WOMAN AND TO-MORROW

W. L. GEORGE

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WOMAN AND TO-MORROW

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

NOVELS:

A BED OF ROSES. *Eighth Edition*

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MISCELLANEOUS:

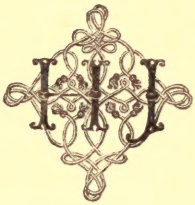
ENGINES OF SOCIAL PROGRESS

FRANCE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

LABOUR AND HOUSING AT PORT SUNLIGHT

WOMAN
AND TO-MORROW

BY
W. L. GEORGE



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WOMAN AND TO-MORROW

I

GENERAL

FEMINISM is often confounded with Suffragism. This is damaging and inaccurate. It is therefore necessary to define Feminism, and this may appear tiresome in essays which do not pretend to be more than indications, milestones on the road to understanding. But the Feminist idea, like most modern ideas, is suggestive rather than didactic. It has not yet crystallised into a final form, and therein lie its strength and its hope; it has no rules, few text-books, no traditions, no shibboleths, and its adherents wage against one another a fierce, if beneficial war. It is like an infant whose skull-bones are not yet set, under whose young skin the fresh, generous blood can be seen as it flows. It has not attained the obstinacies of the adult, felt

the trammels of its own conventions; when it is not dumb it is hysterical. The Feminist principle is bursting with its own vitality. And it is hot, uneasy, controversial; it is prompt to adopt, prompt to reject and expel; it readily cries out upon the doubter: "We are betrayed!" it splits upon every obstacle into schismatic movements, as lava upon a rock. You must take Feminism as the Feminist preaches it—or find another Feminist: there is no compromise.

This is the story of every progressive movement. Already Liberalism has divided into several streams, Imperialist, Orthodox, and Radical, which flow resentfully in a single channel, while Labour, Fabian Socialism, Independent Labour, Social Democracy, and Syndicalism watch one another in a hostile spirit. With progress comes schism. Conservatism even, in an attempt to be "progressive," that is to say constructive, has produced the "Confederates" and the rebellious young section which reluctantly obeys the old leaders. Feminism, in so far as it is concerned with ideas, is undergoing the same pressure:

while the process by which it "finds itself" is at first weakening, it must in the end strengthen the movement by refining it, excluding the dishonest and the incompetent, by concentrating power in the hands of the minority. In Feminism, as in other movements, it is the minority and not the majority that matters. It is for this reason I venture, as a declared Feminist, to lay down certain opinions; it matters little whether they be agreeable to many, it matters very much whether they be agreeable to some. And I repeat that opinions are not rules: a discussion of Feminism must, at the present stage of social development, be considered principally as a stimulant.

Feminism can be defined broadly as a furthering of the interests of women, more specifically as the social and political emancipation of woman, and philosophically as the levelling of the sexes. The three definitions have their value, especially their application value, for they enable the exponent, in a Jesuitical spirit, to convert with the one formula persons to whom the

other two would mean nothing. The first is, however, somewhat dishonest; the second is sound but theoretic; the third embodies our immediate aims. To further woman's happiness or interests may indeed be taken in different ways. A number of white men are still imbued with the harem idea. They have, it is true, called it "home," taken a hare and baptised it "carp"; they have relaxed the harem regulations, but in the main they still believe in "woman's sphere." They do not confine women by means of bars and bolts, but still attempt to limit their activities, to throw them back on their household, their household gods and the household god—the husband. Naturally this does not appeal to us, who consider that "*Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum putto*" should include woman together with man. Those men who wish to exclude woman from certain occupations, to discourage the exercise of her discretion in the choice of friends and pleasures, to maintain her in a state of favoured subjection, may love woman very deeply, but much as they love their dog. Their attitude

is that of the Victorian sentimentalist who never laid his hand upon woman save in the way of patronage. For this reason the definition is inadequate.

The social and political emancipation of woman corresponds far better to the true meaning of Feminists; it includes Suffragism, but is not limited by it. Indeed, Feminists look upon Suffragism as no more than a part of their programme; they invest its obtention and its use with no sacred quality. It is for them but one of the steps which should be taken, and it is not proven that Feminism cannot succeed unless women have votes. The development of Syndicalism, of which we know little save the early stages, tends to show how greatly overrated is political pressure, how much swifter and more drastic action can be when it is freed from the childish formalities of procedure. The sex-Syndicalism to which Feminists may yet resort should be a far more efficient weapon than the more or less purchasable polling-slip men have for so many generations dropped into the Lethe of the ballot-box. We wish to establish

that the intellectual capacities of the two sexes, though different, are not unequal. We do not contend that a woman will make a good soldier, sailor, judge, foreign minister, railway guard, or horse slaughterer, but we do contend that she should not be debarred by law or by custom from competing for these more or less valuable offices. We ask that woman should be allowed to enter the lists, and that she should not receive a handicap. At present male society either favours women or hampers them: it is unable to look upon them as rivals or equals, but must consider them as humble collaborators or as gracious queens. The Feminist claim is that they should be considered merely as human beings.

It will be seen in the chapters that follow in what directions emancipation is required. The suffrage agitation has cast so lurid a light upon many of these that it will not be necessary to dilate upon them. The material sex-disabilities, such as the exclusion of women from the legal profession, their partial exclusion from priestcraft, the

quasi-inaccessibility of the Honours List, the denial of a vote and of the faculty to sit in Parliament (even when they possess a barony in their own right), their ineligibility to Freemasonry—these are not in the Feminist view the vital grievances of women. Feminist action is directed against attitudes rather than against situations; its desire is to abolish in men a state of mind which it considers evil, suicidal, and cruel. Briefly it aims at a mental rather than at a material adjustment of relations. It is essentially philosophic.

I do not suggest that sex-disabilities must not be removed. They must and they will be removed, as they have been to a greater or lesser degree in certain States; but this again is but part of the Feminist programme. It is not enough that New Zealand should give women votes; it does not even satisfy us that Norway allows women to sit in Parliament. We want a mental recognition of status, for there is no true status without a mental recognition. The removal of sex-disabilities does not of itself alter the status of woman; being

a product of public opinion, the status of woman can be modified solely by the result upon men's minds of the equalising of sex-conditions. The levelling tendencies of Feminism are best understood if we resort to a simple illustration. I cannot trace the exact date when women began to smoke cigarettes; I imagine that the practice followed upon the great stiff-collar-and-bloomer movement of the eighties, but that is not important. What is important is that, at the inception, a woman who smoked cigarettes was regarded as loose; then, and little by little, she was allowed to smoke in public, until to-day, in all save the most *collet-monté* circles, no protest arises when a woman takes a cigarette from her case. So far that is what the Suffragists would call a victory: the prohibition has been removed. But the Feminists go further. They find that, in certain circles, a woman need no longer smoke covertly, apologetically, or archly; she merely smokes, and a man will offer her a cigarette as casually as he would to another man. Therein lies the difference of degree between Suffragism

and Feminism: we do not attach much importance to the removal of the disability, but we attach immense importance to the fact that some men have forgotten that there ever was a disability. *It is not what women may do that matters, but the taking for granted of what they may do.*

It appears at once that Feminism is infinitely more greedy than Suffragism. We are not content with the more or less sterile products of the ballot-box; we wish to arrive at a state when the differences between men and women will be reduced to sexual differences, because those alone are natural. It would be absurd to contend that women are, at present, the equals of men. They are not; as individuals, even, they are inferior, physically, mentally and intellectually—which does not mean that a George Sand is inferior to the average coal-heaver. But George Sand was certainly inferior to, say, Balzac, while the coal-heaver is almost invariably far ahead of his wife so far as education and public spirit are concerned. To refuse to acknowledge this, to put forward the single swallows of

Joan of Arc, Catherine of Russia, Mary Wollstonecraft, etc. against the gorgeous battalions of masculine genius is an absurd and suicidal error. Feminists will not set up Aunt Sallies for their enemies. That which has been need not, however, always be; we are bold enough to believe that woman has had no opportunity in the Feminist sense since the intellectual life of the world began. Notably in the arts the works of women have not been judged as works, but as the works of women, and that spirit is the one we wish to destroy.

We must consider that the education of women is essentially a novelty. I do not refer to elementary education, for, in this sense, the education of men is also a novelty, but to the broader education which lies beyond the school-book, the education in character, responsibility, and public interest. So long as women were looked upon as chattels their education was wasted—that is, such education as they were given, namely, a blend of artistic training and household economy. It is not what one learns that matters, but what one is allowed to know

Here again the Feminist point of view appears: we do not think it material that girls should learn engineering, but we do wish to attain a social condition where no one will be surprised because they learn engineering. We attach far more value to the formation of their character than to knowledge they may acquire.

This question of character lies at the root of Feminism. We believe that if the majority of women are what they are, inaccurate, petty, calumnious, dishonourable, and vain, it is because everything that could be done to develop these traits in them has been done. The ages have given woman the status of the slave and developed in her the characteristics of the slave; we believe that by inverting conditions, causing her to develop in freedom, we can give her the characteristics of the free woman. We do not believe that women are inherently inaccurate, petty, calumnious, dishonourable, and vain, and we can prove our contention by pointing to those women who have been partially emancipated by the arts and the trades. In the midst of the great inferior majority

a class of woman has grown up in the course of the last twenty or thirty years, which is serious (sometimes too serious), public-spirited, and honest. That is the arts and crafts worker, the school teacher, the female doctor, the government inspector; briefly it is the type which, by earning its own livelihood, has learned to hold up its head. If numbers of women have thus been freed from the vices of their sex, induced by the tyranny of the other sex, we feel justified in contending that there are among the women still enslaved an immense number of candidates for freedom.

It is not necessary for the Feminist to prove that every woman is a potentially efficient person, for it is evident that all men are not efficient. Indeed, if our standard be at all high we must admit that a high degree of skill and strength of character is uncommon among men. Among men laziness, stupidity and grossness abound; while woman shows the characteristics of the slave, man shows those of the slave-owner. He is in the main selfish, ignorant, and brutal; secure in his power, he feels

secure in a superiority which is often self-complacent vacuousness. We must not be carried away by the names of Raphael, Shakespeare, George Stephenson, and Dostoievsky; we must not be discouraged because there have been no female geniuses. Woman has not had time. I am inclined to believe with Mme. M. L. Almeras * that "at the elementary bases of her great, ancient forces, sleep the germs of a creative intellect, of an order and a new genius which, to mature, need naught save freedom."

Moreover, the development of genius does not concern our body politic. I am not prepared to say that *la République n'a pas besoin de savants*, but I think it more immediately necessary to raise our general status than to dream of eugenically producing another giant of science or of art. It is questionable whether an adequate person such as Ruskin has not more greatly influenced his nation than has the solitary and aristocratic genius of George Meredith.

* "L'Evasion," par Madame M. L. Almeras (Calmann-Levy, Paris, 3 frs. 50).

The Feminists are not directly concerned with genius; they believe that within womanhood may be found a mute, inglorious Milton, but they are not looking for the seer. They wish to establish that the proportion of generally efficient women is as great as the proportion of efficient men; this being established they claim that those women should not be looked upon as essentially different from men, but as essentially similar to them.

It appears from the above that the Feminist has before him a task far more difficult, because far more elusive, than has the Suffragist. It is comparatively easy to gain a material end, but it is very difficult to alter a point of view. The vote that men reluctantly concede, the policy to which they dishonestly pledge themselves because they hope to be paid by results—these solid gains do not content us. It will not serve us if laws are in the future directed against man as they were once directed against woman; it will not serve us to establish by force that which was once established by favour, for we do not aim

at an unequal state. An idea is abroad that women look upon themselves as the superior sex and believe that they should rule the world; a few do hold this distorted view, a view as distorted as that of men, who still look upon themselves as the natural rulers; but the main body of Feminist opinion is not so blind to its own aims. We wish to establish a state of balance when sex-differences will remain, but when sex-privileges will vanish. We rise as angrily against the laws by which women alone benefit as against those by which they alone suffer; we wish to establish such a condition that the statute book shall not contain the word "man" and the word "woman," but shall substitute therefor the word "person."

This attitude drives us to logical extremes, such as opening to women the ranks of the army, but there is no reason why we should do in practice that which we do in principle. There is one thing which does not matter in politics, and that is principle. I will not be drawn into a puerile discussion of feminine regiments: the idea is absurd. Enthusiasts have unfortunately alleged that

the female animal is improving, and the male decaying, and believe this may ultimately tip the scale; they have named half a dozen women warriors, but in the main they have done damage to Feminism. I think we must consider certain occupations and practices as physically closed to women, but we must not accept that because women are not fit for certain things they are not fit for other things. And it should be said, by the way, that we do not set a child of ten at puddling iron, but we do not despise the child. And we do not ask a would-be Prime Minister whether he can puddle iron.

The Feminist wishes therefore to bring about a moral revolution based on a material revolution. We put some of our trust, but not all, in the Suffragist agitation; we think to draw from it the concrete advantages on which we hope to build the new consciousness. But the vote is not our battle; it is an affair in the van. The Feminist army behind has an objective of its own and will attain it by its own methods. It is impossible, at present, to say exactly what these methods will be if one fears to flounder in

a morass of utopia; political action will certainly be our instrument, but feminine opinion will have to be more fully aroused. Feminists propose to break into the preserved professions, to reform the education of girls, to subject them to an equivalent of military training and possibly to establish sumptuary laws. The opening of the professions is a small matter, but will be a big struggle; already medicine and dentistry are open; the councils of the Bar and of the solicitors will have to be coerced by political action. I repeat that we do not value the prize, for I think it doubtful that clients will readily employ women barristers and solicitors, even at blackleg prices; but we wish to attain a right. There are landowners in England who are entitled to stop trains: they do not make a practice of holding up expresses, but they maintain their rights by stopping one train every year. That is our position in regard to the legal profession. We do not want the material benefits of a new occupation, but we wish to remove from the minds of men the idea that a woman cannot

possibly plead in a court of law, be a K.C. or a judge. We want to remove the restriction because we believe that restrictions make slaves. *

The education of girls is a larger issue on which a great deal might be written. It has been much improved in the course of the last half century. Miss Beale's Cheltenham School, Girton, Newnham, Bedford College, etc.—all these institutions have given to the education of women a semblance of reality. Their imperfections are those of English schools and colleges in general, where everything is respected except learning; they will vanish if and when they vanish in the men's faculties, but Feminists will have to do away with certain obvious absurdities, such as the denial of degrees to women at Oxford and Cambridge. I repeat that Feminists do not so much value Oxford and Cambridge degrees as the right to enter for them; they are aware that they can obtain as good an education in the new universities, but they must suppress in the

* *See* "Woman," by Bebel.

mind of their brothers the idea that certain universities may be reserved for them. To do away with these restrictions is, however, but to scratch the surface of the problem; the education itself must be reformed on Feminist lines.

Feminist opinion, like lay opinion, is divided on co-education. It is not, in the main, hostile to a system which embodies its principles, but it is not blind to the danger of equalising sex together with opportunity. It appears that co-education tends to make girls boisterous and rough, the boys soft and unenterprising; it does not produce a single sex, but it tends to wipe out the outer distinctions of the sexes, those distinctions by favour of which they attract and charm each other. Feminists are too conscious of the splendour of passion to welcome the uniform product of co-education; their ideal is to maintain the sharpest possible physical differences, while causing the mental and intellectual outlook to become the same. It is argued in favour of co-education that it teaches the sexes to know each other, to become accustomed to

each other: if this is true, and if the world is to be co-educated, the most beautiful thing it knows will assuredly disappear. We naturally love the unknown rather than the known; we wish to maintain the mystery of sex, so that human beings may each in turn discover a paradise. It is not on co-education that Feminism relies, but on better general education, on the crushing by the State school of the private girls' school, where the study of taste and the musical glasses leaves little time for Shakespeare. It relies also on the more revolutionary method of compulsory school education for all classes up to a relatively advanced age, probably sixteen, so that girls may escape the willing but incompetent governess: the education of girls must not be made the prey of women who adopt teaching because they do not know anything. Lastly, it relies upon physical training.

Physical training is essentially the equivalent of military service. If we possessed a conscript army, compulsory physical training for women would be

enforceable. It is not utopian to write of it, though, for there are many rumours of war, and it will not be surprising if "compulsory volunteering" is ultimately passed into law. Feminism, besides, is international; it is not solely concerned with these small and retrograde isles. It is therefore allowable to say that Feminism welcomes the idea of a period in camps, where games will be sedulously practised, together with nursing, field-work, the making of clothes and furniture, first-aid, signalling, etc. The object is not war, it is physical development, and the movement is not unnecessary: games are played at Cheltenham, but they are not played in provided schools. As for the fitness of women for the rougher exercises, it is beyond question; we have but to consider our hockey, lacrosse, and swimming teams, and the growing strength of the "Girl Guides." I feel that some form of compulsory physical training will greatly improve the chances of our women in their contest with the ruling sex.

Lastly, and I must be excused the only utopian idea I have put forward in this

essay, there are the sumptuary laws. I can assign no date to their drafting, and it is likely that the social system itself will collapse before they can be applied,* but I am convinced that women are degraded by their insensate desire to deck themselves out in finery. They are not entirely to blame; being slaves they must strive to please so as to acquire a protector, together with a master; when they have acquired a protector they must still strive to please so as to retain his favour. But they are also personally to blame; they are competing, not only for the vicarious exercise of masculine power, which would be legitimate enough, but they strive in a petty spirit to outshine their fellows, because they think therein to find a sensation of victory. The elegant woman does not want to be a work of art; she wants to insult and humiliate her sister; she values her rival's clothes and judges her according to their cost; she steals from necessaries the price of luxuries and, by the force of her ex-

* *See* "The Madras House," by Granville Barker.

ample, becomes a social pest. I do not argue, in a puritanical spirit, that a wealthy woman should dress meanly; there would be no need for her to abstain from eighty-guinea frocks and twenty-guinea hats* if her fellows could afford them also. Indeed, I can conceive of money as well spent on clothes, if only because "to be well dressed produces a holy calm," but it is not good for woman in general that the calm of the one should be bought at the price of another's rage and humiliation. It may be said that this rage and humiliation are evidences of weakness, and that women should be "above" such feelings; unfortunately they are not "above" them, and Feminism must take into account that the competing slaves suffer bitterly under the handicap. It is because they are slaves that they suffer, and it is because they suffer that they remain slaves. The anger of the working-man who beholds the rich man in his motor-car † is as nothing by the side

* These prices are paid. Indeed, a hat has cost fifty guineas, a sable coat £4,000.

† "The Labour Unrest," by H. G. Wells.

of his daughter's anger in the presence of an aigrette. I believe that a proportion of prostitution is directly traceable to this cause. It may be that, as women develop and gain status, they will become superior to the passion for ornament. It is not desirable that they should become altogether superior to it, and I think men have gone too far in their exclusion from their own clothing of colours and delicate stuffs; but women should be helped and not impeded, as they are at present by the social curse of the "smart" woman. It is not necessary to frame here even tentative sumptuary laws; but the idea matters. Feminism in general is then not merely selfish; it aims at raising the tone of women as it raises their status; it wishes to make women worthy of the honour it will earn for them, and to make of their womanhood an instrument of reform as well as of self-elevation.

II

FEMINISM AND SUFFRAGISM

II

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I DO not believe that women are fit to have a vote. That is why I want them to have it. I am convinced that woman's political outlook is narrow, prejudiced, and mean, that her support will, at the inception, be readily accorded to any measure that is definitely sentimental or definitely brutal, to any law which restricts public expenditure and well-doing.* If there be such a thing as progress woman will be the drag upon the wheel. It is fruitless to argue that this has not been the case in New Zealand, for we must deal with women in general and, as we are talking politics, it is certain that Englishwomen

* It must be understood that when, in this essay, I refer to "woman" I except the intellectual minority. These are the finger-posts of the Feminist movement.

know far more of politics than do their sisters in Germany, France, and the United States. But they do not know much. They are governed exclusively by their passions and their interests. They coalesced to procure the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, the working of which they were not familiar with, because their feelings and not their minds were stirred. I do not defend the Contagious Diseases Act; judging from evidence collected in foreign countries it appears devoid of importance so long as prostitution endures. Whether that horrible thing be regulated or not seems unworthy of consideration, for the regulation of vice in Europe has done nobody any good or any harm. It has not lowered the mentality of the foreign prostitute, for that it could not do; it has not lowered the standard of masculine chivalry, for that also it could not do; it has neither improved nor damaged the health of nations. If there is no "regulation of vice" in England it is because women wept instead of thinking.

Likewise the women of New Zealand

and of certain American states procured the enforcement of local prohibition; the naturally healthy hatred of drunkenness developed in them into fanaticism. They exemplified their temperament, that of the extremist. Incapable of conceiving that anybody might drink in moderation, they decided that nobody ought to drink at all. I argue more definitely against prohibition than against the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, for the latter does not matter, while the former is important. Prohibition means that perfectly normal pleasures have been stolen from man's scanty store, that conviviality and friendship have been impeded and whole districts charged with weakness of mind. Alcohol may be an evil, but we have still to learn that the brave man is the one who runs away from it. If women supported prohibition it was, in the first place, because they jumped to conclusions and believed that if men were allowed to drink they would become drunkards; it was, in the second place, because they were so moved by the sight of the drunkard's wife and child that they

decided no bachelor should be allowed alcohol. The New Zealand prohibition laws have been evaded in many ways,* but they are important as indicating women's tendencies.

Lastly, there is public expenditure. The cry of woman is invariably: "Reduce the rates." Apart from those women who have joined political associations, women who swallow the programme of their party, which is usually that of their men-folk, women electors are almost invariably ranged in local elections against any party which proposes to spend money. This is well known among political canvassers; it is no use going to them with measures of generosity unless the generosity is to begin in their own homes. It follows that they would be equally avaricious if they controlled imperial taxation, that they would vote solid against measures such as Old Age Pensions, Workmen's Compensation, Health Insurance, etc. Indeed, the outbursts in the Press, signed with feminine

* *See* "New Zealand and Its Politics," by Percy A. Harris, L.C.C.

names, when the Compensation Acts were extended to servants and when the Insurance Act was brought in, the meetings and the petitions, indicate how averse are women to spending money.

It is evident, therefore, that the addition to the register of a number of women will, so far as the opinion of the voters reacts upon the legislators, herald in an era of cruelty, sentimentality, and meanness. If the voter were effectively represented by his representative I should, Feminist as I am, shrink from the idea of inflicting upon the world the laws women would favour. They would refuse money to education, to land development, and to labour, but they would gladly spend it on inspiring troops and ships; they would, in the fine words of Mr. Stewart Headlam, confront the children and, in lieu of bread, give them flagstaffs. The revolution will not go thus far, but only because the male legislators will save the situation by violating their mandate. The years that follow the introduction of women's suffrage will be uneasy and chaotic, and many ugly things may be done, but

Feminists believe that the initial chaos is inevitable, that women can, no more than men, evolve into human beings without making mistakes.

I believe that chaos and error are essential if woman is to come into her kingdom. If it is accepted that women in general are as I paint them, politically narrow, passionate and mean, it is important to ask ourselves why they are in such a mental condition. These characteristics are not those of the slave, but of the half-educated, and this remark is immensely significant if there be any virtue in my case. Their attitude towards such measures as the Contagious Diseases Act, capital punishment, the white-slave traffic, prohibition, is essentially unreflecting. I do not suggest that the male voter is much better posted on Tariff Reform or land questions, but he is more educated, and therefore more inclined to weigh pros and cons; he is not so readily carried away by gusts of passion. He is hardened, sometimes ossified, but generally he is as good a product as can be expected under a broad franchise. Woman has not

had the political education which can be obtained by an illiterate man; it has for many years been open to her to study public questions, to read, if she fancies, political economy, history and philosophy, but she has never had the essentially "sporting" stimulus of being an elector.

Those who have taken part in elections will understand my point. They know how electors are canvassed, loaded with literature in the streets, how they are pursued into their houses by argumentative speakers, how their letter-boxes are choked with pamphlets, how they are begged, forced to attend meetings. Women have not been treated in that way. While men have for eighty years been compelled to listen to the banging of the political drums, women have been asked to work like machines in committee rooms, to look pretty when putting to the voters questions they did not themselves understand; elections have for them been, not elections, but the wearing of favours. Politicians have, besides, found out that women are snobs; the Primrose League and the Liberal Social Council are

nothing but vast organisations the object of which is to enable the common people to shake hands with Countesses and Cabinet Ministers' wives; when they wanted to use women, politicians pandered to them, offered them in lieu of political education a sticky compound of patronage and tea. Everything that was low in woman has been made lower, because the lowest minds are the most malleable; everything that is noble and passionate has been neglected because it would have been a nuisance. Politicians found it advantageous to have women stupid and pretty; as they had no votes there was no need to cultivate their minds.

It is because of this mental condition that an extraordinary blend of Imperialism and avarice has developed in the feminine mind; because they are ignorant they have been intoxicated by flag-wagging, and because they are ignorant they do not realise that flag-wagging means the swollen estimates they detest. I do not attack Imperialism: I am perfectly convinced that Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, Mr.

Chamberlain, Sir Leander Jameson, have in their minds a coherent plan, believe (and rightly believe) that ours is the finest Western civilisation the lower races can be subjected to, but I am as firmly convinced that Imperialism among women is naught save a muddy, sanguinary dream. There is no philosophic view in their talk, but there is vainglory; their Imperialism is that of a mafficking crowd, an affair of regiments marching past while the band plays "The British Grenadiers." For them it never plays "The Girl I Left Behind Me." And they think, vaguely but insistently, of blood, of the map painted red with it; they are not consciously but unconsciously cruel; they are sadistic; there is an air about war, a dramatic touch which seduces them, which does not seduce the men, who know that war means mainly empty stomachs and wet boots, lying in the dirt and firing at nothing. Yet they resent expenditure, they turn towards any remedy, Tariff Reform, "making the foreigner pay," so that they may have their Imperial cake and eat it.

How could it be otherwise? How many women know anything about history, ancient or modern? or foreign politics? What woman knows the views of Mr. von Kiderlen-Waechter or the difference between the American Republicans and the Democrats? Few men, and, I presume, fewer women can define the Monroe doctrine or the status of the Congo. Yet it is these untutored minds write, agitate and speak. The speeches of political women, often capable when dealing with internal topics, are ludicrous when they discuss foreign, i.e. Imperial affairs. The education of men is bad enough: the education of women does not exist. I am so sanguine as to think that the vote will help them.

That is the centre of my position as a Feminist. I believe that the vote, and nothing but the vote, will induce women to study the questions on which they now hold forth with the violence of the ignorant. They will, in the first place, be courted by party politicians, for they will, for a generation, be looked upon as the new, the doubtful voters. Now every experienced

politician knows that it is not the stalwarts who matter; they need no convincing, for they know on which side they vote, even if they do not know why they so vote: it is the "doubtfuls" who turn the scale. While the stalwarts mechanically go to the poll the "doubtfuls" hold back, shift their allegiance, or refuse to enter the booth; it is they must be captured. Therein lies woman's immense chance. For a number of years the female vote will be capable of turning the scale; wherever the women vote solid their side will win, and the politicians will at once realise the fact: it is the kind of fact they do realise. I do not, by the way, believe that women will vote solid; they will divide as naturally as do the men, but the politicians will for a long time hope to capture them *en bloc*, and it is therefore upon the women they will concentrate; it is they will be pestered, converted and re-converted; it is they will receive leaflets, pamphlets, invitations to meetings. Indeed, the combined force of the politicians in every party will be mobilised for them. The result will, at first, be intellectual chaos. Women

will be asked to assimilate enormous subjects, such as the Tariff Reform idea, land questions, imperial taxation; they will be hopelessly puzzled, and, like the men, often vote stupidly, but their travail will not be in vain. It has been said that before the Tariff Reform agitation England did not know the meaning of the word "economics"; this is true, and no one will deny that the agitation has endowed the electors with a certain amount of information. It is garbled, lying information for the most part, for many individuals, on both sides, have been quite unscrupulous, but it has started hundreds of thousands of minds upon a quest for economic truth.

That is largely what I hope for women. I think their new dignities will compel them to come to grips with political questions; they will not be allowed to ignore their powers by those who have honour and four hundred pounds a year to gain. The vote means that women will be bullied into learning what modern movements mean. In direct combination with this will come education by newspaper, an education which

I venture to think more important for the average mind than any which can be drawn from books. At present women do not read newspapers. To "read" does not mean to read the accounts of murders, divorces and smart weddings, to look at the pictures and the fashion-plates; to "read" means at least to skim the Parliamentary debates, to glance at the foreign cables and the political leader. That is not very much, but it is left undone. Women wander in an artificial world where national concerns are left to men; they are busy with little things. A journey, any morning, in a railway carriage will prove me right; one man in ten readers may hold a shilling classic, but the others can be seen wading through morning papers. I do not suggest that they avoid the police news, the sports, and the railway accidents, but I do know that they preserve their papers through the day, and, after having skimmed the cream of sensation in the train, consume the more solid fare of politics with their lunch. Meanwhile the women glance at picture papers, are

engrossed in the serial, or replace the paper by a penny novelette of the lowest type; others carry with them the more hollow six-shilling novels.

The vote will change all that. Women will not be able indefinitely to resist the political canvasser; they will argue between themselves and with the men. If victorious their taste for politics will grow, for it is truer of women than of men that nothing succeeds like success; if beaten their qualities of industry and doggedness will compel them to obtain weapons for the struggle. It is the newspaper will give them their weapons; they will read to find a basis for their political faith. This will not be a good basis; it will be biassed, crude, for no newspaper has space enough to print the course of the London School of Economics; but it will no longer be the old basis of prejudice and bawling. It will be a sentient, reflective basis; the newspaper will cease to be the tragic waste of a halfpenny.

Briefly I believe that the vote, by stimulating woman's mind, will compel her

to reduce in her judgments the influence of her passions. I do not suppose that woman will ever become as uninstinctive as man, nor is it desirable she should, for there is a social value in passion to which I shall refer further on; but she must become more logical. Logic alone is worthless, but passion alone is worthless; if woman is compelled to weigh arguments instead of saying something offensive about "a petti-fogging Welsh lawyer," or "a bloated duke," as the case may be, she will be better worth listening to. And if she becomes better worth listening to her status will rise. It is not the code she may establish by means of her vote that pre-occupies Feminists, but the increased respect that must come to her when she is worthy of respect. We want men to think better of women; that is our battle, but we realise plainly that men are not fools and that they will not respect women until women are worthy of respect.

Believing as I do that woman is potentially cleverer than man, more industrious, keener—though I do not claim that she is

more creative—I have no doubt that she will justify the claim which the vote will compel her to assert. That woman is cleverer than man is a debatable proposition, even if we introduce the useful adjective "potential." I am inclined boldly to beg the question and to say: If woman has become as clever as she is under slavish conditions, how much cleverer would she not have been if the conditions had been ideal? This is bad logic, but we are working on hypothesis and induction; the known facts are few, and the existence of some thousands of intellectual women partly justifies us in saying that the possibilities of woman are great. I do not want to rate too high the qualities of Mrs. Fawcett, Mme. Curie, "Lucas Malet," the Countess of Warwick, or of Mrs. Humphry Ward, but I do submit that if these women have attained an undoubted (if varying) degree of eminence in the eyes of their generation, they have attained it in the face of difficulties which did not confront their men-folk. They have never drawn a bill on the bank of fame without paying a heavy discount.

I incline, therefore, to think that if the sex point of view is modified the development of woman will be greater and speedier; when a work is judged as a work and not as a woman's work a truer appreciation must follow. At present women appear before the jury of public opinion under a disability; the treatment afforded them is as unjust and as burlesque as would be the treatment of an alleged murderer whose guilt or innocence was to some extent adjudicated upon according to his political convictions. Tentatively I submit also that tradition comes into play. For thousands of years it has been unthinkable, or "not quite nice" that women should study aught save the minor arts, that they should attempt to create, or appear in public rôles, or dissect the human body. Molière asserted an old opinion when he caused Chrysale to say:

"Il n'est pas bien bonnête, et pour beaucoup de causes,
Qu'une femme étudie et sache tant de choses."

This has weighed heavily upon women; they have doubted themselves because every-

body doubted them; they have been afraid to speak their thoughts, even to write them in journals; sometimes they have refrained from doing their best work because they were afraid, and these were not the least delicate talents. It is said that one of the most remarkable novels written by a woman remained unpublished for a number of years because the husband disapproved of it. It is this tradition has confined woman and made her small; I believe that the development inherent to the exercise of her political rights will increase her stature.

Upon this greatness will follow a more intelligent public spirit. I have said above that women are avaricious politicians and have no use for charity unless it begins at home. This is not to be wondered at when we examine their financial past. For thousands of years they have been the slaves of their masters' purse; they have either been kept as pampered animals, devoid of money, or money has been doled out to them parsimoniously for specific objects. Generally speaking, they have had no financial training, they have never handled

large sums, they have had to practised continual small economies so as to defray the cost of their modest pleasures, and they have never earned much more than a bare living. It is not wonderful then that women's monetary views have become petty, that the idea of spending money should terrify them. Apart from those who are reckless and foolish because their masters have made them beloved slaves, they cannot bring themselves to spend; men have made them either incompetent or irresponsible. Feminists believe that if responsibility is thrust upon woman she will rise to and become worthy of her opportunity, that her opportunity will grow as her capacity grows. She is to-day like a child afraid to open its money-box; political education will enable her to see what it means and how it should be used. She must become used to estimates, budgets, credits, understand rating, taxation, debt redemption, take in something of the distribution of fortunes and of the incidence of financial measures. All this is the fruit of political education. The idea

of national finance which she will obtain may be hazy, for the men are not very clear on the subject, but it is likely to be enough. Though men are not all capable of analysing the Appropriation Bill they are able to understand that the taxes are rightly charged and necessary, that they are devoted to useful purposes; they do not so readily break out into denunciations, cry out "spoliation" and "robbery" as do the hysterical and untaught women. If they occasionally utter these cries it is merely at the behest of their political bosses; soon they acquiesce as they understand the necessity of the taxes. Feminists believe that women need no more than experience of affairs to bring them to the same point.

A knowledge of affairs will automatically cool the passion with which woman approaches politics, but not, I think, completely, and it would be a loss for the State if it did. I believe that we need passion in politics, the hot and somewhat unreasoning sense of right and wrong which so often bears down the sense of the advisable; it

was not surprising that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman cried out "Enough of this foolery" at the play of politics. Take an instance: the coal-miners struck and laid down as terms a minimum wage of five shillings a day. The principle was agreed to, the amount referred to arbitration. Now some of the arbitrators gave awards exceeding five shillings, but Lord St. Aldwyn granted the South Wales miners no more than four shillings and threepence to four shillings and ninepence. Beyond contest it was an honest award, made after full consideration, but it was a dry, unsympathetic award; it left in the minds of the men a bad impression; they thought themselves swindled by the masters and by Parliament who had "sympathised" with them; it was impolitic and ungenerous, briefly, devoid of passion. Five shillings could have been granted without affecting the price of coal, for it is notorious that the selling price has nothing to do with the cost of extraction, that the trade is in the hands of a ring of merchants, that in ordinary years house-coal costs eighteen

shillings a ton in the summer and twenty-seven shillings in the winter, that it costs just so much as the coal-ring can compel the demand to bear. One flash of passion would have illumined the darkness of the arbitrator, made him say: "Five shillings does not look like business, but it does look like generosity." And then there would have been no bitterness.

I do not contend that if women had been voters at the time, Lord St. Aldwyn would have granted the men five shillings, but I do think that the passion in educated women will react so healthily upon public opinion as to make strict but mean legality less common. I think that from women will run a current, sentimental perhaps, but beneficent, a current carrying within itself a new generosity. In spite of the meanness in which women have been compelled to live they are still more active in religious and charitable affairs than are the men; it is they do the office drudgery, the weary canvassing and the humiliating collection of money for the benighted and the poor. I do not defend the movements they

support: they are mostly futile and expensive, they divert to the happy savage energy we need in our own country, they are tainted with religious fanaticism. But I am not concerned so much with woman as with potential woman, and I believe that the enlightened public spirit which must follow on the granting of the vote will greatly benefit by this passion of religion, Empire and charity. I do not care how much evil women may work, for I am assured that the power that works evil can also work good. Fanaticism can be deflected, new shibboleths taught, and the believers be converted to other gospels.

I believe as a Feminist that this immense reservoir of intensity contains a force of which we are but dimly aware. I imagine that once women have fully realised the influence of housing upon physique and mentality, the relation that exists between the feeding of children and their education, the effects of communal control on mines, transit and milk-supply, they will throw into these causes, which men discuss too coldly, a little of their fierce, race-protecting

passion. For it is women, and not men, who care for the race; men care for achievement, for immediate improvement, and in this way they do help the race; but women look further, quite unconsciously; they see, beyond their unborn son, the endless procession he and his sons will beget. But that is a cloudy vision, a vision swathed in the wrappings of times long dead; women can conceive the race, but not yet the new race, with new standards, new desires, and a strange freedom from the old thralls. As a Feminist I want to use that intuitive faculty, to make of woman the conscious seer who will work for these children of the mist.

Militancy demonstrates the existence of this passion. For six years now women have been throwing stones, breaking windows, firing pillar boxes and mobbing ministers and members of Parliament; they have repeatedly submitted to arrest, and have cheerfully returned to the charge, knowing that they would again be subjected to imprisonment, assault, forcible feeding and insult. They have persevered, and

many have shown a heroic quality akin to insanity: the dividing line is very thin. I do not want to judge them, to discuss whether Militancy has defeated its object; I do not think so, but as a Feminist I am bound to look further ahead. What matters to us is the fanatical quality, and we do not care whether opponents attach to it the word "insane" or "hysterical": few reforming movements have come into their own, and few great deeds have been done, save by those whom Dr. Nordau and others call degenerates,* madmen, urnings, hysterical persons. If sanity means "average person," and I believe it does, we can bear with the lunatic fire of Napoleon, Nietzsche, Savonarola, Newton and Galileo. If this lunacy be genius, then we can rely upon woman as the depositary of the genius of the race; her unflinching physical courage, her yet greater moral courage in the face of gibes, the ferocity of spirit which dominates her weakness of body, all these traits make me believe that it is the passion of woman shall be the passion of the State.

* *See* "Degeneration," by Dr. Max Nordau.

The Feminist attitude towards woman's suffrage is therefore one of expectancy. We support the Suffragist movement, whatever be its demands, its aims or its methods, because we consider that the framing of any demand, the conception of any aim and the practice of any method are evidences of the revolt of woman which we desire to engineer. Believing in the sex-war that precedes sex-peace we are friendly to every form of sex-aggression; we do not care very much whether the material fruits of Suffragism fall into the hands of the Suffragists, but we do want to see them extend their hands towards the forbidden branches, for desire is the mother of action. We expect our own movement to benefit by the success of the Suffragists, for we think to draw from among the Suffragists the forces which will be unemployed when they have attained their object. Feminism is to Suffragism what Socialism is to Trade Unionism; nominally free from each other the two movements are essentially inseparable. If Feminism aims at a clearer consciousness of objects, at a longer vision, it

does not for that reason despise Suffragism, which so bravely bears the rough and tumble of action; indeed it is glad when a Suffragist is also a Feminist, sets upon activity the crown of thought and is consciously a Talleyrand as well as a Murat.

III
THE HOME

III

THE HOME

THE home is the enemy of woman. Purporting to be her protector it is her oppressor; it is her fortress, but she does not live in the state apartments, she lives in the dungeon. In modern life the home, however gaily-decked, is for her but a glorification of the basement where live the slaves of slaves. I do not think that there is a more powerful enemy of Feminism than the home, an atmosphere more deadly to all ideas of freedom and equality than the rarefied, holy air of the fireside. I speak, of course, of the home as it is to-day; and I waste no thunder on bricks and mortar, dogs and drawing-room fenders; those things, which we need or choose to have, are the representatives of a system which must be attacked through

them, and with it they must probably go, to reappear in civilised forms.

It is not that I imagine a society of units, where men and women live separate lives, but a society of voluntary organisation, an orderly anarchic society, when the sexes no more exact service from each other than do the individuals. They may give service, as I shall show, but they must not be compelled to give it: I submit that, under present social conditions, a system of slavery makes use of woman for the procuring of man's comfort. Consider indeed the home as we know it, and whether it be run on a pound a week or on a thousand a year its characteristics do not vary much. I advisedly exclude the very wealthy, though the slavery of woman is not unknown among them; in the home of a magnate the woman can relieve herself of most of her cares on the shoulders of other women; she is no longer a servant, but a manager, but it may well be that even in those homes she staggers under the weight of social organisation. Yet, as she is very well paid, we need not waste general

sympathy on her; as Feminists we may say that a millionaire's wife has a lower status than has a working woman, for she is not even a junior partner, but she does not run a home in the strict sense of the word: she runs a hotel.

The problem of the very rich woman will solve itself with that of the very rich man. Both are so luxury-drugged, so impoverished intellectually that we must look upon them as monstrous and accidental facts. Nowhere are women so low as among the very rich, and we must not be dazzled by their social or political activities: that is what they are paid for. They are low as in the scale as their domestic servants, for they have the arrogance, while the others have the humility; as arrogance and humility are the foes of social progress it is not surprising to find banded together in political action the Duchess and her cook. It is not, therefore, upon the social fungus of the luxurious home I wish to base arguments; when the march of time has brought into being fortunes which will dwarf that of Rockefeller, when the middle-class has

been crushed out and when at last labour begins to break down the vast fortunes, the wealthy home will slowly disappear and the woman who runs it will be subject to the same laws, follow the same evolution, as the woman who to-day runs an average home.

The primary characteristic of the home as I understand it, from the workman's two rooms to the thousand-pounder's house (and this can stretch to another thousand pounds), is its sacredness. The Teutonic peoples, who have manufactured the word "home," are specially proud of it, but they have no monopoly in its spirit; though Latins, Slavs and Mongols talk less about the home they are not free from its influence. Indeed, and this is curious, it is perhaps because the Anglo-Saxons feel the home as more sacred than do, for instance, the Latins, that British and American homes are freer, more liberal than those of other nations. The Anglo-Saxon so deeply respects his home that he can hardly conceive of its not being respected by other people; it is he invented "An Englishman's Home is his Castle,"

and wrote "Home, Sweet Home"; it is he discovered that "woman's place is in the home." Why this is I cannot say; it may be that the cold climate of Teuton and Scandinavian countries made of the home the place of refuge which the Latins did not need; it may be that if the latter looked upon the home as a sleeping-place merely, it is because the conditions of their countries were agreeable. All this is hypothesis; it is hypothesis too to suggest that the ferocity of defence prevalent among Latins and others is due to the home being the abode of domestic lust, that they defend the home in the same spirit as the Arab defends his harem. Those considerations are not unworthy, but origins do not trouble Feminists much; their concern is not with the past, but with the present and the future. In this essay, it is with the sacredness of the home.

By "sacred" I mean a mixed feeling, implanted deep in most men, that their home is intangibly different from and superior to that of most other men. However ill-managed and uncomfortable it has

for man a quality that is not to be found in a luxurious hotel; if a poor thing it is his own, and he is as unready to recognise it as bad as he is unwilling to pronounce his dog a mongrel, his son a booby or his wife a jade. Home, dog, son, wife, all these properties are sanctified by his enormous egotism; they are either flawless or as good as can be expected; at most, man allows it to be felt, if he be in humble mood, that "his home may not be much but it's as good as anybody else's." He will seldom express this opinion, he is too shy or too inarticulate, but he pays continual tribute to the domestic god by returning to it whenever he can, boasting of it in a non-comparative spirit, decking it and those who serve it. To be invited into the home is an honour and a favour; the invitation confers privileges but it imposes obligation: the guest may not brawl, or contradict, or behave as freely as he might in a club; he may not sit in unbecoming attitudes, he must make himself agreeable to other guests even if he dislikes them, he must not pry into secrets, and if he discover

any by chance he is bound in honour not to reveal them. When man says of a guest that he has broken his bread and eaten his salt he has expressed the sacramental feeling that is in him, inferred that the guest must treat the home very much as if it were a church.

That it is a church is evidenced by the hullabaloo that is raised when a legal enactment threatens the home and its humble subsidiary, the club. Man considers that "the sanctity of the home is violated" when the authorities propose to inspect his drains, to ascertain whether his servants are insured; he dislikes the idea that strangers may be admitted into it; if he could he would do without servants and exclude the official who checks the gas-meter. The home, he feels, would be the better for a kind of Habeas Corpus Act. That is the ideal; man dislikes departures therefrom, tolerates them when he must: but he does not tolerate anything that he need not, and one of them is that it should be neglected or refused proper worship by woman, its queen and its slave. So far as

woman is concerned she must do more than worship, she must serve; the man must pay, and I do not refuse him his due: he will usually sacrifice his time, his health and his pleasure to maintain his home, but he will not labour within it. His labour takes him far afield, to the society of his fellows, to monetary adventure; so far as home-labour is concerned he generally contracts-out.

The woman cannot contract-out. If she be a working woman her life is spent in an effort to keep the home clean, to feed and clothe and school the children, to promote peace, so that the man may, after the oppression of the day's work, luxuriate in domestic tyranny. Observe the distinction: while man exchanges the oppression of the day for the tyranny of the evening, woman knows no such compensation; she cannot "pass on" the thrall, for there is nobody to pass it on to. She has not even a servant, and if she had her tyranny would be exercised over a woman, which would be quite as bad from the Feminist point of view. Her position

recalls that of the donkey in Algeria: The official hits the soldier, who hits the settler, who hits the Arab, who hits the nigger, who hits the Jew, who hits the donkey. Woman is the donkey of the play. The well-to-do woman is in very much the same position; she must please and placate; if she does not work with her own hands she must see to it that the work is done; she must devote her energy and her brain to the sweeping and garnishing of the six to twelve rooms she is blessed with, to the careful ordering of meals, to the education and upbringing of her children, to the pursuit of economy. She is paid, in kind, under a truck system, sometimes much too well, usually not well enough; as a rule she is badly paid because the harsh task-master of her conscience is set over her to say that she is being selfish when she uses money for her own pleasure; for it is not her money: she is merely an administrator.

Leaving aside for the moment the question whether woman should work at all,* I contend that she should work in a

* See Chap. v.

useful, not a sterile manner, and as a Feminist I do not care whether she is over- or underpaid; it is the spirit of the payment and the nature of the work with which I have quarrel. I contend that her work is mainly sterile, that it is essentially humiliating, that no special treatment is accorded to the expert, that expert quality is not recognised; I contend too that labour in the home steals from woman her individuality, her originality, her opportunities for self-expression and self development; that it makes her stupid, limited, harsh (or sentimental), that it deprives her of her beauty and her grace, divorces her from her true social function and generally unfits her to become the equal companion whom man could respect. These are formidable charges and it is desirable to examine them one by one before outlining, even vaguely, the lines of reform and the probable evolution of the home.

The sterility of home-labour is the result of social rather than of conjugal conditions, and we need not limit its reactions to the conjugal relation, for it taints equally the

labour of the wife, of the unmarried daughter, of the relation or paid person who undertakes it. But it is always woman suffers where she is not wholly to blame; while the man escapes all responsibility for the home except that of paying for it, a responsibility which is not on the whole heavier than he chooses to make it, the woman carries, together with her economic cares, those of her household and those which the man chooses to impose upon her. It is within the power of the paymaster to compel the woman, in deference to his desire for state, to labour with her hands on the upkeep of too many rooms, to oversee negligent domestics, to provide on inadequate resources an endless succession of ostentatious entertainments. It is within his power to fill her brain with minor, but disturbing tasks. I am the last to deny that woman shares the responsibility for showy households; it is true she is often a snob, binds herself upon the wheel, "to go from life to life, from despair to despair." Woman has the cult of the pink drawing-room.

But whether the home be simple or ostentatious the result is generally the same. Woman is preoccupied with infinite small cares, and it does not much matter what they are; most of them are sterile. She supervises complicated cooking arrangements, so as to "feed the brute"; she must continually concentrate on futilities, ask herself: "Is it time the curtains went to the cleaner's? Have I stamped the servants' cards? Do I pay the wages to-day?" Wages! Woman has sunk so low in the home that, when she is a domestic servant, she actually refuses to receive her wages on the last day of the month; she must be paid from the day on which she came. I will return further on to the domestic servant, the lowest of the female types. As regards the futility of home-labour, can we imagine anything more petty to occupy a human mind than the memorising or noting of four different pay-days for four servants? But the housewife has other preoccupations: she must remember to pay the bills, some weekly, some monthly, some quarterly;

she must note that the days of grace of the insurance policy are running out, that more dallying will cause the borough to distrain for rates. She must feed the telephone-call account. And the window-boxes need replenishing. And the servants say the dog is not well; she must ring up the vet. And she must instruct the newsagent to change the man's newspaper. And she must not forget that penny bottle of ink.

A full half of woman's time is absorbed by these domestic complexities; they hang over her until they are done with, by which time others have come to maturity. She may be on a Care Committee and busy with social work, but she must leave it if the cook says: "Please, ma'am, the butcher." It is understating the truth to say that half a woman's time is thus employed: if she could compress all her cares into the hours that separate eight in the morning and two in the afternoon my case would not be so strong. But many intrude at all hours of the day; they are always pressing upon her, demanding solution in odd minutes from waking to

sleep. Every care disturbs and deflects her from other pursuits and from thought. If the social position of the hour has to be maintained there are a series of dull calls, there are appearances (prefaced by lengthy dressing) at Ranelagh, drawing-room meetings, private views. And there are scientifically-planned dinners, complicated combinations of amusing people with useful people; there is steering among the shoals of "who dislikes who"; there is correspondence, table-decorating, menu-writing; and there are At Homes, domestic revolutions, a hundred envelopes to address. It goes on for ever and ever.

The great mass of these cares is pure futility. The individual, separate home is intolerably complicated by it separateness; all this work of private cooking, cleaning, decorating should be communal. The finance of the home should be centralised; it should be in the hands of experts, not of the toys or drudges who control it to-day. And the gross, elaborate system of entertaining, its falsity, its vacuousness, bound up in the temperament of the woman of our day,

should be whittled away by sumptuary laws, by the pressure of taxes, and by the urging into rebellion of the women whom it exploits. I deal with the home under Feminism at the end of this essay; at present my point is that this multitude of trifles, *spread over a woman's entire life*, is not comparable with the business details which occupy *six to ten hours* of a man's time. Man can shake from him his office or his factory, while woman continues to stagger under the weight of her home. That is a humiliating position of itself; it is a characteristic of slavery that the subject is never free from his thrall, while wage-slavery, a limited form, resides in a loss of freedom for part of his time. Most men are wage-slaves, but most women are slaves pure and simple. It is because they are slaves that nothing is thought of making them labour under a truck system, at any and all hours, of loading them with such work as men consider unworthy, disgusting or painful. It is women run the household errands, clean the steps, and perform all the menial tasks. And women have been so

well trained by their masters that they believe it is well so, that these things are not "man's work"; they think better of him for his tyranny; they are uneasy if he is domesticated, not sure that he is quite a man. And they stand respectful when he drives a nail, believe that they can't drive nails, just as they believe that they can't laugh over *Punch*.

This condition would not prevail if the home-labourer were recognised as an expert, or if an expert were employed; already some experts have established themselves, such as the cook, the nurse, and the governess, but the housewife, who controls them all, is supposed to do so by virtue of some natural faculty; she gains little credit therefor, and when a man says that "Maud runs the house very well," I believe he means that the house runs itself very well, including Maud. Having loaded on the woman an absurdly complicated business he looks upon her as a figure-head, dully supposes that "one must have a wife," much as some Royalists say: "One must have a king." The effect of this feeling is

that woman realises that she is not appreciated, that a good system will earn little more praise than a bad one, "slacks," becomes pleasure-loving, extravagant, and therefore degraded. She is degraded because she is given lowly work and allowed to do it in lowly fashion. I do not believe this will endure for ever, any more than I believe in the eternity of the narrow, hostile little centre where the family drains away the mother's energies. Taking conditions as we know them, however, it is certain that woman suffers in the esteem of man because she is presumed to be doing minor work: I repeat and cannot repeat too often the Feminist view, namely, that we are not primarily concerned with the quality of the work, but with the result of the work on woman's status. We object to low-class and unnecessary work, and we think most home-labour useless; but we object still more to the attitude of man towards woman when he refuses to recognise the housewife as practising a highly-skilled trade.

The material effects of home-labour upon

woman are, according to her means, more or less serious, but they are all bound up in the inevitable waste of her youth, her beauty, and her grace. They are most marked among the working-classes who, one might almost say, number no women of thirty: working women are twenty, then married, then forty. A few years of married life, of child-bearing, of struggling to run the household on fifteen to thirty shillings a week or on a trade-union unemployment benefit, and they are old. They are divorced from the joyous fripperies of youth, and while their men retain their looks they become ugly; they contract incurable diseases due to working in the home while pregnant, varicose veins; they lose their teeth because they cannot afford a dentist. All this is the tragedy of poverty, but it is especially the tragedy of labour in poor houses, where work is multiplied by bad organisation, ill-taught and ill-shared. I do not pretend they have no pleasures, for they have, and they enjoy more fully the trip in a penny steamer than their rich sisters do Henley: but pleasure

is naught save a compensation; it is not a cure for wasted mental tissue. I go so far as to say that even the well-to-do cannot escape the physical effects of home-labour. It is true that we may see everywhere scores of well-dressed and cheerful married women, but it is also true that we see on the faces of those who carry complex establishments and have large families, lines which mean preoccupation and compulsory activity, lines which are not on the faces of those whose establishments and families are small.

The mental results of home-labour outweigh the physical where the well-to-do are concerned, while they are also apparent in the working-classes; mentally, therefore, women of all classes are affected much in the same way. Home-labour costs most of them their individuality, largely because there are home conventions. They are subtle, soul-destroying things, these conventions that halls should be red or blue, drawing-rooms pink or white-and-gold; and when they change, as they did when fumed oak came, and Morris chintz, and Jacobean

furniture, they are as levelling and as destructive. The conventions go further than decoration: they prescribe courses at meals, their nature and their order, holidays, their locality and their date, and the trappings of babies, the choice of flowers. They deprive women of the need to innovate, without depriving them of the need to do defined things. It is not good that woman should have her road mapped out by custom, for it leaves her with an immense amount of labour to perform if she is to follow custom, while nothing causes her to use her mind. It is her body, not her mind is racked, or rather the almost physical side of her mind, the side which schemes and calculates; the creative side is neglected, and because it has always been neglected it has become atrophied.

I am aware that a number of well-to-do women are reacting against this state of things, that they are trying new decoration schemes, new food, new music, new places, labour-saving appliances, that they are breaking the ring. That is a Feminist movement, and it proves that the home is

throttling woman: if there were nothing to react against women would not be reacting, for there are no revolutions without causes, without grievances. Women are struggling to recover their buried originality, to express themselves. They are trying to escape from the softness of the ready-made home; they know that the gentler it is the worse it is, the more like a velvety prison. It is evident that women are not naturally lacking in originality; there have been too many brilliant talkers and *salon*-makers, too many pungent writers of memoirs, to make it possible to say that they cannot follow their own line. In the home their originality has been restricted by the lack of originality in men; it is not women who invented the sentences "French kickshaws" and "new-fangled notions," but men, and especially old men, who use them as if they were arguments. Women are more experimental than their owners, more inclined to accept new ideas; indeed, they accept them too easily, with the facility that reveals intimate boredom, unsatisfied thirst for suspected beauty.

Upon their loss of individuality and the limitation of their originality there has naturally followed incapacity to express themselves. It must not be thought that because women are voluble they are saying what they mean: generally they can't see the words for the vocabulary. But it is not in words only that woman fails to express herself: apart from artistic expression in concrete works she has learned to repress in the home the manifestations of her personality, to abstain from innovating because the owner would probably dislike the new soup, the child's fanciful clothes. Thus she has not been allowed to develop, for she could develop only as man develops when he tries a new machine in his factory, a card-index in his office. Home-labour has been made a trade, but an unskilled trade bound by obsolete regulations. While the whole face of industry has been changed since the sixties, the home is very much what it was then: the telephone, the carpet-sweeper, and the bathroom are purely external. To expect a woman to look after the electric light is exactly the

same as to expect her to look after the lamps, for the spirit of the charge has not changed.

It is not wonderful then that the thrall should have made women stupid, limited, and alternately sentimental and harsh: slavish conditions make slaves. It is not wonderful that by being told they cannot understand business they have actually grown to believe that they cannot understand business. When a woman occasionally escapes and becomes so proficient as to know how to manage a hotel, nobody is so genuinely impressed as her unemancipated sisters. If they are sentimental it is because they have been flooded with washy belief in domestic sanctities, with compulsory religious observances, with ready-made opinions on divorce and legitimate children; if they are harsh when social rules are broken (and they are harsher than men) it is because they have never been allowed to do more than keep them, because such terrible penalties have been visited on them that they respect them, because they have never been taught that circumstances

alter cases, and they therefore ignore circumstances. Thus Latin women are as a rule willing to accept as right that a man may kill his unfaithful wife, while they often take it for granted that a man may be as loose as he chooses. I will not discuss whether conjugal infidelity deserves capital punishment, for that is irrelevant. What is relevant is that women, having been taught by man that the two sexes are in a different position, believe it. Because they believe it they are the first to ostracise the divorced woman, to turn out their seduced housemaid. Brutality has made them brutal.

A word, in passing, on the domestic servant. I have ventured, earlier in this essay, to dub her one of the lowest female types, and I think myself justified when considering her defects and some of her so-called qualities. Though many well-to-do women rail at their servants it will be agreed that, given their opportunities for stealing with impunity, they are wonderfully honest. In the main they are truthful, conscientious and hard-working; they have most of the qualities with which their

mistresses can afford to dispense. These are unobjectionable traits, but domestic servants can well be called low, because they have lost, or rather sold, the quality of independence. They are voluntary slaves: they think it right that they should serve while others receive service; they are not quite sure that a woman is "a real lady" if she works with her brain; they are as rude as they dare be if she works with her hands; they respect idleness, and they also respect waste, for they will seldom object to the labour entailed upon them by entertaining: it raises the tone of the house.

The attitude of servants is still that of the footmen who dined Sam Weller on a "swarry" of boiled mutton and assumed their masters' names. The servants carry from one house to another the contaminating home convention; they teach (with a sniff) the eight-hundred-a-year household how things were done in their previous twelve-hundred-pound place. They think it normal that their masters should have a call on them for twenty-four hours a day,

accord them no liberty save one evening a week and, every alternate week, half a Sunday. And, while they envy her a little, they feel more genteel than the shop-girl. They prize their intercourse with the rich, they gladly sell their chance of freedom for security, food, and presents of cast-off clothes. They are afraid of adventure, afraid of life. Their gentility places them well below the brave women who will not bend, shop-girls, waitresses, teachers, nurses who bear wage-slavery, bad food, long hours, abominable lodgings and loneliness, rather than enter the gilded cages of Kensington.

The domestic servant is a typical product of the home. She has been maintained in slavery, for centuries insulted, but recently freed from corporal punishment; she has been taught that her laws are the master's voice and that of his deputy; the "character" system has delivered her into ungentle hands, which do not hesitate to visit revenge upon her when she rebels against feminine oppression and masculine pursuit. It may be argued that I paint the case too

black, but the reader must divorce his mind from the luxurious establishment where there are half a dozen maids, turn awhile to the lodging-house and to the myriads of households where one little girl of fourteen (it might be ten but for the Education Acts) ministers for sixteen hours a day to the needs of two adults and several children. In those homes the servant becomes a beast of burden; in the luxurious homes she becomes a pampered beast. In none does she become a woman.

It is not surprising, if my picture of the home and its inmates be accepted as fair, that I should ask for drastic reform. As a Feminist I lay greater stress upon mental than physical evils, and it is with the latter I wish to do away. In the first place the little private home must go. It is going, as is shown by the increase of flats and workmen's dwellings, but even in these the old traditions are being maintained except in a few places, where service is supplied. The ideal system is indicated by the "Chambers for Gentlemen" in Piccadilly and Jermyn Street; I conceive the Feminist

home as much smaller than the average house, for I doubt the usefulness of certain rooms. The average house, tenanted by a family of four and their three servants, comprises a three-roomed and be-corridored basement, a dining-room behind which is another room, a drawing-room (sometimes sub-divided into two rooms), offices and five bedrooms.

Two bedrooms, or one room and a dressing-room, are occupied by the masters; one bedroom is occupied by two servants; two rooms become nurseries and house the third servant. There is little to object to in this arrangement except that, when the masters elect to share a bedroom, the dressing-room is superfluous. The room behind the dining-room is totally useless; it is generally used for the female guests' wraps. The drawing-room is necessary if it be used as a living-room; though generally preserved for infrequent social strutting, a living-room is wanted. But it is either too large if it occupy the whole floor, for it will be recalled that the children are allowed two rooms, or if it occupy nought save the

front of the house, the back-room is useless. The dining-room is useless: there is no reason why we should not eat in common as do millions every day in hotels, boarding-houses, restaurants and cafés. The basement is absolutely useless: that a street of a hundred houses should indulge in a hundred kitchens, a hundred sculleries and a hundred pantries is ludicrous. I do away, therefore, with six rooms out of twelve; if we spare one room, so as to give the two sexes a chance of privacy, and allow one room for the servants' living-room, the economy appears as thirty-three per cent. It is an enormous economy, when we consider that all these rooms must be cleaned; it is probably greater than it appears, for I doubt whether a household would need three servants, when freed from the cooking-range by common catering; moreover, living-rooms for thirty servants would occupy less space than ten rooms, each of which accommodated three.

I am content, however, with this economy of space and labour if common cooking is

conceded. I imagine the Feminist home rather as a large block of flats in a garden, over a common restaurant; the staff is directed by an elected manageress and her deputy, both of whom work no more than eight hours a day; the servants work eight hours a day; a competent kitchen staff, under a well-paid chef, prepares *table d'hote* meals for the lazy and a lengthy *à la carte* bill for the fastidious. Food, wines, tobacco are bought wholesale and co-operative dividends are paid to the consumers *pro rata* to their consumption. There are, because they are large, cheap coal contracts; there is cheap, unlimited telephone service, cheap fire insurance for the whole block, and all these services are taken off the mind of the inhabitants by the salaried staff; the private washer-woman disappears. There are common garages for motor-cars, bicycles, perambulators; these no longer crowd dark halls or occupy valuable space in mews; there is no more dragging of machinery up the front steps. Everything that can be done to throw the business of the household upon a salaried staff is done.

I have no idea of dimensions ; in principle the largest possible block is the best, as it is the cheapest, but it must be reasonably quiet. There is a practical limit to size, as there is in clubs ; a forty or fifty flat block sounds manageable enough. The scheme, which is not novel but yet worth summarising, is open to criticism but can resist it. I know that the first cry is " privacy " : well, I do not want to destroy privacy and have gone so far as to accord one room each for man, wife and child. I merely want privacy to descend from the sacred pedestal, for I believe that, carried too far, the desire for privacy becomes hostility. There is public dining, but we already dine in public. There is the idea of the personal servant : that I am frankly against ; I want to do away entirely with the personal servant, to call in the maid as I call in the plumber, to report her derelictions of duty to my elected representative as I would the plumber to his master. I want to do away with the personal relation because it is the relation of master and slave ; the domestic servant must be an

expert,* and must be treated as an expert. She will be a better servant, and she will have a better mistress, for she will no longer be a slave, the mistress no longer a tyrant. I believe that both arrogance and humility are bad, subscribe to:

> "La Nature n'a fait ni serviteurs ni maîtres,
> Je ne veux ni donner ni recevoir de lois."

It will be objected also that I destroy woman's creative opportunity, which is best exercised within her home: that is a worthless argument, for she will still have the fullest possible scope in decoration; she will be freed from petty tasks, which she does not always perform well, and given time which she now lacks will make beauty in her reformed home; I do not suggest that she must be forbidden to do anything, but I do suggest that she must not be made to do everything: I want her to co-operate with but not serve the man. So far as the creative opportunity of to-day goes I

* *See* "What Diantha Did," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. (An account of a system of home catering from a common centre.)

will leave it to the unprejudiced to say how woman has taken advantage of it in the basement.

It must be understood that, when I suggest a flat system, I am not thinking of the cramped, dark, ill-ventilated groups of little rooms which London calls "mansions," where servants sleep in bunks and the coal is stored under the bath; I think rather of the fine, roomy flats of Paris, Vienna and Berlin, where we sometimes find rooms equal to a Grosvenor Square drawing-room. The Feminist flat is revolutionary, strikes at the root of the economic system, may involve vast readjustments of land-tenure, communal building and taxation. But we are not afraid of revolution, for we are the pioneers of a sex-revolution. We are quite willing to break eggs. We want woman to be free from her immense administrative cares, to use her for domestic purposes on the same footing as man; we do not suggest that we shall hand over all the home-labour to man, for he is not likely to do it well, but we do want to do away with licensed home

slavery, to make the housewife when poor, a paid expert, when rich a centre of culture. We want to take home-labour from the shoulders of the working woman, to give her an opportunity for rest, to preserve her beauty and increase her public interest; thanks to the results of women's suffrage we may achieve this, for we shall arouse woman. It would be a fatal thing if the economic revolution now in progress were to result in a purely andro-centric world based on the labour of an enslaved sex: Feminism shall stand in the way.

The housewife of the future is a little more shadowy than her home, for we do not know what will be the economic conditions of the future. If they tend to a community where none wish to avoid labour, I visualise her as a highly scientific home-worker, fitted for certain tasks, paid a time or a piece rate. There will be no truck system; the monetary element will vanish from marriage (whatever marriage may then be), and the claim of the home-worker will be no longer on the master-man but on the community. I see her then as

wonderfully free, performing the maximum amount of labour in the minimum of time,* drawing her rightful and personal share of commodities from the voluntary association, and using the ample remainder of her time as she may fancy; she will be freed for a social rôle, for self-culture, for the arts, for pleasure. Woman's share of pleasure is not great to-day among those who work; we want pleasure for her, so that she may have joy of life, abundant, unfettered pleasure—pleasure as a natural consequence of life, pleasure as a right and not as a gift. "Beauty and Duty," that is the motto of the Feminists.

* There is a stage beyond this, for I am, in the main, of opinion that woman should not work. *See* chap. v.

IV
THE ARTS

IV

THE ARTS

MAN has, for a long time, been given to asserting that woman has no artistic capacity; he has sometimes asserted it plainly, sometimes inferred it: the judgments of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Weininger, the cruder views of the art-critics who insult with the word "masculine" the artistic works of woman, all show that man believes art to be sexual and bound up within his own sex. He is probably not wrong in considering art sexual, suggesting that there is no art where the fountain of life does not bubble, rush forth alternately into sensual indulgence and into self-expression. Both processes are creative, and I do not think that I am stretching truth too far when I say that the instinct by favour of which a child

is created is the same in principle as the one which brings into existence a picture or a book. I do not deny the qualifying fact of consciousness; it is important that the artist should know what he is doing and that he should deliberately do it, but the qualification does not absolutely stand. It is not demonstrated that consciousness is more than important; it may not be essential: consider indeed the case of "Kubla Khan." This poem was conceived by Coleridge while dreaming. He did not intend to write it; he did not plan it; an obscure impulse seized him during his sleep, and he created.

Now I do not want to exaggerate the value of this illustration, for fear that I should be charged with speciousness in argument, but I cannot help being impressed by the extraordinary case of Coleridge. It would seem that the instinct to create is latent, that creation is a process removed from the scope of our will, and it may be that creation with intent is an illusion, that there is no intent. Perhaps the muse takes up her lute and presses kisses upon

the poet's brow. I am inclined to believe in this extra-human force, a thing imponderable, capricious and obscure, which will manifest itself in the untaught fingers of a Cimabue or an infant Mozart; it is almost universally recognised that genius is not an infinite capacity for taking pains: it is rather an infinite capacity for taking no pains, for surrendering to the extra-human and allowing it to work its will. Certainly Boileau advised us to put back our work upon the loom one hundred times, but he was a poor writer, while Beckford, writing "Vathek" in a few days, may have written for immortality.

I do not seek to build upon "Vathek" and "Kubla Khan" an argument by analogy, for these are only indications; but my illustrations are important, and the erudite will easily increase their number, for they tend to prove my point, that art, not being entirely conscious, is a process we may compare with physical creation. For we never know when we physically create. We know that we do those things which *may* create life, we may fully intend

them to be physically creative, *but we have no means of knowing whether those acts or intentions are fruitful or fruitless.* It is not the deed creates: it is some obscure conjunction of circumstance, some physical condition we cannot gauge or govern, briefly an extra-human creative force. The deed is the instrument, not the force, it is but part of the chain of circumstance.

If, then, we assume that there is some similarity between artistic and physical creation (and I do not suggest that the similarity is absolute) we find that while both man and woman are recognised as physically creative instruments, artistic creation is supposedly reserved for man: this must, in the light of my non-demonstrable but probably accurate assumption, be incorrect. If physical creativeness and artistic creativeness spring from the same fount or from sister-sources, woman must potentially be as capable of artistic creation as she is of physical creation. Whether the capacity has or has not been manifested matters not in an abstract discussion: it is enough that it should be there. If, as I

believe, it is there, then we must ask ourselves the cause of a phenomenon, namely: If man and woman are potentially equal in artistic receptiveness, receptiveness to the extra-human force of artistic creation, then why has man so far stood alone as the artistic creator?

There is no denying that man has found no rival in the other sex. It is impossible to put George Eliot against Turgenieff, Mme. Morisot against Manet. Nowhere has a woman been supreme, not in letters, nor in the pictorial art, nor in music; it is debatable even whether Siddons was greater than Kean, though woman may make a bid for superiority in histrionics, the lowest of the arts. And opinions are divided as to the respective merits of Pavlova and Nijinski. Broadly speaking, however, I do not think it important to settle whether woman has made a case for artistic greatness; it would be easy to make a list of women who have shone more or less brightly in the various forms of art, but it would involve a long and sterile discussion to determine whether they were artists, and

the result would be valueless: Feminists are not concerned with the woman of the past. They use her as an indication of possibilities, as a signpost which shows what woman may achieve under new conditions, but they do not look upon her as a limiting fact. They consider that the woman of the past and the woman of the future are very different creatures, for the woman of the future will develop under new and modifying conditions.

The new conditions of woman will certainly influence her artistic capacity; in certain directions her emancipation will be notable, in others incomplete. One of the incomplete emancipations will assuredly be from the thraldom of child-bearing, which I do not suppose she will abandon. I think we may safely assume that the majority of women consciously or unconsciously desire to have children, much more so than to practise an art. Indeed, as Miss May Sinclair very truly says,* to-day those who practise an art tend to cast it aside when they marry. But that is not a

* "A Defence of Man" (*English Review*, July, 1912).

very good argument, for I do not think that you "have an art"; it is the art has you. Presumably the new woman will still have children, but she need not have them and hold them with unreasoning and primitive ferocity; she may be less animal and have them with greater sanity. So far the child has been the enemy of art in woman. The actual periods of child-bearing, nursing, and early education are long, wearing, and nerve-racking; whether merely conceived or actually born the child is an imperious master and draws upon every reserve of its mother's strength: it is not wonderful then that young women who showed artistic promise should have found after years of child-bearing that their craft had gone, that they were out of touch with surrounding life, that child-bearing, an experience in itself, had not enlarged the vision which perceives art.

Woman has dragged very wearily the load imposed upon her by nature; it is far heavier than any that rests upon man, for his paternal function has left him free, indeed helped him to develop on any lines

for which he was fitted by his temperament. Artists among men have even succeeded in dominating the financial demands of their family, living by, as well as for their art. But woman has not been able to do this; there has been in her a life-clamour, a diversion of the need for self-expression. Nature has compelled her to make jewels of her sons. With the passing of the years she has been dulled and her energies have been drained; when child-bearing was over she has found herself ground by the habit of child-rearing, left behind by art. For art, eternal as it is, changes but does not go back; it develops with life, selects from it, finds itself in the new machine, the new social system. It never goes back, and conscious reactions towards cruder civilisations are dishonest and inartistic. You must grow in art as you live, change as life changes; the artist is always the most modern of the moderns, for he carries the life-essence itself.

It will be argued that child-bearing is not the whole answer, for many women do not marry, and of those who marry some

are barren, while others have very small families. That is so, but the preoccupation of the child extends to the women who do not ally. Of these a small number consciously desire children, another section desires them but is too modest to say so, while a number, who believe they want a mate, really want a child. The desire for the child is a desire for self-realisation, for an extension of personality such as the poet finds in a poem which, he hopes, will be immortal. The time and energy absorbed by these dreams has been stolen from the artistic reserve: it has been stolen from nowhere else, for art and maternity are similar enough in spirit to show that there can be no reserve other than the artistic. The preoccupation has generally taken the form of a desire for a mate, whom woman has for centuries had to hunt down and capture. She has wanted him for many reasons, but mainly because she wanted children. Woman has wanted a mate also for the sake of her status; worst of all she has wanted him because she had somehow to earn a living. All this

has deflected woman from the arts. For thousands of years she has had to hunt man, to cajole him, and it served her ill to arouse by artistic achievement the jealousy of her quarry. It is still said, and still true, that men do not like clever women unless they are clever enough to appear fools: in no direction has this been so apparent as in the arts. To this day there are many men who are charmed if a woman paints flowers on satin, disturbed if she hews rugged nakedness from marble; they like her to play a little piece, to compose gentle verse in the honour of a child's broken hoop, but they feel there is something wrong when Laurence Hope writes a passionate poem.

Man-hunting has been responsible for a concealment of artistic capacity which amounts to stifling; it has been so disturbing an occupation that many of the ablest women have, as George Sand, thrown down the gauntlet and freed themselves from the marriage thrall. But other women, whose strength was less than their art, have, like Emily and Anne Brontë and

Christina Rossetti, wasted away in sterile spinsterhood, while others, following the example I alluded to in another chapter, have suppressed their work because man disapproved of it. They had to pretend that they were futile, to flatter man by claiming inferiority to him; to please him they concentrated on samplers, on paper flowers, on little morocco-bound diaries entitled "Mes Larmes," * on things man could call pretty and praise, not on things he would grudgingly call great. Woman has handled talent as wastefully as nature handles life, and perhaps for the same reason: nature must know that life is inexhaustible, woman may have felt that there was in her so much that was fine that she could afford to wait.

Woman was never encouraged to do more than wait. The home circle has always coalesced to keep her down, to conceal the clever girl's cleverness, to train out of her her originality; this because parents knew that the marriage chances of their clever daughters were small. Parents

* *See* Thackeray in general, woman's worst enemy.

felt, and most of them still feel, that marriage is woman's career; the idea of not "getting rid" of their girls, finding men who would buy them, was repugnant to them, and they tended to despise those who had not been asked in marriage. The mother was harder than the father, for there is a sensual bond between every woman and every man; the father was therefore more sympathetic, more inclined to take pride in his daughter's ability; besides the mother, because she was the mother, was always, when compared with her daughter, twenty-five years out of date. While the father felt sex-sympathy for his daughter the mother felt sex-rivalry and, often unconsciously, tried to prevent the development of qualities she envied as well as despised. Lastly there was son-worship, a peculiarly Anglo-Teutonic disease, from which America is almost free and from which the Latins will be exempt when Latin women choose. The training of daughters has always been sacrificed to that of the sons; the latter cost so much that there is nothing left for the former: if Jack and Jill are both clever, Jack will

certainly go to Oriel and Jill *may* go to Newnham. But if the demand is for artistic training Jill is in much worse case; the home circle does not believe that there is anything in Jill. If Jack absolutely must paint he is sent to Paris; if he has sworn to write, somebody finds him a post in a newspaper office. But if Jill says she is a painter she may at length be grudgingly given a year at the Slade, or if it is music one of the less renowned masters of the Royal Academy will be retained (but she must not ask for a public recital); and if she wants to write . . . poor Jill, the home circle lends a bored ear to the reading of her first short story and suggests that it should be sent to *Science Siftings*.

The home circle is not altogether kind to the sons, but when it comes to the girls it merely doesn't believe that they can do anything. There have been prophets in their own country, but no prophetesses. At any rate the family has never been inclined to speculate on a prophetess, to give the artistic girl that which is the life-blood of her art: appreciation, understanding and

encouragement; still less has it given her the education, the opportunities to travel which were essential if she was to apply her natural capacity. Elizabeth Barrett and Jane Austen, notably, grew up in bitter, sceptical, limited homes, where they were doubted, mocked, censored and oppressed. They triumphed, but I think they would have done bigger work if they had not, in early years, been ground by traditional discipline. And they succeeded: what of those who were not so strong? whose talent was delicate rather than robust? The world knows nothing of these. In art as in science they have never had their share of recognition: who knows that Miss Herschell was as great as her brother? who is surprised when Mr. H. G. Wells causes a male character to attribute to Curie alone the merit of the discoveries he made with his wife?* In the arts it has seldom been acknowledged that woman did more than assist when she collaborated, and when she stood alone she has been discounted. That has discouraged her,

* *See* "Marriage."

compelled her to do "woman's work," bred in her the habit of producing this minor work, because thus only could she earn man's praise.

It should be said that the quality of woman's artistic work differs as a rule from that of man's work. One can generally tell a woman's writings, and the anti-Feminist points a scornful finger at her delineation of the average man . . . but we can point a retaliating finger at the creature the male writer calls woman. I think Mrs. Karin Michaelis would smile even at the women of Mr. Henry James and George Meredith. It is not an insult to say "woman's work," for I take it as a canon of art that one must express oneself: it is not too much to add that one must express one's sex. I do not believe that there is a thing called art, other than self-expression, and there are no degrees in art; the worker is an artist or is not an artist. Thus I make for woman no qualified claim, do not put forward that she is capable of "good" art, or "great" art, or "some measure of" art: I claim that she is capable

of expressing herself. Madame Vigée le Brun's pictures were not specially good, but they were as good as those of the men of her period, and they expressed it and herself; to-day Miss Anne Estelle Rice paints in a style fully equal to that of the men of her school; and the personality of Miss Edith Wharton bursts through the restraints of her style. Provided there be something to express it is enough to express it, and it does not matter much that there have so far been no female peers of Shakespeare or Wagner.

Because some great male artists were colossal we must not assume that all men artists were colossal: d'Arvers left one sonnet, Oscar Wilde was capricious, Lulli light, yet all three were artists. Art in woman need not be crushing as a bludgeon to be recognised as art.

Such differences are those which exist between the pointillism of Diaz and the flat expanses of Puvis de Chavannes—differences of texture but not of degree. While it may broadly be said that man's tendency is towards the general, that of

woman is towards the particular. This is a result of education and environment rather than of temperament, and that is why woman's work differs from man's: while man, being in the world, has thought in terms of the world and of immortality, woman, being in the home, has thought in terms of the home and perishable things. Religion has alone enabled her to slough the body. Thrust back upon herself she has developed the traits which thrive best in a confined atmosphere, she has put them into her artistic work, and these traits are an undue appreciation of the weight of sex, emotionalism and the histrionic tendency. To the histrionic tendency woman owes her position as an actress, and, though I rate the histrionic power low, I see no reason why comparison between man and woman should not be allowed because woman may be the victor. It will certainly be hard to prove that Madame Sarah Bernhardt, La Duse, Rachel, perhaps Sada Yacco, do not drive from the field their male associates: that power is artistic, and I retain it as an

evidence of further powers, careless of those other qualities which woman puts into her artistic works.

Certainly she is sex-oppressed, and man knows it. It is a commonplace one often hears expressed that "when women begin to be nasty they are nastier than men," but it is also an untruth. We must not be carried away by the instance of certain of our female novelists; their work shows sensuality, but I should be surprised if it were suggested that it is cruder than "Moll Flanders" and "The Adventures of Casanova," or more sex-stimulating than "Les Aventures du Roi Pausole." I have still to discover the woman who will exceed Zola and Anatole France. Thus, though it may be said that woman is sex-oppressed, it is not right to say that her view of it is "nasty." I shall return to this topic in another chapter: all that need be said here is that if woman's literary work is largely sex-impregnated, it is because she has for so many thousands of years been maintained in a sexual atmosphere. She has been taught that sex is her business

and she has made it her monopoly, which is not very strange, given that the artist generally deals with that which he knows. No one would expect a woman just emancipated from the harem to take part in a Lancashire bye-election, yet that is the attitude of those who resent the predominance of sex-matters in woman's writings. When women have had more experience of life their scope will be greater, and already such writers as Miss Amber Reeves, Miss Constance Smedley, Mrs. Humphry Ward have shown, imperfectly but clearly, that woman can think of things other than love and lovers. Sexual and emotional quality, that quality which makes the greatness of "Jane Eyre," she will never lose: but she will concentrate it, this force of life and evidence of hope, and thereupon use it on other things.

Already we see the drift of woman's artistic tendency in the utterly bad and cramped home she is entrusted with. She is the decorator, whatever be her resources or her social status; seldom does the man intervene. There are few households

where the man is consulted as to the material with which the chairs shall be covered, as to the colour of the carpet, and the scores of æsthetic points which arise in house-furnishing; as a rule he does not even select his bedroom wallpaper, and if he has a study he tells his wife to find something solid. If he be one of those men to whom the appearance of the home matters he may control one of those two rooms, but he has neither the time nor the knowledge to concern himself with the others; generally he trusts his wife, and if her taste be often very bad it is as a rule less dull and heavy than his own. The pink drawing-room is an abominable thing, its knick-knackery of silver frames, silk screens, china pigs is in bad taste, but it has lightness, some artificial if meretricious grace; it is certainly less ugly than the red-papered room filled with leather arm-chairs and decorated with Asiatic weapons, which the equivalent man affects. In every class it is the woman carries the artistic tradition of the family; she has naught but glimmerings of beauty, but it is

she has them. There are many houses still where reign the antimacassar, the glass-cased wax fruits, and the cabinet filled with Crown Derby, and all these are ugly enough; yet they embody the idea of ornament, which is nothing but a very low form of the idea of beauty. Those are women's works; it is women buy the knick-knacks, the light chintzes, the fancy tea-sets, and in the working-class it is they bring home the Japanese fans and the "Presents from Southend."

Generally woman's taste is bad, but of late years it has enormously improved. It was woman and not man looked kindly upon Morris chintz and wallpaper, de Morgan tiles, leadless glaze, pewter, "New Art"; it was she experimented more or less successfully. To-day it is she buys copies of Chippendale chairs and Jacobean tapestries; it is for her that are made costly "Chinese" wallpapers, "Louis XV" electric-light fittings. She is the decorator of the home; when she succeeds she is very good, and when she's defeated she has tried. Likewise she is the musician.

From the earliest days of civilisation it is woman has sung, danced, played the spinet and the harp, and now plays the piano and sings. Man has always been a little shamefaced when asked to do aught save sing a battle, drinking, or comic song; he was not incapable, but self-conscious. As a result the average man has fallen in capacity below the average woman. I am well aware that this home music is a very poor, passionless, amateurish thing, but still it is something, a refining, idealising force, and from the Feminist point of view it goes to prove that there is in the female sex an immense, if indefinite hunger for beauty. It does not matter much whether the music be ill chosen and badly played, any more than whether the decoration be faulty. I do not contend that because there are a million inferior tastes, a spirit of humility will bring to light a single good taste, but I do believe that a desire for beauty must lie behind the actual realisation of the beautiful. It is thus important to recognise that the tendency of woman is more than that of man towards the

beautiful, for she is the source from which truer and finer realisations will spring.

I have, I think, said *ad nauseam* that development on Feminist lines will enlarge woman's experience of life: it is not too much to expect that the practice of affairs will stimulate her creative capacity. When she no longer decays in idleness or wears herself out by labour she must give the measure of unsuspected qualities. Regenerated by the new respect which man must slowly acquire for his partner as she becomes his equal, woman will no longer trim. In the past a few women have not trimmed, and perhaps the more numerous women who to-day have courage owe them a debt as pioneers. To-day a few are not trimming; notable among the writers are such women as Miss Amber Reeves, whose style is perfectly restrained, or such as Miss Ethel Colburn Mayne, a worthy follower of Mr. Henry James. There will be more such women, and the women to come will be bigger, for they will be afraid of nothing. With Feminism will come a limitation of hours of labour, a levelling of

salaries and wages, revolutionary economic measures of which the mortgage on the earnings of man and the endowment of motherhood are part, and all this will mean for woman an intellectual, artistic freedom which no woman has to-day.

Woman has not these freedoms to-day, even when she is rich in her own right, for she is overlaid by public opinion. She may become an outcast if she chooses to defy the marriage laws; she must, to a certain extent, "behave like a lady." We are going to erase from the dictionary the word which reigns supreme in "business lady," and "lady doctor," and "lady gardener," to say nothing of "lady dog"; we are going to have women. And all these freedoms, economic and mental and physical, must mean that woman will look towards the wider horizons of art, no longer with the old, sick longing, but boldly and as a conqueror. Relief from home-labour, especially, will mean true freedom. Already Socialists, Extreme-Radicals and Individualists look to short hours for the development of the arts; they currently tell us that in the

working class lies an immense reserve of talent, and a little genius; they do not contend that ability will out in spite of poverty and sweating; they see in their utopia a condition when body and mind will not be exhausted by work and when the arts may be pursued. It is on those lines we reason and the same relief we seek for woman.

I suspect that the Feminist home itself will be far more artistic than the cast-iron organisation in which we live. Given the taste that woman displays to-day in her limited sphere, I believe that the new woman will be more experimental and more daring, because she will be able to dare.

I have attacked the home, and bitterly, but I do not believe that it will be replaced by barracks in which every individual will be neatly pigeonholed: that may prove to be desirable when our mentality has altered, but, judging from our present outlook, such a consummation is unlikely. A smaller home, free from the tyranny of coal-dust, provided with labour-saving appliances, must come into existence and be ruled as

heretofore by the expert woman; I think the man will co-operate with her in their voluntary association, but I imagine him as busier in outside affairs than his companion will want to be.

Artistically, woman must remain preoccupied with the home, but she will no longer shut herself up in a semi-detached zenana; she will, as now, invest it with her personality, but she will also go further afield, seeking experience, making comparisons. "Her place is in the home," says man to-day, and he is right to this extent that she chooses to make it her place. But under Feminist conditions woman will appear as the forager, rather as the friendly rival who would do more than the man for their joint enterprise; when birds go a-mating, both the male and the female collect materials for the nest. That is, in close metaphor, how I see the new woman in her new relation. She will no longer look upon herself as bound to watch by the fireside; rather she will go out, see what others do, make notes, enter into controversy, initiate, and the fruits of

her stimulated brain will be such as have never before been seen, when women were not respected and were humble because they were downtrodden. Art is in the artist, true enough, and nothing will put it in his soul when it is not there: all we claim is that environment, physical and mental, matters, and that, by providing the best environment we shall at last give play to woman's ancient, if despised faculty of art.

V

WOMAN AND LABOUR

VI

WOMAN AND LABOUR

IT is an open question whether labour is good for woman, whether it develops in her faculties which are worth developing, whether it does not, on the other hand, stunt her sex qualities. We must, of course, come to some understanding as to the meaning of the word "labour," which suggests something difficult and arduous, while its synonym "work," is often taken to mean a light and possibly futile task. "Labour" may be defined either as "the production of some useful commodity, the rendering of some useful service," or as "any distasteful but profitable occupation." The first definition is not easily applied, for usefulness is a matter of opinion, and it may be that if Diogenes passed down Bond Street he would see a great number of wares he

could do without; the second definition is exact enough, whatever idealists may say, for there are not many men and hardly any women who would work unless compelled to. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I will take labour in the first sense, so as to avoid being drawn into a controversy with Ruskinites and Morrisites, with utopians in general, who contend that the synonym of "labour" should be "pleasure" and not "pain."

Working women are to be found in every class of the community, but we may safely ignore the few who have entered the professions and those who conduct businesses, and base conclusions rather on the six great trades of teachers, civil servants, nurses, shop-employées, factory workers and domestics. The conditions which affect them in the labour-market are evident enough; they are almost invariably sweated, subjected to a humiliating discipline, frequently debarred from marriage. The disabilities which attach to their condition strike at that of the men in a lesser degree: it is true that shopmen may not as a rule

marry, but it is also true that many do, and that they can conceal the breach of the rules far better than women, for child-bearing does not disclose the irregularity; it is true that men are sweated, but it is also true that the boards which deal with sweated industries are concerned mainly with trades monopolised by women, such as box and shirt making. The inequality of treatment is so evident that female teachers and civil servants start on a scale lower than that of the men, that the better-paid posts go to the men, that certain County Councils make a point of appointing in their Training Colleges a male principal and a female vice-principal. This has become so notorious and so scandalous that it is hardly worth while to dilate on the fact, unless it be necessary to say a thing three times to convince some people that it is true. And three times may not be enough.

Feminists are primarily arrayed against this state of things, but before showing how they hope to remedy it, I wish to consider whether the effects of labour upon

women are such as to warrant its extension among them and whether it might not be better to claim for woman a favoured position where she would do no work in the old sense. If we consider working women who have behind them an adequate record, say ten years of employment, a good case can be made against the labour to which they are at present subjected. The working woman of thirty is not, as a rule, a fine specimen of her sex. She may be, usually is, more intelligent than her sheltered sister, but she has generally lost her beauty, she has hardened, she has approximated to man; now it may be desired by some to level the sexes, to create "the female male" who will regenerate the race, but I cannot say that I view the coming of this hybrid with equanimity. The working woman has, if she wishes to succeed, i.e. to live, to thrust her sex into the background, to abandon, often by order, the pretty fripperies the lighter delight in; she has to become accurate, shrewd, quick, to lose her natural hesitations and the appealing languors of the slave. Her new mentality

reacts upon her manner, and I show in another chapter how the new-woman has lost much of the false courtesies of the old; labour makes woman harsh, inimical to man, therefore less fit to co-operate with him.

Labour has deeper effects than those, for the new mental outlook does more than affect manners, it affects the body and coalesces with physical labour itself to ruin that which is and should remain beautiful. Consider indeed a gathering of working women whose lives are not specially arduous, such as teachers. It is my impression, which can easily be checked, that teachers as a class have lost their good looks; their complexions have deteriorated, become either pale or coarse, their skin has become lined; many suffer from short-sight. I do not lay the blame for this wreck on labour alone, for teachers do not as a rule set much store by their looks; they do not, cannot, devote to the care of their person the time which their sheltered sisters freely use in that cause, but I do indirectly blame labour therefor, because it has deflected woman from the

pursuit of her own beauty: I have said that they lack the time to tend their bodies, and that is a grievance against labour, for labour it is has stolen this time.

A gathering of male teachers does not convey the same impression. They are not a specially handsome class, but they appear as ordinary men; they are not readily identifiable as schoolmasters, while to say of a woman that "she looked like a schoolmistress" is to brand her at once with a mark that anybody can recognise. Labour in this case must, therefore, mean that whereas man has performed it unscathed, woman has suffered, lost something of her general quality and acquired a particular quality which is not seductive.

We need not, however, confine this brief survey to school teachers. The nurse, having no masculine equivalent, can be set aside if I remark in passing that nervous breakdown frequently follows on her work. The factory worker offers a broader scope. Now it was given to me, some three years ago, to spend an entire fortnight in a Lancashire factory, to live among the

workers, and to see them at work and at play. It was one of the finest, best-ventilated, best organised factories in England; it was governed by a generous man with worthy lieutenants; the hours worked by women averaged but forty-five a week; the wages were equal or superior to trade-union or current rate. A fortnight was not enough to enlighten me as to the mental outlook of the women-workers, but it sufficed to show me that, even under the best conditions, their outward aspect suffered. Though most of those 1,200 women were young, they already bore the stamp of labour upon them: their colour was not good, they stooped, they were liable to the sudden flushes which reveal a poor circulation. They were infinitely superior in physique to women employed in a neighbouring great town, but they were certainly animals inferior to the male workers, for the latter were mostly fine specimens, while the women were no more than "not so bad as they were elsewhere." It may be said that I paint too black a picture, but let the unprejudiced observer assist at the exit of

the workers of any factory during the dinner-hour, and it will be surprising if his verdict for physical fitness goes to the women. And this will load the dice against the men, for most women-workers are mere girls, while many of the men are toilworn and old; but even then I think he will find more unsatisfactory bodies among the girls than among the men.

The shop-girl supplies an equally damning comparison; though the physique of the shopman be poor he is not so often as she consumptive or anæmic, while he seldom suffers from varicose veins. But the most striking trade, a far from insignificant, that of the charwoman, fully shows that if woman is at all suited for labour, the rougher forms must be excluded. A great many of these women may any day be seen, Temple-laundresses, office-cleaners, workers by the day; they are wretchedly thin or unhealthily fat; they are often drunken (which means merely that they are ill and unhappy); they have lost all the attributes of femininity, fine teeth, abundant hair. The men of their class make a braver show, for they usually

look thirty-five when they are thirty-five, while their charwomen wives cause one to wonder whether they are not approaching fifty. I do not think the case for hard work for women is arguable, even when performed under the best conditions, namely, in the fields. We have realised that women cannot work in mines, but we still find them at work on the countryside, hoeing, carrying sheaves, drawing water from the well. From the place in which I write these lines I can see one whom I happen to know: she is the foster sister of a sheltered woman. The latter has preserved her youth and her grace; the former, bent, burned brick-brown, with silver-streaked hair, has amazed me by confessing that she is thirty-eight.

In the main, therefore, I should view with pleasure a society where women did no labour in the sense of my definitions. I do not think that it is the function of every human being to work, and am not convinced that there is anything ennobling in labour as such. Labour binds the soul to the soil, "breathes upon its star and detaches its wings," substitutes for

speculation and self-development the grind of habit and the depression born of physical fatigue. Let us not too readily forget that most of our finest poets were freed from the need of making money, or following a settled occupation, by the possession of small fortunes. It is because I see for woman a function other than the industrial, because I do not think her especially efficient industrially, and because I think her wasted as a labourer that I am willing to contemplate for her an idleness which will profit the State.

There are, it is true, occupations where woman excels, and I do not want to debar her from any occupation. I will not, in this chapter, contradict anything I have said in others, lay down that in a Feminist society woman would live without directly producing commodities or rendering services. I want to open all occupations to her, for the usual Feminist reason that any limit set upon the ambition of any woman, however misguided, is degrading and depraving. But I do not see why she should use all her liberties. Let me quote a second time

the instance of the landlord who may, under his covenant with a railway company, stop certain trains as they pass certain points : he does not stop trains, but he may do so. It is the power makes him strong, not the exercise of the power; and this is a little what I want for women..

I am aware that a thesis such as this is open to attack, on the part of women as well as on that of men, that critics may look upon it as an invitation to women to become social parasites. It may be suggested that for women to receive, by right, a proportion of the male community's production is more degrading, because more parasitic, than the present condition of idleness and feeding by favour. I do not think this a very dangerous charge, if it be accepted that women are physically incapable of performing with impunity the tasks to which they are set to-day. "Parasitic" is, after all, a relative term, for we value the oak and not the mistletoe . . . but if we happened to value the mistletoe more than the oak, say in days when iron had completely driven wood

out of trade, then the mistletoe would cease to be a parasite, and the oak would be merely the soil in which the mistletoe grew. That is a purely philosophic argument, but, as I am no sophist, it can be carried into the practical field. The Socialist looks upon the footman, the landlord, the stockbroker as parasites: for the duke the labour leader is a man who earns a fat living by swindling muddle-headed workmen. To say, therefore, that women are or would be parasitic, amounts to saying nothing more than "in my particular opinion, formed in particular circumstances, parasitism is evident."

To-day a number of women are willing to be "parasites"; that is, at least, how their emancipated sisters too readily describe them, for I have shown in the chapter dealing with the Home that the appearance of idleness conceals a large amount of futile but arduous labour. Many, however, have resolved to "live their own lives," to enter the ranks of labour, to be considered and treated as men. It is an ambition with which I have

full sympathy, for it reveals the dawning in woman of a personal tendency which has obscured her sex tendency. So far as it leads to the conquest of her new status it is excellent, but I wish to consider this revolt against "parasitism" rather as an instrument than as a result. It does not matter very much, at present, whether women are right or wrong in this particular demand, for they have before them time enough to make mistakes, which they can set right; indeed, it will be good if they make mistakes—this will prevent them from making them later on. To conquer anything at all they must be greedy and active, for "inactivity paralyses or enervates, petrifies or softens."* I must allow for this modern tendency, while discounting it; I do not believe that all the girls who desert their fathers' homes to enter factories and shops do so because they want to be free; they go because they must live and are rebelling against domestic service, or because they need pocket-money which the

* "Le Roman d'un Révolté," by Albert Postel du Mas.

father cannot give them. They are prisoners escaping to new gaols, rather than conscious rebels.

The position of well-to-do young women is not quite the same. They need not work to live, and the paternal hand does not always lie very heavy upon them; yet many are in revolt against the futility of their lives, unwilling to remain pretty toys, to play games and pay calls until a man provides the "new gaol" of their class. A number of these women view the University degree or the craft as a means of justifying their existence, honestly believe that they must eat their bread by the sweat of their brow. They must be taken into account, for they are leading their class, preaching a new gospel to the girls who are entering the scholastic profession or the Civil Service merely to escape from home. They demand, and because they demand, must have the fullest scope for their activity. They may become a genus apart, for a time, then the principal among women whom they have taught, and it is necessary that we should consider how they may be

satisfied. I do not think that labour is good for them, but I do not see why they should not have it: there is no reason to refuse people a thing because it is not good for them; it is better to give it them, let them suffer and learn. Small boys should have green apples until they find out that they give them a pain.

I should point out, before saying in what direction woman is likely to expand, that I am striving to show a Feminist vision which is not limited by the form of society we know. There are not many who will to-day assert that our conditions are fixed; indeed, we see them becoming more and more socialistic, we see trusts form, trades organise, the State become aggressive, and races even show signs of race-consciousness. I cannot predict what the next form will be—more or less socialistic, probably, but it cannot be the ultimate form; there is something beyond socialism to be born of revolt when organisation has done its work, given us the social conscience we lack; that must be a voluntary organisation, where the social conscience will have superseded

authority. And beyond . . . but that is far enough. Because of these vast changes it must be understood that many of these indications apply mainly to transitory states. Typical of a transitory state is the proposal that women should be entitled to a proportion of men's incomes and wages; typical of a new but equally transitory state is the suggestion that they should have a "parasitic" lien on the earnings of the community; typical also of transitory conditions is the demand for the endowment of motherhood.

While I look upon the lien on wages and the endowment of motherhood as immediately necessary, I intend to consider trade monopolies as a more distant step. There are trades which must, in that more collectivist condition, become the monopoly of women, practically by right of conquest; these are chiefly nursing, teaching, and such clerical work as may survive. Domestic service will then have almost disappeared and will be mainly mechanical, while I exclude the manufacture of clothing, an industry where fancy must become personal

and will not be purchasable, for individual wealth will be lacking to buy it, while the demand for "ready-to-wear" goods increases. These are elementary conquests, and all that will be required is that they should be regulated, so that the female Frankenstein may not be devoured. It is very inspiring to think that the natural aptitudes of woman will earn their full play, and I do not suppose that any will deny that, notably, nursing and teaching appeal to woman's genius. Teaching, especially, appears to me to be particularly within her realm, for it demands concentration, obstinacy, and patience, all of which (and this is important) are qualities of resistance rather than action.

Where resistance rather than action is required, there will the woman be. The creative demand must not be made upon her: if, as I believe, she possesses the creative spirit, it will manifest itself unhelped when general conditions allow of its expansion. Meanwhile, in the trades she may conquer, woman must be protected against her own enthusiasm by the usual

economic machinery, i.e., 1. Minimum wages, 2. Limitation of hours of labour. I will not here discuss the minimum wage; it can be established even in competitive trades with or without the help of a tariff, and I am not suggesting that women will enter the competitive trades; there would be no difficulty, for instance, in raising the salary of a schoolmistress from £100 a year to £150. The rivalry of man, the only one which would be possible, falls to the ground if my assumption of feminine monopolies is accepted. Limitation of hours is already accepted, for it is applied in shops, factories, and mines, and already differences exist in the law between men, women, and young persons. I want to "steep up" the distinction and establish that if a woman is employed in a trade where men work, say ten hours, she shall work six. Under our present system this would drive women out of the trade, but the provision is applicable only as the social system adjusts itself and as common profits become important, while individual advantage vanishes. It will tend, also, to thrust women into monopoly

trades, while clearing the ground for men.

I said above that, by right of conquest, nursing, teaching and clerical work would fall into the hands of woman, but that is almost in sight. There are two other branches where woman must expand and where she may acquire a monopoly; the one comprises the crafts, the other may be called administrative. The best-known craftsmen are at present men, but the crafts are narrowly viewed, and many who are by their work entitled to call themselves craftsmen are included in the working-class. It should be accepted that any person is a craftsman who by means of his hands creates the beautiful rather than the useful. Are craftsmen, therefore, in the broader sense those who make and set up designs for printing and reproduction, who paint pottery for glazing, who work with stencils, who make the cards which regulate the patterns of fabrics, etc. It will be realised at once that this is an enormous field. As you read these lines consider the objects in the room round you: almost every one of

them has (more or less) been decorated by the human hand; door-handles, table-cloth and carpet-patterns, picture-frames, the design of the cover of the book you hold, all these things are the work of craftsmen behind the machines.

I believe that women have as often, if not more often than men, the craftsman's temperament; since 1880 especially their progress in wood, leather, and metal-work has been remarkable, as is shown by the exhibitions which are continually held, at the Lyceum Club, at the minor art galleries, even in the parish rooms of the villages. The new craftswomen are emerging from Glasgow and Camden Town, they are illustrating books, selling less little bags and entering more factories; being cheap, efficient and sufficiently inventive, there is reason to think that they will slowly release for rougher work men who have no creative instinct but are wasting their muscles on pencils and paintbrushes. Crafts, as the minor and industrial arts, are likely therefore to absorb much of the energies of many hundreds of thousands of women,

and I incline to think that this will affect the general artistic capacity of woman, by giving her the elementary training by favour of which her gifts will develop. Beyond craftsmanship, which I look upon as the next step, there is the broader field of administration, which need not detain us very long, because it is one as to which we can generalise only from the feminine temperament.

It can be said broadly that man's capacity is executive rather than administrative, that he is better in his place in the sheriff's posse than in the sheriff's office, because the exuberance of his body demands of him that he should expend strength, while woman tends rather to store energy in her cells to assist the subtle creative schemes of nature. For this reason I feel that the portion of executive work known as administration, i.e., storekeeping and time-keeping, the making of records, the preparation of statistics, the organisation of labour and the distribution of commodities, all those tasks which are mainly static, are not well executed by men stolen

from the anvil and the plough. Woman has the essential taste for detail and the *personal* interest in *persons* which can make administration vital and useful. One instance will suffice. A man, controlling as timekeeper a thousand persons, will edict that they must reach the factory at eight; a woman's tendency will be to inquire where they live and to ask: Can they reach the factory at eight without undue inconvenience? If inquiry shows that they cannot, it is she will agitate in favour of cheap tramways, for instance.

This is a small but significant instance; I feel generally that the broad conclusions men are apt to draw nullify the value of humanitarian regulations; they have become accustomed to seeing things writ large, they cannot realise the particular case. Now women have for so many generations been trained to cope with the minor difficulties of the household and with the varying temperaments of its inmates, that they have become infinitely more subtle: I have never heard that a woman administrator was the slave of red-tape; having

little respect for law, because they are essentially individualists, they are the people who must interpret the law. It may be that I shall shock many by saying that, on a capital charge, I would rather be tried by a jury of women than by a jury of men : men as we know them might appreciate the facts more fully, but motives would mean nothing to them ; they are not subtle, and apply the law as they would apply a steam-roller. In all those walks of life, therefore, where a nice appreciation of the details of government is wanted, in the public service, in the factory, the office, I look forward to a great extension of female labour. It will be one of the least harmful forms of labour, for it will not ruin the body, and it will keep mental faculties on the alert.

Lastly, and in any state, however advanced, I think woman must extend her rôle as a trainer and educator of children. I have shown in " Feminism and the Home " that an evolution of the household is certain, but it would be doing the work of a visionary to say that the home will

disappear entirely. Some form of human association must remain unless men are born again, and I think we can safely dismiss such wild ideas as generation under official auspices, separate barracks for men and women, etc. The tendency of lovers has immemorially been to coalesce, to build a nest which they share with their offspring, and the tendency is as strong among the Nietzscheans as among the birds. Here and there is a rebel, who will live alone, but he is negligible, as is among the birds the one exception of the piratical cuckoo. That women will continue to rear their young as they do now in hostile isolation, reluctantly yielding them up to the school and watching over their social relationships, I do not think. There are already many thousands of women on Care Committees, women who conduct crèches, children's hospitals, relief societies; it is women support the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children: that is the spirit the Feminist State will develop. It will be no longer "My Child and I (against the world)," but "The Children and I."

I do not suppose indeed that the gregarious spirit of our age, so weak by the side of the collectivism we must pass through, will spare the sensitive feminine brain; if, living as they do in uncivilised conditions, they already show such love and such tolerance, when their road has been cleared we must find that women will band themselves together in small groups, say of a dozen, to administer what may be called private crèches, where children can be tended, fed, amused in common. The net result will be that some of the burden of child-rearing will be lifted from the shoulders of the mother, for it stands to reason that while it takes one mother to amuse one child, it does not take ten mothers to amuse ten childen.

The effect upon the mother will be relief from labour. The effect upon the child will be that it grows up less unsociable, and yet more individualistic. On the one hand the intelligent mother will more readily throw her child into contact with other children, free it from nervousness and teach it to be tolerant: for it is a common

place to say that it is not good for a child to grow up alone; on the other it will be more individualistic because it will have to assert itself. To-day the child finds the path too easy: an admirer is ready in the home to rave, as Mr. Polly found, over the beauty of its toes; it is bitterly disillusioned, as was Mr. Polly, when it discovers later that the world does not rave over the beauty of its toes. In the Feminist crèche it will have to justify itself, it will have to "show-off."

I am all for "showing-off." Such excellence as feminine teaching has already is found in the taste women have for developing the personal faculties of children; it is women make the child "speak a piece," or do tricks on the trapeze; it is they listen to its amateur stories and to the doggerel it likes to compose. They do not stifle it in the heavy mantle of good form, and for this reason I hope and believe that women will retain a hold upon their children until their education is ended. Feminism cannot co-exist with the tradition of stupidity and brutality exemplified by

the public schools; it cannot allow boys to be brought up in the idea that girls are their inferiors, that Winchester "notions" are enough for its elect and that the Harrow straw hat is the best hat. All that must go, with the tradition of masculine tyranny, and it will be one of the first functions of Feminism to procure its downfall.

I believe, therefore, that in the care of children the new-woman will still find her chief occupation. However far the extension of machinery and the refinements of Government may carry us, the baby will still have to be washed, the child told that it must not swing the kitten by its tail. On the lines I have indicated the work will no longer be ungrateful, but will promote among women the social intercourse by favour of which they can develop and become finer mothers as well as finer women. From that particular labour they will never be free; at least I can conceive no state of society where men will assume responsibility for the care of children. They have never done so, so far, except as medical men, and have avoided the child

in its early stages; if they have preserved for themselves the education of growing boys it is largely because they despised women, and instinctively felt that, to maintain the supremacy of their sex, they had to make the boy the father of the man. But now they are being driven out, partly because they are not relatively so strong as they were, partly because they are more reasonable and are beginning to understand that their task lies in the open, in the struggle for life and wealth, rather than in the reposeful places where youth is slowly being armed for the contest which is to come. Men no longer hold the children's hospital; they have never held the kindergarten, even though a man created it; they are minor influences in co-education, and already in Council Schools they are giving way before the trained and intuitive women. I see this as woman's natural field, and I do not think Feminists will rest until the whole of education, from cradle to career, has been placed in their predestined hands.

Such, then, is the course of the Feminist labour movement, as I perceive it. I have

had to describe it with some regret, holding as I do the view expressed early in this chapter that woman is not as an animal destined for aught save instinctive labour, such as child-rearing and artistry. I realise that it is necessary she should pass through the other stages, partly because she wants to, or thinks she wants to, partly because she needs the discipline and education that labour gives; it does not, perhaps, matter much whether much beauty and much life be sacrificed in the process, for every generation bears its splendid crop; the new generation, still far-swathed in Time, may be of another stamp. Its mothers will have gained for it liberty and freedom of the mind, suffered for it, so as to be able to teach it to fill in the new community the place which I think it should fill. I want woman in the ultimate state to be considered as something more than a producer of commodities, to be justified in her consumption of the food she does not tear from the soil by the fact that as a woman she is the temple of the race. As a temple she is entitled to her worshippers,

and as a temple she must be decorated; she must be physically splendid so that the race may be splendid; she must be freed from toil so that her mind may become more aloof, more aristocratic by detachment from the grosser cares, so that she may give the child the fine pre-natal influence of a sensitive soul; she must be the one who understands and fosters, even if she does not practise the arts. As it would be a bad thing for the State as we know it if there were no leisured people endowed by fortune and able to think, to speculate, to love and to pursue beauty, so would it be bad in another State if both sexes were bound to the wheel of production and if there were none to hold high the torch which sheds upon the world the radiance of the arts. Mother and artist, that is what I want woman ultimately to be, no more, and that is very much.

VI
WOMAN AND PASSION

VI

WOMAN AND PASSION

IF woman is unhappy in her home, her art and her trade, it cannot so absolutely be said that she is unhappy in her loves. She is in a degraded condition, but it is debatable whether degradation matters where passion is; while we can love that which we despise, we can also rejoice in our own subjection and greedily demand that further indignities be heaped on our head, so that we may more utterly show how we love, enjoy martyrdom for the sake of the thing loved. This applies very much to women and somewhat to men; while men deliver themselves into slavery with a sense of gladness only when their senses are stirred and remain slaves only so long as their senses are held, women often appear to welcome wholeheartedly the thrall of sex, the dominance

of a harder brain, tyranny, neglect, insult, blows. So obscure is the tendency, which I will not call instinct, that I lay down the ideas that follow in a shrinking spirit, and only because I believe that passion can be made more splendid if it is stripped of its load of social cruelties. It will always be open to those lovers who are essential masochists to submit gladly to a personal thrall: Feminists are not concerned with conditions so individual, but with the general state of woman in her sex-relation to man.

Whether woman live in a passionate relation or be merely expectant, the social conditions under which we exist tend to make ugly that which should be beautiful. Whether a woman be a spinster, young or old, a wife or a widow, whether she be rich or poor, varying laws and pressures work towards the starvation of her fineness or its diversion into channels which are sometimes sentimental and sometimes mercenary. Most notable is the state of the spinster, because most abnormal. Our singular customs lay down that while millions of

women are without mates, millions of men who live in solitude may not approach them ; we drive the men to a horrible expedient, the women into the bitterness of lonely age. It seems that a majority of the white race consider it well that women should suffer thus in honour of a nebulous ideal that they call chastity ; so convinced are they of the rightness of this, that social ostracism follows on an infringement of the social law. It is an extraordinary state of things, and I would ask the reader to ignore the few thousands of rich or artistic women who can, in the great towns, afford to dispense with marriage, and survive the effects of divorce and illegitimate children ; they do not count in a general question by the side of the millions of women who have been taught to be "straight" and can hardly imagine themselves as anything but "straight."

It would be easy to make great play with the figures of the Census, to ask what is to become of the spinsters, but it is more effective to take the case of one spinster

in her father's house. If she be young and moderately attractive she is in an attitude of expectancy; possibly she works and earns a sum which will not keep her; or she does not work, but is kept. I have reviewed her position as a home-slave, but how does she fare in the light of her passionate needs? I assume these needs, for most women possess them, and know that they are not satisfied. The spinster has suffered from puberty onwards, perhaps for years; she has suffered obscurely, but there has been no illusion about it, and she may be fated to suffer for twenty or thirty years. She is kept, protected, but on the terms that she shall give herself only in marriage; she may do all that can be done to entrap man, but "she must not go too far." If she succeeds she passes into the married class, to face new problems; if she fails she may suffer, physically and mentally, lose her beauty, become the ridiculous mass of ingratiating giggles which provides jokes for the music-halls, but she must uphold still and forever the white flag of chastity. The reason is not far to seek; man, in his

concern for *his* race, which is not concern for *the* race, wishes, in the words of Mr. H. G. Wells, "to have all his own women inviolate, and to fancy he has a call upon every other woman in the world." * So clear is the idea of property that John will assault Henry because the latter has made to John's sister a proposal which John would not hesitate to make to Henry's.

There exists in the world an insane idea that women have no sexual needs, while a man almost requires a wife in every port. There is great talk of encouraging women to emigrate to the Colonies, so that the settlers may have wives, and there is none of providing husbands for spinsters. I do not know to what extent men believe this, and to what extent they choose to believe it for reasons which are not very clear. Why men should value virginity in women has never been demonstrated, for they do not, as a rule, deliberately want to have children; they are oppressed by some obscure desire to initiate, probably out of vainglory. They cannot answer the

* "The New Machiavelli."

argument that a woman is no less desirable because she has known passion,* or explain why they do not hesitate to marry widows; the answer they sometimes make, that a woman who has "sinned" out of wedlock will "sin" when wed, is not very sound, for they apply it in cases where there was but a single "sin," possibly under promise of marriage. It is mainly male egoism that dictates their feeling, the unreasoning sense of property in women.

If the spinster live alone, if she have means, then the penalties of expulsion from the home are reduced to social ostracism, that engine so admirably calculated to ruin finally those to whom it is applied in a spirit of piety. Man substitutes for personal property in certain women a share in a collective sex-property; he will not fail to observe the woman's "fall," and to profit by her weakness, but will thrust her away from his own women, on whom he has imposed a "stainless life." And if we consider the widow, her position is still more ludicrous and pathetic, for she has known companionship

* *See* "Sanine," by Artzybachev.

and sex-intercourse; yet she is to be thrust back into spinsterhood after having escaped it, or forfeit her reputation. To so remarkable a pitch has this been carried that surprise is not general when a Colonel Astor leaves a vast fortune to his wife provided she do not re-marry: apparently a wife is one of the few properties a man may control after his death.

The position of the married woman is different in essentials, for here we have no longer a deprivation of sex-intercourse, but the more complicated question of venality. It is hardly too much to say that in a great number of cases marriage is a form of barter, for the monetary element, while looming very large during the engagement, tends to become predominant when love has run its course. It is within the knowledge of all of us that many women unwillingly tolerate their husband's habitual misconduct because they are penniless; they cannot leave him because they have no trade, or no desire to earn a livelihood. I do not argue that all marriages are venal; at least, the majority cannot be priced in cash; other advantages,

such as "status" or "position," must be taken into account, and intervene largely in match-making. In this country marriages are probably less venal than in any other white man's land, except America, where divorce facilities have made them still more sexo-sentimental than in England. But it would be wrong to think that because love-matches are common the *mariage de convenance* is uncommon; it does not unduly ravage the aristocracy and the working-class, but it exercises its sway in a large proportion of middle-class alliances.

Generally speaking, among the well-to-do the men are in love, so far as they can be in love—which is not always very much—but the women are at best willing. A little emotion, a faint preference suffices, as a rule, to convince the young woman that the eligible young man (with so many hundreds a year) who has paid her flattering attentions is her predestined lover; she is not consciously venal, she does not enter the married state in fear and repulsion. She accepts that she must accept this passable man, so that she may be kept by one other

than her father; without impulse towards him she is ready to be his lover and to bear his children. This tepidity is not worthy of the name of passion, yet serves as a substitute; it would not be objectionable if it did not reveal a low state of emotional development and if it did not lead to hideous compromises. There is no doubt that women must be in an inferior emotional condition if they are willing to offer the most intimate of tributes without being anxious to do so. To replace desire by self-abnegation one must be almost incapable of conceiving desire, and as human desire is governed largely by emotion, it is the latter must be atrophied.

I should not, however, insist so much on the need for passion in marriage if tepid passions did not interfere with happiness. Because it has been notorious for so many centuries that a man takes unto himself a willing wife, who *gives* herself and *takes* no passionate equivalent, it has been assumed by man that his irregularities must be condoned. He has not stated this in the law, but he has established it by imposing

upon the married woman the tyranny of money. If a wife be injured because her husband is unfaithful to her, or if, as is more common, he be not unfaithful but merely repellent as a mate, she has no remedy: if she desert him without just cause the Courts will allow her no alimony, and the Courts, imbued with the idea that wives must submit themselves unto their husbands, will never recognise physical and emotional repulsion as a just cause. Thence springs the difficulty: the unemotional girl, who has married in ignorance a man to whom she did not object, may discover later that she possesses a temperament opposed to his, but she must endure him; matrimony may have worked in her a revolution, but she cannot free herself from the consequences of deeds done before she was awake. The law will not help her; her family, glad to have "settled her nicely," will hardly receive her back; society, male and female, will say that they "see nothing wrong with the man."

There need be "nothing wrong with the man." He may be the perfect lover and the

perfect husband, but he may not be her natural mate; he might charm other women, but repel his wife; neither party is to blame! Yet the bond must endure and hideous things be done in its defence. Because the man is the pay-master he may retain his private odalisque, refuse her freedom and money, brand her in Court as a neurotic person, hold her children; she has chosen him and may not choose twice. But has she chosen? ask the Feminists. Is it "choice" when a young girl fresh from school resigns herself to an unknown man? when an older girl, who has been sheltered in her father's home, plunges for a half-justified preference? Neither has anything to build upon, save imagination, and yet she must make a contract for life. It is not choice, for one cannot choose unless one knows; it is the practice among the well-to-do to exclude as much as possible the "detrimentals," i.e. those men whose means are not enough, and this limits choice to an extraordinary degree: there are many young women who, after having had friendly superficial relations with half a dozen men,

are called upon to choose a husband; there are many more, such as teachers, who hardly meet any men at all. And they too may be called upon to "choose."

It is not wonderful, then, that women who choose so blindly should set aside the sex-factor; it ceases to be the *X* of an equation, to which they have no key. The *X* becomes the money question in all its forms, and a woman tends to ask herself, not "do I love him?" but "will this be a profitable marriage?" She cannot be blamed, she judges that which she can judge, looks, breeding, profession, status, money; she cannot estimate the unknown, cannot tell whether her latent passions will respond to those of the aspirant. The marriage is consummated; perhaps it remains devoid of all joy, and the woman has missed the greatest emotional opportunity in her life; perhaps it is repulsive, and then she accepts her husband's caresses with a feeling that may approach nausea. She endures, she must endure: she has a house, money, clothes, and calls, and a circle; she has truly sold herself, and has sold

herself for life. She may escape, but at great cost. She must be very brave, very able; she must be ready to earn her own living in the face of a hostile world; she must make new friends, a new life, and few women can do this. Some may despise her because of her weakness, say that it is ignoble that she should submit to ignominy; it is, but the iniquity is not on her : it is on those who made the customs and the laws.

Happy, then, in a negative sense, are those whose passions never awaken, who are able to love, let us say adequately, the man with whom they fortuitously ally. They are not uncommon, for it is characteristic of the slave that a little kindness will go a long way; a woman fresh from the oppression of her father and mother tends to think, when the liberties of marriage have been accorded her (not so much sex-liberties as the liberties which attach to her new status), that she has been "pitched neck and crop into Paradise." It is only later she may analyse; at first the husband is the new spirit, the magic creature the like of which she has never met before.

Because she has never met him before, because he is strange, she invests him with qualities almost extra-human, as innocently as Riquet looks upon his master as a God.* Often the illusion endures, and some women may make decent lives of this rudimentary passion ; they belong to a low type.

Indifference need not, however, detain us long, for there is no passionate problem where there is no passion. The problems of marriage are not entirely physical, for woman's passion is not entirely physical ; it is too readily assured by man that it is in no wise physical, but he is right in thinking that it is more mental, emotional than his own. Primarily, passion in woman is maternal, it is a desire to give which feeds upon itself and waxes fat upon its giving ; a woman in love is vampiric and exclusive, jealous of all other women, of the lover's mother, sister, daughter. She wants to be to him all the women of the world, to stand for every relation that can exist between the sexes. She wants to protect him, to spare him pain and trouble,

* " Monsieur Bergeret à Paris " (Anatole France).

to be his friend, as well as his lover, his counsellor, his servant and his partner; she wants to be everything that he wants, and everything she has ever heard of, and yet a little impossible more, to love him and to outstrip love itself and all it may demand in the impetuous offering of all her faculties.

It is not wonderful, then, that an emotion so broad should grow slowly and awaken unwillingly, for I think it an axiom that naught save small emotions grow very fast: a toadstool grows more quickly, but dies earlier than a chestnut-tree. Because man is sensual and impatient, passion is often destroyed, counteracted rather by the disappointment which woman feels because love unveiled is not as delicate and as beautiful as was love in her dreams; as a result many women whose emotional possibilities are those of a Juliet or a Francesca go through life and marriage without having once been deafened by the beating of the wings. That is why passion is in so low a state in Great Britain and the United States, where jostle puritanism

and brutality. Apparently there is no alternative: love must be looked upon either as the prelude to parenthood or it must be coarse, vulgar, or light, a fit subject for the music-halls. Apparently women must be divided into two types and live under two laws, one for the mother-type, the other for the courtesan-type. The mother must be protected and dominated, the courtesan hunted, enjoyed and despised; there must be no charm in love, for charm is held as faintly immoral, and immorality as almost hygienic. It is a curious illusion, and it is not balanced by any division of men into types; we never hear of the father-type and of the lover-type, though they may as readily be imagined as the mother and the courtesan. Man has reserved for woman the classification by which his conscience is salved; it is a false classification, one which, at most, might be proven true only if some mysterious psycho-physiological instrument, say an erotometer, could be built. I do not believe that there is an essential difference between Catherine of Russia and the housewife who governs a

semi-detached villa in Streatham. Both are animated by the same passion, the passion of life-giving, an unconscious, but dominating passion; the modest and monandrous wife cleaves unto her husband while the courtesan gives all to every man, but, if we leave out the monetary element, one is inclined to think that both are searching for the ideal mate who will realise their hopes for the race. The race is their unconscious preoccupation; even if they flout the suggestion it must be maintained, for woman is the temple of the race, and she is its splendid vestal. Indeed the courtesan, hungrily searching, carries higher than the mother the standard of the race, for she is rebellious and discriminating, and she is out among a world of mates for adventure and the service of those who will follow her.

The pity of it all! is the natural corollary of these reflections. No lover of woman can think unmoved of this daily waste of magnificence. For it is magnificence, and I do not think that if the heroic deeds done in the name of patriotism and religion were

heaped high on one another their mass would be seen by the side of the sumptuous pile of sacrifices and lives given in the name of love. It is because the Feminist sees love splendid instead of limited and abject that he wishes to free it from the trammels and conventions of the world, to make it, in fact as well as in name, the supreme joy of mankind. When we speak of the equality of the sexes and of the hostility which envenoms their relations, we do not mean that we want to suppress passion because it enslaves woman; for one thing, we could not, and for another, we think that without passion society would be no more than an animated corpse.

We want, notably, to dissociate from each other the passionate idea and the idea of offspring; we recognise that passion is the spirit of parenthood, but we do not want the two ideas identified. Offspring should be natural and accidental, not intentional. That children should be born as the result of an alliance may be accepted as an implication, but not as dominating

the relations of the sexes. To preserve poetry it must remain an unobtrusive and secret process, much as digestion, to use an ugly but useful metaphor: we do not, when we sit down to an agreeable meal, reflect as we read the menu that we shall assimilate these foods with the curious names; we have, rather, greedy visions of cream, and firm, rosy-fleshed fishes, and tender fowls basted in savoury fats, and of mellow, aromatic wines. That is the spirit in which we want to approach passion: we do not want it correct, or conscientious, or public-spirited, or eugenic; we want it mysterious and alluring, and cruel and altruistic and selfish. Selfish, above all, for he that takes most truly gives.

It is this spirit, we hope, will animate the new "new-woman," this woman dowered with splendours which not one glimpses to-day in every hundred that capture the little god. It does not yet, I confess, inspire the new-woman, as I will call her in memory of her ugly mother of the eighties, who thought that with the help of collars, bloomers, and tobacco she could make men

believe that she was a man. She succeeded in making them believe that she was not a woman, and that was a pyrrhic victory. To-day the new woman has learned to look like a woman, to wear djibbahs, Liberty frocks, Chinese embroidery, to dress her hair soft and low. Her way of proclaiming her emancipation has altered; she has shifted the ground from the physical to the mental, for she is acute enough to realise the value of her sex-assets. She does not realise it fully enough; she condescends to be elegant and beautiful, but she does not cultivate her voice. She is sharp, quick, harsh; she wishes to conquer, not to charm. Because she is emancipated she wants to dominate; she is not content to be man's equal, she wants to crush him; her grievance has poisoned her mind, and now she must humiliate her quondam master, contradict him publicly when she would politely dissent from another woman. She must flaunt her views on sex, politics, philosophy in his face and in presence of his friends; she has to brag of her degrees, of her membership of revolutionary

societies, disreputable little clubs whose sole merit lies in their being obnoxious to him.

The new-woman is not a "nice woman." It may be as well, for we have too long meant by "a nice woman" a woman whom a man might love as a charming fool, but we do not see why she should not, in another sense, become a nice woman while remaining a clever one. We must not be too censorious when confronted with this twentieth century product, this young woman who has left behind her Girton, the Slade, the Fabian Nursery, the Stage Society, for whom these old nostrums have lost their virtue; this young woman has a hard, metallic surface, makes nothing of entering a public-house if she is thirsty, has views on the endowment of motherhood, the esoterics of dancing, workmen's dwellings and the segregation of the unfit. She is one vast, incoherent, lusty shout. She is absurd and she is splendid; she is frightfully alive. At risk of offending her I must ask her enemies to make allowances for her: she is so young in liberty, so

American and so intoxicated with novelty. Again a metaphor will serve: freshly painted railings look very red, but they tone down by degrees. The new-woman will tone down. She is passing from tyranny to freedom that is lawless and will one day be lawful.

It would be a sorry thing if we had to believe that the new-woman is the woman to come. The male egoist would regret the old-woman, and he must be taken into consideration; he is not so black as he is painted by some Feminists, for he loves women in his protective, muddle-headed way, loves them more deeply than many a bloodless male Feminist who to-day breaks lances for women because he is tired of breaking them for political parties. The male egoist must be converted, seduced by being promised, shown, that the new-woman will be more charming than her mother: otherwise he will fight, and we do not want to fight him, to find him entrenched in the polling-booth, in the courts of law and, especially, in the fastness of his own mind, to resist the move-

ment which will bring him greater happiness than he has ever known. We do not despise him because he is an egoist: it is a fine thing to be an inspired egoist, capable of appraising values, of knowing and capturing the ideal. We shall want naught save the egoist in the voluntary associations that must come at the end, when we free ourselves from the social organisations still unborn. And woman too, so far as she can, will have to be the female egoist who co-operates with him in their joint interest. That will be the real new-woman intellectual, economically free and industrious.

It is often argued by those who wish to maintain woman in a servile condition that her intellectual development is the natural foe of her charm, in other words that "men don't like clever women." It is an exploded idea. Man is progressing, not so fast as woman, for he has less leeway to make up, but he is certainly becoming more intelligent, more liberal, more ready to accord her rights. The comparative success of the Suffrage Bills is not entirely due to the

strenuous advocacy which has brought them to public notice, or to the fine temper of the militants who have fought into substance that which was shadow. The success comes also from the increasing reasonableness of man, who realises better (if not completely) that woman is a minor species of human being. He will not yet grant her full rights, but he no longer thinks of her as the ornament of the zenana. He will progress further, follow the line of enlightenment broken by reaction which he has followed in other cases ; he will protest, give vent to gloomy prophecies, then yield, and yield not entirely to force but to the small voice of his reason. And as he yields, he will be conscious of a phenomenon: these harsh, combative women, as they obtain their rights, as their grievances are removed, will cease to be clamorous. He will discover that women are not less lovable because they are intelligent, and that they are not shrill and argumentative when he no longer receives with a sneer their most innocent opinions. As soon as he abandons the superior sex-attitude he

will have full play for the personally superior attitudes which we all enjoy when we can justify them.

Intellectual equality does not destroy passion. Indeed it removes from the relations of the sexes the factor of discontent which so often poisons them. I see no reason to think that because a woman understands business and public affairs she cannot be lovable: one might as well contend that, to-day, no man is lovable unless he be a long-haired painter or a minor poet. It is only when women are conquering the status of equals that they are not lovable; remove the cause for contest and they revert at once to their true passionate function, for they have diverged from its exercise solely because they need intellectual equality to accomplish it to the full.

The effects of woman's economic emancipation will be very similar to those involved by the recognition of her intellectual equality. Prostitution and the white-slave traffic must almost automatically disappear, for I need not assure the informed that few women adopt prostitution as means of

livelihood when other means offer. A small proportion of lazy, self-indulgent and stupid women go open-eyed into this gulf, but they soon regret the step; their tendency to take to drink is an evidence of wretchedness, the facility with which they allow bullies to prey upon them, an evidence of loneliness. The social enquirer has it confirmed on every side that the prostitute carries her cross. But she cannot, under present conditions, emerge from the abyss, for the world has no reasonably light work to offer her on fair terms: it is absurd to think that a girl will readily abandon the adventure and occasional gaiety of the streets for the half-conventual, half-penal workhouse laundry. The Feminist has for prostitution no cure in the direct sense, but is convinced that the economic emancipation of woman will, on the one hand, cut off the supply of women for the trade, and, on the other, restrict the demand by causing men to realise better the equality and nobility of his partner.

When we have established woman in the world, levelled her wages with those of man,

conquered minimum wages for all, raised the school age and created an educational system, the status of woman in man's eyes will have been so revolutionised that he will not so readily make of her a toy; and he will not find it easy to do so. Women will no longer be driven into the slave market as they are nowadays by the truck system of the shops where they "live in," by the seasonal trades which throw them out of employment for months on end, and they will not be so sentimental, so gullible. They will stand as economic equals and, as such, will enjoy at least the respect which attaches to-day to women of independent means. All this will, I think, make for a refining of passion. There will still be contest between the sexes, but it will be a fair contest, and when they ally they will be rid of the monetary element which to-day drags a slimy trail across the purest loves. It is suggested that when a married woman draws a proportion of her husband's wages or income the man will feel degraded and visit his wrath upon her, but I have still to learn that men are

degraded when they marry women who are richer than they are; indeed, men are known to live upon their wives' incomes with perfect equanimity. The truth is that when women are economically free a haunting doubt will be removed from the mind of men: they will cease to have to ask themselves whether they are loved or merely accepted as pay-masters. They will be sure that they are loved, for woman will no longer have for her surrender a reason other than love; the economic emancipation of woman will herald in an era of romance, for romance alone will sway the world. We accept that all temperaments must have play, that some are essentially celibate, some moderate and faithful, some wanton. There should be, in a Feminist State, room for the nympho-maniac, for the State has no business to regulate sex-relations; its business is to keep the peace, to prevent the puritans as well as the licentious from interfering with the liberty of others. It is interfering with liberty to deprive woman of opportunity and to drive her into prostitution, for this deprives her of the right to choose.

Starting from the assumption that love should be free, uncensored and above purchase, we must detest it where we see it venal, bold, grasping and insensitive. We do not propose to establish free-love; we propose to establish freedom in choice, which is not the same thing. It is conceivable that a generation better convinced than is ours of the equal rights of the sexes might do away with the marriage contract and edict that men and women should freely come together or separate: this would be the ideal system, but there are to-day so few beings sufficiently responsible and constant that free-love is not for us worth discussing. The Feminist State would hardly forbid it, for, after all, the existing State does not forbid it and allows any man to control an "abode of love," but we are not concerned with the law. The law does not matter; it is custom matters, and it will be so long before the mass of mankind look upon free-love as normal that we need not dilate upon it.

I imagine that under Feminism there will be room for alliances of every kind;

we seek a freedom without limits, and we shall attain it automatically when woman's economic revolution has been worked. Upon the revolution must follow a readjustment of woman's status; we do not, nowadays, express much surprise when informed that a man has a second establishment: in those days we may accept as quite natural that a woman has allied with a man on a George Meredith lease. Those people to come will not be as we, small, covetous and limited. I see them as shadows upon a screen, but certain characteristics appear. I imagine a type of man who will not be as we are, sex-haunted, who will be able to look upon a woman without insistent desire; he will take woman for granted, as a politician, artist or labourer, and he will think her worthy of her hire. It will not occur to him to consider whether she is his equal: she will be his equal, and that is all.

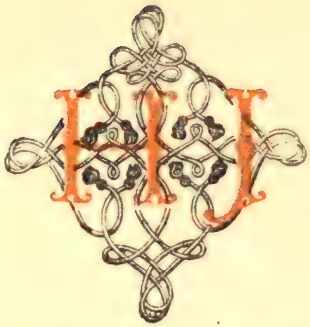
The woman under Feminism will also be regenerated. Free to labour and free to love, she will no longer be oppressed by her sense of inferiority, for she will no longer

be inferior, or be thought inferior. She will not be jealous of her fellows, for she will be as well thought of as they ; she will not be vain, for she will no longer have to compete for the favour of man ; she will no longer be narrow, for every educational and public opportunity will be open to her. Indeed, as I look at my shadow-picture, I seem to find her altogether too simple, unaffected, balanced, to see her as abnormally normal, and my inheritance of male egoism makes me a little afraid of this new creature, so logical, so clear-eyed. Will she understand passion ?

I think so. It will not be the old, cramped passion, the passion of the prisoned thing which struggles towards freedom. It will be a simple, generous passion, and it will gain in intensity that which it loses in complexity ; it will be unreserved, there is nothing which it cannot say ; it will be unashamed, for it will have nothing to be ashamed of ; it will not slink in dark corners, but flaunt itself. Liberated from the shackle of money it will be as some great river undammed that sweeps towards

the sea, not as a torrent which, once past, leaves behind it dry pebbles. It will flow on, broad and steady, but gentle like all big things, and carrying its ships.

THE END



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