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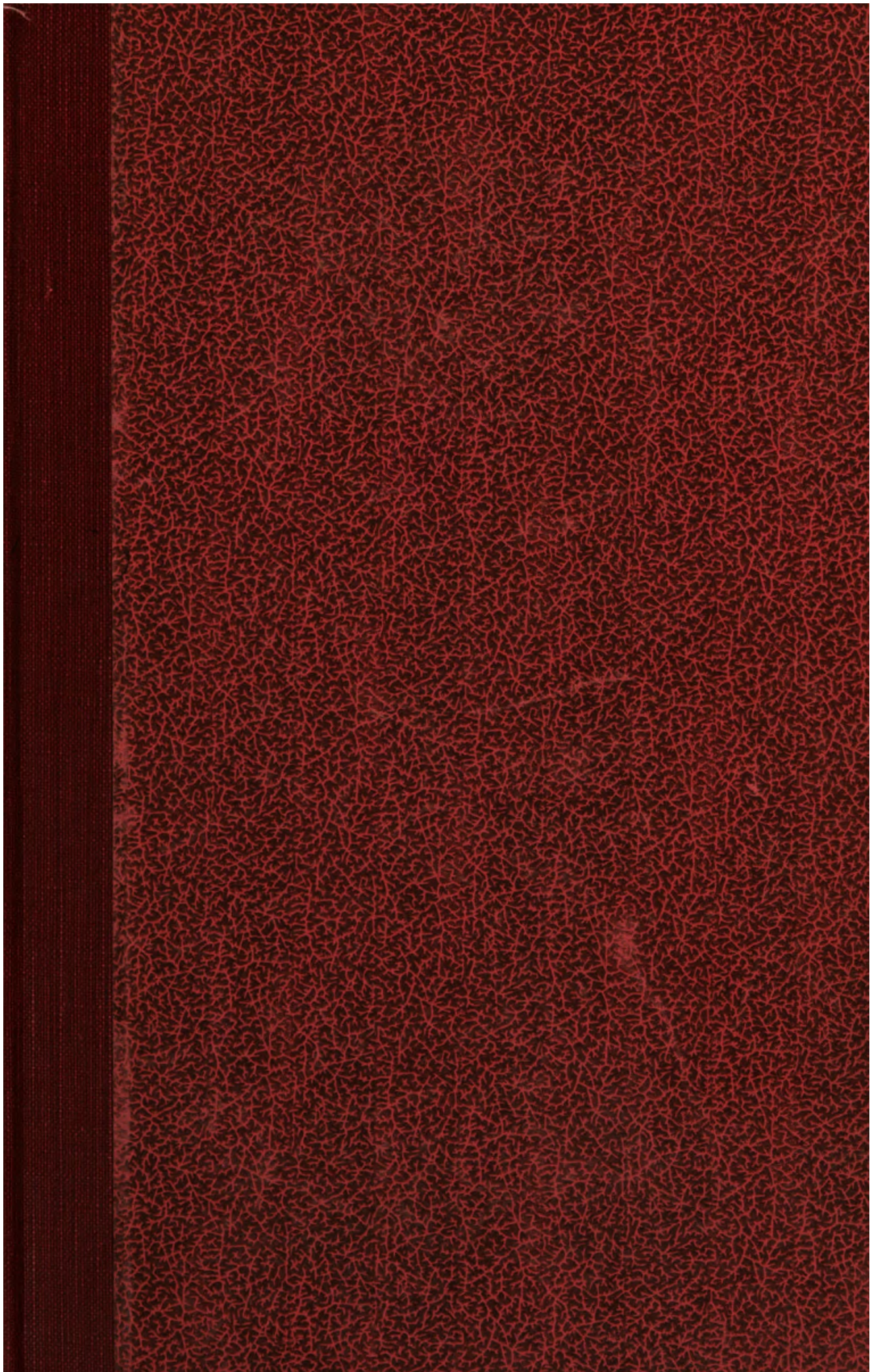
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PURCHASE OF WOMEN:

THE

GREAT ECONOMIC BLUNDER.

BY

DR. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL.

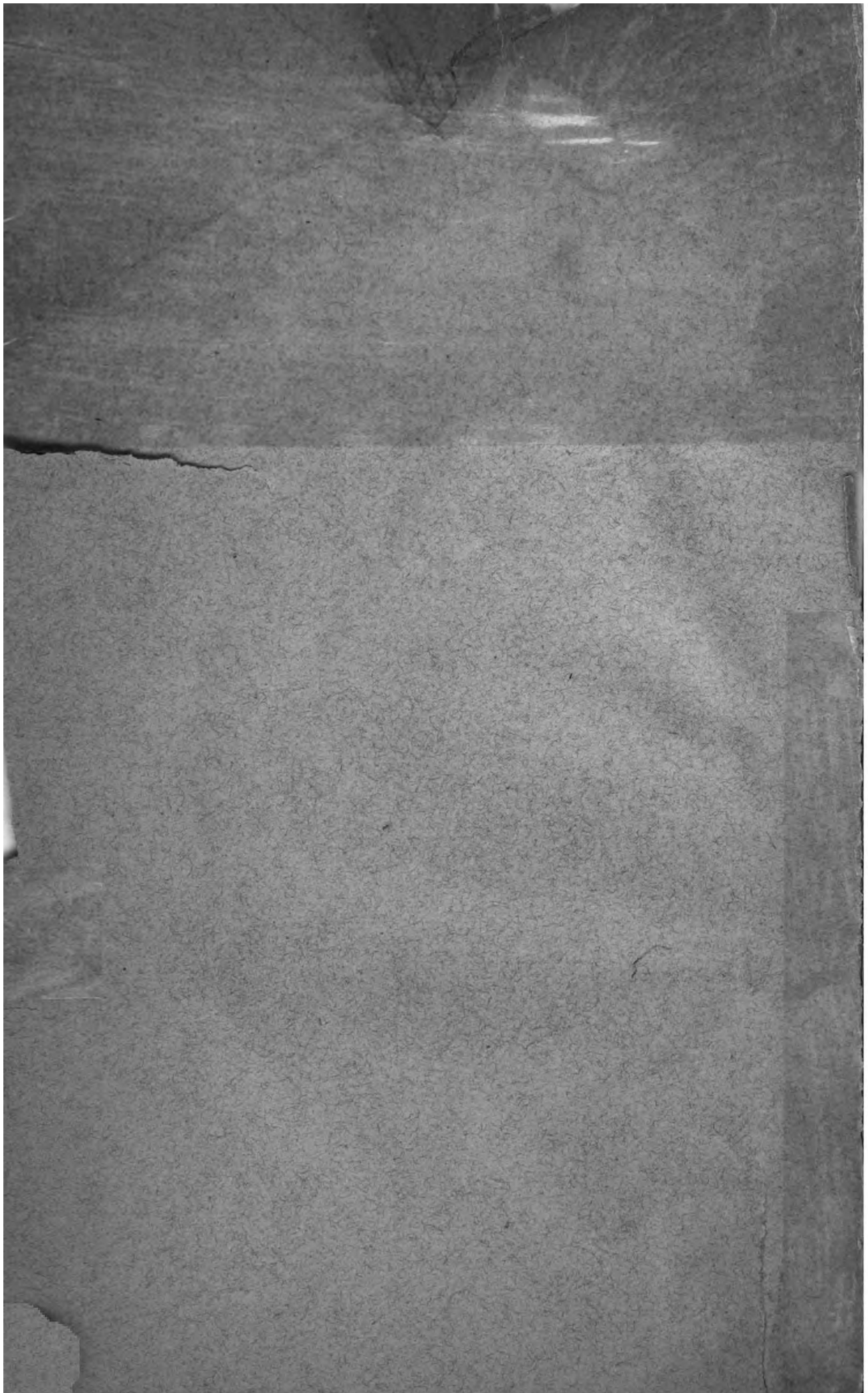
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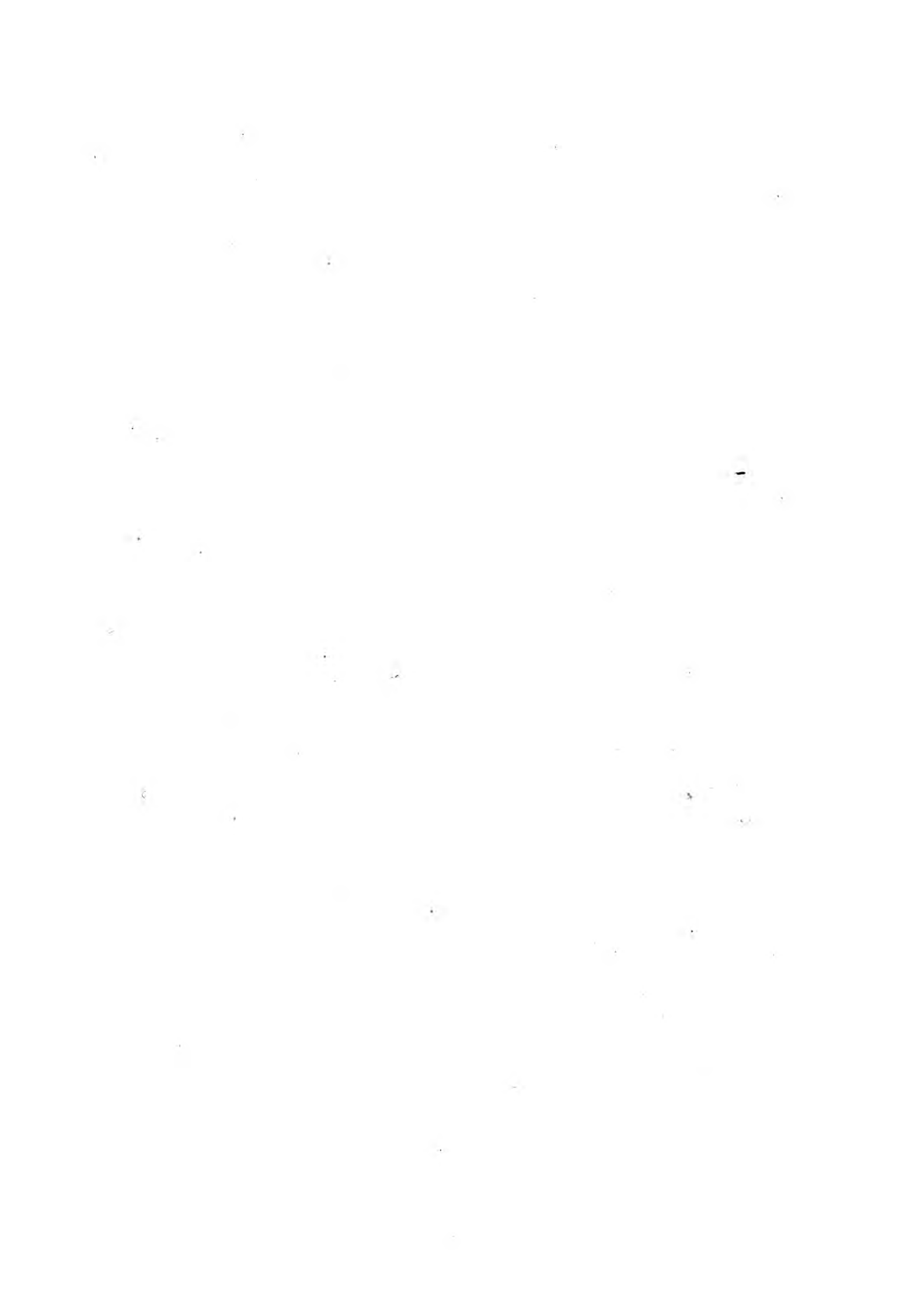
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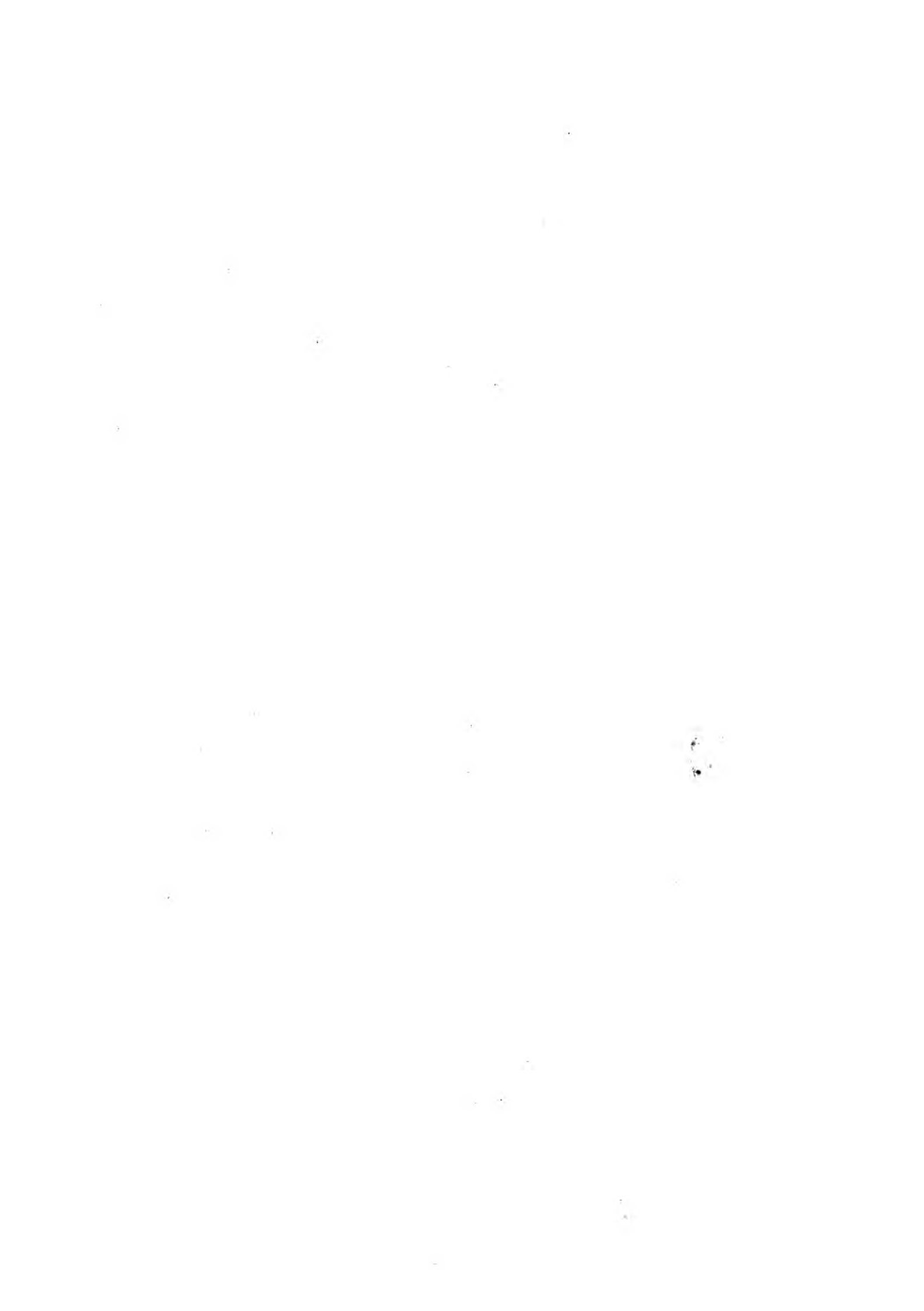
WITH PROFOUND REVERENCE,

TO THAT EVER-LIVING MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE GOODNESS,

Our Lord,

WHO IS CRUCIFIED AFRESH IN EVERY

OUTCAST WOMAN.



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PREFACE.

THE object of this work is to show the real meaning of those relations of the sexes, which are commonly known under the term "ordinary immorality."

Customs in the midst of which we are brought up often befog the vision. Nations, like individuals, may journey on unsuspecting of danger if no fresh wind lift the veil which hides the fatal precipice towards which they are rapidly moving.

Much has been heard of late respecting criminal immorality, *i.e.*, the abuse of the sexual powers which human law recognises as crime. The boundary of criminal immorality has of late been extended in the hope of protecting young girls. When fathers and mothers begin to realise what the destruction of their children by lust really means, natural horror is felt at the corruption or torture of young children of either sex, and a storm of righteous indignation compels an attempt to provide a remedy. But at the same time the very causes which directly lead to and produce these monstrous crimes, are not clearly seen. Horror at effects, diverts atten-

tion from vicious customs which lie at the root of evil, and which inevitably produce crime. Many of those who are most actively engaged in devising safeguards for the very young, draw at the same time a radical distinction between so-called ordinary immorality, and what, at that particular epoch, has been labelled criminal by process of law.

It is a fatal imperfection of human laws, that being only an endeavour to enforce fragments of Divine Law, they carry the evil of such disruption with them ; and whilst checking wrong in one direction strengthen it in another.

This evil is shown in the broad distinction now drawn between different kinds of sexual immorality, and the results which follow such distinction.

Many persons who would shrink from the guilt of being the authors of a first seduction, or of running the risks of legal prosecution, will not hesitate to engage in "ordinary immorality"—that is, they will without scruple purchase the temporary use of a consenting woman for a little money ; they will justify the transaction by the plea that what women will sell men may buy ; they may even consider that they show a little contemptuous kindness to women in such buying, as industrial conditions press most heavily on women. Women also, accept false theories of human nature that blaspheme their Creator, and degrade their exalted rank of motherhood by welcoming profligates and sacrificing their daughters in mercenary marriages.

Until the higher law of human relations is more clearly understood, great confusion of thought will necessarily exist as the result of ignorance and selfishness. But as old errors are gradually proved, an inevitable and growing discussion

will arise in the present age as to the natural relations of the sexes. The most contradictory theories are even now brought forward and actively spread abroad, and in the course of this unavoidable growth of the mental faculties, the necessity or expediency, the wisdom or the guilt, of what is called ordinary immorality, must finally be brought before the highest court of public opinion, *i.e.*, the enlightened conscience of men and women.

Although however, the widest diversity of opinion may still exist on abstract questions, there is one practical point on which all persons are compelled to agree. It is this, *viz.*— If temporary bargains are made, either expressly or tacitly, by which one party gives money to another for a certain return, such a bargain is trade. If few such bargains are made it is a limited trade, if many it is an extensive trade, but in each case the transactions are equally trade, and are necessarily subject to the laws which govern trade. If, therefore, women are made the subjects of temporary purchase, they become the subjects of trade. Now trade is always directed by the rules and customs prevailing at the time; and the economic aspect requires to be studied, for the laws which govern trade are not fanciful theories, but very real practical facts which lie at the foundation of our social institutions, and silently mould our every day life.

This is seen clearly by the effects which trade in land produces; for the methods by which land is held and treated will alter the character of a people as well as change the face of a country. The thrifty farms of New England help to create a sturdy self-respecting people, whilst the Bonanza machine-managed land monopolies of the West create luxu-

rious absentees, and permanent paupers or tramps. Extensive enclosure of hills and commons will destroy the country tastes and habits of generations, whose walks are confined to dusty high roads; and the destruction of a hamlet fills the slums of a city. So the custom houses and protective tariffs which all our municipalities now create within their limits, hamper productive industry and help to produce paupers. Even such a modern practice as bicycling has created an extensive trade, with dress and habits and various arrangements, all acting and re-acting on the life of the younger generation. Whatever becomes an article of trade, will become at once subject to the methods and regulations of trade, with the ever widening circle of effects which belong to all industrial action.

Every civilised nation is compelled to cope with the most difficult of all social problems, viz.—sexual evil; and the great modern development of benevolence and reform, has created a new force endeavouring to solve the same problem. The most varied methods of action have been called forth. Religion and morality, physiology and expediency, pity and severity, have all been invoked in turn to rescue the fallen and to restrain the vicious.

But the subject of ordinary immorality as a trade necessity governed by the economic laws which regulate trade, has not been seriously examined in the light of political economy; nor has the inevitable effect which trade in women must exercise on the character of a nation, been clearly shown.

There is wide spread mental evasion or unconscious hypocrisy on this subject. So many wrongs in our social state require to be dealt with, that reformers willingly avoid

the painful consideration of sexual evil. Hope is felt that some of the great reforms of the day in which all thoughtful individuals take a special interest, will prove fundamental in their curative effects, and heal this gravest of our diseases. Thus free access to land, co-operation and abolition of interest, total abstinence, universal suffrage, emigration, arbitration, state-socialism, &c., are all amongst the popular panaceas of the present day; each important reform or theory being chiefly relied on by its special advocates, to change all social relations and eradicate any serious social disorder.

Favourable, however, as improved material or legislative conditions will undoubtedly be to the extension of health and morality amongst a people, these reforms can only be palliative, not curative, if the fundamental conditions of growth, and freedom to use them, be not guaranteed to all portions of a people. Every really curative measure which will ensure the healthy growth of society, pre-supposes a recognition of the needs of our human constitution, and an adaptation of our social methods to those needs. It is only by such recognition and such adaptation, that any human measure becomes an embodiment of Divine law. Our conscience must recognise this law, and our will must render it obedience, in both individual and collective life; for there is no other possible method of securing durable and progressive growth. No human effort can change the supremacy of law written on the human constitution. Human perversity is free to thwart it temporarily, with delusive results which serve to bewilder our short vision, but the law is re-written with wonderful persistency on each fresh generation of men, and it remains inexorable in its demand for obedience.

If trade in women be contrary to the Divine law written on the human constitution, it will destroy society. Insignificant as the needs of women's lives may seem to superficial politicians or self-worshipping wordlings, yet these apparently weak lives, because God-created, will prove stronger than all their unstable laws and customs. No arrogant rebellion against the methods of moral progress, however splendid in its material force and its money-worship, can change the awful reality of Divine law.

Is the trade in women such a violation? Does it destroy the freedom, and therefore the necessary conditions of growth, in one half the human race?

The time has certainly come when earnest reformers should consider to what extent trade in the human body exists in this civilised and christian nation; and what its effect upon the nation is.

In a subject so vital to human welfare as the social relations which are established between men and women, it is pusillanimous to refuse to examine them. If the human conscience, slowly awakening, discovers that the necessary laws of progress have been ignorantly violated during the gradual development of humanity, none but pessimists will fold their hands in despair, none but atheists will continue to rebel against the Divine law of growth.

Dec., 1886.

CHAPTER I.

The Foundations of Trade.

THE Wealth of a nation is that which contributes to its real and lasting well-being ; which makes it powerful in the present, and durable and progressive in the future. A happy and intelligent people, with just and far-seeing rulers or guides amongst them, is a rich nation, and one that is fulfilling its duty by carrying on the gradual growth and ever higher development of the human race.

Political economy is the study of wealth ; and particularly of those results of human activity which spring from the necessary physical relation of human beings to their surroundings. It is this relation which makes the firm foundation on which political economy rests.

The subject leads to three great branches of enquiry, viz., the things which constitute wealth ; the method of their production ; and the way in which they are distributed.

The study of wealth must always take in this large scope in any lasting system of political economy, because the many special branches which the subject includes are all connected together. Every part is built up on the sure foundation of the relation of human needs to their surroundings. If our knowledge of this relation is unsound, the edifice will in time fall down.

In seeking truth in any branch of political economy, whether it be the relations of labour and capital, land tenure, or free trade, &c., examination must be made of this foundation of knowledge. Artificial arrangements which do not recognise the primitive needs of human nature, can only lead at last to misery.

Reason shows us that physical needs are imperative in a material world, where mind must work through matter. They come first in order of growth, as the primary condition of life, through which and out of which the higher moral and intellectual force grows. They are like the first gasping inspiration of the infant, which sets in motion the astonishing mechanism of conscious human life. Trade and commerce are a necessary first outcome of a nation's physical needs; the nature of its trade and commerce, and the methods by which they are carried on, are inextricably woven in with social life, and stamp the character of a nation.

Trade and commerce being the direct result of human needs in relation to the material world, will be governed by fixed laws respecting the production and distribution of wealth.

The term law however, is often erroneously applied to temporary phases in the arrangements of human industry which vary with age and country. But a fixed law in political economy can only become such when, and because, it expresses the necessary relation between human growth or nature, and the conditions which promote it. It is only the result of this necessary relation that can claim the name of Law.

Political economy must, therefore, necessarily be a progressive study, because, although human desires are unlimited, human power or ability to discover law is much more limited. This power grows with intelligence, and intelligence is of slower development than the motive spring of human life, which is desire, emotion, will.

The methods of producing and distributing wealth must therefore necessarily vary. The interval of growth between the Esquimaux bartering his skins, and the Englishman exporting machinery is great. Even the objects and definition of wealth change with race and epoch. There can be no such thing as finality in the applications of human knowledge, as the law of progress—progress of individuals and of races—is stamped on our nature. Political economy, as every other subject of knowledge, must be revised, extended, and re-adapted from age to age.

Although the methods of producing and distributing wealth may vary, the creative Divine laws which determine the welfare of the human race cannot vary. Below the changing phenomenon of epoch, country, and race, are fixed principles on which trade (which may be designated human) must be based. The search for these necessary or fixed laws, and their discrimination from temporary arrangements or adaptations, is not only a legitimate but an indispensable subject of inquiry. It affects not only the foundation, but the whole edifice of life which is built upon it in every stage of its construction, helping or injuring each individual of the community, as well as that collective mass of individuals which we vaguely style the nation.

No religious teacher any more than the (technically styled) social reformer, can afford to ignore this great subject of political economy. A knowledge of its objects, and of the laws which must govern industry, in its march to the promised land of human welfare, constitute a Divine revelation. It is a revelation gradually made through the honest use of our intellectual faculties, and constantly grows from imperfect beginnings, to clearer guidance under an earnest search for truth.

A distinct recognition of the different kinds of wealth must precede any wise or efficient regulation of trade and commerce; for the same method of production and distri-

bution cannot be applied to all. We can neither produce air nor sunshine, nor legitimately attempt to make them the subject of trade, as, being essential to life, they are necessarily supplied free to all. Neither can we produce earth which (as far as it is essential to life) cannot be made a subject of trade on exactly the same methods, as products which can be indefinitely multiplied. Neither can strength, energy, or character, which constitute a valuable part of a nation's wealth, be grown in a similar way to corn, or thrown off by machinery like calico. Education is a different process from printing, and if reduced to the mechanism of manufacture, or converted into a system of money getting, is self destructive, frustrating the object of education, viz., the drawing out of the infinitely varied human faculties.

The growth of reason and conscience in the leading nations of the world, is more and more differentiating the various kinds of wealth ; data are thus being collected from which the progressive laws of political economy can be deduced. By the leading nations, of course is here meant those communities where a large number of unselfish and thoughtful men inspired by truth, find their teaching accepted by the uncorrupted though crude intelligence of a patient multitude. Unfortunately the so-called ruling classes in these nations, are now too often the creators or the creatures of the barbarous and savage hordes, which false methods of political economy have produced in our midst. But the possession of a band of honest truth-seekers with earnest listeners eager to be guided, marks the really progressive nation.

It will be found that a true system of political economy must rest upon a moral basis. Trust, freedom, and gradually evolved sympathy, are the foundations on which all systems of industry are built up, that permanently civilise races.

Trust is the beginning of exchange. Nordenfeld, in his record of observation round the Arctic circle, relates how money or articles were left in perfect safety, and faithfully

replaced by equivalent articles in exchange. A striking instance of the necessity of recreating trust, as the foundation of industry, where it has been lost by long continued oppression, is related by a gentleman who many years ago went as mineral viewer to the Nerbudda Valley. Almost alone and far removed from the possibility of obtaining white labour, the natives refused to dig for him. He felt compelled to capture a few men and enforce a day's work, which he at once honestly paid for with the copper currency of the region. But it seemed to the natives the grossest folly on his part that, having gained the labour, he should pay for what he had already obtained, and feeling sure that he would not repeat such folly they hid away on the following day. The capture had to be repeated during many successive days, and the heavy coin brought at great inconvenience for the daily payment, before the habit of trust could be fairly established; then an over supply of willing workers crowded round the encampment.

'A great advance was made in the onward march of humanity, when the reasons for abolishing slavery became clear to the conscience of the minority, in those nations who lead the van of human progress.' The production and sale of human beings as articles of merchandise can be made extremely profitable as a money making trade. It has been truly said that "if the reproduction of capital is the one great means of a nation's wealth;" if demand and supply, the employment of labour by capital, and profits limited only by the wages of maintenance, are laws of political economy, and the right guides of industry, "why should sentimental notions about justice and abstract rights of freedom interfere with the national good? Why not grow corn on the sweating system? Why not by slaves? There is no reason, on so-called economic grounds, why slaves should not be bred like cattle, bred to the exact wants of the agriculturist, and when no more wanted melted down in the

sulphuric acid tank and drilled in with the root crops. Any farmer who would have courage to carry on the economy of labour and the reproduction of capital in that way, would farm at a splendid profit."

For long ages the trade in human beings has been, and is still, carried on. It has only very gradually dawned upon human intelligence, that short-sighted trading customs which destroy the conditions of human development, injure equally the sellers and the sold, and gradually degrade and destroy the societies that practise them. This second foundation of political economy—freedom—still remains unrecognised by the large majority of the human race. But when the destructive character or essential wrong of human slavery was once thoroughly understood by a portion of our nation, they never rested from the fight until it was abolished. The abolition of slavery was the revolt of conscience and intelligence, against a false mercantile system which converts everything into money value.

The wisdom of Wilberforce and his heroic band made a great step in advance by laying down a permanent law for the guidance of human industry. They saw that the human being belongs to a different category of creation from the subjects of his industry, and that he may not be made a thing of trade. That he owes duties to himself and to his neighbours, and that he can neither sell another adult, nor his child, nor himself. That the purpose of human life and the methods of attaining it, are both destroyed when the condition of human freedom is violated by converting human bodies into chattels. The abolition of slavery forbade henceforward the purchase or sale of any individual, whether adult or child.

The same uprising against injustice in the kindred nation of the United States, has produced a similar advance in intelligent conscientiousness. However much the American Revolution may be misunderstood, the facts remain which prove the great moral movement which preceded it. Two generations of united and resolute lovers of freedom, although a

minority, had fought to the death for the cause of justice, and prepared the way for the great Emancipation Act of 1863.

It could not be denied that temporary phases of political economy, were being set at nought by the abolitionists. There was no flaw in the logic of maintaining slavery as a money making machine. Vast tracts of land were to be cultivated, useful products raised, craving desires satisfied, great profits realised, and a clever energetic race was able to abuse a weak childish one. But the abolition of slavery united the two leading branches of the Anglo-Saxon race in setting a limit to trade. They established the law that no human being may be bought or sold. They recognised the fundamental conditions of human industry, trust and freedom, and thus established that higher law that removes human beings from the operations of a mercantile system which measures all things by the standard of money.

Another great step in advance has been made by the dawn of the Co-operative move amongst us. As Abolition set a limit to the subjects of trade, Co-operation is setting a limit to its methods. True co-operators clearly see that to arrest the slave owner and the slave dealer by the strong arm of the law, is but a first step in human progress ; it is only compelling a necessary condition, not ensuring a good end.

But co-operation will secure gradually the third necessary basis of progressive and durable human industry, viz., sympathy.

Doubtless this statement will at once bring to mind, not only the selfish combinations of Civil Service supply, but the multifarious quarrels and departure from principle, in the great body of working people distinctively called co-operators.

Nevertheless the statement is true, that co-operation is a new development of practical Christianity, which can introduce that essential element of true political economy—sympathy—the hitherto missing guide of human industry.

The few friends who met in a small chamber in 1828 and initiated the Manchester and Salford Co-operative Schools were fired by enthusiasm. The poor weavers of Toad Lane, who saved their hard-earned pence and divided their first chest of tea, were filled with pity for their suffering brethren, and eagerly gave the poor room, the precious time, the exhausting thought—all they had to give—to establish the brotherly principle of mutual help. And the large-hearted leaders of the movement, who changed the name of Christian Socialist to Co-operator, Maurice, Kingsley, Ludlow, Hughes, and many another of the first noble little band, laid down a spiritual basis, as the essential foundation of durable material success.

It has been said of the labouring classes that “they are unfit for any order of things which would make any considerable demand on either their intellect or their virtue.” The enlightened co-operator perceives that this is true of all classes of men, rich or poor, in a state of things where industry is ruled by unlimited competition, and trade subjects everything to the domination of money. Where all restrictions are removed, but no sympathy developed, new forms of oppression and revenge arise.

Co-operation therefore, announces a fundamental law of durable political economy. It adopts mutual aid instead of antagonism in industry, extends a share of the results of labour in equitable proportion to all who produce them, and replaces competition in money-getting by emulation in superiority of production.

Thus sympathy, the third necessary foundation of industry and social union, is being slowly evolved by the trials, the failures, but the ultimately assured success, of the Co-operative movement.

This gradual recognition of the necessary bases of progressive political economy, viz., trust, freedom, and sympathy (here slightly hinted at) is itself founded upon a rock—viz.,

the immutability of the Creator's law of Moral Government, the adaptation of the human constitution to its surroundings, the only method by which steady growth can be secured. The waves of selfishness and false theories dash themselves vainly against this rock, and race after race perishes in the foolish attempt to set aside the Moral Law.

The hopeful light thrown upon the future by the revelation of freedom and co-operative sympathy, as fundamental laws of true political economy, can only be full perceived by those who have measured the evils of slavery, and sounded the fearful depths of misery produced by unlimited competition. The revelations of the results of this phase of competition in which we are living are all around us, in every class of society, in every quarter of the globe. The mercantile system, which makes wealth and money synonymous, and reduces every interest to a subject of trade, spares no relation of life, and desecrates every rank of society. We need not go back to the crimes which Warren Hastings committed to fill his treasury. The same methods of crushing the weak for money, of bartering honour and conscience in the lust of gain, are going on at this moment in Asia and Africa, in the islands of the Pacific, in uncontrolled America, and enchained Russia. Its effects are seen in the legislature and the courts of law, in all professions and trades, in the mansion and the lodging-house. Corruption and cruelty inevitably resulting from a false system of political economy, are barring the progress of the human race.

In the present day we prostitute the superior strength gained by us from the principles of Christianity, to the debasement of human beings. Money being considered identical with wealth, sensuality reigns supreme. Money having under this system become the great means of gratifying material desires, the strife to obtain it becomes even fiercer.

The statesman regards it as a highest duty to open new channels of commerce for national activity, quite regardless of the conditions of mutual freedom and sympathy, which make commerce legitimate. Whisky, opium, and gunpowder bring rich returns from the ignorant peoples to whom their use was hitherto unknown; and this wicked abuse of our superior intelligence is in strict accord with the short-sighted teaching of the political economy accepted by trade.* This species of trade carried on without limitations, without the large intelligence of religious insight, must produce a fall of any race equal to the height of its development, for although, "Religion without science is a purblind angel; science without religion is a full-blown devil."

It is into the last possible phase of limitless competition in buying and selling, that our nineteenth century has entered, by permitting one half the race to become the merchandise of the other half.

Under a specious hypocrisy, falsely styled freedom of

* "At a meeting of the British Association, held September 7, 1886, the eminent African explorer, Mr. Joseph Thomson, spoke boldly of the evil influence of Europeans in Africa, remarking that it has been terrible, and that for one negro influenced for good by missionaries there were a thousand who had been driven to deeper degradation. We supplied them still with an incredible quantity of gin, rum, gunpowder, and guns, while our defective Government brooded over them like an incubus. He was equally outspoken in praise of the influence of Moham-medanism. Whatever Islam might be elsewhere, it has in the Central Soudan a powerful effect for good being apparently adapted to the negro, and likely to grapple with the gin trade "which so far has been our principal contribution to Africa." Far up beyond the flat delta lands a striking change for the better appears in the country and in the people. Instead of the unwashed barbarous sans culottes of the coast region, with fetishism, cannibalism, and the gin bottle in congenial union, there dwelt a native people astir with religious activity and wonderfully advanced in the arts and industries."

contract, a modern phase of slavery is still exercising its influence in our midst, for the slave-holding principle that the human body may be an article of merchandise is still applied to women, and conscience is still dead to the essential principle of freedom, viz., the sacredness of the human body, through which the soul must grow.

CHAPTER II.

Trade in Women.

It is necessary to define clearly the practical form of evil which is now under consideration, and to the effects of which the consciences of men and women must be roused. Ordinary immorality is not the demoralisation of the slums—that horrible result of monopoly and speculation in land, where human beings are herded together like pigs—a condition into which the bargains of trade hardly enter. Neither is it the practice of free lust—a practice where unlimited liberty is claimed by both men and women, to indulge the impulses of sexual caprice. Ordinary immorality is the distinct deliberate application to women, of the trading system of money values, governed by unlimited competition. In this system activity, opportunity, and cleverness carry the day ; conscientiousness and spiritual aspiration are out of place ; innocence and ignorance constitute weakness, and of course go to the wall.

• Ordinary immorality or fornication assuming the female body to be an article of merchandise, necessarily subjects this merchandise to those fluctuations of the market, those variations in demand and supply, and that tyranny of capital over labour which destroy freedom of contract. •

It may be urged that women “ consent ” to be purchased, and that therefore, there is a radical difference between the purchase of the bodies of men and women which the anti-

slavery movement has pronounced illegal, and the purchase of women by men which we are now considering. The sophistry of such evasion will be apparent if the question of "consent" and the specious hypocrisy generally involved in freedom of contract be closely examined. Freedom of contract can only take place between those who in certain essential particulars are equals. The parties to any contract must be so far equals in intelligence, that they can equally understand any risks that may be run, and clearly foresee the probable results of the bargain; and they must be so far equals in social position, that neither party is compelled by the pressure of circumstances, or the fear of want, to accept conditions which are unjust or unwise. No freedom of contract is possible where this degree of intellectual and practical equality does not exist. Freedom implies responsibility. There is no freedom if both parties are not free. Any insistence upon consent to a bargain ignorantly or forcibly made, is fraud. It is fraud darkened by varying degrees of cruelty, proportioned to the superiority of intelligence and independence possessed by the stronger party in the bargain.

The grave error of excusing purchase by the plea of consent, is fully shown when the relations of capital to labour in the present system of competitive industry are understood. We are now so far removed from the primitive trade of barter, where values were determined by necessities, that first principles are commonly lost sight of. Generations have passed during which ideas about wealth have become confused through complicated exchanges, stored-up labour inherited by those who no longer labour, violent seizures in the past, or cunning ones in the present, with constantly changing standards or ideals. The quite new standard of converting everything into a money value, and measuring its value by money, has taken the place of older methods. As a result, money has become the autocrat of industry. Character, talent, activity, still possess their uses, but only as the

servants of money or capital which have practically become interchangeable terms. People of quite inferior worth constantly and, as a rule, rise into splendid material position through the command of money, whilst talent and invention, industry, activity, and noblest natures, wear out their lives in drudgery, or sink in despair from inability to command the money which has become the condition of life and its energies, Thus the weaker portions of the human race are ever more and more deeply crushed down by the misery of a limitless competitive system, which is not based on the legitimate foundations of trust, freedom, and sympathy, and which consequently by placing money as the irresponsible governor of the industrial world, makes the hypocrisy of so-called "freedom of contract" the most bitter mockery.

It is necessary to realise the overwhelming and illegitimate power of money in the present day, if the condition of any trade is to be justly judged, and the responsibilities for the evils of a vicious trade rightly apportioned. In the terrible trade which converts the human body into a marketable commodity, it is no figure of speech, but a very weighty fact, that vicious men are the capitalists. The responsibility of that position must be recognised.

In judging either of the parties concerned in the trade, the question "Who are the capitalists or paymasters?" is the point to be insisted on. This is the fundamental fact to be steadily borne in mind, whether we consider the demoralised women who consent to the conversion of their bodies into merchandise; or the wholesale traders who organise to meet a demand increasing beyond the power of individuals to supply; or the State which connives at the trade; or society which condones it; the capital on which this nefarious traffic rests, is supplied by licentious men. This is the great economic fact on which the whole system rests. All legislation and all benevolent effort that do not recognise this fundamental fact, will hopelessly wander in the labyrinth of

evil trade, with no clue to direct their energies aright. From this unnatural employment of capital, two other economic evils directly arise, viz., first, the discouragement of honest industry; second, an unfair competition with male labour.

The discouragement of honest industry is a very serious economic evil. Any discouragement to patient industry, thrift, and self-control, is direct encouragement to reckless improvidence, vicious indulgence, and the creation of a dangerously increasing predatory horde. Through obstacles to honest labour, our prisons are now filled with criminals, our streets with the vicious, and our workhouses with paupers. The industrious workers are taxed beyond endurance to support the institutions rendered necessary by the suicidal policy of degrading labour; and our free institution of citizen police, is being rapidly converted into a costly military despotism to meet the imminent danger of revolutionary outbreaks. *

The discouraging difficulties which now surround all honest industry, press with increased force upon women's labour, and compel a moral heroism to resist the special temptation which crowds upon them.

It is now a fact, that in every large city, no woman with any pretension to natural attractiveness can fail to meet a purchaser. The streets, the hotels and lodging-houses—too many of our homes, also—are filled with a mighty army of vicious men, who think it neither shame nor wrong to purchase for shillings or pounds, as the case may be, a temporary physical gratification, without reflection upon the inevitable results, individual and social, of their temporary action. The knowledge that money may be gained so easily, spreads from woman to woman. The contrast between the

* The mounted policeman, with sword by his side, galloping along the Embankment at night, is an ominous sight to the thoughtful pedestrian.

ease with which the wages of sin may be gained, and the laborious, even crushing methods of honest industry, becomes an ever present and burning temptation to all working women.

It is undoubtedly true that the numerical excess of women in Great Britain, with other economic facts, intensify most heavily upon woman the grinding pressure of our present industrial system. All rescue workers seeking to help their fallen sisters are constantly confronted with the appalling answer, "Give me work, I cannot starve." The awful extent of woman's industrial misery would now be more fully realised, had not well-meant benevolent efforts called in the harsh hand of the police to suppress begging, and thus crush it out of sight.

The increasing and perplexing flood of women in the streets, begging to be bought, is a strange commentary on the effect of the stern repression of begging for alms. If in the future, in addition to the suppression of ordinary begging by men and women, another edict goes forth forbidding women to present themselves for sale, but not forbidding men to purchase them, gross injustice to women will be added to a cruel abuse of power, and fresh impulse given to male vice. Certainly if it were in the nature of women to become murderous criminals, any increasingly harsh and unjust attempts to crush their misery and degradation out of sight, would drive them into violent crime.

But it is not the seamstress slowly starving in her garret, nor the mass of struggling poverty, that is alone, or even chiefly, beset by the fiery temptations of gain, and the enticing pleasures which money can provide. The deterioration of character, which is the gravest result of a false system of political economy, extends to much wider circles of society. This serious fact is sufficient to prove the error of those who look to the industrial independence of women, as the chief means of destroying licentiousness. Although freedom to

obtain decent remunerative employment will secure an important condition for checking social evil, it will be a means only, it can never attain the end.

The great army of servants, whether in public or private dwellings, are surrounded by constant temptations to supplement their wages or relieve their monotonous labour by selling themselves. When we remember the conditions under which the vast mass of servants have grown up, the exposures and privations of their homes, their undeveloped mental state in relation to social duties, the exhausting work upon which the majority of them enter in hotels, lodging-houses, struggling households—or the special danger of rich, careless establishments; and then realise both the condition under which their service drags on and the natural instincts of the human being, it is easy to understand why to a frightfully increasing extent they yield to the solicitations to which they are exposed. The five shillings secretly gained at night becomes an important addition to scanty wages, the stolen pleasures an intoxicating relief to drudgery. The economic effect of thus bringing the lightly-earned wages of vice, into competition with the hard-earned wages of honest industry, is to discredit the latter, and to produce discontent and careless unwilling service in industries for which women are naturally better fitted than men; for the same state of things that is injuring domestic service, exists in dress-making, millinery, and all peculiarly feminine industries.

If we take the wider range of labour in which women compete more directly with men in the labour market, it will be found that this practice of purchasing women introduces an unfair element into the remuneration of labour. The introduction of the slave principle (the purchase of the human body) in cheapening women's labour, has a formidable effect in depressing the wages of working-men. In all systems of industry carried on by slaves the cost of maintenance is as a rule the limit of expenditure—the equivalent of wages. Also

in the industrial systems of so-called free industry, the maintenance of the labourer again forms a limit beyond which profit cannot be extracted, for no man will consent to labour for less wages than will keep him alive. But this is not the case in regard to women's labour. As was proved a generation ago in France, and can be amply verified in other civilised countries, women's wages are forced down below subsistence point.

This important fact, with its cause has evidently not been fully realised, even by so close and impartial an observer as Mill. He says, "The wages at least of single women must be equal to their support; but need not be more than equal to it; the minimum, in their case, is the pittance absolutely requisite for the sustenance of one human being. Now the lowest point to which the most superabundant competition can permanently depress the wages of a man is always somewhat more than this. The *ne plus ultra* of low wages can hardly occur in any occupation which the person employed has to live by, except the occupation of a woman." Mill is evidently uncertain as to the causes of the underpayment of women in cases of equal efficiency with men, and is inclined to attribute it to injustice, and to over-crowding in a few employments. He remarks—"When the efficiency is equal but the pay unequal the only explanation that can be given is custom, which, making almost every woman an appendage of some man, enables men to take the lion's share of whatever belongs to both."

But in this generation, which has thrown open the broad gates of education to women, and which has enormously extended the range of employments into which they are invited to enter, the causes which Mill suggests (over-crowding, injustice, &c.) do not seem to give a sufficient economic reason. One powerful and growing cause of derangement in the natural rewards of labour has been overlooked, viz., the unequal competition with male labour which must result,

when the wages given by vice are allowed to supplement the underpayment for honest work, and the street door key makes up for the deficient salary. Whilst this phase of human slavery exists, and the female body remains an article of merchandise, the increasing competition with male labour will make itself more severely felt, as wider fields of industry are extended to women, and they develop increasing ability to enter them. The wages of women can never permanently rise to a just scale of labour value, until this slavish principle is eliminated, because this purchase introduces an uneconomical element into the remuneration of labour, which destroys any legitimate effect of demand and supply. It enables competitive employers, solely intent on profit, to beat down the price of male as well as female labour indefinitely. Indeed, we have by no means reached the limits of this injustice. The practice of purchase is still more dangerous in an economic point of view, because whilst the labour of all women tends to sink to the lowest point of remuneration, this lowest point can be reached in the labour of the young and strong, who are the most eagerly sought for as merchandise.

The increasing employment of less remunerated female labour, while male labour stands idle is an alarming fact. The family is barely held together by the earnings of a daughter, whilst father and brother lounge about the pot house. The results of any sudden stoppage of a factory where large amounts of this cheap labour has been employed (as in the Barking jute factory, where 800 girls were suddenly thrown out of employment) is an object lesson in the suicidal policy of degrading women.

The natural order of industry by which the man is the chief material support of the family, is disturbed and destroyed by this unnatural practice.

The purchase of young women adds cruelty to fraud. Youth must always fail to realise results which are only

known through the experience of age. No amount of cautions or theoretic teaching given to the young, can ever place them on an equality with the experienced adult. Moreover, it is Nature's law for youth, that sexual attraction is quite out of proportion to intellectual development. The fact of this great natural law of slower mental growth, is the Creator's imperative command, laid upon the older generation, to protect and guide the young of both sexes. The corruption of the young by the adult is not only fraud—it is dastardly cruelty.

Moreover, Nature has laid upon women the more important share in the great work of continuing the race. It is not therefore pity, but justice which requires that reverent and grateful aid should be rendered by men, in the grand duty of creating an ever nobler race.

Trust, freedom, and sympathy, form the bases of true relations between men and women, as they are also the moral foundations of political economy.

The depth of that sin against human nature—fornication, or purchase—is seen in the results which follow, from tempting women away from the paths of honest industry. These effects necessarily extend to the whole position and character of one half the race, when any portion of women are turned into human merchandise. They are seen, by a careful study of those reckless or hardened ones, who have become so direful a problem in all our large towns. How is that growing army of shameless women created, who, with their companions, so fearfully avenge all social injustice to our boys and girls, and to our young men and maidens?

It is well known that there are thousands of "fallen women" in London. What does this general statement in relation to women mean in detail? What is involved in living by the sale of the human body? The woman however "fallen," is still a human being with its

desperate clinging to life. Let it be realised what is involved in thousands of women living to the age of three score years and ten, who must feed themselves three times a day, and provide lodging, clothing, and the satisfaction of all human needs by the repeated sale of their bodies. Thousands of women, with all the craving and ever active necessities of the human being, bodies and souls to be kept alive by the money of their buyers, and who are compelled to use every art of corruption, to find the fresh purchasers through whom they have learned to live. Women to whom lust and drink rapidly become a second nature, and sloth and falsehood habitual. Women driven on by ceaseless material needs to lower and lower phases of misery and vice, in whom a bitterness is engendered that revenges itself on the weakness and innocence of youth, tempting the lad when the adult ceases to purchase; women who, terrible fact, finally losing their own marketable value, and scourged by their own daily recurring needs, throw away the last remnants of womanly instinct, and drag down young girls into their hell of life.

The grave fact must be borne in mind that each one of these hundred thousand marketable women—although once an innocent infant—now forms a centre of ever-widening corrupt influence in the varied relations of life. Each one, with father and mother, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances, servants, and tradespeople, is exercising a fatal influence; desecrating the sanctity of sexual relations, proving the ease with which the rewards of vice are gained, bewildering the conscience of the innocent, and transmitting sensual tendencies to their descendants.

From these bought women, come those enemies of social progress, who enslave our young men of the higher classes, our future statesmen, those who should be the leaders of the nation. From Skittles to Cora Pearl, our generation has witnessed the enslaving power of these tyrants of lust. They have dried up the generous enthusiasm of our youth, and

destroyed those principles of trust, freedom, and sympathy, which should guide our domestic and foreign policy. From these purchased women—this human merchandise—come the frenzied menads of bloody revolution, human tigers who delight in destruction and torture. They are growing up amongst us here, as elsewhere, moral dynamite ready for explosion.

Who is guilty of this appalling conversion of women into demons ; this contagion of evil which in ever-widening circles is destroying our moral health, and injuring the modesty, freedom, and dignity of all womanhood ? The immediate cause is the man, whether prince or peasant, who purchases a woman for the gratification of lust. It is this purchase which draws women into the clutches of a godless money-making machine, which never loosens its hold of the feeble creature, until the essential features of womanhood are crushed out of recognition. The irresponsible polyandry of prostitution with its logical acceptance and regulation of brothels, has replaced in the West the polygamy of the East. In both, degradation, discouragement of marriage, and injustice to women, create a fatal barrier to permanent national progress. But there is a more insidious source of evil than the direct purchaser. The conversion of women into merchandise, whilst it produces a dangerous deterioration of female character, unavoidably re-acts upon male character. This evil tends in women to produce the vices of the slave, viz., deceit, falsehood, and servility ; in men it tends to foster the vices of the slave-holder, arrogance, selfishness, and cruelty. In both it engenders that deadly sin—hypocrisy. (Matt. chap. 23.)

Hypocrisy is the vice which, above all others, our Lord denounces with the most awful condemnation ; raising the drunkard and the harlot, with his far-seeing, merciful purity, and thrusting the scribe and pharisee—secret fornicators—into their place. “ He that is without sin, let him cast the

first stone." * Hypocrisy is the vice which distinguishes in the most marked degree, those nations which dare to call themselves Christian, but who practically deny every principle of Christ's teaching in the conduct of public and, to a great extent, private affairs. It is under this reign of hypocrisy that a more dangerous condition of sexual evil has grown up amongst us than has ever existed amongst heathen nations. When a savage tribe enslaves its enemies and trades in human flesh, it does not trade against its conscience. In its rudimentary condition of slow emergence from brutish ignorance, it knows no higher standard than a savage display of muscular force. When a polygamous nation buys both men and women, or endeavours to enforce the physical chastity of women by harem imprisonment, it obeys the highest authority it knows of, its religion, believed in, although erroneous in its teaching. The bitterest hatred and undying hostility

* Those who consider that the clergy are necessarily followers of Christ should read attentively the *Guardian* of August 11th, 1886. It is there stated that, "What is said about the rich in the New Testament does not apply at all to the rich of our time." "We give an answer which does reverse the estimate in the New Testament."—"It is the universal feeling of the clergy that the poor need their attention more than the rich." The noteworthy statement is made in this journal, "idleness, luxury, and pride may live side by side with religion;" and that the rich who excited Christ's indignation were "proud, sensual, covetous, *religious*." A New England Professor, in blindly classing together Christ and Zola, says: "Jesus calls pride the blackest, and incontinence the lightest, of mortal sins. (*Boston Advertiser*, July 29th.) The church *Guardian* writes: "We see more plainly than is necessary the danger of looseness." Christ "speaks tolerantly of common immorality." He was "relatively scornful to religion, and indulgent towards sensual vice." We thus see the Pantheist and the *Guardian*—professed teachers of truth—inculcating the same heresy, and failing to see that it was hypocrisy that Christ, the model to all rescue-workers, denounced as the deadly sin. The lesson must be learned, that those who profess to be religious teachers do not always understand the meaning of religion, and are not always loyal to Christ.

felt by Mohammedan as well as savage communities to their Western invaders is due to the violation of their women, and the treatment of those women according to the demoniacal and hypocritical customs of their lustful conquerors. However false the standard of the savage or semi-barbarous peoples may be, they possess one, and strive to realise it. But the corruption which the latest and intensest phase of competitive money values has introduced into the most enlightened nations, is unexampled in the history of the race. The deliberate reasoning out, and justification of the conversion of women into things, is the abuse of our highest faculties, our power of reason and conscience. Moral hypocrisy, founded on intellectual dishonesty, is the most dangerous disease that can afflict the human race.

The cruel vice of fornication, protected by hypocrisy, is sowing moral scrofula broadcast, and like an insidious poison producing generations of feeble ricketty wills, and maniacal monsters. It is the degeneracy of the race! The palliation of this vice is shaking the foundation of our civilisation, by destroying the moral basis on which alone progressive society can rest. The purchaser of a woman is directly guilty, but a deeper source of evil influence is the man or the woman who excuses and sanctions the purchase of women, by upholding a double standard of morality for the sexes. In the present age, whilst the actively licentious are following evil customs like sheep, their intellectual and spiritual leaders are throwing a veil of hypocrisy over these customs. The God-given faculties for creating literature, investigating science, and promoting religion, are being perverted to the justification or palliation of lust.

Our Brothers have hitherto been the rough and active pioneers of human progress; first moulding the material framework of society, then becoming its leaders and teachers; teachers of those fundamental moral relations on which human society rests.

' But a time has come in the development of the race, when much of the teaching and judgment formed by one half the race alone, is seen to be liable to error, and requires to be weighed and approved by the other half of mankind.

The woman half is necessarily slower in development from being appointed to bear that great altruistic burden—maternity. But the very shackles or sufferings thus undergone for the sake of the race, tend gradually to produce in women special adaptations to the higher spiritual ends of creation.

When we now inquire into, and weigh the value of the teachings offered to women as the guide of their human relationship to men, we are struck with its amazing contradictions. All classes and sections bring forth their varying opinions. The scientist and the theologian, the physician and the comtist, the lawyer and the journalist, the literary and the business man, the official and the man of leisure, are all seen carrying their load of heterogeneous materials to help build up the Babel of advice to women. All assert their knowledge of "Nature and Instinct," of "Science and History," or "the tragical plea of material necessity, to justify opinions founded on misunderstood data.* But the sectional opinions of a portion of the race must necessarily be either imperfect, arrogant or sentimental, and God confounds the Tower which foolish mortals strive to raise to Heaven. All those, both men and women, who retain their reverence for sex, turn away from this unseemly Babel of conceit and short-sightedness, and ponder these things in hearts earnestly seeking truth.

The great question now at issue is the Unity of the Moral Law. This unity is being attacked by the intellectual

* A clergyman has lately justified harlotry on the ground that "vicarious suffering is a law of existence, and sacrifice must continue." Therefore, women must be victims.

shortsightedness, or unconscious intellectual dishonesty of those who should be its most enlightened upholders.

One of our leading family journals has lately stated that "the modern notion of equality impairs the responsibility of special classes for special virtues." There is a sense in which special classes may be said to hold special responsibility. Women who are so vitally affected by the relations of the sexes, are especially called on to strengthen and guide the sexual virtue of a people. They must consider the conditions essential to such virtue, and when they clearly see the truth, an army of noble men will zealously help in shaping truth into practice. The great truth which women are now learning, is the necessity that every man should be chaste. This is the truth so long unrecognised, but at last discovered as the solution of the great social problem. Without male chastity female chastity is impossible.

Virtue is not self-righteousness. It is unconscious of itself, because it has become a mode of individual existence, and it maintains its vitality by care for others. A chaste woman does not think of her own purity, she thinks of the poor girl drudging in cellars, or hurrying at night, waylaid by tempters, to her poor home, or "drilled" in the rich man's shop; she thinks of her cherished sons with their noble and innocent young manhood exposed to the influence of the corrupt adult. Woman's responsibility for the purity of society commands her to announce the conditions of purity, and unmask with a relentless justice—which is now the truest mercy—those destroyers of national purity, the upholders of a double standard of sexual morality. The fact that so many cultivated intellects resort to fallacy or metaphysical abstraction, to palliate the destructive abuse of our sexual powers, is a direct call on women to help in spreading truth.

There cannot be one moral law for human beings, which is at the same time of unequal application to them. Moral law is not the creation of mediæval art, which substituting a

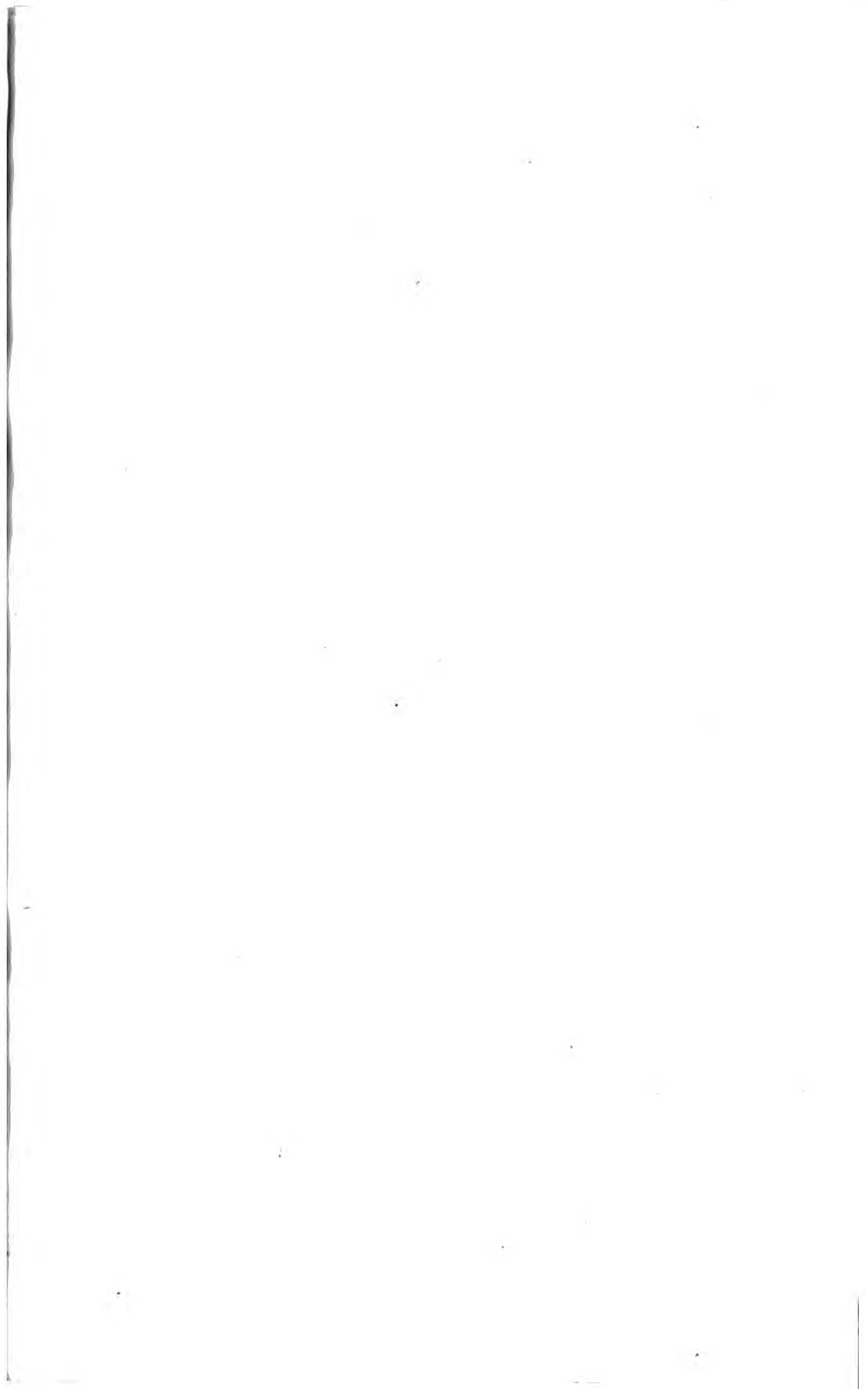
symbol for entity, represents the Great Creator as an aged man, with long grey beard, seated upon clouds. The moral law is not the arbitrary dictum of a man. The authority of the moral law springs from its adaptation by the Creator, to the nature of the beings subjected to it. It is the guide to the highest end of that nature, the necessary method by which its welfare is secured. Its authority is absolute, not relative, because it is the method of highest growth. Divine law admits of no exception, it cannot contradict itself. It is equally binding on the weakest, as on the strongest; on the man as on the woman—or it is not law. If men are so constituted that they can grow to the full stature of manhood without obedience to the law of purity, then the moral law of purity does not exist for them, because it is not a necessary method of growth to their highest human development; their nature is not adapted by the Creator to the moral law; its influence over them is thus weakened, its absolute authority destroyed.

To profess to accept the Unity of the Moral Law, but at the same time seek to avoid its consequences, is hypocrisy. The moral law cannot be evaded by any metaphysical creation of "noble moral paradoxes." * Any attempt to define purity as unequally binding on the sexes by being "more for women, but not less for men," is worse than nonsense, it is dangerous sophistry. It is a confusion of right and wrong, placing men and women on diverging paths which will lead them ever farther apart. It is a strange spectacle, the nineteenth century Adam, cowering under the over-powering justice of the moral law, seeking refuge behind a paradox! But the weak and erring children of one Great Creator, bound to live together and help or injure one another, must not be turned away from each other by the arrogance or ignorance of any portion of the race. What mortal can determine the varying

* See the *Spectator*, July 31, 1886.

kind and quality of temptations which assail another mortal life? Who shall dare to say to another, you are not tempted as I am? Who can measure the weakness or the strength of another soul, and measure out judgment by shifting standards of right and wrong? Only by humility can we gain wisdom. Only by doing the will of the Creator shall we learn the doctrine of Truth.

On a future occasion it will be necessary to dwell on those differences of adaptation in men and women which are now so widely misunderstood, and which therefore produce discord instead of harmony in human life. It will then be seen that the cruel and destructive practice of purchase can and will be entirely abolished. By the triumphant vindication of the unity of the moral law, which underlies equally political economy and all departments of social life, our race will enter upon a new and hopeful stage of future progress.



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