a woman and an ox to plough with."<sup>2</sup> Just so the Exodus version of the tenth commandment reckons a wife among a man's possessions, after his house and before his ox.

"Solon forbade the sale of daughters or sisters into slavery by fathers or brothers—a prohibition which shows" to what unlimited extent women had before his time "been looked upon as mere articles of property."<sup>3</sup> But women still continued to have no independent existence and no rights of property. They were all their lives under the tutelage of their fathers or brothers or husbands.<sup>4</sup> They were married without any regard to their own wishes, and could even be passed on from one husband to another, as happened twice in the case of the first wife of Pericles.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. Wright, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 405.

<sup>3</sup> Grote, Vol. II, p. 509.

<sup>4</sup> Westermarck, Vol. II, pp. 333, 334.

<sup>5</sup> Becq, p. 64.

The women of Sparta were in one respect at least more fortunate than those of Athens. In both cities wifehood and motherhood were regarded solely from the point of view of the State, as being necessary for the production of good citizens, that limited and favoured class which required to live in leisure on the labour of the unenfranchised aliens, artisans, slaves, and women. In Sparta, where the ideal of a citizen was a brave and disciplined soldier, they wished the mothers to be strong and muscular; and so Lycurgus decreed that girls should be trained in athletics in the same way as boys—a practice so abhorrent to the general male sense of female propriety that it was never copied in Greece or elsewhere for over two thousand years, when at last lawn-tennis and bicycles for women were invented. In Athens, on the other hand, wives and daughters were almost entirely confined to their homes, and enjoyed little outdoor life except during their visits to the country, which were on that account “so delightful to the wife and longed for by the children.”<sup>1</sup> Xenophon’s model husband recommended as an excellent gymnastic for his wife that she should “knead the dough and roll the paste, shake the coverlets and make the beds.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly at a later date Clement of Alexandria, while praising athletics for men and boys, prescribed as sufficient bodily exercise for a

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Oec.*, v. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* x. 11

woman the helpful household tasks of spinning and weaving, cooking food palatable for her husband, grinding corn, making beds, and neatly laying the table.<sup>1</sup>

Thucydides, whose general silence concerning women is more eloquent than the many words of other writers as to what the average respectable Greek thought about woman's place in the world, makes Pericles at the end of his funeral oration address the widows of those who had fallen in the war with this terse exhortation: "They should not belie their womanly nature, the great glory of which is that they should be as little as possible spoken of amongst men, whether for good or for ill."<sup>2</sup> But the Athenians, who "were apt to spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing," found in the days of Pericles a new thing in the personality of woman and especially of that foreign woman Aspasia, whom Pericles married, after putting away his first wife. We can safely discredit the abominable libels concerning Aspasia, which were circulated by the political opponents of Pericles and by the scandal-loving comic writers; and may well believe that she was endowed with nobility of character as well as with exceptional brains.<sup>3</sup> Becq de Fouquières, in his *Aspasie de Milet*, skilfully

<sup>1</sup> Clement, Vol. I, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Thuc., ii. 45 2.

<sup>3</sup> Mahaffy, p. 214; Grote, Vol. V, pp. 23 ff.; Holm, Vol. II, p. 283; Curtius, Vol. II, p. 461.

disentangles her life-history from the conflicting testimony of her contemporaries and of subsequent writers, and shows that it was the moral elevation of her soul, even more than the keenness of her intellect, which was the real secret of her prestige.<sup>1</sup> Her salons were attended by the cleverest men of Athens, and by many women who secretly yearned for some improvement in their position. Aspasia had been able herself to take the first step on the road to woman's emancipation through the happy companionship of a husband who loved and respected her, and she wished that others might share her happiness. Cicero, quoting from Aeschines Socraticus, records a conversation between her and Xenophon and his wife,<sup>2</sup> in which she pointed out that the man should take care to choose the best possible woman for his wife, and the woman to choose the best possible man for her husband—a most revolutionary idea in a society where women were given no choice in the matter of marriage. We know that Xenophon was following her teaching when, in his picture of a model husband and wife, he preached the duty of mutual helpfulness between two partners who naturally supply one another's deficiencies<sup>3</sup>; but his tone clearly implies that he regarded the wife as the inferior partner; and his ideal did not

<sup>1</sup> Becq, p. 360.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *De Inv.*, i. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Oec.*, iii. 14-15.

include any cultivation of the mind, but only careful attention to household management. Euripides, who also may have fallen under the influence of Aspasia, showed a much keener appreciation of women's spiritual values, especially in "that strangest, saddest, sweetest song of his, *Alkestis*."<sup>1</sup>

The emotionless idealist Plato classed women with children and slaves as unreasoning creatures<sup>2</sup>; and often gave emphatic expression to the idea of their all-round inferiority, physical, moral, and intellectual, though he was willing to lessen the distance between the two sexes by training women in music and gymnastics and the art of war. It is a curious feature of his theory of women's education that he laid more frequent stress on the last two items of his triple programme than on the first.<sup>3</sup> Women, said Plato, are by nature (not merely from lack of education) prone to secrecy and stealth on account of their weakness; woman's nature is inferior to man's "in capacity for virtue."<sup>4</sup> Men who have not lived well, who have been cowards or led unjust lives, may (he said) be fairly supposed in their second incarnation to change into women; and if in this state they still do not turn from their evil ways, they will then be

<sup>1</sup> Browning, *Balaustion's Adventure*.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, Vol. III, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 143 ff., 531; Vol. V, pp. 186-7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Vol. V, p. 163.



changed into beasts.<sup>1</sup> By his system of the communisation of children in the *Republic* he would have put women even lower than the beasts, by destroying all family life; though it is only fair to say that in his later work, the *Laws*, he seems to have reluctantly dropped this proposal, which was too inhuman to be accepted even by callous Greeks. Aristotle was even more definite than Plato as to women's natural inferiority, and these two philosophers between them gave the death-blow to the movement for women's elevation in Greece.

Xenophon and other husbands (according to Plutarch) took their wives to see and hear Aspasia; but not so Socrates, whose attitude towards his wife is revealed by the story that when Xantippe wished to comfort him in his last hours the cool philosopher remarked, "Let some one take her home."<sup>2</sup> One wonders what Xantippe thought about the Aspasia movement. Was it perchance something like this?—

I would not that ye thought  
I blame my lord departed; for he meant  
No evil, so I take it, to his wife.  
'Twas only that the high philosopher,  
Pregnant with noble theories and great thoughts,  
Deigned not to stoop to touch so slight a thing  
As the fine fabric of a woman's brain,  
So subtle as a passionate woman's soul.

<sup>1</sup> Plato, Vol. III, pp. 461, 513.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, p. 198.

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I think I could have borne the weary life,  
 The narrow life within the narrow walls,  
 If he had loved me ; but he kept his love  
 For this Athenian city and her sons ;  
 And haply, for some stranger-woman, bold  
 With freedom, thought, and glib philosophy  
 . . . Hope died out.  
 A huge despair was stealing on my soul,  
 A sort of fierce acceptance of my fate,—  
 He wished a household vessel—well 'twas good,  
 For he should have it ! He should have no more  
 The yearning treasure of a woman's love,  
 But just the baser treasure which he sought.<sup>1</sup>

Another famous Greek woman, Sappho, the poetess of Lesbos, founded a girls' school of music and poetry. Only fragments of Sappho's poems have survived, but the ingenious restoration of those fragments made by Mr. A. S. Way, in his *Sappho and the Vigil of Venus*, helps one to guess that she truly deserved the reputation, which she had from the first, of being one of the world's sweetest singers. As a woman, Sappho suffered the same fate as Aspasia, in that her fair fame was grossly attacked by envious or evil-minded persons ; but her defenders have driven from the field those "wallowers in foulness, who thought that they could defile the stars with bespatterings from their sties."<sup>2</sup> Pupils flocked to her school, because they were weary of the monotony of spinning and weaving, and longed to escape the prison-

<sup>1</sup> Levy, pp. 28, 32, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Way, p. xv.

house of home, and to climb the heights of Parnassus. One of them, Erinna, who died at the age of nineteen, wrote *The Distaff*, a poem in hexameters, which is now lost, but which was highly praised by those who heard it :

Erinna's little Lesbian honey-comb,  
Replenished from the Muses' sweetest store.  
Three hundred lines as good as Homer's verse  
Were fashioned by this maid of nineteen years.  
To loom and distaff by her mother tied,  
She yearned in secret for the Muses' crown.  
As Sappho won the prize for lyric strains,  
Erinna conquered in hexameters.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greek epigram, quoted by Eustathius, Vol. I, p. 265.



## CHAPTER IV

### ROME

There are no other men possessing so great a power over their children as we Romans possess.

JUSTINIAN, *Institutions*, I. 9, 2.

“THE position of the Roman matron” in the days of the Republic “was quite different from that of the Greek matron in the time of Pericles.” She was the real mistress of the home, “supreme in all household arrangements,”<sup>1</sup> and above all she was respected by her husband. The idea of a well-ordered and mutually helpful family life is not the least important gift which we have inherited from Rome ; and the “chief features of the Roman household were the power of the father and the dignity of the mother.”<sup>2</sup> The almost unlimited power of the father, as head of the family, was the fundamental principle of ancient civilisations, but no nation “equalled the Roman in the simple but inexorable embodiment in law of the principles pointed out by nature herself.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Donaldson, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Heitland, Vol. I, Chap. xx, § 226 ; cf. Bailey, pp. 209 ff. ; Chesterton, pp. 160-2.

<sup>3</sup> Mommsen, Vol. I, p. 72.

So is poor mother Nature generally held responsible for the blunders of her children.

“ In all the relations created by Private Law the son (and daughter) lived under a domestic despotism, which, considering the severity it maintained to the last, and the number of centuries through which it endured, constitutes one of the strangest problems in legal history. . . . No innovation of any kind was attempted till the first years of the Empire ”<sup>1</sup> ; and one of the last severities to disappear was the right of a father to surrender his children as slaves to any one whom he had wronged, which was only formally abolished by Justinian, although it had previously fallen utterly into disuse.<sup>2</sup> A woman remained a daughter, as it were, under the paternal power, all her life, for when she married she simply passed from the power of her own father to that of her husband-father ; and when she had no father or husband she came under the control of her brother or some other male guardian.

At no period was she legally mistress of herself ; and yet the Roman matron managed to be a free woman in many ways. She seems to have been naturally less submissive, more self-assertive than her Greek sister, and perhaps the Roman man had a finer sense of justice, not legal but human justice, than the sensuous and selfish Greek ; and so at Rome

<sup>1</sup> Maine, pp. 144, 148.

<sup>2</sup> Bury, Vol. II, pp. 417, 418.

the woman gained more respect, and a position of some dignity and independence, and public opinion and private inclination disposed the husband not to take full advantage of his legal powers. Restrictions on her personal freedom of action became slight, and friendly lawyers found for her many ways of evading the restrictions on her property rights.<sup>1</sup> Some women even became politicians, which shocks the conventional historian more than anything else. Any one, says Mommsen, who beheld these female statesmen, and saw at their side the effeminate young men of the day, "might well have a horror of the unnatural world, in which the sexes seemed as though they wished to change parts."<sup>2</sup>

There is a very modern touch about two striking occasions on which the women of Rome interfered in politics, described at length by Livy and Appian respectively, but unnoticed or dismissed in a line or two by most historians of Rome. In the crisis of the second Punic War, the Oppian Law had been passed (215 B.C.) forbidding women to wear dresses of many colours or golden ornaments weighing more than half an ounce, or riding in horse-drawn carriages except on religious occasions. Twenty years later the women started a violent agitation for the repeal of this war legislation. "They could

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, Vol. III, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. V, p. 393.

not be kept at home either by advice or shame nor even by the commands of their husbands, but beset every street and pass in the city, beseeching the men as they went down to the forum, that in the present flourishing state of the commonwealth . . . they would suffer the women to have their former ornaments of dress restored. The throng of women increased daily, for they arrived even from the country towns and villages, and they had at length the boldness to come up to the consuls, praetors, and magistrates to urge their request." One of the consuls, Cato (the Elder), delivered a long oration, in which he argued more hotly against this unfeminine agitation for the repeal than on the merits of the question itself. "If, Romans, every individual among us had made it a rule to maintain the prerogative and authority of a husband with respect to his own wife, we should have less trouble with the whole sex. But now, our privileges, overpowered at home by female contumacy, are even here in the forum, spurned and trodden under foot ; and because we are unable to withstand each separately, we now dread their collective action. . . . Our ancestors thought it not proper that women should perform any, even private, business without a director, but that they should be ever under the control of their fathers, brothers, or husbands. . . . If you suffer them to throw off these restrictions one

by one, to tear them all asunder, and at last to be set on an equal footing with yourselves, can you imagine that they will be any longer tolerable by you?"<sup>1</sup> Valerius, in his reply to this harangue, turned against Cato his own writings, and showed that Roman women in times past had been capable of patriotic political action. And if, said he, "masters are not ashamed to listen to the petitions of their slaves, why should we be angry at receiving requests from honourable women?"<sup>2</sup> The day after this debate in the forum, the women poured out into the streets in much greater numbers, and in a body beset the doors of those tribunes who had hitherto prevented the passing of the Bill proposed by their colleagues; nor did they retire until this intervention was withdrawn. And so the women's rising was successful, and the obnoxious law was repealed.

About a hundred and fifty years later the women agitated in a more orderly fashion against a proposal that their property should be taxed to provide for the expenses of the Civil War. At first they approached the wives and sisters of the magistrates, and tried to persuade them to influence their husbands to drop the proposed tax; but being repulsed by these ladies, "they then forced their way to the tribunal of the triumvirs in the forum, the people and the guards dividing to let them pass." And Hortensia, the daughter of

<sup>1</sup> Livy, xxxiv. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. xxxiv. 5.



Hortensius, in a faithful reproduction of her father's eloquence,<sup>1</sup> spake thus: "As is befitting women of our rank addressing a petition to you, we had recourse to your female relatives. Having suffered unseemly treatment on the part of Fulvia, we have been compelled by her to visit the forum. You have deprived us of our fathers, our sons, our husbands, and our brothers, whom you accused of having wronged you. If you take away our property also, you reduce us to a condition unbecoming our birth, our manners, our sex. If we have done you wrong, as you say our husbands have, prescribe us as you do them. If we women have not voted you public enemies, have not torn down your houses, destroyed your army, or led another one against you; if we have not hindered you in obtaining offices and honours—why do you visit upon us the same punishment as upon the guilty, whose offences we have not shared? Why should we pay taxes, when we have no part in the honours, the commands, the statecraft, for which you contend against each other with such harmful results? 'Because this is a time of war,' do you say? When have there not been wars, and when have taxes ever been imposed on women, who are exempted by their sex among all mankind? Our mothers, once for all, rose superior to their sex, and made contributions, when you were in danger of losing

<sup>1</sup> Valerius Maximus, 8, 3, 3.

the whole Empire, and the City itself, through the conflict with the Carthaginians. But then they contributed voluntarily, not from their landed property, their fields, their dowries, or their houses, without which life is not possible to free women, but only from their own jewellery ; and not according to fixed valuation, not under fear of informers or accusers, not by force and violence, but what they themselves were willing to give. Who now causes you alarm for the Empire or the Country ? Let war with the Gauls and the Parthians come, and we shall not be inferior to our mothers in zeal for the common safety ; but for civil wars may we never contribute, nor ever assist you against each other." The triumvirs, angry that women should speak in public, and should demand from them reasons for their actions, would have driven them away by force, but frightened by the cries of the crowd, they promised to give them a reply on the following day.<sup>1</sup> In the end they remitted the greater part of the proposed impost ; and so was the battle waged, and nearly won, for the principle of no taxation without representation.

<sup>1</sup> Appian, *Civil Wars*, Bk. iv. §§ 32-34.

## CHAPTER V

### CHRISTIANITY

They marvelled that He was speaking with a woman.  
*John iv. 27 (R.V.).*

WHEN we come to the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, we breathe a new atmosphere, filled with the spirit of love, with a divine enthusiasm for all mankind. Here there is no distinction of sexes, for were not male and female alike created in the image of God, the children of the heavenly Father, whom Jesus came to bring back to their spiritual home? So in the gospel stories, women for the first time hold as prominent a place as men. John tells us how Jesus first proclaimed His Messiahship to the woman of Samaria ; and that Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus. Luke, more than any of the other evangelists, and more than any other historian, religious or secular, records many striking things concerning women ; and it is interesting to note Harnack's suggestion, that he very likely derived some of the incidents in his Gospel, which are not contained in the other Synoptics, from stories handed on by the daughters of Philip.<sup>1</sup> Luke gives

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, pp. 153 ff.



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us the songs of Mary and Elizabeth, the testimony of Anna, and Simeon's prophecy of Mary's sufferings, and tells how Mary pondered in her heart the words of her Son. He tells the story of the woman of the city who loved much, and who washed His feet with her tears ; and records the words of Jesus to the daughters of Jerusalem. There are also reasons for thinking that the story of the woman taken in adultery belongs to Luke's Gospel and not to that of John.<sup>1</sup>

Josephine Butler pointed out that in Christ's treatment of women the word *liberation*, more than any other, expresses the act which changed their life and character and position. The woman taken in adultery was made free in a double sense, free from the harsh judgment of men, and from her own moral slavery. He raised the Syrophenician woman from the position, accepted even by herself, of a Gentile dog to one higher than the highest in the commonwealth of Israel. His "go in peace," and words of commendation of one who had been exiled from society, contrasted solemnly with His rebuke to His self-satisfied host, who had marvelled that Jesus should not seem to be aware what manner of woman it was who touched Him. Of another He said, "Shall not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from her bonds on

<sup>1</sup> McLachlan, pp. 268 ff.

the Sabbath day?" "It is no wonder that there should be some women whose love for this Saviour exceeds the love which it is possible for any man to feel for Him."<sup>1</sup>

Luke tells us of Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susannah, and many other women, who with the twelve Apostles accompanied Jesus on His journeys through Galilee; and how some of these women followed Him to Jerusalem, and were present at the Cross and at the Sepulchre, and were the first to proclaim the Resurrection to the Apostles. One also gathers (putting together Luke xxiv. 33 and Acts i. 14) that these women were with the Eleven at the time of the Ascension, when Jesus said that they must wait at Jerusalem until they received power by the coming of the Holy Spirit, after which they (the Apostles and the women) would be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. So the women waited with the Apostles, and continued to meet with them in prayer in the upper chamber, until on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon them, men and women alike. In the following chapters Luke takes care to record several times that many women, and leading women too, were added to the Church; he specially mentions Lydia, Damaris, Priscilla, and the mother of Timothy. Paul also speaks of Priscilla, Euodias, Syntyche, and the deaconess Phoebe as his fellow-

<sup>1</sup> Butler (Essays), pp. xlix ff., lviii, lx.

workers or helpers, and says that Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis had worked hard in the Lord. Next after the Apostles, women would seem to have been among the most active agents in spreading the gospel. Women were actually ministers in the first Christian churches ; they took part in public worship, praying and prophesying (or preaching) ; and Paul by no means condemned this practice, but only urged the Church at Corinth to require that their women ministers should appear with their heads covered, as was the custom in other churches.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, is the meaning of the subsequent injunction in the same epistle, that women should refrain from "speaking" in church?<sup>2</sup> We believe that this refers only to "speaking in tongues," and not at all to "prophesying or praying." In the three chapters (xii.—xiv.) Paul draws a sharp distinction between prophesying and speaking in tongues, which he regards as the least important of the gifts of the Spirit,<sup>3</sup> and as having no element of edification, unless it is followed by interpretation. Great disorder had arisen in the Church at Corinth from several persons speaking in tongues at the same time, and no one interpreting ; and Paul urges the Corinthians to follow the example of other Churches by conducting their services "decently and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 5-16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. xiv. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. xii. 28.

in order." In particular he advises that the man who is tempted to speak in a tongue should, if there is no interpreter, "keep silence in the church, and speak to himself and to God"; and that women also should not speak in tongues, but rather should keep silence and wait (upon God), as the Psalmist says.<sup>1</sup>

The writer of the Epistles to Timothy, who, there are strong grounds for believing, was not Paul, but some admirer of Paul in the early part of the second century,<sup>2</sup> is more decided as to the impropriety of women teaching, or having any authority over men, and he bases this on the assumption of woman's moral inferiority to man, as shown by the fact that it was Eve, and not Adam, that first brought sin into the world.<sup>3</sup> This last point was for many centuries a favourite argument with many writers, who were glad to find in (or to read into) Scripture an excuse for maintaining masculine domination. Thus early in the history of the Church was Christ's doctrine of the equality of the sexes denied by His followers; and the male rulers of the Catholic Church, through fear or contempt or both, invented the theory that women are

<sup>1</sup> The Greek word, which A.V. here translates "be under obedience," does not occur in that sense anywhere in the Septuagint, but it is used three times in the Psalms (xxxvii. 7, lxii. 1, lxii. 5), as the equivalent of the Hebrew "be silent."

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, pp. 84 ff.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. ii, 11-14.

not capable of receiving Orders ; that ministering at the Altar, even in a subordinate capacity, is forbidden to women ; and that, being incapable of exercising a liturgical office, they cannot even form part of the choir or musical chapel. " This does not prevent them, however, from taking part in congregational singing " !<sup>1</sup>

When the Church became a power in the State, and ecclesiastics were able to influence law makers, they threw their weight into the scale against extending the rights of women, especially of married women. Horrified at the scandals arising from the lax marriage customs existing in the early days of the Roman Empire, which seemed to them to be the consequence of the measure of freedom gradually won by women, they had not sufficient faith in the power of their own preaching to prevent liberty from continuing to pass into licence, and preferred rather to trust to the maintenance of the old Roman Law, under which women had been subject to the absolute control and protection of their fathers or husbands. The tendency to recognise the equal rights of women, signs of which were evident in the liberal School of Roman lawyers,<sup>2</sup> was prevented from bearing fruit in the Code of Justinian, because the Church—as often afterwards—was on the side of

<sup>1</sup> Cath. Encyc., Vol. XV, pp. 690, 698.

<sup>2</sup> Maine, p. 159.



the conservatives. The subjection of women under the old Roman Law was twofold—personal and proprietary. The personal freedom, which they had won by the time of the Empire, was too securely based to be wholly taken from them by the Church. Indeed the maintenance of such freedom was desirable from the Church's point of view, to secure that women should have liberty to enter the religious life, unhindered by their fathers or guardians. But in the eyes of the Church the only way to protect married women was to strengthen and rebuild the bulwarks which had of old surrounded their proprietary freedom, and which seemed in danger of falling down. The result was that the matured Roman Law, as it permeated and was fused into the barbaric law of the Roman provinces throughout Europe, largely under the direction of Church lawyers, produced legal systems under which unmarried women were in general comparatively free, and married women had hardly any rights at all.<sup>1</sup> The worst example of this was to be seen in the English Common Law, which borrowed most of its fundamental principles from the jurisprudence of the Canonists. "I do not know how the operation and nature of the ancient *Patria Potestas* can be brought so vividly before the mind, as by reflecting on the prerogatives attached to the husband by

<sup>1</sup> Maine, pp. 161 ff.

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the pure English Common Law, and by recalling the vigorous consistency with which the view of complete legal subjection on the part of the wife is carried by it, when it is untouched by equity or statutes, through every department of rights, duties, and remedies.”<sup>1</sup>

Although the Church, in these several directions, retarded the emancipation of women, it never wholly destroyed the seed which was sown by Jesus, and now at long last the harvest is beginning to be reaped. Women have, however slowly and gradually, benefited by the Christian doctrine of human equality ; although their bonds were not at once removed, they were gradually loosened. As in old Rome, so in Christendom, the strictest legal subordination of women has in practice been found to be not incompatible with a real respect for womanhood, albeit sometimes misdirected, and inspired more by condescension and charity than by any true sense of justice.

The elevation of the Mother of Christ into an object of religious veneration, even of worship, might have been expected to give to all women a new and better position in the eyes of men ; and to some extent this has perhaps been the result in Roman Catholic countries. Protestants, however, have objected strongly to the dogma of the perpetual vir-

<sup>1</sup> Maine, p. 164.

ginity of the Virgin Mary, and to the associated doctrine that women devoted to the "religious" life should make vows of perpetual virginity. We do not wish here to discuss the origins and the merits or demerits of this aspect of the religious life. We would only remind Protestants that in the early days of Christianity this was perhaps the best way in which unprotected and unmarried women could find a safe refuge from the dangers of a licentious society. It was at least a good temporary expedient, if not the best final solution. Moreover, it had the great advantage that it opened a new career to women.<sup>1</sup> As a recent German writer has put it: "It was indeed the Bride of Christ who won for woman the freedom of professional life."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Royden, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Mausbach, quoted by Foerster, p. 145.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FIRST FEMINISTS

Honour to womankind ! It needs must be  
That God loves woman, since He fashioned thee.  
CHRISTINE DE PISAN, *Joan of Arc*.<sup>1</sup>

THE idea of a general revolt on the part of women against their position of subjection did not arise until the middle of the nineteenth century, that era which saw the birth of a social conscience, a spirit of solidarity, and a sense of the power of association. But throughout the ages and in all countries the voices of isolated women made themselves heard from time to time, protesting against the assumed moral and mental inferiority of their sex ; and here and there a man was found to champion the cause of women. Clement of Alexandria believed that women had the same capacity as men for virtue and for learning, and he gave as examples of this such diverse women as Judith, Susanna, Atalanta, Alcestis, Aspasia, Sappho, and many others.<sup>2</sup> A sentence, torn from its context, is often quoted from Clement to the effect that " it brings shame to a woman even to reflect

<sup>1</sup> From translation in Welch, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Clement, Vol. II, pp. 166 ff., 193 ff.

of what nature she is," to show that he regarded woman as an inferior being ; but the context shows that his meaning was, that a woman is heartily ashamed in the morning when she remembers how she behaved at last night's drinking-bout !<sup>1</sup> Basil (or his imitator) also taught that the benefits of nature are entirely equal for men and women, and they have an equal power of doing well. If women are weak it is only in the body, and by no means in the soul, which is the seat of power, constancy, and virtue, in which often there is no man capable of equalling them.<sup>2</sup>

Pierre du Bois (c. 1255-1322) in a curious Latin work, *On the Recovery of the Holy Land*, advocated the better education of girls, generally in the same subjects as boys, including Latin, logic, and theology, but especially in medicine and surgery, "so that they might become useful wives in the Holy Land to patriarchs and priests of the Eastern faith (who are not celibates), helping to bring them to, and keep them in, the true Roman faith, since women have great influence over their husbands, as witness the wives who led away Solomon, that very wise man, to idolatry ; and also by their healing arts might win the confidence of, and even convert, the infidels."<sup>3</sup>

Christine de Pisan (1363-1429) was the first woman to grasp, and partially to expound,

<sup>1</sup> Clement, Vol. I, p. 209.    <sup>2</sup> Basil, Vol. II, pp. 33 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Bois, pp. 51, 52, 70.

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the foundation principles of feminism, namely, that every woman should be allowed to develop her personality and to exercise her faculties to the full, and that to this end she should be gradually freed from all shackles which hinder that development and prevent that exercise. Christine was born in Venice, but at the age of five was taken to Paris to join her father, who had been appointed Astrologer to Charles V, and for the rest of her life she lived in France. She was married at fifteen to a Court official, Étienne de Castel, who died when she was barely twenty-five. Her father dying shortly after, Christine the widow was left to face the world alone, and by the force of hard necessity "found herself," as in happier circumstances she might not have done. She became a voluminous writer—perhaps the first woman who wrote for a living—in prose and verse, on many subjects, including love, politics, morals, and the art of war. Her *Feats of Arms and Chivalry* was translated and printed by Caxton in 1488. But her two favourite subjects were Woman and France, and the two were not wholly unconnected ; for although she was not so far imbued with feminism as prematurely to claim for women generally a share in practical politics, she showed by the common sense and breadth of view of her political writings that she at least was fit to be a politician, and so by her example gave a more powerful impe-

tus towards the ultimate enfranchisement of women than could have been given by theoretical arguments in favour of such an ideal, which in those days would have seemed merely utopian. Her feminism was rather insinuated than loudly proclaimed. Indeed, in her *Livre des trois vertus*, the theme of which is woman's enormous capacity for usefulness, even in the limited sphere hitherto allotted to her, she emphasises the duty of using well such opportunities as woman already possesses, and says nothing about casting off shackles, except the shackles of ignorance.

In the literature of the Middle Ages women were generally regarded either as angels or devils, and rarely as ordinary human beings, with the same faults and virtues as men. The knights of chivalry made of them angels, though unfortunately they were often other men's wives whom they worshipped. Christine tells a story of one of these knights, in *The Book of the Duke of True Lovers*, a poem interspersed with letters in prose. The story is naïvely told, with an apparently sympathetic appreciation of the innocent delights of courtly love, but, lest the reader should fail to notice the author's real attitude on the subject, the moral is somewhat clumsily revealed in a letter from the lady's old companion, who sensibly exposes the dangers of her conduct and counsels her to dispel melancholy and pass her time, not in such love as

this, but in some useful work, so as to prevent idle thoughts. This letter, perhaps not originally composed for this work, is reproduced in *Le Livre des trois vertus*.<sup>1</sup>

This angel-worship only roused in Christine a mild and reasoned protest, but her spirit was stirred to its depths when she answered the detractors of women, such as Jean le Meun, the author of the second part of *Le Roman de la Rose*, who wrote that all women "are, will be, or have been, unchaste in fact or in will," anticipating Pope's cruel gibe that "every woman is at heart a rake." She felt that libels of this sort were only uttered by men who were themselves corrupt, who first used every artifice to deceive and to defile women, and then tried to excuse themselves by defaming them. "What are women?" said she—"what are they? Are they serpents, lions, dragons, or ravenous beasts, that you need to use stratagems to deceive and capture them? Deceive them, vituperate them, besiege this castle, take care that no one of them escapes from you men, that every one of them is delivered up to shame. And by God, they might be your mothers, your sisters, your daughters, your wives, and your sweethearts!"<sup>2</sup> Again, in her poem *L'Epistre au Dieu d'Amours* she points out that if men

<sup>1</sup> Pisan (Lovers), pp. 102 ff. ; and Pisan, Vol. III, pp. ix, xv.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Epistre sur le Roman de la Rose*, quoted in Rigaud, pp. 67-8.



find one woman full of all sorts of vices, "yet followeth not that so all women be." It would be just as reasonable to call all angels proud, because some of them for their pride fell from heaven, or to distrust all the Apostles because one of them was a traitor. It is only—

Men's own falseness  
Them causeth woman for to trust the less.  
O ! every man ought have an heart tender  
To a woman, and deem her honourable. . . .  
Every wight wot, that wit hath reasonable,  
That of a woman he descended is,  
Then is it shame of her to speak amiss.<sup>1</sup>

Christine expounded her ideas in a prose work, *La Cité des Dames*, a dream-allegory, in which she imagines a city built for and occupied by virtuous women of all ages, many of whose lives and characters she quaintly sketches. She claims that women, though physically weaker, are not morally or intellectually inferior to men. It is only the general lack of education that makes them appear so. One section is devoted to answering those who say "that it is not good that women should learn letters." She says that Hortensius, the Roman rhetorician, was not of that opinion, who "had a daughter named Hortensia, whom he loved much for the subtilty of her wit and made her to learn letters and to study in the aforesaid science of rhetoric." Likewise to turn to modern times, Jean André, a solemn legist of

<sup>1</sup> Pisan (Cupide), p. 535.

Bologna, made his fair daughter, Nouvelle, learn letters and law so well that when he was busy and unable to "read the lessons of his scholars, he sent Nouvelle his daughter in his place to read to the scholars in his chair; and to the intent that her beauty should not hurt the thought of them that she taught, she had a little curtain before her."<sup>1</sup> Behold the reverse picture six hundred years later, when a shy professor at Cambridge is said to have similarly protected *his* eyes and thoughts from wandering, when women students first attended his lectures, by hiding his face behind the lid of a desk.

It is impossible to estimate the measure of the influence of Christine's writing, direct and indirect, on the thought of her times. Five of her works were translated into English and printed in this country within a hundred years of her death, but after that she was almost forgotten until the eighteenth century, when books began to be written about her,<sup>2</sup> chiefly by Frenchmen who greatly eulogised her powers and talents; but even now some of her best works have never been printed. The best recent accounts of her writings are by Rose Rigaud, and by Dr. Mathilde Laigle.

Martin le Franc (d. 1540), Provost of the Church at Lausanne, wrote a poem, *Le Champion des dames*, in which he brings forward a host of famous good women to confute the

<sup>1</sup> Pisan, *Cité*, Pt. II, § 36.

<sup>2</sup> Nys, p. 77.



calumnies of an imaginary Malebouche, who maligned all women from Eve downwards. Among le Franc's famous women is included Christine de Pisan, whom he places above all the poets of her age, and compares with Cicero for her eloquence and with Cato for her wisdom. The Italian historian Capella, in his pamphlet *Della eccellenza et dignità delle Donne* (1526), also answered those who held that women were morally and intellectually inferior to men.

Another male champion of women was Cornelius Agrippa (1476-1535), who in 1532 published a Latin treatise, *Concerning the Nobility and Excellence of Women above Men*. Some of Agrippa's arguments are valueless from a scientific point of view; but he maintains that woman's natural privileges are restrained by man-made laws (whose tyranny usurps against God and nature's laws), abolished by use and custom, and extinguished by the manner of their education. She is detained in sloth at home and permitted to think of nothing but her needle or the like, and afterwards she is delivered up to the jealous rule of her husband or she is shut up in a nunnery. He urges that it is wrong to exclude women from public offices, and from preaching the word of God, as did Miriam, Huldah, Anna, and the daughters of Philip, and Priscilla the wife of Aquila.<sup>1</sup> "God is no respecter of persons,

<sup>1</sup> Agrippa, pp. 52 ff., 76.

for in Christ neither Male nor Female but a new creature is accepted."

The next champion of her sex is Marie de Romieu, whose poems, published in 1581, included *A Brief Discourse showing that the Excellence of Women surpasses that of Men*. It is a bright poem hastily struck off the anvil of her lively imagination, in reply to a taunting letter from her brother defaming women. Like a bee gathering honey from many a flower—to use her own simile—she picks out her good and famous women by chance as they occur to her, without order and without art, and presents to us an interesting portrait-gallery. In reply to the charge that all the trouble of the world from the days of Helen has been brought about by women, she points out that men were the beginners of the mischief by their deceitful flatteries. It was Paris, not Helen, that brought Troy to its destruction.

Ha ! ce n'est pas ainsi, non, ainsi ce n'est pas ;  
 Vous ne vous trompez point par nos subtils appas.  
 C'est quelqu'une de nous, las ! qui se laisse prendre  
 Dans les trompeurs filets, que vous luy venez tendre.<sup>1</sup>

A Spanish poetess and erudite scholar, Juana de la Cruz (1651-93), struck the same note :

Weak men ! who without reason aim  
 To load poor woman with abuse,  
 Not seeing that yourselves produce  
 The very evils that you blame.

<sup>1</sup> Romieu, p. 23.

## THE FIRST FEMINISTS

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You 'gainst her firm resistance strive,  
And having struck her judgment mute,  
Soon to her levity impute,  
What from your labour you derive. . . .

How rare a fool must he appear,  
Whose folly mounts to such a pass,  
That first he breathes upon the glass,  
Then grieves because it is not clear !<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From translation in Hayley, Vol. III, p. 101.

## CHAPTER VII

### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Nec historias sciat omnes,  
Sed quaedam ex libris et non intelligat.  
JUVENAL, vi. l. 450-1.  
Mens cujusque is est quisque.  
*Inscription on Pepys' Library,  
Magdalene College, Cambridge.*

LUCREZIA MARINELLA (1571-1653), of Venice, who, becoming a widow at an early age, sought relief in the cultivation of letters, was the author of some religious poems, and of a treatise on *The Nobility and Excellence of Woman and the Failures and Vices of Men*, illustrated by numerous and miscellaneous examples from ancient, modern, and mythical sources. She claims that the minds of men and women are the same in essence, but that women's are nobler, as they are more beautiful in body. They ought to have the same education as men, and should also be trained in athletics, so as fully to develop their mental and physical capacities. She cites cases of famous athletic women, foremost among them being Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, of whom Gibbon relates that she was esteemed the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex ; that she had inured her constitution to fatigue,

disdained the use of a covered carriage, generally appeared on horseback in military costume, and sometimes marched several miles on foot at the head of the troops. Zenobia is also cited by Lucrezia as an example of learned women. This too is confirmed by Gibbon, who says that "her manly understanding was strengthened and adorned by study. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but possessed in equal perfection the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. She had drawn up for her own use an epitome of oriental history, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato under the tuition of the sublime Longinus."<sup>1</sup>

Lucrezia Marinella specifies about a dozen virtues in which women excel, and three dozen vices for which men are notorious. The general calumny of women by men may usually be traced to their pride, envy, or self-love. Repulsed by virtuous women, they attack them in revenge; or they are jealous of women's beauty or nobility. The majority of sins committed by women have been suggested to them by men with their false and honeyed tongues. Some have even cast aspersions upon Helen, but prithee, who first fell in love, Paris or Helen?

About the same time (1600) was published, under the pseudonym of Moderata Fonte, a posthumous work by another Italian poetess,

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, Vol. I, pp. 302-3.

Modesta Pozzo (1555-1592), on *The Worth of Woman*, in which she also tried to show woman's superiority to man.

Marie de Jars de Gournay (1565-1645), youthful admirer of Montaigne and afterwards editor of his *Essays*, in *Le Grief des Dames* satirises those wretched men who refuse even to listen to, much less to confute, a woman's arguments, and simply pass them by "with a smile or a slight shake of the head, exclaiming with mute eloquence: It is only a woman speaking." Woman is left "for her sole and sovereign virtues, to be ignorant, to play the fool, and to serve, while happy man can be wise without crime: his quality of man allowing him what is forbidden to woman, all action, all judgment, all right speech, and the credit of being believed or at least of being listened to."<sup>1</sup> In *L'égalité des hommes et des femmes* she claims to avoid all extremes and to content herself with equalling women to men, nature being opposed in this regard as much to superiority as to inferiority. Woman's apparent intellectual inferiority is only due to lack of education. According to Plutarch, Seneca, and Montaigne, there is no essential difference between the moral and mental capacities of men and women. Plato, Aristotle, St. Basil, and St. Jerome and the Bible are on the same side against the many ignorant detractors of women. God gave to them, as

<sup>1</sup> Schiff, pp. 89 ff.



well as to men, the gift of prophecy (Huldah and Deborah) ; and " if St. Paul forbids them the ministry and commands them to be silent in the Church, it is clear that this was not from any contempt, but he only did so for fear that they should cause men to be tempted by the public display which they would have to make, while ministering and preaching, of their charms and beauty." All the ancient nations conceded the priesthood to women equally with men, and even Christians have been forced to agree that they are capable of administering the sacrament of Baptism, and " it is clear that they have been forbidden to administer the other sacraments, only to maintain more entirely the authority of man." Among her heroines of learning and eloquence she cites Hypatia, Cornelia, and Hortensia, and that " new star," Anna Maria van Schurman.<sup>1</sup>

The last-named learned Dutch lady (1607-1678) expressly disavowed the extreme views of Lucrezia Marinella as to woman's superiority, and preferred the little book of Mlle de Gournay, though she could not follow her in all her sentiments. She wrote a syllogistic essay in Latin, to prove that women are by nature fitted for the highest learning. No studies are excluded by her as being unsuitable for women. She allows Theology, Moral Science, Physics, Metaphysics, Mathematics, Music, Poetry, Art, History, Grammar,

<sup>1</sup> Schiff, pp. 61 ff.



Rhetoric, Languages, especially Hebrew and Greek, and Logic for all women ; and though she would consider Law, Military Discipline, and Church, Political and University Oratory, to be rather less suitable and necessary than the above-mentioned subjects, she would on no account keep women from the knowledge and theory of these things. Her other works were an Ethiopian Grammar ; a volume of Letters and Poems, entitled *Opuscula*, most of them written in Latin, but some in Greek, Hebrew, and French ; and a religious autobiography in Latin, entitled the *Choice of the Better Part*. In one of her letters, to Dr. John Rivert, she hotly contests the suggestion made by him that only a few exceptional women were fit for higher education. "I remember," she writes, "to have somewhere read, that according to Ulpian women are excluded from all civil or public affairs. Whether this rule is right or not I will not stay to consider, but at any rate it follows from it, that it is laudable and lawful that we women have leisure. Having thus time on our hands, and quietness, which is a friend of the Muses, and since, as Basil says, having nothing to do is the beginning of doing evil, how better can we employ our leisure than in learning wisdom?"<sup>1</sup> There is a fine portrait of her in the National Gallery by Jan van Lieven, which

<sup>1</sup> Modified from translation in Torshel, pp. 42, 45, and in Birch, pp. 70 ff.

shows that she had a beautiful and intellectual face.

Bathsua Makin, the most learned Englishwoman of her time, once governess to Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Charles I, and afterwards a schoolmistress, wrote an *Essay to revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen in Religion, Manners, Arts, and Tongues* (1673), to which is appended a prospectus of her school at Tottenham High Cross. At this school half the time was given to dancing, music, singing, writing, and keeping accounts, and the other half to learning Latin and French ; or, for those who desired it, Greek, Italian, or Spanish. Natural History was also taught, and Astronomy, Geography, Arithmetic, and History ; and Religion was by no means neglected, for A. M. van Schurman wrote to her (these two ladies corresponded with one another in Greek) : " I praise you most of all because you turn your encyclopedic knowledge to the service of Theology, the science of sciences."<sup>1</sup> In her Essay she cites Miriam the great poet and philosopher, Deborah the lawyer, Huldah the prophetess, " who dwelt at Jerusalem in the College, where (we may suppose) women were trained up in good literature "—a quaint supposition—as ancient examples of learned women ; and her pupil Princess Elizabeth, and her Dutch friend van Schurman, as modern examples.

<sup>1</sup> Schurman, p. 126.

" Though women may not speak in the Church, yet those extraordinarily inabled, to whom Paul speaks, might : for Paul directs them they should not pray nor prophesie with their heads uncovered, which supposes they might do the things. I shall not dispute these texts what this praying and prophesying was ; it serves my turn, that women extraordinarily inabled, were publicly imployed."<sup>1</sup>

Another, less learned, governess and schoolmistress, Hannah Woolley (c. 1623-1675), published about the same time *The Gentlewoman's Companion, or a Guide to the Female Sex, containing directions of behaviour in all places, companies, relations and conditions from their childhood down to old age*. To prove her qualifications for advising the female sex in general, she gives a naïve account of her life and experience as a schoolmistress, and as a governess in a family of a Person of Honour.<sup>2</sup>

" Vain man is apt to think we were merely intended for the World's propagation, and to keep its humane inhabitants sweet and clean ; but by their leaves had we the same literature, they would find our brains as fruitful as our bodies. Hence I am induced to believe we are debarred from the knowledge of humane learning, lest our pregnant Wits should rival the towring conceits of our insulting Lords and Masters. . . . I must condemn the great negligence of Parents in letting the fertile

<sup>1</sup> Makin, pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Woolley, pp. 10 ff.

ground of their Daughters lie fallow, yet send the barren Noddles of their Sons to the University, where they stay for no other purpose than to fill their empty sconces with idle notions to make a noise in the Country." She quotes the authority of Cornelius Agrippa, and that most ingenious Dutch lady, A. M. van Schurman, that nature never intended any difference in intellect between the two sexes, and claims that women should learn Latin, French, and Italian.<sup>1</sup> This *Guide to the Female Sex*, however, is chiefly concerned with humbler matters, giving quaint advice on Manners, Behaviour, Dress, Cooking, Preserving, Physic, and Chirurgery, and on the Art of Letter-writing; and concluding with some satirical dialogues in which foolish men are scored off by witty women.

*The Illustrious History of Women* (1686), by John Shirley, contains a collection of curious tales of women famous for virtue, piety, learning, and courage. The author thinks that the alleged inferiority of women is merely due to the fact that "Man having attained the upper hand in Rule and Power, claiming it by birthright as first created, as much as in him lyes, strives to keep station as his prerogative, by endeavouring to keep the Softer Sex in ignorance."<sup>2</sup>

François Poulain de la Barre, an ex-Catholic priest (who among other works wrote an

<sup>1</sup> Woolley, pp. 1-2, 29-30.      <sup>2</sup> Shirley, p. 127.

ingenious treatise proving out of the Roman Missal the truth of Protestant doctrines), published in 1673 *De l'égalité des deux sexes*, of which an English translation by A. L. was issued in 1677, under the title, *The Woman as Good as the Man*. In the opinion of Lord Morley, "the reasons for accepting the equality of the sexes have never been stated with calmer or more rational force than in this little volume."<sup>1</sup> Poulain wrote a second pamphlet (1675), *De l'excellence des hommes*, in which he pretended to answer *De l'égalité des deux sexes*, and this was followed fifteen years later by a Dissertation to serve as the third Part of his *De l'égalité*, and as a reply to the authorities of Holy Scripture contained in the second Part. Miss Florence Smith, in her book on *Mary Astell*, throws doubt on the seriousness of Poulain's opinions on the subject of sex equality, having regard to his second pamphlet,<sup>2</sup> but she had apparently not read the third pamphlet. Poulain claims that women are equally fitted with men for all offices, including those of prince, preacher, and general, and that they are peculiarly fitted to be lawyers and physicians. As to relations between husbands and wives, he argues that the marriage contract is or should be based on love, not on fear; that it is a free contract between two equals, and that there can be no question of subordination, or of dependence of

<sup>1</sup> Morley, Vol. I, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, p. 177.



one of the parties on the other, any more than there can be between two reasonable friends.<sup>1</sup>

Mary Astell (1668-1731) was not, like Bathsua Makin and Hannah Woolley, a schoolmistress, but she was a well-educated woman, moving among educated and enlightened people, who wished that other women of leisure should care more, and have better opportunities, for learning. She published (anonymously) *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* (by a lover of her Sex), in which she advocated the establishment of a Ladies' College, or "Religious Retirement," a sort of nunnery without vows, where women should retire from the world and devote themselves to study, and then to the education of the children of persons of quality. "When by the increase of their Revenue (from the fees of well-to-do parents) the Religious are enabled to do such a work of charity, the education they design to bestow on the Daughters of Gentlemen, who are fallen into decay, will be no inconsiderable advantage to the Nation. For hereby many souls will be preserved from great dishonours and put in a comfortable way of subsisting, being either received into the House, if they incline to it, or otherwise disposed of. It being supposed that prudent men will reckon the endowments they here acquire a sufficient Dowry, and

<sup>1</sup> Poulain, I (Engl. trans.), pp. 40 ff., 74 ff., 121 ff.

that a discreet and virtuous Gentlewoman will make a better wife than she whose mind is empty though her Purse be full."<sup>1</sup> Even men ought not to object to educated women, since they expect mothers to begin the education of their children. A "certain great lady" was so attracted by the scheme, that she proposed to give £10,000 for the erection of the College, but this proposal was nipped in the bud by Bishop Burnet, who feared that "it would be reputed a nunnery." This was a most unfair suggestion, since Mary Astell expressly laid down that there were to be "no vows or irrevocable obligations, not so much as the fear of reproach, to keep our ladies here any longer than they desire."<sup>2</sup>

Mary Astell's scheme was anticipated fifty years earlier by the pious Lady Lettice, Viscountess Falkland, who had a "magnificent and most religious contrivement that there might be places for the education of young gentlewomen, and for retirement of widows (as Colleges and the Inns of Court and Chancery are for men), in several parts of the Kingdom. This was much in her thoughts; . . . but the evil times disabled her quite, and discouraged her somewhat from attempting much in these her designs."<sup>3</sup>

Daniel Defoe in his *Essay on Projects* (1697) could not believe that God endowed women

<sup>1</sup> Astell, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> Duncon, pp. 92-3.



with souls capable of the same accomplishments as men, merely that they might be Stewards of our Houses, Cooks, and Slaves. He was not for exalting Female Government, but he would have men to take women for *companions*, and educate them to be fit for it. He accordingly had "a very great esteem" for Mary Astell's proposal, though he criticised it in some respects, and himself sketched out a scheme for a Ladies' Academy, not essentially different from hers. He would have this Academy fortified by an Act of Parliament forbidding men to enter it by force or by fraud, "or to solicit any woman, though it were to marry, while she is in the House. And this Law would by no means be severe, because any woman, who was willing to receive the addresses of a man, might discharge herself of the House when she pleased; and on the contrary, any woman who had occasion might discharge herself of the impertinent addresses of any person she had an aversion to, by entering into the House."<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt that in many cases women originally entered convents as being the only way of escaping objectionable and importunate suitors, but it is strange to find a staunch Protestant thinking it necessary to recommend a similar refuge at the end of the seventeenth century.

Mary Astell has also been credited with the

<sup>1</sup> Defoe, pp. 282 ff., 291.

authorship of two other pamphlets, namely, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (1696), in a letter to a Lady written by a Lady, and *Reflections upon Marriage* (1706); but the general style and satirical flashes of these pamphlets make it improbable that they were the product of her serious pen. For instance, in the former pamphlet the writer refers to the City Militia drilling furiously in the Artillery Ground: "Yet this is but skirmishing; the hot service is in another place, when they engage the capons and quart pots; never was onset more vigorous, for they came to handyblows immediately, and now is the real cutting and slashing and tilting without quarter."<sup>1</sup> And the author of the second pamphlet remarks: "It were ridiculous to suppose that a woman, were she ever so much improved, could come near the topping genius of the men, and therefore why should they envy or discourage her? Strength of mind goes along with strength of body, and 'tis only for some odd accidents, which Philosophers have not yet thought worth while to enquire into, that the Sturdiest Porter is not the wisest man. . . . Do not the men generally speaking do all the great actions and considerable Business of this world, and leave that of the next to the Woman? . . . To show that nothing is beneath their care, any more than above their reach, they have brought

<sup>1</sup> J. Drake (Def.), p. 93.

Gaming to an Art and Science, and a more profitable and honourable one too than many of those that used to be called Liberal.”<sup>1</sup>

A complimentary poem to the author of the *Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, written by Dr. James Drake, a political pamphleteer of those days, appears at the beginning of that essay, and it has been suggested that the essay was written by his sister, Judith Drake. May not the *Reflections upon Marriage* also have been written by her?

Elizabeth Johnson, in *Preface to Poems on Various Occasions* by Philomela, or Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1696), makes some sarcastic remarks on men: “We are not unwilling to allow Mankind the brutal advantages of strength, . . . but when they would monopolize sense too, when neither that nor learning, nor so much as wit must be allowed us, but all overruled by the tyranny of the prouder sex; nay, when some of ’em won’t let us say our souls are our own, but would persuade us we are no more reasonable creatures than themselves, or their fellow-animals; we then must ask their pardons, if we are not yet so completely passive as to bear all without so much as a murmur; . . . we complain that here’s a plain and an open design to render us mere slaves, perfect Turkish wives, without properties or sense or souls.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Drake (Ref.), pp. 78, 88.

<sup>2</sup> E. Johnson, p. ii.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Oh, how sick to faintness grew the poetry of England !  
Anna Seward by'r lady was the muse of those days, and  
Mr. Hayley the bard, and Hannah More wrote our dramas,  
and Helen Williams our odes, and " Rosa Matilda " our  
elegiacs.

E. B. BROWNING, *Poets*, 191-2.

THE eighteenth century was for the most part an age of prose and reason, with little imagination and less enthusiasm. There were political women in those days, but they had no ambition to take a direct part in politics, and were content, like Mrs. Humphry Ward, to influence their men<sup>1</sup>; and there were literary women in abundance, not many of whom are read, or deserve to be read, to-day. Perhaps the best of them are the letter-writers, such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Lady Hervey, Elizabeth Montagu, and Mary Wollstonecraft, each in her way not unworthy to be compared with the great French letter-writer Madame de Sévigné. Salons, or conversation parties, were held both in France and in England. " Madame de Lambert established in Paris a house at which it was an

<sup>1</sup> Delany, Second Series, Vol. II, p. 103; E. Montagu, Vol. II, p. 55; Stephens, p. 271.

honour to be received. It was almost the only one which was preserved from the epidemic disease of gambling, the only one where people met for reasonable conversation, seasoned with a sprinkling of wit."<sup>1</sup> The assemblies of the blue-stockings in London drawing-rooms likewise sought to rescue Society from "Whist, that desolating Hun," and from despotic Quadrille, "the Vandal of colloquial wit."<sup>2</sup> But none of these salons had any feminist tendency; indeed, some of the French *salonnières* rather despised their own sex, and preferred that their parties should be attended by at least "four times as many men as women."<sup>3</sup>

Anne-Thérèse, Marquise de Lambert (1647-1733), allowed her writings to circulate among her friends, but was unwilling to publish anything, fearing the ridicule attaching to women of letters, against which Marie de Gournay had protested. Even men of genius in France, according to Madame de Staël, were afraid to express their inmost thoughts, lest they should offend against the conventions of society.<sup>4</sup> But Madame de Lambert's works were published after her death, including *Avis d'une mère à sa fille, suivis de réflexions sur les femmes*. She urges

<sup>1</sup> Fontenelle, Vol. II, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> Hannah More, quoted by Doran, p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> Stephens, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Staël, Vol. I, p. 109.



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that women should be better educated, and severely condemns the injustice of men, who begin by neglecting women's education, regarding them only as creatures intended to please, and then blame them if they devote their whole study to the improvement of their exterior charms. But she admits that neither sex has a right to reproach the other, for both equally contribute to the depravity and corruption of the age they live in.<sup>1</sup>

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) in two or three of her letters revealed herself on the side of those women who claimed a better education for their sex. Writing, at the age of twenty-one, to a Bishop, she did not put her claim too high: "I am not now arguing for an equality of the two sexes. I do not doubt that God and Nature have thrown us into an inferior rank."<sup>2</sup> But forty years later, writing more intimately to her daughter, she says: "I am inclined to think (if I dare say it) that Nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to men, no more than females of other animals."<sup>3</sup> In another letter to her daughter she writes: "The character of a learned woman is far from being ridiculous in this country, the greatest families being proud of having produced female writers; and a Milanese lady being now professor of

<sup>1</sup> Lambert, Vol. I, pp. 203, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Montagu, Vol. II, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 230.



Mathematics in the University of Bologna, invited thither by a most obliging letter, wrote by the present Pope, who desired her to accept of the chair, not as a recompense for her merit, but to do honour to a town which is under his protection. . . . There is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England. I do not complain of men for having engrossed the Government, . . . but I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies, which raise the character of a man, should hurt that of a woman. We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason.”<sup>1</sup>

Of Lady Sarah Pennington (c. 1710–1783) we are told that “to a heart firmly attached to the practice of every virtue she unfortunately united such an eccentricity of opinion on certain topics, as provided the enemies of her peace with the too fatal means of wounding her feelings, though they could not injure her reputation.”<sup>2</sup> One can only guess from the story of her life, obscurely revealed in her *Letters on Different Subjects*, that her “eccentricity of opinion” consisted in the theory that friendship between the two sexes was natural and proper without any idea of love-making; that as a young girl she put this theory into

<sup>1</sup> Montagu, Vol. II, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> Pennington, p. 190.

practice to such an extent as to shock an aged relative, who induced her father to force her to marry a most unsuitable and unsympathetic husband ; that this husband encouraged her habit of forming friends with men and then turned this into an excuse for separating from her, and depriving the "unfortunate mother" of any right of access to her daughters. Her acknowledged writings dating from 1761 show that she regarded women as not intellectually inferior to men, if only their understandings were better trained. It is possible that in her younger days her "eccentricity of opinion" amused itself with trying to prove that women are actually superior to men, and that she was the author of *Beauty's Triumph* by "Sophia, a person of quality" ; for there is a French translation of the first Part of that book, entitled *Le Triomphe des Dames*, traduit de l'Anglois de Miledi P. . . . (Londres, 1751), and perhaps "Miledi P. . . ." means "My lady Pennington."<sup>1</sup>

*Beauty's Triumph* was issued in three Parts. Part I (1739) endeavours to show that woman is not inferior to man ; Part II (1739), supposed to be written by a man—a man of straw—tries to refute Part I, and to prove man's natural right to authority over woman ; and Part III (1740) exposes the "excessive weakness" of Part II, and concludes that

<sup>1</sup> Others, for less reason, have guessed that Sophia was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

woman is superior to man. Part I borrows largely, without any sort of acknowledgment, from the English translation of Poulain's *L'égalité des deux sexes*; but she does not follow that author in advocating women's admission to the ministry. Women's "natural capacity" for exercising the ministry Sophia considers to have been "restrained by a positive law of God. . . . But why He forbade us to do so, would be presumption to enquire. However, if it is lawful to reason at all upon the divine precepts, we may assign a cause which carries its own probability with it, and rather redounds to the honour than disrepute of our sex. God undoubtedly knew the general tendency of the men to impiety and irreligion; and therefore might He not confine the functions of religion to that sex, to attract some of them at least to those duties which they are so prone to dislike? Especially since the natural propensity of our own sex to virtue and religion make it unnecessary to add those external helps to His divine grace."<sup>1</sup>

*The Polite Lady, or a course of female education in a series of letters from a Mother to her Daughter* (1760), urges that women should devote themselves more to reading, especially of the History of England and of other countries. The author is far from claiming that women need be so deeply read as men, "as our

<sup>1</sup> Sophia, pp. 50, 51.

sphere of action is more narrow and confined, . . . but must we therefore be allowed to know little or nothing at all? . . . Men act very unreasonably; . . . they first keep women ignorant, and then complain of their ignorance."<sup>1</sup>

If the young ladies of those days were, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu said, educated in the grossest ignorance, they were at least favoured with plenty of advice—some of it good, much of it exceedingly namby-pamby—as to their morals and manners, in such works as Lady Pennington's *The Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters* (1761); Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1773); Dr. Gregory's *Legacy to his Daughters* (1774); Maria Edgeworth's *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795); Mary Pilkington's *A Mirror for the Female Sex, or Historical beauties for young ladies, intended to lead the female mind to the love and practice of moral goodness* (1798); and Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, with a view of the principles and conduct prevalent among women of rank and fashion* (1799). Of Hester Chapone and Dr. Gregory it is enough to say that their brochures went through many editions down to 1844, when Chapone, Gregory, and Pennington were included together in one volume; and that one

<sup>1</sup> Portia, pp. 139-40.

pities the girls who had nothing better to read, and is thankful that after 1844 those works fell into oblivion. Maria Edgeworth did not wish to be "a champion for the rights of women," but sought only to advance the happiness of both sexes by improving the education of women. "Women have not erred from having knowledge, but from not having had experience ; they may have grown vain and presumptuous when they have known but little, they will be sobered into good sense when they shall have learned more."<sup>1</sup>

Hannah More's *Strictures* are unspeakably conventional and impiously sure of understanding the ways of God. "I am not sounding an alarm to female warriors, nor exciting female politicians. I hardly know which of the two is the most disgusting and unnatural character."<sup>2</sup> The contest for women's rights "has recently been revived with added fury and with multiplied exactions ; for whereas the ancient demand was merely a kind of imaginary prerogative, . . . a shadowy claim to a few unreal acres of Parnassian territory, the revived contention . . . brings forward political as well as intellectual pretensions ; . . . the imposing term of *rights* has been produced to sanctify the claims of our female pretenders, with a view not only to rekindle in the minds of women

<sup>1</sup> Edgeworth, pp. 45, 56.

<sup>2</sup> More, Vol. I, p. 6.



a presumptuous vanity dishonourable to their sex, but produced with a view to excite in their hearts an impious discontent with the post which God has assigned them in this world. . . . A little Christian humility and sober-mindedness are worth all the wild metaphysical discussion which has unsettled the peace of vain women, and forfeited the respect of reasonable men.”<sup>1</sup> She thinks it would be “the best practical answer to the popular declamations on the inequality of human conditions, were the rich carefully to instruct their children to soften that inevitable inequality by the mildness and tenderness of their behaviour to their inferiors. This dispensation of God, which excites so many sinful murmurs, would, were it thus practically improved, tend to establish the glory of that Being, who is now so often charged with injustice !”<sup>2</sup> Her advice to youthful females is thus characteristically summed up : “The animated silence of sparkling intelligence . . . with an” occasional “modest question,” which indicates at once rational curiosity and becoming diffidence, “is in many cases as large a share of the conversation as it is decorous for feminine delicacy to take.”<sup>3</sup>

Mary Ann Radcliffe (c. 1740–1810) published in 1799 *The Female Advocate*, a second

<sup>1</sup> More, Vol. II, pp. 21 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 132, 133.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, p. 67.



somewhat abridged edition of which is embodied in her *Memoirs*. She is not to be confused with Ann Radcliffe, the novelist, though her publisher (she hints) was not averse to the chance of extending the sale of her book "from the same name at that period standing high among the novel readers."<sup>1</sup> Married at the age of fifteen to a feckless husband, who gradually wasted all her property, she tells in her epistolary *Memoirs* a pathetic tale of the hardships she went through to support herself, and bring up her children, her husband the while living apart from her and hardly able to support himself; ending in her practical destitution when over seventy years of age. From her bitter experience she learned to pity the lot of poor, self-dependent women, whom society would not help, but drove so often to prostitution, for lack of any opening for honest employment. Her tract *The Female Advocate* is a passionate, though very rambling, plea for the protection of such waifs and strays. She thinks that the facts only need to be known to a society of Christians, for some remedy to be found. Her own, somewhat inadequate, contribution towards the solution of the economic problem is, that men should be excluded from effeminate trades, such as millinery and hairdressing. "Above all look to the haberdashery magazines, where from ten to twenty fellows,

<sup>1</sup> Radcliffe, p. 387.

six feet high, may be counted in each, to the utter exclusion of poor females, who could sell a toothpick, or a few ribbons, just as well."<sup>1</sup>

Her experiences as companion in the family of Lady T—— were "extensive and peculiar." When the mistress was indisposed, the companion and another person had to carry her "ponderous weight of twelve or fourteen stone round the garden or pleasure grounds, which we performed with crossing our hands, as children frequently carry one another, forming what is usually called the King's cushion."<sup>2</sup> She was anxious that girls as well as boys should be educated for some employment. She claimed "not power but protection," not so much equal rights as some rights for poor, weak, struggling women, who as a rule "have not the Amazonian spirit of a Wollstonecraft."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Radcliffe, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 398-9.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

La Révolution Française, surtout et presque exclusivement bourgeoise et paysanne, n'apportait rien, ne donnait rien à deux classes de la société, c'est à savoir aux ouvriers et aux femmes.

FAGUET, p. 170.

THE French Revolution presents us with "a complete Drama of Feminism in four acts: its dawn in the writings of that apostle of sex-equality, Condorcet; its zenith in the influence exercised by women in the revolutionary clubs and societies; its decline when women fell into disfavour with Robespierre and his colleagues; finally, its collapse, when the Anti-Feminists of the Convention closed the women's clubs, and began to lay the foundations of the Napoleonic Code, which was to constitute the most serious reverse ever suffered by women in any country."<sup>1</sup>

The Marquis de Condorcet, in his pamphlet *Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité* (1790), observed that the principle of equality of rights was violated by calmly excluding one-half of the human race from any share in the framing of laws. The exclusion of

<sup>1</sup> Stephens, p. 15.

women from all political rights cannot be justified by the false assumption that they are not governed by what one calls Reason ; it is true that they are not governed by man's reasons, but they are by their own ; and if they are apt at times to follow their feelings rather than their conscience, this is not due to any natural difference of character, but only to difference of education in the existing social order. Moreover, if women are to be excluded from political rights on such grounds, how many men ought to be similarly excluded ? Some people fear that political women would exercise a malign influence over men, but such influence is more to be feared when exercised in secret, than in open and public discussions. The argument that women would be taken away from their domestic duties is absurd ; it might as well be argued that politics takes men from their business and professional duties ; as a matter of fact only a very small number of men devote their whole time to politics, and the same would be true of women. " Hitherto," says he in conclusion, " all known nations have had barbarous or corrupt manners and customs. . . . Hitherto among all nations legal inequality has existed between men and women ; and it would not be hard to prove that in these two phenomena, equally general, the second is one of the principal causes of the first, for inequality necessarily introduces

corruption, and is the most common, where it is not the only, cause of it.”<sup>1</sup>

In his last great work on *The Progress of the Human Mind* Condorcet points out that “among the causes of human improvement that are of most importance to the general welfare must be included the total annihilation of the prejudices, which have established between the sexes an inequality of rights, fatal even to the party which it favours. In vain might we search for motives, by which to justify this principle, in difference of physical organisation, of intellect, or of moral sensibility. It had at first no other origin but abuse of strength, and all the attempts which have since been made to support it are idle sophisms.”<sup>2</sup>

The Abbé Sieyès, one of the most prominent of the Constitution makers, is often referred to as a supporter of women’s rights, but his support was very lukewarm, and he took no part with his friend Condorcet in pressing the question.<sup>3</sup> He noted the fact that “for good or for ill” women were everywhere deprived of political rights<sup>4</sup>; he thought this “rather odd,” seeing that they were in some countries allowed to wear the crown; but he was content to bow to popular prejudice in the matter, and to acquiesce in the consequent exclusion of half the entire popula-

<sup>1</sup> Morley, Vol. I, p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> Clapham, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Condorcet (*Progress*), p. 355.

<sup>4</sup> Sieyès, p. 41.

tion, as he was also content to exclude those workmen who were in a condition of servile dependence on some "master."<sup>1</sup> In an earlier pamphlet he accepted the exclusion of "women, at least in their present state," as also of those men "who contribute nothing to support the public establishment." The anonymous English translator of this pamphlet adds a note regarding this "error of so many eminent writers," observing that every one who consumes taxed commodities contributes to the cost of Government, and further that "society is not merely an association to defend our goods and chattels, but likewise to secure the infinitely more valuable attributes of intellectual existence."<sup>2</sup>

Sophie de Grouchy, the Marquise de Condorcet, agreed with her husband in advocating the removal of unequal laws between the sexes, which, in her view, led to men treating women merely as toys, or as victims. She wished to break down the barriers erected by French custom against social intercourse between men and women before marriage, so as to encourage true love-unions instead of *mariages de convenance*.<sup>3</sup> She is reputed to have said—in reply to Napoleon's "I dislike women who meddle in politics"—"You are right, General; but in a country where their heads are cut off,

<sup>1</sup> Sieyès (Obs.), pp. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Sieyès (Rights), pp. 97-8.

<sup>3</sup> Grouchy, Vol. II, pp. 484 ff.



it is natural they should wish to know the reason why.”<sup>1</sup> This is wittier than the saying of that other Revolutionary feminist, Olympe de Gouges, “qui a fondé le droit des femmes par un mot juste et sublime : Elles ont bien le droit de monter à la tribune, puisqu’elles ont celui de monter à l’échafaud.”<sup>2</sup>

The literary and society women of those stirring days generally made no claim to political rights, though some of them were most active politicians behind the scenes. Madame Roland said “that women ought to foster and inflame every sentiment useful to *la patrie*, but they ought not to take any direct part in politics” ; Madame Robert thought woman’s domestic duties prevented her from exercising administrative functions, though she would like to see them acting as Health Inspectors ; and Madame Tallien wished to see them as the companions of men and not their rivals.<sup>3</sup> But the women of “the people” thought and acted otherwise. Many of them actually felt the pinch of hunger, and the more fortunate among them, such as Théroigne de Méricourt and Olympe de Gouges, had hearts to feel for their starving and oppressed brothers and sisters. Hence arose the Insurrection of Women, so picturesquely, but not too accurately, described by Carlyle, when Théroigne led the women in

<sup>1</sup> Stephens, p. 76.      <sup>2</sup> Michelet, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> Stephens, p. 271.

their famous march to Versailles, and brought back the King and Queen—and bread—to Paris. Then followed the creation of women's clubs and societies, and "Frenchwomen displayed a faculty for co-operation and organisation in public matters which they had never shown before, and which they have seldom, if ever, displayed since."<sup>1</sup> Their words and acts, like those of the men, were at times wild and disorderly, but by no means always. For instance, "when in 1792, as the result of profiteering, Lyons was on the verge of starvation, the Women's Club took the matter into their own hands. Having failed to obtain satisfaction from the Lyons Council, they placarded a notice all over the city, fixing the price of no less than sixty necessities, including bread, wine, oil, fresh and dry vegetables, cheese, fruit, candles, etc. Then a well-organised body of women police took possession of shops and markets, and for three days, until such a time as the Municipal Council decided to fix prices, the Women's Club practically ruled the city."<sup>2</sup> Similarly three years later, there was "a series of food riots all over England, in which a conspicuous part was taken by women. These disturbances were particularly interesting from the discipline and good order which characterised the conduct of the rioters. The rioters, when they found themselves masters of the situation, did not use their strength to plun-

<sup>1</sup> Stephens, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 99, 100.

der the shops ; they organised distribution, selling the food they seized at what they considered fair rates, and handing over the proceeds to the owners.”<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the Revolution the men were glad to make use of women's political activities, but as soon as the women showed that they had opinions of their own and were not content merely to follow the men, the natural anti-feminism of the Frenchman, trained to despise women by such writers as Voltaire and Rousseau, burst forth into violent hostility. Unfortunately, the violence of the more extreme women and the timidity of the moderate women gave them an excuse for action. In October 1793 a deputation of women from the Popular Societies petitioned the Convention to close the Club of the Republican and Revolutionary Women. A Committee was at once appointed, and it recommended the suppression, not of one disorderly club, as the women's Petition had requested, but of all women's clubs and societies. This proposal was joyfully accepted by the Convention with only one dissentient voice. In introducing the resolution to the Convention Amar explained that the Committee had examined, and replied in the negative, to the following two questions : Are women capable of exercising political rights ? When assembled in political associations, are they

<sup>1</sup> Hammond, pp. 120, 121.

capable of deliberating? He agreed that woman's nature is such as to unfit her to take part in politics. "In the height of the Terror, addressing one of the most hysterical Parliaments the world has ever seen, Amar declared that the quality essential in all who would take part in Government is imperturbable equanimity! Then he went on to enquire whether a woman's appearance in public is compatible with her good fame. Women, he concluded, can best serve their country by influencing their husbands, and teaching their children to love liberty."<sup>1</sup> By the word "children" of course he meant "sons," since daughters and mothers stand in no need of liberty!

Thus was woman's political impotence settled, so far as France was concerned, for many a long year. But the ferment of the French Revolution spread to other countries and inspired Mary Wollstonecraft to write her *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). This last book is one of the most important in all feminist literature, not for its literary value, which is below that of many of her other writings, nor for its immediate influence, which was small, but because it is the most passionate cry of a woman, on behalf of her sex, since the days of Christine de Pisan, for liberty to develop her human personality.

<sup>1</sup> Stephens, pp. 267-8.

She refused to believe that woman was merely created for man: "though the cry of irreligion, or even atheism, be raised against me, I will simply declare that, were an angel from heaven to tell me that Moses' beautiful poetical cosmogony, and the account of the fall of man, were literally true, I could not believe what my reason told me was derogatory to the character of the Supreme Being."<sup>1</sup> She was roused to fiery wrath by the selfish and sensual view of Rousseau (in *Émile*, Book V) that woman's sole sphere was to give pleasure to man,<sup>2</sup> and that women's education was only to be regarded as it affected men. "Would men," she cried, "but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers—in a word, better citizens."<sup>3</sup> She deplored that so many wasted their lives, "the prey of discontent, who might have practised as physicians, regulated a farm, managed a shop, and stood erect, supported by their own industry."<sup>4</sup> She advocated a national system of education in day-schools, where all classes and both sexes should be taught together. Co-education would lead to better morals, both in men and women, and would be a sure way to promote early and suitable marriages,

<sup>1</sup> Wollstonecraft, pp. 173-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.



if only parents would allow their children freedom in the choice of their companions for life.<sup>1</sup> "Saint Hannah" (More), as Horace Walpole called that estimable lady, looked upon Mary Wollstonecraft (as we have seen) as a "disgusting and unnatural character"; and because she spoke out frankly on subjects hitherto reserved for discussion by men, Maginn some years later in *Fraser's Magazine* spoke of her "shameless books," and rejoiced that "we shall not have any such lady in our literature again."<sup>2</sup> We may think otherwise on both points. It is dangerous to prophesy.

<sup>1</sup> Wollstonecraft, pp. 387 ff.    <sup>2</sup> Maginn, pp. 114, 141.



## CHAPTER X

### THE DAWN

Reviens de ton erreur, toi qui veux les flétrir :  
Sache les respecter, autant que les chérir;  
Et si la voix du sang n'est point une chimère,  
Tombe aux pieds de ce sexe, à qui tu dois ta mère.

G. LEGOUVÉ, *Le Mérite des Femmes*, p. 44.

NAPOLÉON, that arch-apostle of reaction from the Republican ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, had a cynical contempt for women, and marked the opening of the nineteenth century by establishing in Paris the odious system of police regulation of vice. At the same time by the Code Napoléon any enquiry into the paternity of an illegitimate child, except in special cases, was prohibited, a prohibition which remained in force until 1913. "From the time that the spirit of chivalry was extinguished in France," wrote Madame de Staël, "that there were no more Godfreys, St. Louis, and Bayards, who believed that they were bound by a word as by indissoluble chains, I will dare to say, contrary to the received opinion, that France has perhaps been, of all countries in the world, the country where the women were the least truly happy. They called France the paradise of women,

because they enjoyed there a great liberty ; but even this liberty came from the ease with which men detached themselves from them. The Turk who shuts up his wife at least proves by that, that she is necessary to him ; the man of good fortune, such as those of whom the last century has furnished a goodly number, chooses women as victims of his vanity ; and this vanity consists not only in seducing them but in abandoning them.”<sup>1</sup>

And again : “ If the destiny of women is to consist in a continual act of devotion to conjugal love, the recompense of this devotion should be the scrupulous fidelity of him who is the object of it. How unjust is the exchange to which the husband proposes to make his companion submit ! ‘ I will love you,’ he says, ‘ with passion for two or three years, at the end of that time I will talk to you with reason ’ ; and what they call reason is the disenchantment of life. ‘ I will show at home coldness and ennui ; I will seek to please elsewhere ; and you who have ordinarily more imagination and sensibility than I, you who have no distractions outside, and live only for me, will be satisfied with such secondary, cold, divided affection as I shall be pleased to give.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

Such opinions and practices were hardly peculiar to France or to one age. Euripides

<sup>1</sup> Stael, Vol. I, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 235-6.

said something like it over two thousand years ago :

Her lord, if he be wearied of the face  
Within doors, gets him forth ; some merrier place  
Will ease his heart : but she waits on, her whole  
Vision enchained on a single soul.<sup>1</sup>

And yet James Mill—unworthy father of a great son—could not see that women had any interests distinct from those of their husbands or fathers. In his article on *Government* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1824) he said : “ One thing is pretty clear, that all those individuals, whose interests are indisputably included in those of other individuals, may be struck off ” from political rights “ without inconvenience. In this light may be viewed all children up to a certain age, whose interests are involved in those of their parents. In this light also women may be regarded, the interests of almost all of whom are involved either in that of their fathers, or in that of their husbands.” <sup>2</sup>

William Thompson made a vigorous reply to James Mill, in his *Appeal of One-half the Human Race, Women, against the pretensions of the other half, Men, to retain them in political, and thence in civil and domestic, slavery* (1825). Thompson was quick to detect the snag underlying the word “ almost ” in Mill’s argument.

<sup>1</sup> *Medea* (trans. by G. Murray).

<sup>2</sup> *Encyc. Brit.* (S. 1824), IV, 500. The article was repeated in Seventh Edition (1842), but disappeared from Eighth Edition (1856).

He pointed out that very many women, perhaps from one-sixth to one-fourth of the total number of adult women, have no father or husband to protect them. Should not they at any rate be granted political rights?<sup>1</sup> He thought it "altogether childish to talk of an improved public opinion, and the acquired beneficence of men, as capable of serving as a substitute to women for equal civil and criminal laws"; for, if this public opinion were sincere, the unequal laws would of course be repealed.<sup>2</sup>

At this period women were not loudly claiming more freedom and an ampler life; but there were some notable women who simply expressed themselves, and lived their full life, and so helped to prepare the soil for a future rich harvest. The incomparable Jane Austen never troubled herself with social or moral problems, but she traced with delicate appreciation the growth of her heroines' characters, and showed how characters are ordinarily formed, not out of great and exceptional crises, but "in the petty round of irritating concerns and duties"; and the reading of her wise and gay tales may perchance "help us to perform those duties with laughter and kind faces, and to go blithely on our business."

Two Quaker women had a "concern" for the sufferings of humanity, and in following through their concerns showed a fine capa-

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

city for practical statesmanship. Elizabeth Fry visited prisons, and was the pioneer of Prison Reform. Elizabeth Heyrick, by her pamphlet, *Immediate not Gradual Abolition* (1824), largely contributed to the initiation and success of the new policy of abolishing slavery in the British Empire, in place of the attempt, which had failed, to destroy it by stopping the slave-trade. The Quakers, who had been the first to protest against the slave-trade, now led the way in the attack on slavery itself.<sup>1</sup>

The opening of Queen Victoria's reign was celebrated by the publication of two books by women, we hope the last of such books, *The Women of England*, by Mrs. S. S. Ellis, and *Woman's Mission* (anonymous), which propounded the theory that women's sole mission in life was to help men to be good. Why did it never occur to any one that man was also intended to help women in the same way? In 1840 Lady Morgan (Sydney Owen-son) published the first two volumes of *Woman and her Master*, a much more interesting book, in which she gathers together, from scattered and doubtful hints in ancient records, stories showing the ever-present influence of women, and the important part, freely utilised but never fairly acknowledged or rewarded, which they played in the destinies of nations. The survey unfortunately stops short with the Roman Empire, as failure of eyesight pre-

<sup>1</sup> Wilberforce, Vol. V, p. 170.



vented the completion of her work. Lady Morgan was the first woman to receive a Civil List pension.

The first serious attempt to find a rational foundation on which to build the fair structure of woman's freedom was made by the dramatist Ernest Legouv  , in his *Histoire morale des femmes* (1849), a valuable work, despite its occasional florid and purple patches. Legouv   believed woman to be profoundly different from man, and it is precisely for this reason that he thought her participation in State affairs was desirable. The State needs all sorts of apostles: not only St. Peter with his fighting instincts and St. Paul with his eloquence, but St. John with his message of love. "O divine St. John, your only true heirs are Women."<sup>1</sup> He wished girls to receive the same education as boys, but believed that women would become more and more womanly as their education increased in virility.<sup>2</sup> He regarded marriage as an equal partnership for the pursuit of human and divine ends; and while thinking it necessary, for practical reasons, that one partner (the husband) should be legally recognised as having authority over the action as well as the property of the other, he wished to prevent this authority from becoming oppressive and autocratic by subjecting it to the control of the Family Council, a sort of marital Court

<sup>1</sup> Legouv  , p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 57.



of Appeal.<sup>1</sup> Divorce, he said, "is essentially contrary to the ideal of marriage, but before we reject it on that account, we must first secure that marriage itself is not contrary to its ideal."<sup>2</sup> He considered women peculiarly fitted for the medical profession, because, as an eminent doctor has said, "There are no such things as diseases, there are only diseased persons"; and women, much more than men, have the gift of diagnosing and treating souls.<sup>3</sup> But, alarmed apparently by the excesses of women-politicians in the short period during the Revolution, when they were allowed to exercise the rights of citizenship, he was not at present prepared to give votes to women, but would only have them called into counsel from time to time on those political matters in which their knowledge would be specially useful.<sup>4</sup>

Juliette Lamber (afterwards Madame Adam), in her first book, *Idées anti-Proudhoniennes* (1858), made a forceful and eloquent appeal for woman's emancipation. Proudhon seemed to think that women were only fit to be housewives or prostitutes. She indignantly replied that if all careers, professional, commercial, and administrative, were open to women, and properly paid, the doors of the brothels would be closed. "You men, do you desire this?"<sup>5</sup> She admitted that woman's first

<sup>1</sup> Legouvé, p. 195.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 246.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 412.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 445 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Lamber, p. 102.

duty was to be a wife and a mother, but maintained that family life need not absorb all her physical, moral, and intellectual activities.<sup>1</sup> So long as the State only represented force and was only organised for war, woman's rôle in administration was *nil*. But in proportion as the reign of force disappears, and the State is organised for peace, her rôle acquires more importance and extent ; the element which she represents emerges in all social functions, and in many of them becomes predominant.<sup>2</sup>

Unhappily the arguments of Legouvé and Madame Adam seem to have had little effect in France. Madame Adam in her long life appears to have done little, or nothing, more, in pressing forward the cause of women. She played a large part in politics, behind the scenes, but after 1870 was too much on the side of force, being imbued with the fatal spirit of *la revanche* against Germany, which she lived to see accomplished by the end of the Great War.

Some years earlier than Juliette Lamber, some women in England had made their voices heard, claiming more scope for the development of their natural powers and more opportunities for fuller life. Mrs. Hugo Reid, in *A Plea for Woman* (1843), well states the case for Woman's Suffrage, for the amendment of unequal laws relating to pro-

<sup>1</sup> Lamber, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184

perty and to children, for placing women on juries, and for the higher education of girls. Dinah Mulock, in *A Woman's Thoughts about Women* (1841), complained that so few professions were open to women, while so many women were obliged to take care of themselves. Mrs. Taylor, afterwards the wife of John Stuart Mill, wrote for the *Westminster Review*, July 1851, an article on the *Enfranchisement of Women*,<sup>1</sup> which was the germ out of which grew Mill's famous work *The Subjection of Women*, published in 1869. This has probably had more influence in England and in other countries than any other book written to promote the liberty and rights of women. It covers the whole ground with relentless logic, and is suffused with a passion for justice. It leaves little to be said, though much has since had to be said, for the prejudices of the opponents of women's rights are hard to conquer. We will not endeavour further to trace the growth of opinion since the middle of last century, when the battle first began to show positive results throughout the civilised world; but will begin to count the fruits of victory—and first in the field of Education, which needed to be won, before any other struggles could be attempted with any reasonable hope of success.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in Mill (*Dissertations*), Vol. II, pp. 411 ff., where he says it was written by his wife.

## CHAPTER XI

### EDUCATION

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.  
C. KINGSLEY.

THESE words might have been taken as the motto of most of the many writers on the education of women, from Jerome to Fénelon, and even down to Hannah More. They confined their attention to religious and moral education ; they expected women to love God with all their heart and with all their soul, and left it to men—a few exceptional men—to love Him with all their mind. Schools for girls were unknown until the sixteenth century, and yet educated, and even learned, women emerged in all ages. Nearly all of these exceptional women received their education at home, and in those cases where their fathers were true lovers of learning, and free from prejudices as to women's inferiority, such education was often solid and thorough. Thus was it in the case of Hortensia, Hypatia, Christine de Pisan, the daughters of Sir Thomas More, Lady Jane Grey, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth.

The convents also provided some learned women. When Benedict founded the monas-

tic orders in the sixth century, he prescribed Divine Service, Manual Labour, and Study as the three occupations of monastic life ; and so long as the monasteries and convents faithfully carried out this threefold programme, they constituted an important factor in the growth of civilisation in Europe, through the propagation and cultivation of books and the peaceful arts, and nuns as well as monks played an important part in this beneficent work. The convents gave women their first opportunity to show their capacity for culture and for doing useful work in the world, other than mere domestic duties.

Transcribing and illuminating manuscripts was one of the special tasks of nuns (as also of monks) from the earliest times down to the invention of printing. Cesarius of Arles (542) mentions his sister Cesaria, as mistress of those virgins of Christ who wrote beautifully ; and it was said of the nuns of Maaseyk, in the eighth century, that it was marvellous that they could write and paint so well, an art which seems difficult to the strongest of men.<sup>1</sup> Another, specially feminine, branch of art, which reached its perfection in English convents in the thirteenth century, was that of embroidering delicate pictures in silk—resembling miniatures in illuminated manuscripts—especially for ecclesiastical vestments.<sup>2</sup>

In the early convents there were learned

<sup>1</sup> Wattenbach, p. 445.      <sup>2</sup> Eckenstein, p. 227.



and cultured nuns, such as Roswitha of Gandersheim (932-1002), Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1180), and Herrad, Abbess of Hohenburg (d. 1195).

Roswitha wrote in Latin, prose and verse, stories of the Saints, Histories, and Plays. The last have a charming directness and simplicity, and show a knowledge of human nature hardly to be expected from a cloistered nun. One of them, *Sapientia*, is rather spoiled by an irrelevant display of learning, but the irrelevance may be forgiven for the light it throws on the kind of learning which was then pursued, and the mentality which such learning produced. Hildegard produced several interesting and important treatises on religious and scientific subjects, which betray a considerable degree of learning, a painstaking study of the writings of her predecessors, and some original thinking.<sup>1</sup> Herrad also in her *Hortus Deliciarum* compiled from many sources, and illustrated with striking pictures, the religious and scientific beliefs of her age. The original manuscript of this great work was destroyed at the burning of the Strasburg Library, when the city was bombarded in 1870, but reproductions of some of its pictures had been previously published.

Other religious women, whose books, or whose correspondence with Popes and other high personages, influenced thought in the

<sup>1</sup> Singer, p. 16 ; Lipinska, pp. 138 ff.



Middle Ages and helped to make history, could be named, such as the Abbess Hilda, St. Bridget of Sweden, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Theresa of Spain, and our own Julian of Norwich. The convents which produced such exceptional women may be assumed to have provided a fair education for their other inmates ; but after the thirteenth century education seems to have become narrower, being more exclusively than before directed to mystical studies, and then to have greatly deteriorated. The foundation of the Universities gave a fatal blow to the prosperity of monasteries as seats of learning, the monks themselves being drawn away to Bologna, Paris, or Oxford to complete their education ; and this brought about a similar declension in the convents, whose inmates, moreover, had not the same advantage of admission to the Universities.<sup>1</sup> The utter inadequacy of the convents at this period, as schools for girls, was pointed out by Peter du Bois, who wished to direct their ill-gotten revenues, as he considered them, to the foundation of public schools open to all, and not merely to the well-to-do.<sup>2</sup> The succession of learned nuns died out in England about the ninth century, but lingered in Germany and elsewhere on the Continent for three or four more centuries.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Fuller's fond fancy, that " the

<sup>1</sup> Bréchillet, pp. 484-5.      <sup>2</sup> Bois, pp. 46 ff., 83.

<sup>3</sup> Power, p. 289.

convents were good she-schools, wherein the girls and maids of the neighbourhood were taught to read and work,"<sup>1</sup> and Cardinal Gasquet's boast, that "in the convents the female portion of the population found their only teachers, the rich as well as the poor,"<sup>2</sup> seem to rest on nothing stronger than the idle imaginations of those who love to praise the past. The Cardinal does not produce a shred of evidence to show that any *poor* girls were educated in convents, or that nuns were the only teachers of the daughters of *rich* parents. On the contrary, Miss Eileen Power, in her careful study of *Medieval English Nunneries*, conclusively shows, by contemporary documentary evidence, that for two hundred years or more before the Dissolution of the Monasteries, only gentlemen and a few well-to-do merchants and traders sent their daughters to convents for education, and that the nuns themselves were none of them daughters of the poor, but were mainly aristocrats. The convents could not afford to receive pupils or novices except on payment, as we learn from the *Letters* of St. Theresa, who often deprecated the admission of novices who did not bring with them substantial dowries. Moreover, the education given was of a very elementary character, the nuns having no Latin, and very little French or other learning; and only a very

<sup>1</sup> Fuller, Vol. III, p. 336.

<sup>2</sup> Gasquet, pp. 298-9.

few girls, even of the richer classes, were sent to convent schools, which merely formed an alternative to the more prevalent practice of sending girls away from their homes to other (secular) households to gain a wider training and experience—a practice of which we find traces in the *Paston Letters*.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, girls were not generally admitted to the “song” (or elementary) schools, or to the grammar schools, which from very early times were established in large numbers for the education of boys. It may be safely said that no provision whatever for the instruction of the daughters of the working classes was made in pre-Reformation days, in England or in other countries. Martin Luther (1483–1546) was the first to proclaim the duty of the State to provide universal and compulsory education for children of both sexes and of all classes; and he did not confine himself to telling other people what they ought to do. All through his life he took a keen interest in education, and he helped to found schools, especially for girls.<sup>2</sup> Nor did he consider that girls only needed elementary teaching, but he wished the “brightest pupils to be kept longer at school, or set apart wholly for studies, like St. Agnes or St. Agatha.”<sup>3</sup> However, it took three hundred years for the seed sown by Luther to bear full fruit, in the

<sup>1</sup> Bennett, pp. 84–6, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Boyd, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Painter, p. 200.

enjoyment by German women generally of the possibilities of elementary, higher, and university education.

John Knox (1505-1572) similarly laid the foundations of universal education in Scotland for all classes of children, but apparently contemplated that girls should only receive elementary education. His ladder, from the primary school to the university, was only to be climbed by boys.<sup>1</sup> More could hardly be expected from the author of *The Monstrous Regiment of Women*, wherein (mindful of the Bloody Mary) he laid down the dangers of letting women rule. Unfortunately his otherwise enlightened and comprehensive programme was only partially and gradually carried into effect, "because the endowments from the patrimony of the disestablished Church, necessary for their realisation, were in large measure appropriated by greedy nobles."<sup>2</sup> However, even the partial adoption of the generally liberal ideas of Knox brought to the girls of Scotland, sooner than in any other country, the benefits at least of elementary education, which was always on a co-educational basis in that country.

This Protestant recognition of the right of the daughters of the people to receive some education—enough, at any rate, to enable them to read the Bible in their own language—had its counterpart in movements that began

<sup>1</sup> Knox, Vol. II, pp. 208-12.    <sup>2</sup> Boyd, p. 213.

in the same sixteenth century in the Catholic Church, which had hitherto been very lukewarm on the subject. When Françoise de Saintange wanted to establish a school for girls at Dijon, "she was hooted in the streets, and her father called together four Doctors learned in the law 'pour s'assurer qu'instruire des femmes n'était pas un œuvre du démon.' Even after he had given his consent he was afraid to countenance his daughter's wild scheme, and Françoise . . . began her first school in a garret. Twelve years afterwards she was carried in triumph through the streets, with bells ringing and flowers strewed in her path, because she had succeeded."<sup>1</sup> But in 1535 the Ursulines, founded by St. Angela of Brescia, devoted themselves to the teaching of poor girls; and in 1598 St. Peter Fourier founded the Congrégation de Notre Dame, the main purpose of which was the education of girls. Other Teaching Orders in the Catholic Church were established later for the same purpose.<sup>2</sup>

In England we know of no girls' schools before the seventeenth century; but in 1627 the Red Maids' School was founded at Bristol for the education of forty poor girls, who were to be "taught to read English, and to sew or do some other laudable work for their maintenance"; and in the following year a school

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Encyc. Ed., Vol. III, pp. 1433 ff.



was started at Great Marlow for twenty-four boys and twenty-four girls. The Quakers, under the leading of George Fox and other Nonconformists, established several charity schools, at which girls as well as boys were taught, and their example was followed by the S.P.C.K., which at the beginning of the next century started similar Church schools. A hundred years later this voluntary educational work was more widely extended by the British and Foreign School Society and the National Society ; but universal education for the girls and boys of England only came with the Education Act of 1870, about the same time as higher education became available for women.

Private schools for girls of the middle and upper classes also began to be founded in the seventeenth century. Mrs. Amye of Manchester (1638), who had the "tuition of many children of rank and quality," brought them up "with reading and all manner of sewing," and employed visiting masters to teach the extras, namely writing, dancing, and music.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Makin, as we have seen in a previous chapter, provided a much wider education at her school at Tottenham Cross. Other boarding-schools for girls were founded in the same century, and they greatly multiplied in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Some of these schools were excellent in their

<sup>1</sup> Burstall, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Cyc. Ed., Vol. V, pp. 800-1.



way, for they helped to produce our mothers and grandmothers of the Victorian age, many of whom, though they may seem narrow-minded when measured by modern standards, had a far higher and broader culture than the women of any preceding age. Most of the girls' schools, however, were distinctly inferior to the schools for boys, poor as many of these were.

Meanwhile the only career open to the middle-class women who had to earn their living was that of governess or schoolmistress ; and those who were driven to follow this career were thought to deserve pity rather than respect and admiration, as we may read, for instance, in Jane Austen's *Emma* and Henry Kingsley's *Ravenshoe*. And they usually entered on the work with no sort of training, and with a very modest equipment of learning ; but since the middle of last century we have changed all that. The first step was taken by the foundation of Queen's College for Women (1848), the object of which was to produce women fit to teach ; and surely that object was fulfilled, since it produced such women as Dorothea Beale and Frances Mary Buss, the pioneers of efficient girls' schools. Then followed the admission of girls to the Cambridge Local Examinations (1865), which did much to raise the general standard of girls' schools ; the establishment of the Cambridge Examinations for Women

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over Eighteen (1869), afterwards called the Higher Local Examinations ; and the foundation of Girton College and Newnham College. Meanwhile, James Stuart, at the request of the North of England Council for promoting the Higher Education of Women, of which Josephine Butler was President and Anne J. Clough was Secretary, gave his first lectures to women in certain northern towns (1867), and thus laid the foundations of the University Extension movement, which has resulted in something beyond its original conception, namely, the creation of seven new Universities in England and Wales, all of which have from the start been open to women on the same terms as men. All the older Universities have now admitted women to full membership, except Cambridge, once the pioneer in woman's higher education, now the *Lost Leader* :

He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,  
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

As the first Local Examinations stiffened up the old private schools for girls, so the Higher Locals were followed by the creation in the seventies of Girls' High Schools, and of new boarding-schools, like St. Leonard's at St. Andrews (the first of its kind), which have more or less adopted the ideas of boys' public schools, such as "the House system, the Prefects, House games and colours, and have thus

developed a particular kind of tradition and of *esprit de corps*. The ideals fostered in these schools are being widely spread by mistresses and old pupils, who are now teaching in high schools and county municipal schools."<sup>1</sup> The success of these new schools, which, be it noted, have been almost exclusively managed and taught by women, soon showed itself in the University honours obtained by their pupils in all subjects. Women have been proved to be capable of distinction in every branch of learning.

During the same period the old Universities have been revolutionised. Whereas Cambridge, for instance, in 1850 had only two Triposes, Mathematics and Classics, and no one could take the Classical Tripos unless he had first passed the Mathematical Tripos, now the doors are thrown wide open to many other studies, and the number of Triposes has grown from two to fourteen, while diplomas are granted in such modern subjects as Agriculture, Forestry, Public Health, and Hygiene. Girls' secondary schools, while still in their experimental stage, have in one way profited by this wide extension of subjects, as they have not been forced into the old narrow groove of boys' curricula, but have been free to choose their own ways. On the other hand, they may in some degree have suffered, since in order to give scope to the varied capacity

<sup>1</sup> *Differentiation*, p. 34.

of their pupils, they have perhaps endeavoured to cover too wide an area. Whereas boys at public schools used to learn little besides Greek, Latin, and a smattering of mathematics, girls are now often expected to be grounded in English, French, German, Latin, mathematics, drawing, music, and one of the sciences.

That girls have proved themselves fully capable of competing with boys in all departments of study is shown by the recent Report of the Consultative Committee of the Education Department, on *Differentiation of Curricula between the Sexes in Secondary Schools*. That Report does not advise any differentiation for girls, except in certain minor suggestions, which are made with a view to reducing the danger of physical and nervous overstrain to which girls are, in the opinion of the Committee, more liable than boys. The Committee is very insistent on this point of girls' peculiar liability to overstrain, and we suspect that it is exaggerated and too much stressed—perhaps owing to the predominance of the masculine element on the Committee. We should feel more confidence in its conclusions if the Committee had contained more women members, especially women doctors. Its final recommendation (No. 24) is at any rate sound: "that women should be *adequately* represented on all committees and examining bodies which deal in any way with girls' education." There

were only three women on this Committee of twenty-one members !

Opportunities for higher education came to the women of most of the countries of Europe about the same time as in England. Although there was in most cases no conscious connection between the reformers in different countries, the same spirit of political—and feminist—progress began to work in the revolutionary year 1848, and it has produced similar results, though in varying degrees, in the field of women's education, in almost every part of Europe. Higher education for women began in the United States of America a little earlier, but made no great advances before 1848. Culture, more than most things, has always been in a large measure international and not the monopoly of one country.

The earliest and greatest progress was made in the more democratic countries, Switzerland, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Belgium. A High School or College for girls was opened by the Municipality of Neuchâtel in 1853, and greatly enlarged in 1893<sup>1</sup>; and the first Girls' High School in Holland was started in 1867. Germany, Austria, France, and Italy began later, and have proceeded more slowly. There were a few enlightened women in Germany and Austria who sixty years ago voiced the demand for the better education of their sisters<sup>2</sup>; but

<sup>1</sup> Humbert, Part II, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Stanton, pp. 152, 176.

the ideal of housewifeliness, and submission to the rule of husbands, was too deeply embedded in the Germanic mind to make it natural or easy to German men to provide openings for the higher education of their women, or to many German women to take advantage of such openings when they were made. More rapid progress may be expected under the new political *régime* in those countries. Women's educational advance has similarly been retarded in France by the theory of Rousseau, which is not yet dead, that their main duty in life is to be pleasing to their male relatives.



## CHAPTER XII

### ECONOMIC STATUS OF WIVES

With all *thy* worldly goods I *me* endow.  
*Marriage Service, as paraphrased by  
the Common Law.*

WE have said in a previous chapter that under the different legal systems of European countries unmarried women were in general comparatively free, while married women had hardly any rights. There was, however, one country, Sweden, which seventy years ago did not recognise the rights of the unmarried woman, but kept her under the perpetual tutelage of her father. Frederika Bremer, in her novel *Hertha* (1856), proclaimed the revolt of the Swedish daughter against this barbarous anomaly, and this novel helped to bring about the law of 1858, under which the unmarried woman could obtain independence at the age of twenty-five, if she applied for it. Five years later the necessity for application was removed, and in 1884 the age of majority was reduced from twenty-five to twenty-one, thus putting daughters in the same position as sons.

Married women in England—and elsewhere—formerly had no legal existence apart from their husbands. It was a maxim of the Com-

mon Law, that "husband and wife are one person in law," and it need hardly be added that the husband was that "one person." In regard to a woman's real property, "marriage conferred upon the husband the right to receive the rents and profits for the joint lives of husband and wife," and after the wife's death for the remainder of his life, "if there were issue of the marriage capable of inheriting ; . . . and in regard to personal property, marriage" involved "an absolute gift to the husband of all the goods, personal chattels, and estate which the wife was actually and beneficially possessed of in her own right at the time of marriage, and of such other goods and personal chattels as might come to her during marriage."<sup>1</sup> It was regarded as a fraud on her future husband if an engaged woman disposed of any of her property before marriage without his knowledge, and such disposition might be annulled by the Court. There is a curious seventeenth-century pamphlet by A. L. purporting to prove, by patchwork of over two hundred and fifty Scripture texts, the awful wickedness of women who thus defrauded their husbands. Marriage was accordingly often a very profitable business—for the husband. The prudent Paston family, for instance, looked at the matter almost exclusively from this business point of view, and by judicious matrimonial alliances increased

<sup>1</sup> Butler (*Essays*), p. 188.

their possessions, and from humble beginnings attained a respectable and recognised position among the landed gentry of Norfolk.<sup>1</sup> In later years also, we see from the novels of Jane Austen and her predecessors that the value of a marriage was generally measured in terms of the wife's property.

"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is !"  
 An' I went wheer munny war : an' thy muther coom to  
 'and,  
 Wi' lots o' munny laäid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.

In return for his privileges, the husband was in theory bound to maintain his wife ; and was responsible for all his wife's debts contracted before marriage, and for wrongs (torts) committed by her before or after marriage. These responsibilities, however, were hedged about by so many prickly legal technicalities that the "husband's obligation to support his wife merely means that he is to keep her out of the workhouse."<sup>2</sup> If she was driven to the workhouse, the Guardians had statutory powers to make her husband pay for her maintenance ; otherwise she had (and still has) hardly any remedy against him for neglect to provide her with food and raiment.

It is true, that these hardships of the Common Law could be softened by settlements or wills which placed the wife's property in the

<sup>1</sup> Bennett, pp. 2-4, 27.      <sup>2</sup> Butler (Essays), p. 219.

hands of trustees on her behalf, but left the income thereof at her free disposal. It will be noted, that in such cases women were considered incapable of looking after their own interests, which had to be cared for by trustees. Women with large fortunes often secured their fortunes in this way by marriage settlements; but where they "were not properly advised, or where they could not afford the expense of marriage settlements, the powers with which the law armed an unprincipled husband were most severely felt."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the working woman, who had no fortune to be settled, had no means of securing her future earnings for her own use.

Some of the protagonists in the sixties for the higher education of women at the same time took part in an agitation for the abolition of the property disabilities of wives, as they recognised that, next to education, one of women's most urgent needs was to get rid of this most glaring survival of old ideas as to women's inferiority and incapacity.<sup>2</sup> This agitation resulted in the passing of the Married Women's Property Act, 1870, which provided that the wages or earnings of a married woman, and any real or personal property coming to her by deed or will, should be her own separate property.

<sup>1</sup> Butler (Essays), p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> See *Woman's Work and Woman's Culture*, a series of Essays edited by Josephine Butler, 1869.

The subsequent Act of 1882 expressly laid down that a married woman, whether married before or after the Act, was capable of acquiring, holding, or disposing by will or deed of any real or personal property as her own separate property, as if she were a *feme sole*, without the intervention of a trustee; and of entering into contracts in respect of and to the extent of her separate property; and that she might hold and dispose of her separate property and earnings, acquired before or after marriage. As a set-off to these benefits, the wife was made liable for her debts before marriage to the extent of her separate property, her husband's liability in respect thereto being limited to the extent of the property of his wife which he has acquired. She also became liable, to the extent of her separate property, for the maintenance in the workhouse of her husband and children, and also by the Act of 1908 of her parents.

The worst anomalies of the Common Law and of ancient prejudice were swept away by the Married Women's Property Act, since they secured that a wife should be allowed to keep her property and earnings free from the control of her husband, and should be regarded as capable of managing her property without the intervention of trustees. But she has not yet been placed in the same economic position as a man or as a single woman, because she can only make contracts to the extent of



her separate property, whereas they can make contracts without any limitation ; and so she is greatly hampered in undertaking commercial enterprises, in which credit is the chief asset.

In other countries the story is very similar : the wife's property was generally merged in that of her husband and managed by him. The husband's privileges and paramount authority and the wife's incapacity were everywhere assumed. For instance in France, in the absence of a marriage contract, all the present and future property of the husband and wife, except landed property, fall into a common stock, which is administered solely by the husband, and may be sold or alienated or mortgaged by him without his wife's concurrence. Her consent is only necessary in the case of her landed property. If, however, the husband's management is so bad that there is a risk of the wife's property being wasted, she may apply to the Court for a dissolution of the common stock, and in that way, if the Court consents, recover control of her own property. If there is a marriage contract, it may provide for *séparation de biens*, whereby the wife retains entire control of her own property, subject to her contributing towards the household expenses. Another form of contract subjects her property, including her dowry (if any), to the *régime dotal*, which means that such property cannot be alienated



and cannot be distrained. In this case the husband takes the annual income, but cannot sell or mortgage the landed property, even with his wife's consent. Such property must be kept absolutely intact—for the benefit of the heirs, rather than of the wife herself. She can only deal with it in one of two events—namely, on the death of her husband, or on the dissolution of the marriage by divorce.

Émile Faguet tells a pathetic, true story of a wife who, after forty years of happy married life, wished to help her husband, whose business had become embarrassed, and it was found impossible for her to do so except by arranging to be divorced. She consented to endure the sneers of her neighbours and the public scandal of a divorce in order to save her husband—truly a climax most amusing except to those immediately concerned! “Never forget that the Frenchman loves a play. All his history, all his legislation, all his philosophy, and all his art are wholly explained by the fact that he loves a play (*Il est homme de théâtre*). So get yourself divorced, to save your husband, whom you can help in no other way; get yourself divorced, because this is the most screaming farce at which the world has ever been able to laugh.”<sup>1</sup>

The married woman in France gained the right to retain her own earnings by the law of July 13, 1907, subject, however, to certain

<sup>1</sup> Faguet, pp. 143-53.

limitations and restrictions. For instance, if the wife makes a bad use of her rights under this law, the husband can apply to the Court for the withdrawal of those rights. Moreover, the business, occupation, or profession must be distinct from that of her husband. Thus the woman who works in her husband's business, or acts as her husband's secretary, gets no benefit from the law, any more than the ordinary wife who is merely occupied with the management of the house.<sup>1</sup> In France, as elsewhere, the wife has still no legal right to any remuneration for her services as housekeeper or homemaker. This has hitherto been thought too delicate a matter for the legislature to handle. Though the State may regulate, where necessary, in every other department of labour, in marriage relations it must not interfere. There the labour of the wife is a labour of love, and it would be sacrilege, and dangerous, forsooth, to domestic harmony, if the State were to dictate that a husband should hand over (say) a fixed proportion of his income to his wife for household expenses and for her own personal enjoyment, as that would put her in the position of a paid servant.

Sweden, however, has greatly dared to tread this dangerous path. The law of 1920, which abolishes the husband's authority over, and guardianship of, his wife, and makes her personally free to dispose of her energy and to

<sup>1</sup> Vêrone, p. 27.

administer her estate with exactly the same duties and rights as her husband, including equal guardianship of the children, and equal responsibility on the part of husband and wife to support one another and to support the family, at the same time lays down that "if the wife works at home, her work there shall be reckoned as composing her share in the support of the family. This consideration has by the critics been called 'wife's wages,' something like 'servant's wages.' The Swedish woman has not been scared by this, but is thankful that this clause has been introduced into the Act, for it has a certain importance, and will certainly not lower the wife to the status of the servant."<sup>1</sup> Denmark has recently passed a similar law.

The economic position of the widow in England is even less secure than that of the wife. If the husband dies intestate, a fairly liberal provision is made to the widow from his estate, under the Law of Property Act, 1922—which increases the amount due to her under the previous law; but if her husband has made a will, there is nothing to compel him to leave anything whatever for his wife. In Scotland and some other countries he is obliged to leave a certain proportion of his property to his wife and children. In Tasmania and Queensland power is given to the Court, in cases where a wife or a husband has

<sup>1</sup> Nilsson, p. 3.

not made sufficient provision for the support of the surviving spouse, to assign what is necessary for that purpose out of the deceased's estate.

The above-mentioned Act of 1922 effected another measure of justice to women, by abolishing primogeniture, and providing that in cases of intestacy all the children, daughters as well as sons, should share equally in the real as well as the personal estate.

## CHAPTER XIII

### RECOVERY OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

Ænone, *my* Ænone, . . .

I am dying now

Pierced by a poison'd dart. Save me. Thou knowest,  
Taught by some God, whatever herb or balm  
May clear the blood from poison, and thy fame  
Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee  
The shepherd brings his adder-bitten lamb,  
The wounded warrior climbs from Troy to thee.  
My life and death are in thy hand.

TENNYSON, *The Death of Ænone*.

WHEN men were chiefly occupied with war, or with hunting and other outdoor exercises, it was natural that the healing art should rest largely in the hands of women. So in Homer, and elsewhere in ancient and medieval literature, we read of women skilled in pharmacy. We learn also from Euripides that dealing with women's special diseases was thought to be peculiarly the function of women :

If thy disease be that thou mayst not name,  
Lo ! women here to allay thy malady ;  
But if to men thy trouble may be told,  
Speak, that to leeches this may be declared.<sup>1</sup>

There is a story told by a Latin writer of the Augustan age,<sup>2</sup> that at one time it was

<sup>1</sup> Eurip. *Hipp.* 293-6 (translated by A. S. Way).

<sup>2</sup> Hyginus, *Fab.* 274.

forbidden in Athens for a woman or a slave to study medicine, but that Agnodice, dressed as a man, and cutting her hair short, went to the school of one Hierophilus, and learning medicine from him began to practise among women with so much success that she drew many patients from the men-doctors. The doctors were so angry at this loss of practice that they accused her to the Areopagus, and she would have been condemned for breaking the law, had not the women burst into the Court and cried: "You are no husbands of ours, but our enemies, if you condemn her who has found salvation for us." Thereupon the Athenians repealed the old law, and enacted that any free woman might study and practise medicine. Some think that this story is apocryphal,<sup>1</sup> but if so it enshrines a fact, which has emerged in history more than once, namely, the jealous opposition of some medical men, when they see their preserves invaded by women.

In the Greco-Roman period the names of many women-doctors are recorded, and it seems that most of them came from the Dorian Greek colonies of Southern Italy. The special tradition of this district is carried forward into the Middle Ages in the famous medical school of Salerno, which produced several women-doctors from the eleventh to the fifteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The earliest of these

<sup>1</sup> Lipinska, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 54-5, 83 ff.



was Trotula, the reputed author of a book on women's diseases. Certain German doctors have lately tried to prove that Trotula was not a woman, but merely the name of a book written by a man, Dr. Trottus; but the evidence as to her identity collected by Dr. Mélanie Lipinska seems fairly conclusive.<sup>1</sup> Anyhow, she stands as a type of the many Italian women who seized the opportunities for studying medicine which Italy pre-eminently afforded.<sup>2</sup>

Amongst the many learned women whom the Italian Renaissance produced, we find a number of women medical students, coming from all the chief cities of Italy, notably at the University of Bologna, which specially favoured cultured women, having as many as seven women professors during the eighteenth century—namely, Anna Morandi-Manzolini (Anatomy), Bettina Calderini (Civil Law), Bettina Gozzadini (Canon Law), Clotilde Tambroni (Greek), Laure Bassi (Physics), Maria Gaetana Agnesi (Mathematics), and Maria Dalle Donne (Obstetrics).<sup>3</sup> It is curious to notice that the two last named owed their respective appointments to Pope Benedict XIV<sup>4</sup> and to Napoleon Bonaparte<sup>5</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Lipinska, pp. 87 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Woman's Leader*, "Dame Trot," Sept. 12, 1924.

<sup>3</sup> Lipinska, pp. 156-7.

<sup>4</sup> Fachini, pp. 165, 166, 235; Montagu, Vol. II, p. 242.

<sup>5</sup> Jex-Blake, p. 31.

about the only act of justice which Napoleon ever did to a woman.

Dr. Lipinska gives the names, and in important cases full and interesting particulars, of many medical women in Italy, Germany, France, England, Spain, and Poland who practised or wrote medical works before the nineteenth century ; but it appears that after the fifteenth century the number of women practitioners was gradually lessened and finally almost vanished. It has to be remembered that medieval medical practice was mainly empirical and unscientific, both among men and women, and also that it was much mixed up with astrology, magic, and sorcery. When medicine began to assume the garb of science, the men of science (at any rate outside Italy) claimed that women were incapable of learning it, and gave them no chance of proving whether or not they were capable. At the same time this old prejudice as to women's mental inferiority was greatly helped by the new prejudice, that every woman possessed of unusual skill in the use of medicaments was a witch, and deserved to be cruelly done to death. Such was the teaching of *Malleus maleficarum* (1489), one of the cruellest books that was ever published, and the most powerful instrument in the long series of witch persecutions, the number of victims in which is variously estimated at from 100,000 to several millions. The usual

procedure was to extract confessions from them by torture, and on the strength of these so-called voluntary admissions to condemn them to death.<sup>1</sup>

In France, after a long struggle of three hundred years, the Medical Faculty of Paris succeeded in the sixteenth century in their efforts to exclude women from the profession.<sup>2</sup> About the same time a law was passed in England (3 Hen. VIII, c. 11), which after reciting that "the science and cunning of physic and surgery . . . is daily within this realm exercised by a great multitude of ignorant persons, . . . that common artificers, as smiths, weavers, *and women*, boldly and accustomably take upon them great cures and things of great difficulty, in which they partly use *sorcery and witchcraft*, partly apply such medicines unto the disease as be very noyous and nothing meet therefor, to the high displeasure of God, great infamy to the faculty and the grievous hurt, damage, and destruction of many of the King's liege people," enacted that no person was to practise as a physician or surgeon unless he was first examined and approved by a Bishop, who should call unto him four doctors and four surgeons to assist him in such examination. Apparently no women were examined and approved, and so this Act excluded women

<sup>1</sup> Encyc. Brit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 757 ; Mayreder, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Lipinska, pp. 118, 179.

from regular practice ; but some women continued to practise, not for pay but "for neighbourhood and God's sake, and of pity and charity," as we learn from an Act passed thirty years later (34 Hen. VIII, c. 8). This Act recited that "the Company and Fellowship of Surgeons of London, minding only their own lucre and nothing the profit or ease of the diseased or patient," had abused the provisions of the earlier Act "by suing troubling and vexing divers honest persons, *as well men as women*, whom God hath endued with the knowledge of the nature, kind and operation of certain herbs, roots and waters, and the using and ministering them to such as be pained with customable diseases," and enacted that such persons should be allowed to practise "without suit, vexation, trouble, penalty or loss of their goods."

In the seventeenth century every good housewife was expected to have a little knowledge of "physic and chirurgerie,"<sup>1</sup> and such as had special skill therein were enabled by the last-mentioned Act to apply that skill to the benefit of their neighbours, not apparently as paid practitioners, but "of pity and charity." Thus we hear of the Countess of Cumberland, who "was a lover of the study and practice of alchemy, by which she found out excellent medicines, and did much good to many"<sup>2</sup>; of Lady Ann Halket, whose

<sup>1</sup> Woolley, pp. 168 ff. ; Markham, pp. 59 ff.

<sup>2</sup> V. Wilson, p. 142.

ability was willingly recognised by some of the best physicians in the country<sup>1</sup>; and Mrs. Elizabeth Bury, whose "successes in the preservation of human life were not easily numbered."<sup>2</sup>

The above two Acts of Henry VIII have never been repealed, but they are practically superseded by the Medical Act (1858), which penalises persons falsely pretending to be "registered practitioners," but does not prohibit unregistered persons from practising, providing however that no charges for such irregular practice can be recovered in any Court. Women were not explicitly excluded by this Act, but the effect was to exclude them, until Universities should agree to examine and grant them degrees.

The English doctors even tried, and for a time practically succeeded in their endeavours, to take away the practice of midwifery from women, because the midwives had no training, and in their opinion had no capacity for being properly trained. "The midwomen cannot and the midmen won't instruct them. . . . The midmen say that the midwomen want both capacity and strength (instruct them as you please). To which I reply . . . that it's not want of capacity, docility, strength, or activity . . . which is evident to a demonstration from the successful practice of midwomen in the Hôtel Dieu at Paris (the best school for midwifery

<sup>1</sup> Ballard, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> S. Bury, p. 29.



now in Europe). . . . Would not any person then be deservedly laughed at, who should assert that our women are not as capable of performing their office, had they the same instruction as the French women?"<sup>1</sup> So wrote Dr. John Douglas in 1736, but his proposals for establishing a training school for midwives, like the similar proposals of Elizabeth Cellier fifty years before, fell on unwilling, deaf ears, and by keeping the women ignorant, the medical men got much of the practice in their own hands.<sup>2</sup> Matters improved in the last half of the nineteenth century, when the training and status of midwives and nurses were gradually raised beyond those of the Sarah Gamps and Betsey Prigs; but England still lagged far behind the rest of Europe in the attempt to stamp out the practice of ignorant midwives. It was only in 1902 that the Midwives Act was passed, which prohibited any woman not a "certified midwife" from using the title of "midwife," and from attending any woman in childbirth, except under a medical practitioner or on emergency.

The idea that nurses needed any systematic training was hardly dreamed of a hundred years ago. The first Institute for Nurses was founded in 1836 at Kaiserswerth in Bavaria, and there Florence Nightingale obtained her

<sup>1</sup> Douglas, pp. 70-1.

<sup>2</sup> Jex-Blake, p. 23; Clark, pp. 242-3.



training. Elizabeth Fry founded an Institution of Nursing Sisters in London in 1840, and a School for Nurses was established in 1860 at St. Thomas's Hospital from a fund collected in honour of Florence Nightingale. But trained nurses had to wait sixty years for legal recognition, when at last in 1919 the Nurses' Registration Act was passed, which established a Register of Nurses, and made it unlawful for anyone not on the Register to assume the title of Registered Nurse.

The onslaught upon the closed and barred citadel of the medical profession began as soon as the mid-Victorian demand for the higher education of women was made. The pioneer women knew that they were capable of serving humanity in the highest and most difficult paths ; and the first of the professions which they resolved to gain—or rather to regain—was that of Medicine. They saw no reason why they could not and should not share with men the honour and happiness of trying to relieve and to prevent suffering ; and in one direction at least they were confident that they could supplement the work of men, for they knew that an enormous amount of preventable suffering arose from the unwillingness of very many women and girls to consult a medical man on various matters of vital importance.<sup>1</sup> Still more was this true of India, whose crying needs were

<sup>1</sup> Jex-Blake, pp. 42 ff.

part of England's burden, and where medical work amongst women could only be carried on by women, as Hindu and Moham-medan women would "in many cases rather die than be seen by a man in times of sickness."

It is unnecessary here to repeat the oft-told tale of "the dauntless three" who stormed and forced "the bridge so well in the brave days of old." Suffice it to say that Elizabeth Blackwell had to go to America for her medical degree in 1847; that Elizabeth Garrett Anderson obtained the degree of L.S.A. in 1865 from the Society of Apothecaries, which very reluctantly admitted her for examination, and thereafter revised its regulations and banged the door in the face of any women who might have the temerity to try to follow her lead, and that she was driven to Paris to get the higher qualification of M.D.; and that the more impetuous but not more persistent Sophia Jex-Blake in 1860 began the siege of the University of Edinburgh, which only completely surrendered after twenty-five years, after she had obtained her M.D. degree at Berne in 1877, and had been admitted to the Register by the courtesy of an Irish College, under an Act passed in 1876 to enable Examining Boards to admit women candidates. Similarly at a later date Trinity College, Dublin, gave degrees in Arts to the women waifs and strays from Cambridge and

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Oxford, which had examined them, but refused to grant them degrees.

To-day there are nearly two thousand women doctors registered in Great Britain and Ireland (nearly six per cent. of the total number of medical practitioners on the Register). They have established for themselves a recognised and honourable position ; they have set the example of claiming and securing the principle of equal pay for equal work ; they have helped to raise to a higher level the national standard of thought in regard to child-culture ; and they have proved by example and precept the patent untruth of the theory, formerly held, and even yet not finally dispelled, that all women are necessarily at times unfit for any responsible effort of mind or body.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Helena Normanton in *Woman's Leader*, Sept. 19, 1924.

## CHAPTER XIV

### WOMEN IN PUBLIC SERVICE

She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*, xcvi.

THE highest position in the land, that of Sovereign, has long been open to women in England, Holland, Spain, Portugal, and Russia, as also in ancient Egypt. In Greece, Austria, and some of the German States women could only succeed to the throne, in default of *any* male heirs of the reigning family; while in France, Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Roumania, where the Salic Law prevailed, no woman could become Queen, though she might act as Regent during the King's minority.<sup>1</sup> And yet in all those countries women were generally debarred from any other participation in the affair of Government, for which their very nature was supposed to render them unfit. Why, then, were they considered fit to reign? There seems no other answer than in the theory that "divinity doth hedge a king," and that this divinity could only be maintained if the royal blood was kept pure. The dogma of the divine

<sup>1</sup> Ostrogorsky, pp. 3 ff.

right of kings was held to be so important as to override that other dogma of the natural incapacity of women to deal with affairs outside the home.

Next to the divine right of kings comes the almost divine right of the privileged landholding class to keep intact the family property in land. Accordingly in countries "where the right to take part in local government did not depend upon being a citizen, but upon having a stake in the land," it was thought expedient to disregard to some extent the incapacity of women, and to allow the local franchise to women holding property in their own right. Such was the case in German and Slavonic countries, but in Russia (except for village assemblies), and in Austria and Prussia women could only vote by proxy. "On the other hand, in the Latin world, where communal rights generally coincided with citizenship," women were excluded from the local as well as the national franchise.<sup>1</sup> In France, for instance, where women formerly had some control in rural communities, the Revolution "extinguished the little vitality that remained to those communities, by assimilating them to urban communities," and incidentally thereby excluded women from such communal rights as they previously possessed.<sup>2</sup> Women are still without the municipal vote in France and

<sup>1</sup> Ostrogorsky, pp. 118, 127.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 85-8.

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Italy, and they only gained it in Belgium in 1920.

In England women (including married women) have now won the right to vote for, and to be elected to, all Local Government bodies (on the same terms as men, except that married women can only vote if thirty years of age), by a series of Acts ranging from 1834 to 1918, which, however, proceeded in a somewhat zig-zag fashion. Thus the Poor Law Act, 1834, allowed them to vote for and sit on Boards of Guardians (though no woman was elected till forty years later); the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, deprived them of their ancient right to vote for Municipal Councils, which was only restored in 1869; in 1894 an Act, extending women's rights in certain directions, deprived them of the vote as owners; in 1899, when London Borough Councils were substituted for London Vestries, women for a time lost their right to be elected; and in 1902, when the work of School Boards was transferred to County Councils, they again lost their right to be elected, and for some years could only act as co-opted members of Education Committees; all of which shows that in a Parliament of men, elected only by men, the interests of women are very apt to be overlooked. There were in 1923 over three thousand women on the various local bodies of the country, as against eighteen hundred in 1914; but fourteen



hundred of such bodies still had no women members.

The growth of feminine representation on Local Government authorities has been accompanied by increased openings for women as paid officials. Besides the ever-increasing number of school teachers, women now hold such appointments as assistant Medical Officers of Health, School Medical Officers, Poor Law Medical Officers, Medical Officers in Asylums, Inspectors of Midwives, Sanitary Inspectors, Health Visitors, Nurses, Police Inspectors and Constables, Assistant Librarians, Relieving Officers, Rate Collectors, and Registrars.

In the last fifty years, also, women have found fresh fields of work in national Government Service. The Civil Service was thrown open to competition in 1870. Lord Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, says that this change "placed the whole intellect of the country at the service and disposal of the State," and that "it rescued some of the most important duties in the life of the nation from the narrow class to whom they had hitherto been confided." But women were not at that time included in the scheme, and so *not* "the whole intellect of the country" was utilised; and one important department of the State, the Foreign Office, was allowed to remain outside the scheme. It is idle to speculate what a difference might have been made in the last

half-century of European history if the doors of the Foreign Office had in 1870 been thrown open to the free air of democracy, and still more, if women had been admitted to that last sanctuary of a "narrow class" !

In that same year, however, a few women first entered the Civil Service, not by open competition, but by transfer from the service of the Inland Telegraph Company, whose business was then taken over by the Post Office. The system was gradually extended to other branches of the Post Office, which now employs about 50,000 women, seven or eight times as many as all other Government Departments taken together, excluding temporary employees. Before the War typists were almost the only class of women serving on the clerical side of any Government office, other than the Post Office, but the War brought about an enormous temporary extension of the employment of women—some, but not all, of which has come to stay.

The principle of equal pay for the two sexes has not been wholly won in the Civil Service. While women will enter at the same rates as men, and will for some years receive the same increments, they will not generally be allowed to reach as high a maximum rate as men. The Government has also laid down that, except in special cases, married women will not be appointed, and women civil servants must automatically retire on marriage.

The obvious need for appointing women to professional and technical posts in those Departments where the special interests of women and children are touched has only been very slowly and gradually recognised by the State. The first woman was appointed about fifty years ago by Mr. Stansfeld (afterwards Sir James Stansfeld), then President of the Local Government Board, to such a post, namely, to that of Inspector of Poor Law Institutions. Some years later women became Factory Inspectors, Inspectors of Schools, and Medical Officers under the Ministry of Health. One of the paid and one of the unpaid Lunacy Commissioners are women. There has been a Woman Inspector of Prisons, and the Governor of the female Borstal Institution is now a woman.

A trial has been made of the employment of women in the Metropolitan Police Force and in a few of the Provincial Police Forces, and in the opinion of those who measure the value of a policeman in the terms of his power to prevent offences, and not merely of his power to punish, the experiment deserves to be widely extended, as it has proved an undoubted success, even to the official mind. The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis, in his Report for 1920, said that "experience has amply demonstrated that there is a considerable sphere of usefulness for their activities, . . . especially in preventing girls and

young persons from commencing or continuing lives of immorality." Similar testimony was borne in the Report for 1919 of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary as to women in the provincial Police, and the Report added : "It is sometimes said that this is the work of the parson and the social reformer, and should not be done at the expense of the rates and taxes ; but prevention of crime is the first duty of the police, and anything which tends towards the prevention of crime, however remotely, is their work. After all, the boy saved from crime, and the girl saved from infamy, are the gains, moral and material, of the community, whether the saving be done by the parson or the policeman."

As in England, so also in other European countries, women have during the same period, but at a much slower rate, found openings for employment in public service. In Germany and Austria, for instance, as long ago as 1860 associations were formed for promoting the employment of women, which met with considerable success in winning new openings for them in schools and public offices.<sup>1</sup> Any vigorous demand for women's higher education or for entrance into the professions did not come in Germany, as it did in England, simultaneously with the general demand for new openings, but much

<sup>1</sup> Crépaz, p. 18.

later. The municipal franchise was not granted to women in Germany and Austria and several other countries until after the War. The Scandinavian countries obtained it some years earlier. In France women seem to have looked for an extended sphere of work rather in the direction of trade and commerce than in that of the professions or of public service ; and though they have not obtained the municipal franchise, they have since 1908 been entitled to vote for members of the Commercial Courts (for settling disputes between traders), and for the *Conseils de Prud'hommes*, which deal with questions between employers and employees ; and they are eligible for election to the latter, but not to the former.

## CHAPTER XV

### WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

It may be quite true that women are more valuable to the community when taking care of the home than when working for an outside employer for a more or less inadequate wage. But dogmatic statements of this kind are useless to women faced with the practical problem of sustaining life.

B. L. HUTCHINS, *Ideals*, p. 34.

THOSE comfortable anti-feminists who wish to confine women to the rôle of home-makers have hardly faced the problem of the millions of women who are compelled to work outside their own homes to gain a living. For the most part people are apt to think in terms of the habits and interests of their own class, and to forget that the real big world is far different from their own little world.

The woman's movement was at the outset mainly a middle-class movement. The mid-Victorian middle-class girl had grown up in an atmosphere where it was thought to be unladylike to have to earn one's living or to do any real work. Even house-work was all done by hired servants. The mother, indeed, was kept busy looking after the servants, but the daughter often had no work to do harder than picking flowers in the



garden and arranging them in the house. She had only to wait, passively or actively, according to temperament or to maternal training, for a husband, who sometimes never turned up. The horrible *ennui* and grave dangers of this life of lilies and languors were apparent to the more thoughtful women of those days ; and stirred them to tell their sisters that they were meant for something higher and more strenuous, that they had souls and minds to develop, that work was more honourable than living on the labour of others, and that they would better fit themselves for life by better education, which would not only sweeten the otherwise bitter hours of leisure—those hours so long and so hard to endure—but would also prepare them to go out into the world, whether as wives and mothers, or, should necessity so decree, as workers for their own support. No one could tell how many women, even in the well-to-do classes, might be driven, through the death or misfortunes of their fathers or husbands, into the cold world to earn their daily bread. Yet how few such women had then any training or preparation for such a life.

Only by degrees did the woman's movement grow to be a movement for the women of all classes. This began with the realisation of the very low wages paid to women workers, as compared with men doing the same or similar work. This injustice specially struck

women who were for the first time seeking work for themselves ; and sympathy and self-interest combined to make them alive to the fact, and led them to "tease their souls for some great cure." But no great cure has yet been found, though women (like men) have sought it, not along one road only, but along many roads. Possibly, however, women are more keen about the search, and may yet discover some solution ; or still more likely men and women together may find it.

The bigness of the problems connected with women in industry may be gauged by the following (approximate) figures for England and Wales, taken from the Census for 1921. One-third of the total number of women and girls over sixteen years of age, or about four and three-quarter millions, are engaged in paid occupations, by which they earn or partly earn their living. Of these workers, 3,600,000 are spinsters, 690,000 are married women, and 425,000 are widows or divorced. In addition to the above, there are 350,000 girl workers under sixteen years of age, i.e. nearly one-half of all girls between fourteen and sixteen, besides a much smaller proportion of girls under fourteen. The question of this child-labour will be dealt with in a later chapter.

In face of these figures, the fanciful theory that woman's sphere is the home and only the home, and that women—and children—

are wholly supported, or can in existing circumstances be wholly supported, out of men's earnings, falls flat to the ground. The bare necessity of living, or the craving for a higher standard of living, drives hosts of women, including many married women, into the labour market; and no philosophic theories of the ideal family life, unless accompanied by some radical economic reorganisation of industry, will bring them back to their homes.

The proportion of wage-earning women to the total female population is about the same as it was in 1911 and in several previous Censuses,<sup>1</sup> and has not been appreciably affected by the temporary increase of women workers during the War. As to the kinds of employment in which these women are engaged, we find that 87 per cent. of them come under the following six large groups:

Domestic servants, etc. . . . .	1,677,000
Textile workers . . . . .	609,000
Textile goods (milliners, dressmakers, etc.) . . . . .	548,000
Commercial . . . . .	496,000
Clerks and typists, etc. (including those in public employment) . . . . .	500,000
Professional (including teachers, nurses, etc.) . . . . .	360,000

In each of these groups, except the fourth and fifth, the women outnumber the men workers; but these groups mainly represent the kinds of work which have from time immemorial been recognised as naturally falling to be done by

<sup>1</sup> Hutchins (Stat.), p. 11.

women. Women have always cleaned and cooked, and spun and woven, and made clothes. In none of these careers have they displaced men ; rather might it be said that in the making of clothes men have partially ousted women from what was once their peculiar province. Old Herodotus marvelled that in Egypt some men were found engaged in the feminine task of weaving ; he would have marvelled more if he could have foreseen that in English cotton-factories nearly as many men would be employed as women.<sup>1</sup>

In the olden days, when spinning and weaving were home industries, women as well as men were the breadwinners for the family. There was no idea, then, that a man should be paid enough to support himself, his wife, and his family. And a very hard time they, both men and women, had of it, especially the women, of whom Piers the Plowman tells us : "what they save by their spinning, they spend it in house hire, also in milk and meal to make porridge with, to fill their children who cry after food. And they themselves suffer much hunger and woe in winter-time, when they wake at nights to rise to rock the cradle, and also when they card and comb and patch and wash and rub and reel, and peel rushes, so that ruth is it to read or show in rime the woe of those women who dwell in cottages."<sup>2</sup> The tradition of family co-opera-

<sup>1</sup> Chapman, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Piers, Vol. I, p. 234.

tion, and the combined family wage, was carried forward into the factory, when machinery destroyed home industries. So women found their way naturally into the textile factories, with the full sympathy of the men workers; and "whatever may have been the social misery and disorder brought about by the industrial revolution, one striking result was an increase in the earning power of women"—at any rate where large numbers worked together in big, well-organised businesses. "Low as the standard of women's wages continued to be, their wages have on the whole been higher under the factory system than under other methods; and as a general rule the larger and more highly organised factory pays higher wages than the smaller, less well-equipped factory." Similarly in other countries, such as France and Italy, it is found that women working in large factories are generally better paid than those in small factories and workshops.<sup>1</sup>

Outside the textile industries, women have been much slower than men to organise themselves into Trade Unions, for the protection of their interests and the securing of a living wage. This was doubtless due to the fact that most of them only looked to earning their living for a few years, until they were married. "Woman, having an eye to marriage, is not equally wedded to her trade."<sup>2</sup> They were

<sup>1</sup> Hutchins, pp. 71-2.

<sup>2</sup> MacDonald, p. ix.



therefore willing to take any work and any pay that they could get, and were unwilling to spare the time and trouble, and unable to spare the money, needed to make themselves skilled workers. And so in most trades young women were content to work long hours for a miserable pittance, with the piteous result that older women, who became widows with families to support, were compelled to work for the same starvation wages.

"According to the Board of Trade Report on Earnings and Hours for 1906, the average earnings of an adult woman in a full working week were at that time 18s. 8d. in the cotton industry, compared with 15s. 5d. in all textile trades (including cotton), 13s. 6d. in the clothing trades, 12s. 2d. in the printing trades, 12s. 8d. in the metal trades, 11s. 10d. in the pottery and chemical trades, and 11s. 3d. in the food and tobacco trades. About one-third of the whole body of working women earned less than 12s. a week. . . . The average net earnings of an adult woman, allowing for five weeks' lost time from sickness, unemployment, etc., throughout the year, were 10s. 10½d. compared with 25s. 9d. for an adult man."<sup>1</sup> The realisation of these figures, and of even worse figures for sweated home workers, led to the passing of the Trade Boards Act, 1909, under which wages, especially women's

<sup>1</sup> Drake, p. 44.



wages, in the most sweated industries have been somewhat improved.

Parliament has been very reluctant to interfere with the conditions of labour, but by slow degrees, in the course of a hundred years, it has built up an elaborate code of regulations touching every industry and involving a complete denial of the old *laissez-faire* doctrine. This legislation has not proceeded along straight lines of logic, but on irregular waves of sentiment. "Each successive statute aimed at remedying a single ascertained evil,"<sup>1</sup> regardless of its possible effect on the prosperity of the industry concerned. Happily it has generally turned out that the workers have not suffered and the industry has not been injured. Beginning in 1802 with "the protection of the tiny class of pauper apprentices in textile mills," and going forward to the protection of other young persons—and of women—the law now includes within its scope nearly all the workers of the country. It regulates the hours of labour and sanitation, the age of beginning work, protection against accidents, mealtimes and holidays, the methods of remuneration, and even the rate of wages itself.<sup>2</sup> Similar laws have been passed by most of the English-speaking communities, and other countries have followed the example in greater or less degree. Steps have recently been taken towards the unification of

<sup>1</sup> Hutchins (Hist.), p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

labour laws in different countries, through Conventions made, first by the International Association for Labour Legislation, and later by the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations—that fine embodiment of the new principle, that “labour should not be regarded merely” as a commodity or “article of commerce,” but that “the well-being, physical, moral, and intellectual, of industrial wage-earners is of supreme international importance.” Among the principles laid down for the guidance of the I.L.O. is the feminist principle that “men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value.”<sup>1</sup>

Women in industry have hitherto been regarded by the State as needing special protection, like children and young persons, rather than as requiring to be treated in exactly the same way as men workers, which is the modern feminist demand; and the women’s labour movement can hardly be said yet to have identified itself with the feminist movement. The woman worker has perhaps thought it more important that men’s wages should not be lowered than that her own wages should be raised, for she naturally regards herself mainly from the point of view of the family.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, she has been too busy in the hard struggle of life to find time for thinking out logical theories of how that struggle might

<sup>1</sup> Peace Treaty, Art. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Hutchins, p. 195.

most quickly be relieved ; and after all it was a greater relief to have her conditions of labour softened, and the hours of work shortened, than even to have wages raised. Women were no doubt glad to accept in 1844 their inclusion with young persons in the shortening of factory hours to sixty hours a week. As a matter of fact those who advocated this measure did so with the knowledge that it would in effect limit also the hours of men's employment in the same factories, and promoted it expressly for that purpose.<sup>1</sup> So in this case the departure from the theoretical principle of equal treatment for men and women was more apparent than real ; and indeed the Act does not seem to have been followed by any hurt to the women concerned, or by any displacement of them by men workers.<sup>2</sup>

In another direction women have also been treated differently from men, namely, by their exclusion altogether from certain hard and dangerous occupations. Thus they were excluded in 1842 from working in underground mines ; and this at the time led to great suffering by throwing many women out of work—suffering which Parliament callously refused to relieve. “ A ruling class which had compensated liberally the slave-owners of Jamaica or the dispossessed holders of sinecure offices . . . would have thought it

<sup>1</sup> Ashley, p. 164 ; Hammond (Sh.), p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Chapman, p. 106.

a perilous departure from the traditions of orderly government to provide the women, whom they were turning out of the mines, with an allowance for their maintenance, until and unless they could support themselves by other employment.”<sup>1</sup> Probably, however, the strictest feminist would not now demand the repeal of that Act, but would prefer to work towards equality by making the working in mines a less hard and dangerous occupation for men, as indeed has been the aim of subsequent Mines Acts, notably the Act of 1908, which took the unprecedented step of limiting the number of hours to be worked by all underground coal-miners. Again, the employment of women and young persons in certain lead processes is restricted by an Act passed in 1920, “in view of the danger involved to the function of maternity, and to the physical development of children,” in accordance with the recommendations of the Washington Conference of the International Labour Organisation. Would feminists wish for the repeal of this measure? Would they not rather seek equality of treatment, by making these processes less dangerous for men, or if that cannot be done, by prohibiting them altogether, on the analogy of the prohibition of the use of white phosphorus in the making of matches?

In another direction the I.L.O. are tending

<sup>1</sup> Hammond (Sh.), p. 82.

towards the equal treatment of men and women, in the proposal to prohibit men from employment in night baking—women being already excluded from night work in all industries.

“In some backward countries *temporary* legislative restrictions upon women’s work may be the lesser of two evils,” and it may be that English women workers should, in view of the importance of international action towards levelling up the conditions of labour, be willing to accept such restrictions for a time, for the sake of their less fortunate sisters in other countries, even though they may seem unnecessary here. They will, however, do well to consider whether “any permanent segregation of women by an international system of restrictive legislation based upon sex may not, in spite of any apparent temporary advantage, result in no stable protection to women, but rather in adding to the difficulties they already have to meet. The ultimate ideal would seem to be, that protective legislation should be based, not on the sex of the worker, but on the nature of the work.”<sup>1</sup>

One who is no mere sentimental feminist, but who believes that the true interests of men and women are identical and not opposed to one another, wrote not long ago as follows :

“The existing relation between the conditions of employment of men and women,

<sup>1</sup> *Woman’s Leader*, Feb. 20, 1925, p. 29.



whether in manual labour or in brain-working occupations, is detrimental to the personal character and professional efficiency of both sexes, and inimical alike to the maximum productivity of the nation, and to the advancement of the several crafts and professions. The exclusion of women, by law or by custom, from the better-paid posts, professions, and crafts has driven them to compete with each other and with men in the lower grades of each vocation, where they have habitually been paid at lower rates than men for equivalent work. . . . For the production of commodities and services women no more constitute a class than do persons of a particular creed or race; and the time has come for the removal of all sex exclusions, for the opening of all posts and vocations to any individuals who are qualified for the work, irrespective of sex, and for the insistence, as minima, on the same qualifications, the same conditions of labour, and the same occupational rates for all those accepted by private or public employers as fit to be engaged in any particular pursuit."<sup>1</sup> We are already moving towards these ends, but they have by no means yet been attained.

The Factory Bill of 1924 proposed further to limit the work of women and young persons to forty-eight hours a week. It would be fairer and more logical to apply

<sup>1</sup> Webb, p. 254.



the same limitations to the hours of men's work, but should women workers on that account refuse this boon, which the less fortunate among them so sorely need, and wait instead until the illogical British public is driven to accept an all-round forty-eight hours' week?

## CHAPTER XVI

### ONE MORAL STANDARD

The very nature of the opposite sex, or its long hereditary habit, which has become like nature, is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position.

HAWTHORNE, *The Scarlet Letter*, p. 200.

That indiscretion of the young appetite about which the world is mute, but whose better ordering and governance would give a diviner brightness to the earth.

MORLEY, Vol. II, p. 32.

FIFTY years ago, just as the women of England were beginning to enjoy new opportunities for better education and to enter on new spheres of work, they received a sharp and startling reminder of the moral implications of man's age-long domination by the passing of the Contagious Diseases Acts, against which Josephine Butler raised her voice in the wilderness, thereby breaking the Victorian conspiracy of silence on sexual matters. She was one of the truest friends of the woman's movement in all its aspects. She believed in the equality of men and women, and sought to emancipate women from all those unjust laws and customs which prevented the realisation of that equality. In the name of Justice she protested against the starvation wages

paid to women, against their exclusion from the medical profession and many other employments, against their inadequate education, and against the laws affecting the property of married women ; and she attributed all these abuses to the fact that women were not represented in Parliament, and that the interests of the unrepresented were always apt to be neglected. Above all, in the name of Justice she led the crusade against the Contagious Diseases Acts, because they embodied in a blatant and odious manner the principle of the double moral standard, by legalising prostitution, and at the same time further enslaving and degrading the prostitute.

Christianity was the first religion, and has been the only religion, to preach at once the duty and the possibility of an equally high standard for men and for women. Jesus first proclaimed the idea in His words to the men, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" ; and His words to the woman, "Neither do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more" ; thereby revealing the truth that what is sin in a woman is equally sin in a man, and the further truth that sin can be forgiven, and can be overcome. The Council of Jerusalem laid down that all Christians must abstain from indiscriminate sexual indulgence, and almost every book in the New Testament lays special stress on this injunction, which is the outcome of two

fundamental Christian principles, namely, "the sanctity of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the royal law of love, which forbids the degradation for selfish ends of any child of God for whom Christ died."<sup>1</sup> These two principles may be translated into non-theological language. First, man's body is the temporary home of his soul, and the man of understanding "will regulate his bodily habit and training, and so far will he be from yielding to brutal and irrational pleasures, that he will regard even health as quite a secondary matter ; his first object will not be that he may be fair or strong or well, unless he is likely thereby to obtain temperance, but he will always desire so to attemper the body as to preserve the harmony of the soul."<sup>2</sup> In the second place, he who realises the oneness of the human family, which is so intimate that when "one member suffereth all the members suffer with it,"<sup>3</sup> will be very careful that he will not cause suffering to any of his brothers or sisters in the pursuit of his own selfish ends, but will rather sacrifice himself to lessen and help to remove the sins and sufferings of humanity.

Despite the obvious failure of many professing Christians to live up to this high standard,

<sup>1</sup> Copec, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, Vol. III, p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> May not Christians add : not only all the members of the human family suffer, *but also the Father Himself?* Hence the need for the Incarnation and the Atonement.

the ideal has still persisted in the Christian Church ; and who shall say how many thousands of men, not saints only, but simple ordinary souls, have found themselves able to respond to the clamant call of duty, and to live clean lives ?

“ Ah, the key of our life, that passes all wards, opens all locks,  
Is not *I will*, but *I must*. I must,—I must,—and I do it.”<sup>1</sup>

The mountain-top ideal has always been there, but many men have lacked faith in their own powers, and the slopes have seemed too steep for *them* to climb, although women, with more faith or more strength, have been able to reach the peak. Unhappily, in the sub-Apostolic age and afterwards, many leaders of the Church blurred the image of sex-equality by the cowardly theory that Eve was more responsible than Adam for bringing sin into the world, and pictured woman as the temptress, man as the unfortunate, helpless victim. So good men began to think that their best or only chance of safety lay in altogether avoiding women's society, by becoming first hermits, and later monks. They also taught women that the highest religious life was to be found in vows of virginity, and seclusion in convents. This monastic ideal of asceticism was not without its value, since it held out to the ordinary man

<sup>1</sup> Clough, p. 314.

a proof that a life of self-control was possible, and consistent with complete serenity and sanity of body and mind ; and even in these days of free and harmonious conceptions of life as a whole, asceticism might serve a useful purpose, as a reminder that " natural life does not flourish unless the spirit attains the upper hand. . . . Without most people being conscious of the fact, one of the main foundation-stones of our traditional moral culture has been the constant presence in our midst of great personalities, illustrating in their own lives the highest possible degree of spiritual freedom, the complete conquest of the spirit over the world and the senses. The presence in society of such spiritually dedicated characters is a source of psychic inspiration for the whole community, and a constant and courageous protest against the smug Philistinism of the men of the world."<sup>1</sup> The age of saints has not wholly passed away, though they are not all to be found in cloisters, but some of them in the busy world ; and we still need them to help us to solve the most important of all the problems of freedom : " How shall I become free from myself ? "

The danger of monasticism was its tendency to suggest that self-control was only attainable within cloistered walls, and that men in ordinary life could hardly be expected to restrain their passions. Thus the old Pagan

<sup>1</sup> Foerster, pp. 129, 130 ; cf. Copec, p. 55.



idea of the inevitability, the necessity, of self-indulgence was helped to persist. Men might believe that chastity was the best way, but they felt that the ideal was too high for them, and that to transgress was at least a venial offence, for which absolution might readily be obtained. Moreover, some of the monks failed to live up to the high level of their vows, and later on—when the Church enjoined celibacy on the clergy—Popes, Cardinals, and priests were in many cases notoriously immoral, and by their evil examples more than undid the force of the Church's teaching. *Corruptio optimi pessima est*. It was not any doctrinal or ecclesiastical corruption, but the moral corruption of the clergy, which more than anything else led to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, just as two hundred years later the general worldliness and lack of spirituality of the English clergy led to the Methodist revival.

Despite the failure of many Churchmen to live up to their ideal, the Church has never faltered in its proclamation of purity as one mark of the ideal life. It is interesting to see how the greatest of theologians, Thomas Aquinas, bases the doctrine that fornication is a mortal sin, not on the wrong done to the woman thereby, but on the wrong done to the child, as "hindering the due upbringing and advancement of the child when born."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aquinas, II, Q. 154, 1.

He taught that the object of true marriage was twofold, the bringing of children into the world, and their proper upbringing and education, and that both objects need both father and mother. Even when the second object alone exists, as in the case of Joseph and the Virgin Mary (whose marriage, he believed, was never physically consummated), he says that their union was a true and perfect marriage, because it conduced to the education of the child Jesus.<sup>1</sup> "The upbringing of a human child requires not only the mother's care for his nourishment, but much more the care of his father as guide and guardian, under whom he progresses in goods both internal and external." Therefore fornication is a mortal sin, since human "nature rebels against an indeterminate union of the sexes, and demands that man should be united to a determinate woman, and should abide with her for a long time, or even for a whole lifetime."<sup>2</sup> The child needs both father and mother, "and a temporary partner for the mother is not a true father for the child."<sup>3</sup> By the side of this manly, common-sense statement of Aquinas how senseless and anti-social sounds the excuse for immorality suggested by Lecky: "There are always multitudes who, in the period of their lives when their passions are most strong, are incapable of supporting

<sup>1</sup> Aquinas, III, Q. 29, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., II, Q. 154, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Copec, p. 93.

children in their own social rank, and who would therefore injure society by marrying into it, but are nevertheless perfectly capable of securing an honourable career for their illegitimate children in the lower social sphere, to which they would naturally belong"<sup>1</sup>—as though the child, forsooth, had no right to his father's social advantages, but only to his mother's inferior social position!

The same Lecky, in his despairing belief in the permanent inevitability of man's immorality, called the prostitute "the eternal priestess of humanity, blasted for the sins of the people. . . . Herself the supreme type of vice, she is ultimately the most efficient guardian of virtue. But for her the unchallenged purity of countless happy homes would be polluted, and not a few who, in the pride of their untempted chastity, think of her with an indignant shudder, would have known the agony of remorse and despair."<sup>2</sup> In the name of womanhood Josephine Butler protested against this cruel way of salvation for the favoured members of her sex: "Sirs, you cannot hold us in honour and respect so long as you drag our sisters in the mire. As you are unjust and cruel to them, you will be unjust and cruel to us. . . . Even if we could admit that chivalry could exist in the same person along with the vilest selfishness, that a man

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, Vol. II, pp. 369-70.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 299, 300.

could at the same time practise debauchery and cherish an honourable love ; even then we would refuse to acquiesce in the sacrifice of one of the lowest of these women, who—say what you will to us—we hold to be our sisters ; even then we would turn away in disgust from the thought of a family life whose purity is preserved at the price of her degradation.”<sup>1</sup>

A recent woman writer, who perhaps gained a twist in her mental vision by helping her father in his studies in criminology, tries to justify injustice by the following farrago of false science and philosophy : “If in nature the woman’s part is maternity, the selection of species belongs to the man. Hence the *necessity* that in him the sensual, aesthetic, and selfish elements predominate, and this, *although causing so much moral injustice*, yet is justified from a philosophical point of view by his [selective] mission. In woman, on the contrary, reason and the devotion necessary for her maternal task are the dominant factors”<sup>2</sup>—as though, forsooth, God could only arrange for the continuance of the human race by creating cruel, selfish men and self-sacrificing women. We decline to accept this theory of man’s moral inferiority, as we firmly believe that both male and female were created in the

<sup>1</sup> Butler, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Lombroso, p. 205 (English translation). The passage apparently does not occur in the original Italian edition.

image of a good and just God ; and that men ought to, and therefore can, attain the same high moral standard as women. The theory that man is merely selective, and selfish, and sensual, is as much a libel on the Creator as the medieval theory that woman is merely seductive and a snare to man. We also believe that the re-enunciation of the doctrine of the single moral standard by Josephine Butler, in the course of her crusade against the State Regulation of Vice, has borne substantial fruit, not only in increased insistence by women on the cruel injustice of the contrary doctrine, but also in a growing determination by men to attain the high ideal of true love and fidelity, which their own consciences and the opinion of good women demand from them ; and we believe that far more men than is supposed by many people succeed in their endeavour.

How have these so-called "high-priestesses" been treated all down the ages? Even by the Greeks, who felt no sort of shame in the matter, they were never respected, or even loved, but merely used as playthings while they remained physically attractive, and then cast away as beneath contempt, when age diminished those attractions. There is a brutal callousness in the Greek poet Epicrates, telling how *Lais* has become lazy and drunken, now that the years have brought her to the end of her career, and her beauty has fallen



into ruin ; and the Roman poet, generally so genial, is wantonly cruel on the same theme :

“Thou art like to outlive the raven,  
Dying down, a spent torch, into ashes and smoke,  
The butt of each roystering youngster’s joke !”<sup>1</sup>

The modern *roué* is often quite as heartless as the old Greeks and Romans.

How, again, have they been treated by Society and Governments? In a matter in which man and woman are equally involved, one would have imagined that justice would have demanded that if any measure of repression or regulation were applied, it should be applied equally to both partners in the transaction. Indeed, if any discrimination was to be made, it should rather be against the man, since what is here “wrong in a woman is doubly so in a man, because she does with personal risk what he does with risk to another, in personal security and damnable selfishness.”<sup>2</sup> But in every country and in every age the woman concerned has been subjected to some sort of punishment, restriction, or regulation, while the man has always (with a few temporary exceptions, e.g. under the strict Puritan *régime* in England and in New England) been left wholly free ; the reason being, that Society adopted a double

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *C.* IV, 13 (translated by Theodore Martin) ; cf. *C.* I, 25, and *C.* III, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, Vol. II, p. 22.



moral standard, saying in effect :—We expect *our* wives and sisters to remain pure, but we do not expect that our husbands and brothers will or can do so ; therefore *other* people's wives or sisters must be provided to meet this unfortunate situation ; but these women must be kept within bounds, and as far as possible in the dim background, and subjected to rules and regulations, so that their status and condition may not become so favourable as to be a danger and temptation to *our* wives and sisters. All kinds of experiments have been tried, but they have always been made *in corpore vili femineo*, never *in corpore virili*. "Prostitution has in turn been patronised and prohibited, ignored and recognised, tolerated and condemned, regulated and let alone, flaunted and concealed. Christianity, the greatest moral force in the history of mankind, has repeatedly and systematically attacked it, with a scourge in one hand and balm in the other ; but the effect has been trifling or transient."<sup>1</sup> Is that not because the scourge and the balm alike have always been applied to the woman, hardly ever to the man, who has, forsooth, been thought to be undeserving of restraint and incapable of reclamation ?

The Greeks and the Romans alike had their systems of State Regulation of Vice, honestly intended, no doubt, in the first instance to keep the evil within reasonable bounds ; but

<sup>1</sup> Encyc. Brit., Vol. XXII, p. 463.

in that respect they, like other similar modern systems, were a complete failure, as both of these nations seem to have become more, and not less, profligate and licentious, down to and after the Christian era.

Christianity introduced at any rate a spark of hope to the Magdalens of the world, by teaching that they might be rescued and reclaimed. A "registered" woman in Rome was registered for life, but the later systems of registration, in theory at least, allowed the woman to escape when she desired; and a few good Christian women, all down the centuries, have earnestly tried to help their unfortunate sisters to a better and happier life. The Empress Theodora was the first to attempt the work of rescue on a large scale. "A palace, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, was converted into a stately and spacious monastery, and a liberal maintenance was assigned to five hundred women, who had been collected from the streets and brothels of Constantinople. In this safe and holy retreat they were devoted to perpetual confinement; and the despair of some, who threw themselves headlong into the sea, was lost in the gratitude of the penitents, who had been delivered from sin and misery by their generous benefactress."<sup>1</sup> There are some even to-day who favour this method of "compulsory rescue," and long confinement in so-

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, Vol. IV, p. 217.

called "Homes" for fallen women, though they hardly suggest it for fallen men ; but we believe that the new type of purely voluntary and wisely educative sympathetic Homes is the better way, and has proved itself more successful than the locked door.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Christian charity degenerated into toleration, and in the Middle Ages, in England and in many European towns, disorderly houses were not only left alone, but were even licensed by the municipal authorities, with the tacit or open consent of Bishops, who in the Renaissance fervour of admiration for Greek and Roman culture thought it well to copy also Greek and Roman methods for regulating vice, which they believed it impossible to stamp out. Attempts were even made to deal with the special diseases connected with prostitution. For instance, a weekly medical examination of the women was ordered in London in 1161, and a similar practice was adopted at Avignon during all the time that the Popes stayed there.<sup>2</sup> These medical experiments were, however, subject to much variation in different countries and at different times ; and the sanitation system was not fully established, until at the beginning of last century Napoleon definitely placed the prostitutes of France under the iron feet of the police, with full power to act arbitrarily

<sup>1</sup> Copec, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Encyc. Brit., Vol. XXII, p. 460.

and tyrannically, free from any of the usual restraints of law. The plan was followed in most Continental countries, and partially introduced into England in 1865. But Josephine Butler protested not only against the immorality and futility of the system, but also against its injustice, as an infringement of all the safeguards against tyranny contained in Magna Carta. After a fight of nearly twenty years, the Acts were swept away in England—never, we believe, to return.

In other countries the futility of the Regulation system is more and more becoming recognised. Some countries have already abandoned it ; and where it is still maintained the licensed houses are gradually dying out, and the arbitrary powers of the police affect an ever-lessening proportion of the women concerned. Abolitionists, however, will not be satisfied until the whole system is everywhere swept away, since its moral injustice is not diminished by the fact that only a few are hurt by it.

Josephine Butler was not content with opposing the unjust methods of the Regulation system, but she pointed the way to a better method of combating the spread of diseases consequent on vice. She was no mere destructive iconoclast, but a constructive politician. She recommended that the problem should be met by making full and ample provision for healing diseased persons

on a purely voluntary basis.<sup>1</sup> Her plan, however, was not adopted for nearly fifty years; but the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases in 1915 strongly condemned compulsory measures, and recommended the initiation of a State-supported, free, confidential, and voluntary system of treatment for all persons. This has been tried in England for nearly ten years with a growing measure of success. England and Holland are the only countries which are trying this plan, without any elements of compulsion whatever, and the evidence seems to show that they have attained a greater measure of success than those countries, such as the United States, most of the British Dominions, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, which include in their laws more or less ample compulsory provisions. We believe that such compulsory provisions tend to deter many persons from seeking treatment; and they are specially objectionable when, as in some cases, they include provisions for compulsory examination and compulsory detention—which in practice are only applied to women, or to a few men of the vagrant or criminal classes.

In one direction there still remains in this country some legal injustice, based on the Double Moral Standard, namely, in the laws relating to solicitation for the purpose of prostitution. Prostitution is not made an offence

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, p. 97.



and we believe it to be impracticable and undesirable that this should be done. The State should not concern itself with the private conduct of its adult citizens. Even solicitation in the streets is not made an offence in itself, but only if it causes annoyance "to the residents or passengers," and then only if the person soliciting is a "common prostitute." In practice, however, the annoyance is generally proved on the evidence of the police only. The result is that every year thousands of women have been fined or imprisoned, while very few men are fined (under a provision dealing with "insulting words or behaviour"), although in fact solicitation is probably practised by men as much as, if not more than, by women<sup>1</sup>; and although in many, if not in most cases, women only solicit men who are on the look-out for being solicited and who are accordingly not annoyed. It has therefore been proposed that the whole of the existing laws on the subject should be swept away, and replaced by a law providing that any person who in any street or public place annoys any person by words or behaviour shall be liable to a penalty, but that the offender should not be subject to arrest except on the complaint of the aggrieved party. This would cover all the cases aimed at by the existing law, and would be nominally and actually applicable equally to all persons and

<sup>1</sup> Waddy, pp. 183-6.



to both sexes ; and the only positive change introduced into the law would be the explicit provision (which is really implied in the present law, but is often not acted upon) that action should only be taken on the initiative of the person annoyed. It would prevent the police acting in cases of trivial or no annoyance, and would relieve them from the unfair and invidious position, in which they are now placed, of having to decide when they should take apparent offenders into custody.<sup>1</sup>

Every attempt to regulate vice, or to suppress it by forcible means, or to reduce the supply by rescuing some of the women concerned in it, has so far failed. The time seems to have come to try the Christian method of cutting off the demand, by appealing to the manhood of men to control their passions. Such an appeal can "be based on their sense of justice and fairness, to women, to society, and to themselves ; on their recognition of the consequences of sin to others, rather than to themselves ; and on their powers, hitherto largely unsuspected, of self-mastery."<sup>2</sup> In this way we may confidently hope that progress, even if slowly, will surely be made towards the realisation of one moral standard, and a truer comradeship between men and women.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson (State), pp. 29-36.

<sup>2</sup> Copec, p. 120.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

There is a memorable usage in some parts of England, where the manufactories are most considerable, as to the provision made by them for the poor of each parish, in the management whereof they make this distinction : That where a poor man has many children he is not allowed to be in the Poor's Book, because they conclude that the children are by their work able to maintain the father, contrary to the practice of most places, where they consider the parents the more for their numerous family. And that shews the defect of not allowing all hands to employment ; for where that course is taken, there we see children no charge, as in the case before us, for there they keep them *from five years of age* in some employment or other, which the Church wardens take care to see done in their respective parishes.

*P.Q.*, p. 39.

WHAT a change was wrought in public opinion between 1690, when the above words were written, and 1919, when the International Labour Charter included among its principles : "The abolition of child-labour, and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education, and assure their proper physical development."<sup>1</sup> Women did not originate social reforms on behalf of children, the beginnings of which were due to the com-

<sup>1</sup> Peace Treaty, Art. 427.

bined efforts of humane men of all parties ; but the women's movement has played its part in quickening, and in some cases giving new direction to, the working of the social conscience, as may be gathered from the account of legislation passed in countries where woman suffrage prevails, given in *Le Suffrage des femmes en pratique*.<sup>1</sup> The rights of children are closely bound up with the rights of women, and their full recognition has needed the play alike of the paternal and the maternal instincts. It was Elizabeth Barrett Browning who put into burning verse the poignant *Cry of the Children* :

Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,  
And your purple shows your path !  
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper  
Than the strong man in his wrath.

But it was the not less burning prose of Charles Dickens, with his tender pity for children, that more than any other influence roused the English conscience to recognise that children had rights as well as duties.

Down to the middle of last century parents were allowed to exploit, and employers to enjoy, the cheap labour of children of the tenderest age, in factories, mines, chimney sweeping, and other trades. It was considered wrong to interfere with the sacred rights of " free labour " ; the rights of " soul-

<sup>1</sup> Suffrage, pp. 2 ff., 10 ff., 72 ff.

murder and infanticide on the part of the rich, and self-slaughter on that of the poor.”<sup>1</sup> But the efforts of Ashley (Lord Shaftesbury) and of a few humane manufacturers produced the Factory Act of 1844, which prohibited the employment of children under eight, and only allowed children between eight and thirteen to work half-time, receiving meanwhile some education. The half-time age was raised to ten in 1874, eleven in 1891, twelve in 1901, and fourteen in 1921, by the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act, 1920, and the Education Act, 1921. These last Acts will mean the gradual removal from the labour market of seventy-two thousand children, that being the number of boys and girls under fourteen who, according to the 1921 Census returns, were wage earners in that year. The last Education Act, while definitely raising the age for full-time education to fourteen, sets forth the ideal of full-time education up to fifteen and part-time education to eighteen years of age. But the realisation of this ideal is left to the indefinite future, and will depend on the strenuous efforts of all men and women of good-will, who will need to strain their hardest to overcome the after-war slackness and disillusionment, if we are ever to recover and to vivify the Armistice dreams of a millennium.

As part compensation for the loss of chil-

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, quoted by Hutchins (*Hist.*), p. 29.

dren's wages the Education Acts provide for free education, and free meals for school children in necessitous cases. The question is sometimes raised whether this legislation has not tended to lessen parental responsibility, with the consequent break-up of family life and destruction of family love ; but can anyone point to any evidence that this has taken place ? Has not the general tendency turned out to be all in the contrary direction ? Good parents, who after all are the great majority, have rejoiced to see their children getting a chance of self-development, and some hope of a more secure livelihood than some of the parents themselves have ever had. There is more opportunity for family life, with its joys and its responsibilities, when children attend day schools for six hours a day, than in the days when they worked for twelve hours or more in factories and workshops. The very moderate economic assistance given by the State during the education period is not enough to relieve parents from all the cost of their children's maintenance, but rather acts as a challenge to them to do their share, and as a reminder that they are not acting alone in the difficult task of bringing up their children, but with the sympathetic help of their fellow-citizens.

Co-operation does not destroy the sense of personal responsibility. It is only the few bad parents, who would still wish to exploit their



boys and girls as bread earners for the family, who may be encouraged by the new system to neglect their responsibilities ; but they would be shirkers in any case, and surely it is right to try to save the children of such parents from soul-murder. These remarks may seem to many readers rather platitudinous, but they have been provoked by the fact that the " parental responsibility " argument has been advanced by critics of recent proposals for Family Endowment, as though that argument were a sufficient answer to such proposals, which need not therefore be further examined, but must be utterly condemned.

The advocates of Family Endowment point out that wages never have been, and under present economic arrangements apparently never can be, sufficient for the maintenance of a family of more than two, or at the outside three children ; and as no one is bold enough to propose, or indeed believes that it would be desirable or practicable to propose, a compulsory limitation of families, they demand that something should be done to meet the rights of surplus children, for whom the State as well as the parents have a responsibility, to something better than semi-starvation ; and that in some way the whole resources of the community must be pooled for the purpose.

Three ways of meeting the difficulty have been suggested, and other ways may yet be devised. First, it could be met by a national



system of Child Endowment ; secondly, by an extension of the system of Compulsory Contributory Insurance ; and thirdly, by a system of paying the allowances of dependent children of wage earners out of a pool or fund formed by contributions from employers. The first plan is supported by Mrs. Sidney Webb, who says : To place the funds necessary for children's maintenance on employers "would have various economic drawbacks, and would probably be resented by organised labour no less than by the employers. It would, I think, be better for the Children's Fund—the bairns' part in the National Income—to be provided . . . by taxation, like any other obligation of the community."<sup>1</sup> The gross cost of such a scheme might be £200,000,000 a year, which appears to timid persons an unthinkable amount for the nation to spend for such a purpose ; but Christian enthusiasts might suggest that even this expenditure could be faced, if only the nation had courage and faith enough to reduce their huge expenditure on the Fighting Forces, and temperance enough to cut down their Drink Bill. The second scheme would mean that the State, the employer, and the worker would each contribute to a central Children's Fund, as is now done in the case of the Unemployment and Sickness Funds. The third scheme in various forms has actually been

<sup>1</sup> Webb, p. 307.

tried since the war in Austria, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland, and has spread with amazing rapidity. It is too soon to prophesy which of these plans, or any modification or combination of them, is likely to be adopted in this country; but one may feel confident that all social reformers, especially women, will more and more seek to probe the problem and to find the solution which will be best suited to the peculiar psychology and the special circumstances of the British nation.<sup>1</sup>

There are three directions in which the women's movement has made new claims upon society, on behalf of womanhood, and in recognition of the rights of children. First, as regards assistance to needy mothers at the time of childbirth. Three forms of maternity benefit are now in use in different countries. New Zealand has a system under a voluntary organisation, worked through a Government office, of providing the mother, both before and after confinement, with skilled nurses, medical attendance, and helpful advice (for all of which she pays if she is able), but with no money grants. In Australia the Commonwealth Government makes a grant of £5 for

<sup>1</sup> The facts and arguments are fully set forth by Miss Eleanor Rathbone in *The Disinherited Family*, and briefly in her pamphlet *Wages plus Family Allowances* (obtainable from the Family Endowment Council, 50 Romney Street, Westminster).

each case of childbirth. In Germany, England, and many other European countries the maternity aid is given in connection with the National Health Insurance schemes, to which workers, employers, and the State contribute. "One of the most humane features of these maternity systems is the treatment of the unmarried mother. In New Zealand only is she (wholly) excluded from the aid; in Great Britain she is not allowed to receive the *supplementary* benefit which is granted to married women."<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere she is treated in the same way as married mothers.

Next came the twofold claim, first on behalf of illegitimate children, that they should as far as possible be relieved from the unjust punishments formerly inflicted on them for the sins of their parents, and then on behalf of legitimate children, that they should have the benefit of the equal guardianship of both parents. The two problems at first sight appear distinct, but the logical legislators of Scandinavia have thought fit to deal with them simultaneously, as they both depend on the right of children to be cared for by both their parents. The propagation of new principles of family life has owed much to Scandinavian writers, such as Jacobine Camilla Collett, Ibsen, Björnson, and Ellen Key; and Scandinavia has produced the completest codes of law dealing with the family. Camilla

<sup>1</sup> U.S.C.B. (No. 57), pp. 11 ff., 13.

Collett, who was at once conservative and radical in her views, was the first woman in Norway to break the spell of silence imposed by the Church on the discussion of woman's questions, and was the most zealous and energetic champion of women's emancipation in the whole north. Her novels *The Magistrates' Daughters* (1855) and *From the Camp of the Mute* (1877) are said to have made a great impression on Ibsen.<sup>1</sup> Ibsen, in *Nora* and other plays, taught that the object of a true marriage is to make each human personality free. Björnson, in his play *A Gauntlet*, proclaimed the (then) startling doctrine of the equal moral standard. Ellen Key, in *Love and Marriage*, gave definiteness to these general principles, and prophesied that "when the law gives to every mother the rights, which now only the unmarried mother possesses, but imposes at the same time on every father the obligations, which now only the married have, then it may be that the child will become a new and more valuable possession in the eyes of man."<sup>2</sup> This book bore fruit in Germany, being largely responsible for the foundation at Leipsic in 1904 of the *Bund für Mütterschutz*, or League for the Protection of Mothers, which League not only induced the German Government

<sup>1</sup> Anthony, p. 239. The last-named novel has been translated into French and German, not into English.

<sup>2</sup> Key, p. 334.

to grant maternity benefits to unmarried mothers, but also, when war broke out, to place illegitimate children on the same footing as legitimate children, as regards the receipt of allowances, while the soldier-father lived, and also at his death.<sup>1</sup> France, England, and other countries generally followed the example of Germany in both these respects.<sup>2</sup> France had, a year before the War, repealed the section of the Napoleonic Code which prohibited enquiry into the paternity of illegitimate children.

Proposals are now before the British Parliament for giving full equal guardianship to mothers and fathers, for improving the position of the unmarried mother and her children, and for legitimising such children on the subsequent marriage of the parents. These questions are exhaustively dealt with in the family legislation of Norway, embodied in six laws passed by that country in 1915. A translation of these laws has been published in America, with an explanatory memorandum,<sup>3</sup> in that most useful series of pamphlets issued by the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labour. The same series includes a larger pamphlet, comparing the laws in other countries on the subject of illegitimacy<sup>4</sup>; and another pamphlet dealing with the question as a child-welfare

<sup>1</sup> Anthony, pp. 9, and 133 ff.      <sup>2</sup> U.S.C.B. (No. 31).

<sup>3</sup> U.S.C.B. (No. 42), p. 249 ff.      <sup>4</sup> U.S.C.B. (No. 42).



problem, from which we quote the following suggestive remarks :

"Society is forced to bear a burden that properly belongs to the child's parents. Sentiment has ruled largely in the treatment of these cases, often with the result that the emphasis has been placed upon saving the mother from the social consequences, especially if her status or that of her family is likely to be affected. Most often there has been little recognition of the importance of the father as a factor, and of his liability for the support of the child. With the growing concern of social agencies to render permanent help and to deal in a larger way with this whole problem, it is now being considered from a new angle, *with the child as the central factor*. Of increasing interest is the question as to whether, in being separated from the mother, the child is not deprived of something that society cannot replace, even with the best care it can provide, and whether this most important consideration may not outweigh all others."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S.C.B. (No. 66), p. 56.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### MARRIAGE

With women, love usually proceeds from the soul to the senses, and sometimes does not reach so far ; with man, it usually proceeds from the senses to the soul, and sometimes never completes the journey.

ELLEN KEY, pp. 98, 99.

Le divorce est essentiellement contraire à l'idéal du mariage ; mais pour le repousser par cette raison, il faut d'abord que le mariage lui-même ne soit pas contraire à son idéal.

E. LEGOUVÉ, p. 246.

THE inspired poet who wrote the parable contained in the second chapter of Genesis bases his conception of a true marriage on the fact that "it is not good for man to be alone," and so God made for him "a helper like unto him."<sup>1</sup> A seventeenth-century writer put it quaintly when he wrote of the creation of woman from a man's rib : "She was taken from his side, not only to give ease and rest to him, but also to give dignity and honour unto her. For, as it hath been observed, as she was not made of his head, to sit above and rule him, so she was not made of his feet, to be despised and trodden under him ; but from

<sup>1</sup> Such is the nearest equivalent of the Hebrew, and so is it rendered in the Septuagint version of Gen. ii. 20.

his side, to be equal with him ; so that though he be her head, she is not his feet, but may go side by side with him. . . . And it must needs be so, for else she could not be an equal help for her husband ”<sup>1</sup> ; nor, we may add, could he be an equal help for her.

According to this view, the chief emphasis of marriage is not laid on the physical act of bringing children into the world, but on the spiritual principle of comradeship, upon mutual help to one another ; and so no marriage is complete unless the partners are drawn together by psychical as well as physical attractions. Otherwise one cannot be sure that God has joined them together. A marriage is not necessarily a God-made marriage, merely because it has been solemnised in a church. Even Catholics allow for the nullification of such a marriage in certain cases. For instance, “in the ideas of the Church, incapacity for marriage of one party freed the other from the duty of fidelity ” ; and modernists make bold to say that “in the more spiritual view of the future it will be equally evident that the same right exists to dissolve a marriage which has remained unconsummated in a spiritual sense.”<sup>2</sup> This is briefly, and essentially, the feminist theory of marriage, though the different exponents of feminism may express it in different ways, and may draw varying conclusions (especially as regards divorce), as

<sup>1</sup> Austin, pp. 43-4.

<sup>2</sup> Key, p. 321.

they attempt to translate it into practical politics.

Many good people, while inclined in the main to admit feminist arguments, fear that the emancipation of women may lead, and to some extent has actually led, to the weakening of the marriage tie. It is true that some feminist writers seem to argue that free love is preferable to marriage, as it often exists at present ; and at least one of the early feminists, George Sand (if indeed she can properly be called a feminist), openly and unashamedly practised free love. It is usually an odious practice to pry into the private and sacred intimacies of great men and women (such as the Carlyles and the Brownings) ; but George Sand deliberately published her love-affairs,<sup>1</sup> and therefore one is justified in referring to them. The fairest judgment that can be passed seems to be, that she began her experiments in so-called romantic love because she had had a bad husband, and that all the experiments turned out to be, for her, miserable failures. In De Musset's relations with George Sand, his was "the love which claims the faithfulness of the loved one, but reserves the right of being unfaithful to her," and the catastrophe which befell these "two chosen champions, such as it would not be easy to bring a second time together . . . appears to be the catastrophe awaiting that mode of con-

<sup>1</sup> Doumic, p. 131.

ceiving love."<sup>1</sup> In these cases the woman almost always suffers in the end, and the man not at all, or hardly at all.

In recent years a certain number of emancipated young women, but relatively a very small number, unmindful or ignorant of the unhappy fate of women like George Sand, in a spirit of reckless adventure, interpret the principle of the single moral standard in the sense that women are entitled to adopt the same low standard which so many men have followed ; but this laxity, which is so often bemoaned and exaggerated in press and pulpit, cannot fairly be attributed to the feminist movement, but seems rather to be a temporary outburst, largely due to the unsettling effects of the War. Moreover, those who have any knowledge of history and literature would be very bold to say that the morality of women to-day is generally lower than that of the women of England, Germany, France, or Italy two or three hundred years ago. Viewed over long periods of time, morality is seen steadily to press forward, though now and again there may be temporary set-backs :

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.<sup>2</sup>

In order that ideal marriages may become more common in future—and it is not sug-

<sup>1</sup> Croce, pp. 252, 254.

<sup>2</sup> Clough, p. 453.

gested that there are not very many such already—it needs must be that they should not be made for convenience, or as a means of livelihood for the woman ; that they should not be arranged by parents, as formerly in France and sometimes in England, between young men and women who have had little previous knowledge of one another ; and that they should not be the result of sudden passion, which is often mistaken for love. “ Marriage based on sexual attraction alone is a very risky thing ; with sexual attraction must be combined real friendship, based on knowledge and appreciation of the actual qualities of the friend.”<sup>1</sup> As Elizabeth Montagu wrote many years ago, “ a long and intimate acquaintance is the best presage of future agreement.”<sup>2</sup> The true relation between the sexes, even before marriage, or when marriage is never contemplated, is one of comradeship ; and it is surely a good thing that such comradeship has of late years become more general, both at work and at play, in colleges and in sport. It adds new interest and colour to workaday life, by bringing into play the element of sex-charm—a quite different thing, be it noted, from mere sexual charm—which seems to spring from the different psychological endowments of men and women ; for one instinctively feels that

<sup>1</sup> Copec, p. 23 ; cf. Drummond, p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> E. Montagu, Vol. I, p. 110.



there are subtle differences, though one can never capture and classify them. There may be some risks involved in these frank and full friendships ; some "tragedies may happen. But are these so sad as the daily occurrences in a society that condones prostitution ?" <sup>1</sup>

Women will no longer submit to the old measures which were adopted to protect their innocence ; they demand to be free to work out their own salvation, with all the risks involved in that adventure.

When marriage follows comradeship, it is more likely to continue in true and lasting comradeship, and any desire to dissolve partnership will become more rare. But as long as human nature lasts, mistakes will be made, and there will be some unhappy marriages ; and the problem remains : in what cases should the Church and the State provide for the separation of married persons or for the absolute dissolution of their marriage ? The Roman Catholic Church lays down the dogma that marriage is by God's decree indissoluble, and it does not therefore allow divorce ; but it allows marriages to be nullified in certain cases, with permission to remarry, and it also sanctions in certain other cases the separation of married persons, but without permission to remarry. The State, on the other hand, usually allows divorce

<sup>1</sup> Copec, pp. 20, 25.



where either party has been guilty of such offences as adultery, cruelty, or desertion, with permission to remarry: following in this respect the view, that has generally prevailed since the Reformation outside the Roman Catholic Church, that it is more "moral" for the individuals concerned, and on the whole better for society, that divorced persons should be permitted to remarry. Some feminists take the Catholic view on divorce, others the non-Catholic; but all feminists insist that the grounds for separation or for divorce should be the same for the husband as for the wife; and on this point of equal treatment Catholic principles and sentiment are on their side.

It has long been the law in Scotland that infidelity on the part of either husband or wife is a sufficient ground for divorce. France passed a law to the same effect in 1884, repealing the old provision of the Code Napoléon, that the husband's infidelity was not a ground for divorce, unless he brought his mistress to his wife's home. Most other countries had to wait for this recognition of moral equality until women were able to enforce their demand with the power of the vote behind them; and England only granted it in 1923, nearly forty years after it was given by anti-feminist France!

It is possible for a husband and wife, if they are not too scrupulous, under the existing English divorce law, to secure a judicial separa-

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tion by arranging between themselves a fictitious case of "desertion." Some have even gone further and have put themselves in a position to be (untruly) charged with adultery and by this means have obtained divorce by mutual consent. The Scandinavian countries have been bold enough to legislate for this to be done openly, thus putting all on the same footing, honest and dishonest, rich and poor alike, and removing temptations to fraud and perjury in matrimonial causes.

Under the marriage law of Norway divorce is usually preceded by judicial separation, which is granted by the magistrate, if both parties desire it, without their being required to assign any special reason, proper provision being made for the custody and maintenance of the children. A decree of divorce is granted by the Minister of Justice when one year has elapsed after the decree of separation, provided both parties are then agreed in claiming divorce; but if only one party still wishes for divorce, the requisite interval is extended to two years. Provision is made for attempted conciliation between husband and wife before separation is granted, but such attempts are said to be not usually successful. On the other hand, it frequently happens that, after having been separated for a time, husbands and wives become reconciled and abandon their intention of being divorced.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Castberg, pp. 367-8.

This was what Ibsen evidently foreshadowed, at the end of *Nora*, would be the sequel of the separation of husband and wife in that play. The procedure in Norway is very similar to the Talmudic practice described above (in Chap. II) ; and as in that case, so in Norway, it does not seem to have led to any great increase in the number of divorces, which are still proportionately fewer in Norway than in most other countries.

Many persons, including feminists, will on religious grounds be unable to approve this liberal extension of matrimonial legislation. But it is only fair to recognise that the more thoughtful advocates of such legislation support it in the genuine belief that it will elevate and not lower the marriage ideal. The fact that a divorce is possible often prevents its being asked for, "not only because it puts married couples on their good behaviour towards one another, but because, as no room feels like a prison if the door is left open, the removal of the sense of bondage" tends to make marriage much happier.<sup>1</sup>

Freedom of divorce in fact does not necessarily mean a lowering of the marriage ideal, but rather a help towards its realisation. "Marriage has such sure allies in man's psycho-physical conditions of life that one need not be afraid of freedom of divorce becoming equivalent to polygamy. What this

<sup>1</sup> Shaw, p. 170.

freedom would demolish is only lifelong slavery." Again, "Love is still such—men, women, and the people around them are still such—that one would rather wish a tied man or woman, strength to endure marriage than to break it, at least if they have children, who must share with them the unknown fortunes of their love."

<sup>1</sup> Key, pp. 311, 354.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE WAR-WON FRANCHISE

Why should an eagle strive to soar  
With one wing only ?

ANON.

THERE is a psychical and historical connection between negro slavery and the subjection of women. Although no one would say that the hardships suffered by white women could fairly be compared with the horrors of slavery, it will never be forgotten that the cruellest of those horrors centred round the woman slave. The arguments for emancipation in each case were similar ; and both systems were defended by a similar appeal to the infallibility of selected texts torn from the Scriptures, literally interpreted without regard to the progress of spiritual ideas revealed in the Books which make up the Old and New Testaments. The same St. Paul wrote, "Slaves, obey your masters," and "Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands." These simple sayings were good enough for the defenders of slavery and for the anti-feminists.

It was very largely the same group of women who first agitated for the abolition of slavery in the United States, and who afterwards started the woman's suffrage movement

in that country, and this came about because of something which happened at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention held in London in 1840. To this Convention delegates were invited from all countries, but the conveners forgot to say that in their view the word "delegate" was of the masculine gender. There were a number of women among the delegates sent from America, who, after travelling three thousand miles to attend a World's Convention, were surprised to discover that "women formed no part of the constituent elements of the moral world." The conveners explained at the opening of the Convention that it never occurred to them that they were inviting ladies, and that it was quite contrary to English sentiment for "ladies" to appear in any such public capacity; and after a long debate, the rejection of the women delegates was carried by an overwhelming majority. They were, however, graciously permitted to remain in the gallery as silent listeners, and there they were joined by William Lloyd Garrison, who as a protest against their exclusion refused to take any part in the Convention. Their eyes being thus opened to the contemptible and contemptuous attitude of the dominant male sex, these women on their return to America at once took steps to establish Women's Rights Associations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F Stanton, Vol. I, pp. 53 ff.; Bruce, p. 158.



Then began the friendly race for the Suffrage Cup, between the women of the British Empire and the women of America, which lasted nearly eighty years, and ended in nearly a dead-heat, Great Britain reaching the goal (at least a truncated goal) in 1918, and the United States in 1920; the first lap having been won by Wyoming in 1869, and the second by New Zealand and Colorado in 1893.

On the occasion of the Woman's Rights Convention at Worcester, U.S.A., in 1851, Harriet Martineau sent a letter, in which she referred to Harriet Taylor's *Westminster Review* article of July 1851 (then supposed to have been written by J. S. Mill), and in which she struck the high note that what women claimed was Office (or responsibility), instead of the Influence (behind the scenes) which they had hitherto exercised in politics, which was neither good for them nor for men<sup>1</sup>—that poisonous subterranean influence which the women of the eighteenth century exercised over politics in France.<sup>2</sup>

In that same year was founded the Sheffield Female Political Society, the first women's suffrage society in England, and a petition of women from its first public meeting, on February 13, 1851, claiming the franchise, was sent to the House of Lords, and presented

<sup>1</sup> E. Stanton, Vol. I, pp. 229 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Goncourt, pp. 100 ff.

by the Earl of Carlisle. In those early days no woman in England dared or was allowed to appear on a public platform. Among the first meetings ever addressed by women were suffrage meetings in Manchester and Birmingham in 1868 ; and in London in 1869, when Mrs. Peter Taylor was in the chair, and Mrs. Fawcett made her first speech. This led to a member of Parliament referring to "two ladies, wives of members of this House, who had disgraced themselves," and adding that he "would not further disgrace them by mentioning their names."<sup>1</sup> Dame Millicent Fawcett managed to live down this "disgrace," and to go on speaking for fifty years before the suffrage was at last won. The persistent permeation of public opinion by the constitutional suffragists, who included practically all the leading women in the professions and in educational and social work, with the sympathetic support of many men distinguished in politics, literature, and science, resulted before the end of last century in a Woman's Suffrage Bill passing a Second Reading in the House of Commons three times (in 1870, 1886, and 1897), but no further progress was made with any of those Bills. During the same period the House twelve times rejected Bills, or amendments to Bills, in favour of woman's suffrage. Members showed a "disconcerting levity" in breaking

<sup>1</sup> Stanton, p. 10 ; Fawcett, pp. 87-8.

their pledges when convenient. For instance in 1884, when a woman's amendment to the Reform Bill was under discussion, Mr. Gladstone said: "The cargo which the vessel carries is, in our opinion, a cargo as large as she can safely carry." This provided a convenient excuse to 104 members, who had formerly supported women, to vote against their enfranchisement. "The women were thrown overboard, and the cargo of new male voters brought safely into port."<sup>1</sup>

At last, and not unnaturally, the long-suffering patience of women gave way, and in 1903 the Women's Social and Political Union was founded, in order by more striking and sensational methods to put the fear of women into the hearts of politicians, and to compel them to give what reason and conscience already told them ought to be given. Then followed the stormy ten years of the militant suffragists, marked and marred by the two features which always attend war—marvellous unreasoning discipline and extraordinary heroism on the part of the women, and mad savagery<sup>2</sup> on the part of the men. It is only fair to remember that during the first five years of their existence the militants, although they suffered extraordinary acts of physical violence, practised no violence. "At the outset they adopted the strictly orthodox and time-honoured practice of asking questions

<sup>1</sup> Suffrage, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Fawcett, p. 176.

of Ministers at public meetings"<sup>1</sup>; or they interrupted speakers by calling out "Votes for women." On one occasion in Queen's Hall such an interruption in so gentle a voice that the speaker (Mr. Lloyd George) could easily have gone on with his speech, was followed by a perfect pandemonium of stentorian shouts, "Turn her out." The noise and tumult reminded one first of the lion-house at the Zoo just before feeding-time; and then of the theatre at Ephesus, where a terrible noise was caused by certain men who feared that their craft was in danger of being set at naught. One felt that these men in Queen's Hall were afraid that male domination was in danger. Another more serious incident is thus described by an eye-witness: "Suffragettes were being carried by main force out of an Albert Hall meeting; a girl was violently struggling, but powerless in the clutches of four men, two to her shoulders and two to her feet, and while in this defenceless position was violently smitten on the face by enraged male members of the Liberal party, both fists and umbrellas being used in this cowardly assault."<sup>2</sup>

A few years before this Mr. Lloyd George's life had been endangered by a brick dropped from the roof, when he was speaking at a Birmingham meeting; and Mr. Balfour had excused this "natural and spontaneous" de-

<sup>1</sup> Fawcett, pp. 176, 181.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

monstration and said that the promoters of such (pro-Boer) meetings should be "careful lest they asked more of human nature than, after all, history shows that human nature is capable of giving."<sup>1</sup> So perhaps it was only human nature that women who suffered from cruel acts of violence should retaliate, as they did in the second half of the militant struggle. But again be it remembered in their favour that their outbreaks—foolish and regrettable as they seemed to many of us—never endangered human life, and rarely, if ever, caused any serious bodily injury, though they themselves joyfully risked their lives in the cause.

Many persons felt, as a suffragist M.P. said, that "the very mistaken tactics, which we so greatly deplore, had deeply injured the cause which we have at heart," but it was nearer the truth to say, as a voice in the audience said in reply to that M.P., "they've rose the country, sir."<sup>2</sup> This uprising of the country's conscience came not only from the conspicuous and irregular acts of the militants, and the way in which those acts were met by their opponents and by the Government; but also from the clear logic and eloquence of some of the leading speakers of the W.S.P.U., and the calm courage of the rank and file, from those who suffered imprisonment to those who merely sold papers on the pavement or in the gutter. But no one will ever know

<sup>1</sup> Spender, Vol. I, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Fawcett, p. 185.



how soon victory would have come in this warfare had not a more grim and terrible war intervened.

When the Great War came, domestic strife came to a full stop ; and all suffragists, constitutional and militant alike, turned to the work that women have borne in all ages in war-time, that of providing comforts and healing for the soldiers ; only they did it more efficiently than in any former war, since owing to their emancipation and better education, and a consequent higher sense of responsibility, they were able to show more energy and more skill than women of earlier days. Other women were willing to take the posts left vacant by the absent men ; and, saddest of all, they took a more direct part in the awful work of killing, by crowding into munition factories—for the first time in the world's history. In the next war they will probably have actually to fight and kill, like the Amazons of old. Will this prospect help to bring about what we all desire, that there never shall be a next war ?

The part played by women in the War, and the more ghastly part they might have to play in future wars, destroyed the basic argument for resisting woman's suffrage, namely, that women were not entitled to vote because they could not fight or share in the horrors of war ; and so, even before the Armistice, Parliament in 1918 agreed to give votes to



women—at least to women over thirty. Women of course cannot and will not remain content with this partial concession, but they demand to have the vote on the same terms as men, as is generally the case in the other enfranchised countries.

Before the War woman suffrage was in force only in some States of America, New Zealand, Australia, Finland, and Norway. To this list have now been added Denmark, Holland, Iceland, and Sweden ; and also, as a direct or indirect consequence of the War, the following old and new countries : Russia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Austria, Luxemburg, Czechoslovakia, the United States, Canada, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, parts of India, and some of the Colonies. In several countries a number of women have already been elected members of Parliament and have begun to influence legislation. It is of course impossible yet to judge the general trend of such influence, if indeed there will ever be any “ general ” trend. Women do not all fall into one party, any more than men—not even into a feminist party. Women have not asked for the suffrage in order that they might dominate men and get their own way, but in order that they might have an opportunity of working with men for the progress of humanity.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE LAST BARRIER

It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, . . . and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit ; and they shall prophesy.

JOEL ii. 28-9 ; ACTS ii. 17-18.

“Is it possible,” wrote Josephine Butler, “that the Church has ever fully believed this, has ever truly heard or understood this mighty utterance from heaven, recorded first in the Hebrew Scripture, and again at the great inauguration of the Dispensation under which we are now living, a Dispensation of Liberty, Life, Impartiality, Equality, and Justice, in which there is, or should be, neither male nor female ? ”<sup>1</sup> The Church, whether speaking from Rome or from Lambeth, which boasts that it builds upon the Scriptures, and never builds anything contrary to the Scriptures, even in these last days, when all other barriers have been thrown down, obstinately defends this last barrier of the priesthood against the entry of women.

There were prophetesses in the early Christian Church, such as the four daughters

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, p. 237.

of Philip, and Ammia of Philadelphia (c. 100).<sup>1</sup> In the second century the Montanists carried forward the tradition that women, as well as men, could speak as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Their chief prophetesses were Maximilla and Priscilla, who were so famous that three Bishops tried—in vain—to confound them. Maximilla said they were trying to drive her away from the sheep, as though she were a wolf, but “I am not a wolf, I am word and spirit and power”; and the sheep sided with her and helped to silence the Bishops.<sup>2</sup> These “forward heretical women,” as Tertullian called them in his pre-Montanist days, seem to have taken part in public worship, preaching and even baptizing, whereas he laid down that women should not preach, nor administer the sacraments, nor exercise any priestly function.<sup>3</sup> When he became a Montanist, he admitted that women could receive revelations, but held that these should only be related privately to the Church members after the congregation was dismissed, so that they could be properly examined and tested.<sup>4</sup>

For some centuries, however, after Tertullian's days some women in the orthodox Catholic Church were ordained to the diaconate, and even took part in the administration

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, chap. xvii, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., chaps. xvi, xviii, pp. 185, 188-190; and Harnack in *Encyc. Brit.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 758.

<sup>3</sup> De Soyres, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

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of the sacraments, as appears from the Canons of several of the Councils. For instance, the Council of Orleans (538), while recognising deaconesses who were already ordained, decreed that women should in future be excluded from the diaconate on account of the frailty of the female sex; the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle (818) laid down that abbesses should not take upon themselves any priestly function; and the Council of Paris (824) complained that women were found serving at the altar, and even giving to the people the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Again, in 1210 Innocent III severely blamed the abbesses of Burgos and Palencia who blessed their religious, heard the confession of their sins, and when reading the Gospel presumed publicly to preach,<sup>1</sup> and sternly prohibited the continuance of such practices, because "although the most blessed V.M. was worthier and more excellent than all the Apostles, yet the Lord committed to them, and not to her, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

So the diaconate of women gradually died out, and the loyal daughters of the Church accepted their inferior status, though one is tempted to believe that some of them secretly chafed at their subordination. In reading the *Letters* of St. Theresa, one feels that

<sup>1</sup> Guizot, Vol. II, pp. 460, 487, 488; Ministry, pp. 121 ff.; Corpus, Part II, pp. 886-7.

that woman of saintly common sense must often have thought that she was fully capable of directing her spiritual director.

After the Reformation voices began to be heard, claiming that women were fit to be ministers in the Church. This was of course not the view of all Reformers, and the stern John Knox, in his *Monstrous Regiment of Women*, strongly insisted on the supposed Pauline doctrine that women should never speak in the Church. But John Aylmer, afterwards Bishop of London, made a vigorous reply (1559) to the blast blown by John Knox, in which he pointed out that St. Paul's words had reference to ordinary women, who were insufficiently educated to be good preachers, and not to women who were exceptionally gifted. Moreover, "what more vehemency useth Paul in the forbidding of women to preach, than in forbidding them to uncover their heads. He sayeth of the one that it is evil-favoured, and of the other that it is against nature. And yet you know, that in the best reformed Churches of all Germany, all the maids be bareheaded, which the preachers and learned men make no great account of. This I say, not that I allow either (for I assure you I do not), but that we should not in such points grate upon the words too sore, as though in no respect a woman may open her mouth to edify."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aylmer, H. 2.



Margaret Fell, afterwards the wife of George Fox, whom she so splendidly helped with her spiritual insight and administrative ability, wrote a little tract (1667), *Women's Speaking*, in which she pointed out that St. Paul clearly allowed women to pray and prophesy (1 Cor. xi. 5), and explained that his injunction as to women being silent only related to a disorderly Church, where people were constantly interrupting the speaker. "The man is commanded to keep silence, as well as the woman, when they are in confusion and out of order."<sup>1</sup>

From 1556 to the present day there has been an almost unbroken line, in one or another of the reformed sects, of women specially set apart for the work of the Church, whether as widows, or deaconesses, or ministers. The first woman preacher seems to have been appointed by the Baptists in 1613, and she was followed by a few others among the Baptists and Independents, one of them being Elizabeth Hootten, one of Fox's first converts, who became a noted Quaker preacher.<sup>2</sup> She and other women preachers had much to do with the phenomenal spread of early Quakerism; and as the number of such women afterwards declined, the membership of the Society also declined.

Later came the Wesleyan revival, which "once again lit up the prophetic fires in the

<sup>1</sup> Fell, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Braithwaite, pp. 12, 44.



hearts of women as well as men"<sup>1</sup>; but the Wesley brothers soon threw cold water on their women preachers, who almost ceased to exist for some time. Other Methodist bodies were more tolerant to the ministry of women, and from one of these bodies came Catherine Mumford, who became the wife of the founder of the Salvation Army. Thus "the torch of women's ministry, even among the Free Churches, has often burned very low, but never without kindling another flame to take its place. A Baptist preacher became the first of Fox's women disciples; these Quaker pioneers in their turn influenced the early Methodist women; and as these grew silent there sprang from their ranks the greatest woman preacher of last century. Under the leadership of Catherine Booth the songs and preaching of the Hallelujah Lassies have encircled the whole earth."<sup>2</sup>

Nearly all the Free Churches in England admit the theory that women are not debarred by sex from eligibility for the ministry, but they are slow to adopt it in practice. The different Methodist bodies have many women local preachers, but no woman at present among their regular itinerant ministers. There are only two Congregational, two Baptist, and seven Unitarian women ministers. Three of the theological colleges—Mansfield (Oxford), Western (Bristol), and Hackney and New

<sup>1</sup> Coltman, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Coltman, p. 112.

(Hampstead)—are open to women students for the ministry on the same terms as men.

There is a very much larger number of women ministers in the United States, where the first was ordained in 1853 ; and there is a growing movement to admit women to the ministry in Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland. Meanwhile, as in the olden days women had full liberty to become martyrs, so to-day there is no hesitation in allowing them to become missionaries (practically ministers) in the more difficult and sometimes dangerous foreign field. It is only at home that we put difficulties in the way of their exercising the full duties and responsibilities of a minister.

The Church of England has so far only entertained the idea of restoring the ancient order of deaconesses for strictly defined spheres of service, and without any of the powers and functions of the priesthood. Sixty years ago James M. Ludlow drew attention to the need of developing this form of service, in a book which, for the first time, gave a comprehensive history of deaconesses. He showed how the Church of Rome had deprived itself of this aid, and how the Reformed Churches—the Puritans first of all—had recognised the need of restoring the diaconate of women ; and how during last century Institutions had sprung up in Germany and England for training deaconesses for works

of charity, whether or not as recognised members of the staff of the Church. "The chain of woman's work in the Church, which the Church of Rome had snapped, has thus by Protestant hands been practically restored, and the new female diaconate needs but a franker and more general recognition, and a more solemn consecration at the hands of the Reformed Churches of Christendom, to bear, I believe, a yet more abundant fruit."<sup>1</sup> This prophecy is at last beginning to be fulfilled. The Archbishop of Canterbury in 1917 appointed a special Committee to consider the question. That Committee issued its Report in *The Ministry of Women* (1919), a most valuable historical treatise, which will for years to come be the standard work on the subject. A special Committee of Bishops was appointed by the Lambeth Conference of 1920 to consider this Report and make recommendations. These recommendations were generally adopted by the Conference, but with some omissions and modifications, one of which is especially noteworthy. The principal Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference as to Deaconesses were to the following effect: "The time has come when, in the interests of the Church at large, and in particular of the development of the ministry of women, the Diaconate of Women should be restored formally and canonically; . . . the Order

<sup>1</sup> Ludlow, pp. 193 ff., 217.

of Deaconesses is the one and only Order of the Ministry of Women which has the stamp of Apostolic approval ; . . . the office of a deaconess is primarily a ministry of succour, bodily and spiritual, especially to women, and should follow the lines of the primitive, rather than those of the modern, diaconate of men ; it should be understood that the deaconess dedicates herself to a lifelong service, but that no vow or implied promise of celibacy should be required as necessary for admission to the Order" (the Bishops' Committee had recognised "that a deaconess who is married is likely to possess, as a married woman, a peculiar power by prayer and counsel to help married women"<sup>1</sup>) ; "the following functions may be entrusted to the deaconess, in addition to the ordinary duties which would naturally be assigned to her : (a) to prepare candidates for baptism and confirmation ; (b) to assist at the administration of baptism, and to be the ministrant in cases of necessity in virtue of her office ; (c) to pray with and give counsel to such women as desire help in difficulties and perplexities ; and (d) with the approval of the Bishop and of the parish priest, and under such conditions as shall from time to time be laid down by the Bishop : (i) in Church to read Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany, except such portions as are assigned to the priest only ; (ii) in

<sup>1</sup> Lambeth, p. 103.

Church also to lead in prayer, and under licence of the Bishop to instruct and exhort the congregation.”<sup>1</sup> Clause (d) (ii) was only carried by 117 votes to 81, and the Conference omitted the further recommendation of the Bishops’ Committee, that “deaconesses should render assistance at the administration of the Holy Communion to sick persons.”<sup>2</sup>

These Resolutions mark a distinct, though much belated, advance in the attitude of the Anglican Church towards women, but it is difficult to discover any reason, other than mere conservatism, for refusing the priesthood to women. The conservative argument is thus put concisely: “The twelve Apostles were men; the seventy who were sent forth to preach the Kingdom were men. The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was instituted in the presence of the Apostles only. The Apostolic Commission recorded in John xx. 19–23 was delivered to men. The evangelistic charge narrated in Matthew xxviii. 16–20 would appear to have been delivered to the eleven disciples. These facts taken together are proof that there were functions and responsibilities which *at the first* our Lord assigned to men, and did not assign to women.”<sup>3</sup> The words “at the first” seem to show that the writers did not think that the facts referred to were meant necessarily

<sup>1</sup> Lambeth, pp. 39, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry, p. 2.



to be a guidance for all time; but are the facts correctly stated or the implications correctly drawn? The first two sentences merely prove that Jesus selected for His first missionaries those who in the social conditions of the time had the best chance of being listened to. The third sentence, if it "proves" anything, proves too much, namely, that women ought not to receive the Communion. The fourth sentence, if we may trust the parallel version given by St. Luke, is probably incorrect; for whereas St. John merely says the words were spoken to "the disciples," St. Luke (xxiv. 33) mentions "the eleven gathered together, and *them that were with them*," and it seems from Acts i. 14 that "*the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus*," were among those who at that time were in the habit of meeting with the disciples in the upper room (cf. John xix. 27). It is therefore more than likely that women were amongst those to whom the "Apostolic commission" was given in the words: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." At least we know that women were amongst those who received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Similarly it is not by any means certain that only "the eleven" were present on that other occasion when Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the



name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

In any case, no one would say that the Church foreshadowed by Jesus was meant to be a static Church, designed from the beginning in all its details; rather was it to be dynamic with the power of the Holy Spirit: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." It has taken many years for the Spirit to lead the Church to bear the truth, that women may be ordained as ministers of Christ. Must they ever remain in the ranks as deaconesses, and never rise to the priesthood, because forsooth that would involve their entering into the Holy of Holies, administering the Sacraments, and telling the repentant sinner that he is forgiven, for all which acts women are for some mysterious reason considered unfit? "A woman was fit to be the vehicle by which our Lord's incarnation became possible. Women approached so nearly to the person of our Lord during His lifetime, as to minister daily to His wants. They stood at the Cross on which He hung dying. But they must not approach the consecrated places of His Church!"<sup>1</sup>

One last word—to those who believe in the practice of Confession, or the Sacrament of

<sup>1</sup> Royden, p. 213.

Penance. It is simply incomprehensible to a layman why the Church should compel every woman to confess to a man-priest, and not allow her the alternative, which many women would prefer,<sup>1</sup> of opening her heart to, and seeking consolation from a saintly sister, who would surely in many cases better understand a woman's troubles. The excuse assigned in *Piers the Plowman* for the Papal prohibition of women-confessors, namely, that they could not keep a secret,<sup>2</sup> seems wholly inadequate and antiquated.

<sup>1</sup> Royden, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> *Piers*, p. 142.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE UNKNOWN FUTURE

Tout en coopérant,  
Restez différents ;  
Rappelez-vous en somme,  
Que femme est femme et homme est homme.  
*Inscription in Hall of Danish National Assembly.*

IN pressing the claims of women for liberty to develop their personality to its utmost limits, and to devote their powers to the service of humanity in any and every sphere of work, social, economic, religious, and political, some feminists have laid stress on the essential likenesses of men and women, and others on their essential differences. If men and women are alike, Society and the State have the right to demand the aid of both men and women in trying to find the road that leads to progress, as every available help is required for that difficult task. If men and women are different, all the more does humanity need the different services which their different natures can render, and those services can best be rendered in full and friendly co-operation.

Probably the truth, as usual, lies somewhere in the middle of the two opposing theories. Men and women are more like to one ano-

ther than was formerly supposed—mentally, morally, and even physically. The superstition that women are the weaker sex tends to vanish with the spread of lawn-tennis, athletics, and the bicycle. "The bicycle," says a German woman writer, "has done more for the emancipation of women than all the strivings of the entire woman's movement together."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, there are a few, but most important, differences, inextricably bound up with the different parts that men and women play in the continuance of the race, which can never be wholly obliterated, though they may be assimilated and combined, and by co-operation can do infinitely more for civilisation than if they work separately and in opposition.

Drummond called the male instinct the Struggle for Life, and the female instinct the Struggle for the Life of Others.<sup>2</sup> These two instincts kept the race alive, but there was another instinct in each, without which the race would have remained stagnant and unprogressive, namely, Love, and Love came into the world through a little Child. "Till this appeared, man's affection was non-existent, woman's was frozen. The man did not love the woman, the woman did not love the man. But one day, from its Mother's very heart, from a shrine which her husband never visited nor knew was there, which she

<sup>1</sup> Mayreder, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Drummond, pp. 329-30.

herself dared scarce acknowledge, a child drew forth the first fresh bud of a love which was not passion, a love which was not selfish, a love which was an incense from its Maker, and whose fragrance from that hour went forth to sanctify the world. Later, long later, through the same tiny and unconscious intermediary, the father's soul was touched. And one day, in the love of a little child, Father and Mother met."<sup>1</sup>

This story of the evolution of love is a parable, for the family is a microcosm of humanity. Humanity cannot continue to live without a struggle for life, without hard work ; it cannot live a civilised life if each member lives for himself and takes no care for the life of others ; and it cannot attain the highest, happiest life without love between neighbours and classes and nations. Man has hitherto tried to govern the world by himself, and has trusted too much to brute force. When men and women meet together to govern the world, there is a greater store of spiritual power to draw upon, and together they may better succeed in the great endeavour. The emancipation of women is itself a recognition by men of the fact that there are spiritual as well as physical forces in the universe, and will hasten the time when it is recognised that the spiritual forces are really the all-powerful forces.

<sup>1</sup> Drummond, pp. 391-2.

In the long run quality, not quantity, prevails. The *Vox populi, vox Dei*, argument for democracy does not mean that the will of the majority is necessarily and always the will of God ; but it means that God works in this world through human beings, and that a good man has more influence and power than a bad man. Without this axiom no reasonable philosophy of life, no theory of progress, is possible. It therefore follows that every widening of the franchise brings into play a larger number of centres of good influence, which (despite the other bad centres) must ultimately help to lift the race up, possibly after many foolish experiments and failures. Not only is there a better chance under democracy of the needs of all classes of the community being voiced and understood, but there is also a better chance of a number of men of good-will being found, who will earnestly and disinterestedly seek to meet those needs.

So too the enfranchisement of women, while it will bring to light new problems, will also bring into the field new springs of influence and power to solve those problems. A new army of women of good-will will join the Old Guard of the men of good-will, and together, will march triumphant at last over all difficulties. The old political economy, which reckoned men as mere units, like a flock of sheep, seemed a comparatively simple arith-



metrical problem on paper, though it was not so easy when one tried to work it out in live sums, because the units turned themselves into widely differing personalities possessing hearts as well as hands; and it became still more complicated when women emerged into sight, revealing the forgotten or ignored truth that the existing wage system did not adequately meet the needs of the mother and the children and the unmarried woman. The solution of this complicated problem, and of others like it, depending on the fact that women are women and men are men, but both are human beings, will require much hard thinking and unselfish determination on the part of men and women. They are not simple arithmetical sums, but problems that can only be solved by the aid of higher, spiritual mathematics.

What about the greatest problem of all, the crying need of the world for Peace? Can women help in that? Women are not all of them peacemakers; some are as hard as any man, and as full of that fear which is akin to hate, or at least breeds hate, when fear has led to war. But surely there is in women's nature, rather more than in men's, a sympathetic, pitiful side, and a power of imagination to feel the horrors of war, even when war is only threatened and has not actually come, which must lead more and more to work for peace, and above all to exercise the will to

peace, and not merely vaguely to desire it. "The direction of the collective will to definite ends over long stretches of time has become the most urgent need of civilisation. . . . The male mind of the race is by itself incapable of rendering this service. It is in the mind of woman that the winning peoples of the world will find their psychic centre of power in the future."<sup>1</sup> But it must not be left to women alone to will peace; here too there must be comradeship—men and women must will it together.

Are not two prayers a perfect strength?  
And shall I feel afraid?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kidd, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Rossetti, *The Blessed Damozel*.

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