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THE
CASE FOR POLYGAMY

OR
THE CASE AGAINST THE *SYSTEM*
OF
MONOGAMOUS MARRIAGE

BY
J. E. CLARE McFARLANE
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To
AMY CLARE,
My Courageous Wife and Comrade,
To Whose Sympathy and Understanding
I Owe So Much.

“ It is no novelty that mankind does not distinctly foresee their own changes, and that their sentiments are adapted to past, not to coming ages. To see the futurity of the species has been the privilege of the intellectual *élite*, or of those who have learnt from them ; to have the feelings of that futurity has been the distinction and usually the martyrdom of a still rarer *élite*.”

JOHN STUART MILL—*The Subjection of Women*.

“ Do you suppose it is for nothing that disbelief has gone out over the world ; that weariness has taken possession of the souls of the rich, and that fatal darkness enfolds the head of wealth and education ?

“ That men disbelieve in the human heart and think that the source of power is set elsewhere than in its burning, glowing depths ; that the powers which they worship are but so many withered emblems of power—dead scoriæ nodding and jostling over the living lava-stream ? ”

EDWARD CARPENTER—*Toward Democracy*.

“ A world . . . muddled and confused, full of false counsel and erratic shames and twisted temptations.”

H. G. WELLS—*The New Machiavelli*.

“ Civilization—the most elaborate system of mutual slavery that the world has known.”

S. FOWLER WRIGHT—*Deluge*.

“ I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly.”

JOHN 10 : 10.

*“ In the near distance the great city stood,
Southward beyond the peopled lake which lay
Shot with delightful glooms and silver tracts
Of light. Life beckon'd from mysterious deeps
Of Being ; the throng'd arena of man's toils
And triumphs whence creative impulse soar'd
On wings of fire, the splendour and repose
Of mothering Nature in her plenitude
Of gracious inspiration sought and given
With sweet insistence call'd ; for them the hills
And the majestic sweep of wood and field ;
For them courageous gropings after truth,
If haply Man might win from out the glooms
And broken gleamings of sectarian creeds
To universal Mind. On Clement came
The great temptation of reflective souls
To view life's panorama from the heights—
The strife, the progress and the goal—nor join
With those that forward move or backward roll.
And now he would have lingered on, but she
Urged him once more upon the path that led
Downhill towards the city. ‘ There,’ she said,
‘ Is work that calls thee ; where men plan and build
Thy task awaits ; thou need'st not tell, I know
Would'st rather be where fields are thick with gold
Of buttercups and rugged passes lead
Towards the peace that breathes from yonder hills.
Yet is the measure of our joys not such
As answers to our wills, but that large need
To which we bend our wills and minister.’ ”*

DAFNE—VIII.

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PREFACE

WITH the matters discussed in this book are bound up some of the most deep-rooted prejudices that have entangled the minds of men. It will not be surprising, therefore, if its observations and conclusions raise a storm of controversy.

But I am not appealing to prejudice. In connection with the injustices that have laid so widespread a curse upon human life I address my remonstrance to thinking men and women : to such as are willing to admit that truth is more important than organized religion ; and life a bigger thing than systems of thought and belief.

The outlook at which I have arrived may most properly be described as the result of definite and continuous growth, to which all my experience has contributed. Far from being the outcome of a mere whim or fancy, my convictions reveal themselves as the natural fruit of a mind which, consciously or unconsciously, has been working towards an inevitable conclusion. In the *Daily Chronicle* of the 30th July, 1917, appeared under my signature an article entitled "Our Great Social Problems." This article, I find, discloses so remarkable a kinship in temper and outlook between the youth and the man that, in spite of its immaturity, I have decided to reproduce it in an appendix to this book.

PREFACE

For a similar reason I append also my poem "Humanity," written in 1921 and published in the edition of my poems which appeared in 1924. This poem, now that I think of it, is practically a forecast in verse of the present work.

During the war the civilized world was forced to take some notice of the toll of venereal diseases : not because it cared for the wastage of life that occurred, but because it could ill spare for the ravages of disease what was so urgently required as targets for the guns. The matter became one of public controversy, and in certain quarters the suggestions put forward for checking and controlling these diseases were criticized as measures which would tend to place a premium on vice, by rendering departures from "the path of virtue" less perilous for those who ventured.

As there is no war on at present, and the nations are not, therefore, obliged to examine too closely how and why their men die, our pretentious Social Purity Associations, and such-like, have quietly gone out of existence. The women, of course, don't matter : they never did. For aught I know, venereal diseases are considered a part of the natural heritage of some women, as children are that of others : a virus which their systems automatically produce as a sign of God's displeasure at the fact of their existence.

J. E. C. M.

I.—THE INDICTMENT

WHAT THE FIGURES SHOW

THE report of the Registrar-General of England on the census taken in Great Britain during the year 1911 shows the population of England and Wales to have been 36,070,492 apportioned between the sexes as under :

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|------------|
| Females | .. | .. | .. | 18,624,884 |
| Males | .. | .. | .. | 17,445,608 |
| Or an excess female population of | .. | .. | .. | 1,179,276 |

In this simple arithmetical statement we have before us the symbol of the greatest social problem that has perplexed the world.

I have begun by quoting the census figures for 1911 because there is a popular belief that the large surplus female population, which has become so noticeable a feature of social life in recent years, is an outcome of the Great War. This is not the case. It will be interesting to note that as far back as the year 1801 the surplus female population in England and Wales stood at 57 per thousand ; the lowest figure recorded during the last century was 36 per thousand in 1831, while during the present century the figures have steadily risen, culminating in those for the 1921 census which show an excess of females over males in England and Wales of 1,736,222 or 96 per thousand of

the population.* The excess shown by the preliminary report of the census taken in 1931 stands at 1,670,248 or 87 per thousand. In the city of London the surplus female population is 139 per thousand, or roughly 556,000.

In dealing with problems arising out of social injustice it is a principle upon which we are called to decide. The widespread nature of the injustice and the large number of persons it involves merely emphasize an argument whose reasonableness is not increased by the incidence of the facts upon which it is based. But the mind of the average man is impressed by weight of numbers; his imagination is, and therefore his sympathies are, more easily awakened by the effects of a disaster involving thousands or millions of human beings, than they would be if but a few persons were concerned; and this is why the disharmonies and other evil consequences arising out of a wilful or thoughtless infringement of natural law are piled up by Nature until they loom so large that even the blind become aware of their presence. This is true of the problem we have before us. The civilization of Europe has from the beginning been based upon social injustice and economic exploitation; one has but to read the history of the last days of the Roman Empire to understand whence modern Europe has received its heritage, and why it is that once again Western civilization is heading for disaster. The dire consequences to humanity arising out of economic

* The figures in connection with vital statistics quoted in this chapter have been derived from official sources and may be considered reliable.

exploitation in our day culminated in the world war of 1914-1918, whose repercussions are even now bringing the world to the verge of economic ruin ; a debacle so far-reaching that none dare foretell its issue. Hand in hand with this economic exploitation goes the exploitation of womanhood. These are the arch-evils which afflict the world ; and until their removal is accomplished there can be no reign of righteousness on earth.

Almost every man will admit the existence of economic exploitation, although he will deny his own share in it ; but the exploitation of womanhood is a more insidious thing ; the conscience of the world has not yet arrived at the point where it will admit the equal rights of men and women as human beings ; even now it is considered that woman was created expressly for man's gratification and that she should have no grievance if he chooses not to put her to the best uses, or to any use at all. This was certainly the outlook of the Victorian Age ; women existed for men's convenience and accommodation ; they were not beings who had any claims based upon Nature, nor did they have any desires save those which men required them to have ; they were, even the most exalted and favourably circumstanced, " something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse." With so general an outlook and attitude it was small wonder that even the most advanced minds of that age, men whose human hearts compelled them to denounce chattel slavery as inhuman and unchristian, were yet blind to this more subtle kind of slavery

that shackled the minds and deformed the souls and bodies of millions of women in their midst.

And as in the case of chattel slavery and in that of almost every other disability from which humanity has suffered, the authority of the organized Church has stood as the chief bulwark of the existing order, so it is in the present instance ; and as in every important epoch in the history of the fight for human liberty during the last 2,000 years, so now the challenge goes forth once more, and the Church is called upon to defend its position with regard to the disability which its dogma has placed upon womanhood.

The law of the State, based upon the dogma of the Church, which makes it a criminal offence for a man to marry more than one wife, by that same provision makes it illegal for millions of women to have husbands, or to bear children.

On whose authority are these things done ?

How should we regard it if some one having the power to enforce his will decreed that henceforth in this island it would be illegal for any one to marry or to bear children ? Would this announcement arouse our indignation, I wonder, or awaken our imaginations ? Yet such a veto is precisely what is being exercised in England, a country with twice the population of Jamaica.

And the situation in England is by no means singular ; in these discussions I shall employ English facts and figures because they are most easily available ; but the results which I shall point out as arising from our social system are true, with sometimes

greater force, of conditions in the rest of Europe and in America.

Now monogamous marriage has been held before the eyes of the world as a Christian ideal ; we have been told that there is no more beautiful human relationship than the love of one man for one woman whom he chooses out of all the world, " forsaking all others." These two people place a ring about themselves within which there is but space enough to accommodate the possible offspring of their marriage. We can imagine, if we choose, the whole world of Western civilization similarly paired and ringed off ; those rings are impassable barriers which, even more securely than the frontiers of the nations, divide the families of men ; but outside are millions of those whom men have been commanded to forsake ; forlorn ones whose attempts to enter any of those rings are characterized as criminal and illegal ; who are forbidden to have children on pain of expulsion from a society in whose midst they live, but in whose privileges they do not share, and on threat of eternal damnation by a God, who, apparently, is a respecter of persons and a distributor of special favours.

And some men refuse to place a ring about themselves so that they may the more readily go in and out among these forsaken ones, tempting them with this trifle and with that, without incurring any responsibility whatever.

But there is a rule known as the Golden Rule which also is, I believe, an ideal of Christianity. Let us see how it is applied to the ringless ones.

At the 1911 census the number of unmarried women in England and Wales between the ages of 15 and 45 was 4,530,942.* Of the total number of unmarried women 1,552,929, were shown as being unoccupied; 182,923 of these were listed as retired, or of private means, leaving a residue of 1,370,006 unmarried women over 15 years of age without visible means of existence.

The figures of the 1921 census are, as may be anticipated, more impressive; at that census 4,587,359 women between the ages of 15 and 45 were shown to have been unmarried; of the total number of unmarried women (7,683,817), 3,737,500, including the widowed and the divorced, were reported as unoccupied; after deducting the number of women listed as retired or of private means† the following is the summary of unmarried women over 12 years of age not “gainfully occupied”:

| | | |
|--|-------|------------------|
| Single | | 2,472,613 |
| Widowed or divorced | .. | <u>1,183,055</u> |
| Total number of unmarried women without visible means of existence | .. | 3,655,668 |

At this time of writing the details of the 1931 census are not available, but it needs little imagination to realize how much the conditions existing in 1921 have been aggravated during the last ten years.‡ Here we

* I have taken the figures for these ages because they cover the period when a woman may reasonably expect the most from life.

† This deduction embraces also students over 18 years of age.

‡ On the 21st October, 1931, the figures for unemployment in Great Britain stood at 2,766,746. These figures do not disclose the state of unemployment among women. They include only such women (584,739) as have at some time or other been employed. The vast majority of those making up the total of 3,655,668 shown by the 1921 census have never found any legitimate occupation.

have the tragic spectacle of one-half of the nation's mothers working overtime and sometimes with disastrous consequences—to produce a birth-rate which will balance the death-rate, while the other half sits looking on in idle jealousy or active and obstructive enmity. With these facts before him with what amazement would an intelligence from another world regard the toleration, by beings whose crown and pride is their reason, of such a manifest absurdity !

To what use does the nation put this unmarried and unemployed three and a half million ? Doubtless a proportion of these become permanent charges on the purses of their fathers or brothers. A wiser civilization—if these women cannot be “gainfully occupied”—would have arranged that these fathers and brothers should rather be charged with the maintenance of daughters and sisters other than their own, and to whom they could at the same time extend the healthful comradeship ordained by Nature ; but the ring which divides the families of men, the glorious doctrine of “ourselves alone” upon which our social system is built and which ministers to the most selfish proclivities of human nature, precludes this.

And what of the vast army of those whom Providence has not favoured with fathers and brothers willing or able to maintain them ? The imagination, even of the most sympathetic, refuses to grasp in its entirety the lot of the woman who is cast adrift upon the world without home or occupation ; so, in order to assist our minds the more easily to comprehend their plight, let us first turn our attention to those conditions which

arise merely as a result of the denial and frustration of the natural instincts of womanhood and which, in comparison, are only mildly affected by economic considerations.

THE FORSAKEN ONES

At the 1921 census the number of unmarried women reported as "occupied" was 3,946,317, or slightly more than 50 per cent of the total number of unmarried women over 12 years of age. A feature of the industrial situation of late years has been the keen competition of the unmarried woman with men for positions in factories and offices, and which by an unerring law of Nature has further reduced her chances of marriage by making it impossible for the man, with whom she has successfully competed for a job, to assume the responsibilities of a family. The man who gains from this condition of affairs is the capitalist, the employer of labour; women outbid men for a position at which they are equally capable, because a woman's possible financial obligations do not include the support of a family; and so she is preferred for the position—and often at a price; for besides competing with the man, she has also in many instances to compete with a sister-woman willing to put the gift of her body into the bargain in order to wring the necessities of life from a hard, selfish world. So the capitalist, or his representative, wins all round; he secures service at two-thirds the monetary value, or less; and he secures also a human body.

For the bodies of women are cheap; society says

there are too many of them ; the supply exceeds the demand, and the price accordingly falls. The fine possibilities of life and love are vitiated, stifled, irretrievably spoilt ; a blight falls upon the soul out of which honesty and courage and noble passion will never grow.

But these are special cases ; for the vast majority of working girls even such security as this kind of intrigue brings is out of reach ; the miserable pittance which they receive in return for their labour does not suffice to provide bread, clothes, shelter and insurance against illness ; and so the young thing that migrates to the city in search of work, if she is fortunate enough to succeed in finding it, yet discovers that soon or late she is forced into difficulties from which she may be extricated only by the sale of herself. Not all the women who sit alone on benches in Hyde Park after dark are professional prostitutes ; a few are driven there for the first time by the extremities in which they find themselves. While in London I was told of one such by a friend, who seeing a lonely, attractive girl sitting on a park bench, approached her. " I am not what you are looking for," she said, " but I will give you what you want for a pound." " Why a pound ? " asked he. " Because," she said, " that is the amount I must have to-night or my things will be thrown into the street ; my rent must be paid." Further questions elicited the fact that she was a working girl from the country, with no relations in London ; whose income would not always stretch to the payment of rent after providing for food and

clothing ; who came of respectable family and was brought up in a sheltered home from which necessity had driven her. My friend took compassion on her ; he gave her the pound she needed but he demanded nothing in return ; she was saved, at least for the moment ; she escaped ; but what is the lot of others ? Driven not by vice, or even by Nature, but by stern, unyielding circumstance, they sell themselves for food and shelter ; they do it once, and twice ; and then comes upon them that apathy, that numbness, that tells that a nervous system has been outraged ; that the delicate mechanism through which the feelings operate has been deranged by contradictory magnetic forces. An icy draught steals over the soul and arrests its blossoming for ever.

DIVORCE

There are others with more will and resolution ; stronger women who will not sell themselves to any passer-by, or yet agree to be a party to an intrigue that carries with it no responsibility on the other side. They labour for an honest living, but they have by no means resigned their rights as women. Society and religion may decree that they shall not have husbands, but they purpose otherwise ; they find a means of getting around this veto ; and they manage to do it without antagonizing the one if not the other. Their weapon is divorce. "The maintenance of the marriage-rate of young spinsters," says the Registrar-General's Report for 1929 (page 103, text), "at a point well in excess of the corresponding rates of pre-war years,

in spite of their diminished opportunities for marriage, has been a feature of the returns of recent years." The significance of this the Registrar-General did not attempt to explain ; nevertheless an explanation will be found on page 117 of the same report where it is shown that the number of divorced men marrying spinsters has risen from 42 in 1876 to 1,886 in 1929. This is how the strong woman for whom society provides no husband revenges herself upon society. This war among women is one of the saddest and most perplexing features of a sad and perplexing problem. It is safe to say that 75 per cent of the time of the majority of women is spent either in scheming how to secure a husband, or in scheming how to hold him. In this way are the mental energies of women dissipated ; by this means are their souls kept narrow and dark with intrigues, violent animosities, blind hatreds, spite, envy and every other uncharitable passion ; this war closes the doors of a woman's sympathy on members of her sex, and embitters the attitude of the less fortunate to those who are securely placed ; it is perhaps the greatest menace to Christianity in the world to-day.

And so we find that heartless, unscrupulous men are daily deserting the women they promised to love and cherish, in order that they may obtain what the law otherwise denies to them—the affections of another woman ; and single women are taking by force or guile what cannot be obtained from society in any other way. The *Sunday Express* of 18th October, 1931, reported that " divorce cases are being heard at the rate of 90

a day in the Law Courts at present," and the *Evening Standard* somewhat earlier stated that "broken romances involving more than 1,700 husbands, wives and co-respondents will be discussed in the Divorce Court during the Michaelmas term which opens on October 12." It does not help matters to argue that these things are wrong; as well argue that the slaves of the last century did wrong in turning on their harsh masters and butchering them sometimes; now, as then, the spiritual value of self-restraint and forbearance is as nothing compared to that lost by the disabilities they suffer; besides, there are more worthy and beneficial ways in which to exercise self-restraint.

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

But the real crimes of these broken pledges are committed upon the children who are left adrift in the world. In the *Sunday Express* of 27th September, 1931, the following article appeared:

A serious side to the alarming increase in divorce in Great Britain year after year is engaging the attention of social workers. It is the problem of the children of divorce.

There are thousands of these divorce-court-orphaned children, and with a record list of cases down for the Michaelmas term, 3,000 more will be added to their number this year.

Some schools, it is alleged, have an official bar against these children. Every public schoolmaster will deny its existence, but it is there, nevertheless, according to a divorce law authority.

"Since the war I estimate that at least 5,000 boys have been made 'fatherless,'" said the authority yesterday.

"It is a tragedy to see these boys grow up, with a grudge against the world, often difficult to control at school, and

eventually begin their search for careers without help or advice.

“ I know of a child who was two years old when his parents were divorced. He was sent to a boarding-school. His mother died some years later.

“ This same boy at the finish of his schooling was sent to an engineering firm as an apprentice. Three years later he discovered that his father was a departmental manager in the same works. They had passed each other every day without recognition. That man became a bitter man, with a grudge against the world.”

In these “ children of divorce,” society is sowing the seeds of its own destruction. Out of such conditions grow Bolshevism and anarchy; an injustice never fails to avenge itself upon its perpetrator.

And so the wastage of life and of the possibilities of life goes on.

ABORTION

And in the lives of all these classes of women I have named arises the chance of an undesirable pregnancy; whether because of the urgency of Nature's demand upon them, or because of economic considerations, those who do not descend to self-abuse must run the risk of being found out; yet they cannot meet the scorn of a heartless society that enslaves not only their bodies but their minds as well. We make it well-nigh impossible for them to live clean, virtuous lives, certainly impossible to live normal lives, and we damn them when they don't succeed; and so they resort to the crime of abortion, they crush out the tender life that has sprung up within them and often crush out or wreck permanently their own. These things have

become so established a feature of our social life that their occurrence occasions little surprise, and less pity for the weak, unfortunate ones that are the victims of a malignant fate.

Suicide, madness, varying degrees of nervous disorder and the "diseases peculiar to women" make their contribution to the sum of these miseries; on almost any day one may read in the newspapers of the dementia that drives middle-aged spinsters to take their lives; the torture of being alone in the world proves too much for them; "a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind" is returned and the world passes on unmindful or unconscious of the result of its cruelty. Who that has looked upon the starved, emaciated frames of these creatures but must feel a great pity and a great indignation! For there is a hunger more wasting than that for food; it is the hunger of a woman for the child which society and religion deny to her. All through the lonely years she waits for the baby fingers that never clutch at her breasts, and for the eyes and lips that never meet her own. There is no torture suffered and inflicted by savages that compares with this refinement of cruelty which a civilization calling itself Christian practises upon its women.

ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

Arising in part out of these disabilities and in part originating them, looms the giant octopus of economic pressure which crushes out the life of the masses; this inter-relationship between economic exploitation and the exploitation of women cannot be too strongly

emphasized ; a mode of living which leads to isolation and competition instead of to unity and co-operation is not only bad in sociology but bad in economics as well ; this is true in the case of individuals as of nations ; the exclusion of so large a proportion of women from the privileges and responsibilities of the nation's families not only undermines the stability of those families but also makes it increasingly difficult for the majority of them to achieve independence. As I have already pointed out, the competition of single women with men reduces the marketable value of a family-man's labour, and the wealth produced by that labour is more and more appropriated by the capitalist.

Again, the large number of unmarried women who must find housing accommodation outside the families which could easily absorb them under a different social practice, creates a housing problem which sends the price of real estate soaring and places the rent-payer under further tribute to the landlord ; thus the family-man's earnings are twice reduced : first by the competition with women and again by the pressure exerted by women on housing accommodation. In both cases the appropriation of wealth by the wealthy is increased while the wage-earner's share in the product of his labour becomes less and less. Out of this arise, as monuments to the injustice on which society is built, the castles of the rich and the hovels of the poor. He who regards the world with sober eyes cannot but be aware of something basically wrong with a civilization which possesses great mansions and palaces whose only tenants are the ghosts of the past and the

wind whistling through empty corridors, while a few miles away three or four families divide the space of one room between them ; in which some women are maintained in idle luxury while others have neither home nor employment ! In one of the English dailies appeared last summer a story which would have been comic if it were not quite so sad ; a little girl took some work to school in a soiled and crushed condition. “ Why,” asked the teacher, “ did you not hang it up ? ” “ My house has no wall,” the little girl replied. The teacher was mystified ; but further questions brought out the fact that in the room which this little girl called home three or four families lived ; and her family occupied the centre of the room !

“ Ourselves alone ! ” This is the motto which appears over the door of every family ; the symbol of the religion of selfishness which masquerades as Christianity. It is not more houses that we need but more open hearts.

THE OUTCAST LEGION

So far I have tried to present a picture—a very poor picture—of the sufferings of those women who, though they labour under a grave social disability, are nevertheless admitted to some share in the nation’s economy. Let us now turn our gaze upon the other 50 per cent of unmarried women : the more than three and a half million who possess neither home nor occupation ; and perhaps our recent contemplation of the cruel lot of their more fortunate sisters will assist us in plumbing the depth of their misery. I see them as desperately

struggling bodies in a tempestuous sea ; about them are all types of seaworthy vessels, from palatial ocean liners to fishing smacks ; and on their struggling forms the passengers on these vessels look down in derision, contempt, or unconcern ; the palatial liners are out of reach ; to attempt to board one of them would be to invite instant destruction through the agency of the propellers which churn the sea about them ; besides their sides are too high and slippery ; and in the smaller boats are cruel, watchful eyes, and hands ready to strike at the grappling fingers ; nowhere in that vast expanse of sea is there a pitying eye or a saving arm. They must perish ! Who needs them, anyway ? Let them drown like the unwanted dogs they are !

A Christian civilization ?

PROSTITUTION

In Hyde Park at the height of the summer you may see them, when the dusk of the long day falls at last ; bright, watchful eyes ; furtive eyes ; eyes dulled by pain and weariness ; despairing eyes ; forms bravely decked in cheap finery ; forms whose pitiable shabbiness is hidden by the merciful coat of brown tweed ; battered, ill-used forms that lie prone upon the grass in a chance embrace ; from whose faces, into which the passer-by may stare, all feeling and concern have fled. God ! Are they, too, human ? Flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood ? The Saviour of the world must experience great anguish as He gazes into the faces of these misery-stricken ones ; how He must long to bind up their broken hearts, to kindle the light

of hope once more in their eyes, to lift them out of the degradation into which they have fallen. But He can do it only through human agencies ; and who among us cares for these unfortunate ones ? Do we not rather despise them and heap curses upon them ?

Does the arm of the Church reach out to these—the unwanted, the forsaken, the lost ?

When considering social conditions in Jamaica, we have in the past comforted ourselves with the thought that this is a comparatively new country, a comparatively poor country, a country in which the majority are still ignorant ; and we have told ourselves that poverty, ignorance and crime go together ; that social degradation must be the lot of people who are too unintelligent to improve their economic condition ; we have lulled to sleep any misgivings we may have had as to the soundness of our reasoning, and hoped that somehow matters would mend themselves in the future. But this was London ; here amid the pomp and circumstance of the world's mightiest city, amidst evidences of great wealth, here also appeared the most abject and appalling degradation, the most sickening destitution. Where in this great city that had reared such imposing edifices in the name of Christ were the evidences of Christian practice ? Were there not thousands to whom only parks and doorsteps afforded shelter ? Were there not thousands who could keep themselves alive only through the sale of their bodies ? There might be some point in preaching comfortable words in comfortable pulpits to a congregation seated in comfortable pews, who, having found

pleasure in this world's goods, might reasonably be expected to welcome the invitation to look forward to more pleasurable things hereafter; but the outcast, the destitute, the degraded, the abandoned; was preaching any good to these? Could they, if they would, go to church to hear it?

And did the Church go to them? Was there in these magnificent temples any one remotely resembling the Man of Galilee, the friend of publicans and sinners, whose most exalted manner of moving about His country was on the back of an ass?

Yet some one has gone to them; some one who calls herself an agnostic, but who, I am confident, will not hear at last those awful words: "I never knew you!" Some one who, too, in her small way, laid her glory by and went down among the forsaken ones to discover at first hand how they lived; and who has reported her findings in her book *In Darkest London*. I should like all men to read Mrs. Cecil Chesterton's work and see the results of their blindness and selfishness; I should like all our women to read it and see what, but for the accident of circumstance, might have been their lot; I should like all our clergy to read it and be ashamed that work of this nature should have been left to the performance of a woman who does not profess Christ. But as I cannot ensure these things, I shall quote freely from the work.

The most distressing circumstance in connection with the lot of these disinherited women is that from no section of society do they receive sympathy or pity of any kind. Women of secure position regard

them as base creatures whose very presence in the same room with themselves is polluting ; not for one moment would they permit themselves to think that these women are what they are through force of circumstance ; and men, when they are not exploiting them, consider them but as subjects for ribald jests and rude laughter ; vermin, to be crushed when they become too great a nuisance. Few charitable institutions acknowledge the humanity of these outcasts ; philanthropy stretches a helping hand to every one but them, lest it should be thought to be encouraging immorality ; they do not enter into the State's calculations when provisions of a humanitarian nature are being made ; they are outside the pale ; forsaken. This is one of the first things Mrs. Chesterton discovered in her wanderings among the destitute ; the lodging-houses provided by the London County Council accommodated, at the time that she investigated, 17,310 persons, but of this number only 1,630 were women ; so that even when these luckless ones had managed to earn the price of a bed they often found it impossible to secure one.

I had not dreamt there were so many women without habitation or home, and the knowledge that, purely through force of circumstances, and by no individual merit, I was in possession of both, rankled—a sore injustice. Why should these young girls, these elderly women, be cut off from those things, without which the soul cannot flower ? Why should I, and so many hundreds like me, sleep softly and securely while their dragging feet walked the pavement, or, at best, found soiled shelter for the night ?

Cast off by society the young prostitute is being for

ever hunted by the law ; the more fortunate of her kind, who are sufficiently successful at their trade to maintain a flat, live in comparative comfort and security ; but the homeless ones must earn their bread in parks and blind alleys and may at any moment come within reach of the police. In France, I understand, there are more than 100,000 women licensed as prostitutes. This seems a brutal frankness, but at all events it gives these outcasts some legal status, some recognition by the State that they are entitled to exist. In England we have the effrontery to make soliciting a crime ; the only alternative to starvation we offer these unfortunate ones is the river or the prison !

This is the way the nations provide for hundreds of thousands, nay, millions, of their women ; a wilful waste of God-given powers and possibilities for which mankind, and particularly that section of it which professes Christianity, will not be held guiltless. Parasites they are called by the respectable and the secure, who never think that some of their respectability and security has been paid for by the birthright of the disinherited. But parasites are bred of dirt and filth ; and if there are human parasites it is a sign that human society is dirty and filthy.

WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC

Another phase of this traffic in human flesh is the forcible abduction of women who are led into a life of degradation and unimaginable misery, and whose plight is even worse than that of the ordinary prostitute, since they are indeed slaves whose masters appropriate

the returns of their hire. A recent issue of the *Daily Express* presents a rueful picture of the horrors of the White Slave Trade in Central Europe, where between the curse of a terrible poverty and the fiendish greed and cruelty of bootleggers the life of thousands of peasant women is made a veritable hell :

The road to Buenos Aires, that tragic highway of shame and terror, paved with living souls, has its beginning in the plains and simple homesteads of rural Poland, where the girls, famous as the most beautiful peasant type in Europe, are so uneducated and trusting that traffickers in women and children find little difficulty in snaring them in hundreds.

These daughters of tragic destiny are doomed, for the most part, the moment they leave home. With their fresh, rosy cheeks and pretty-coloured shawls they are an easy mark for the traffickers.

The end is varied. It may not even lead to Buenos Aires, but to the underworld of Paris or elsewhere. But the road, wherever it leads, means the same heart-breaking journey.

Parents have been known to offer their children for sale. How can one cope with poverty ? Parents refuse to accept their rescued daughters back.

Once a girl has fallen she cannot save herself. Almost inevitably she slips back into the net. There is not enough money to place all the rescued in charitable homes.

The rescued ! What have their rescuers to offer them ? It seems all so hopeless, so futile. Yet why are these things so ? Why are women so cheap that they may be carted about like so much goods ? Why is it that after two thousand years of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the midst of a civilization supposedly based upon that gospel, it is possible to enslave the bodies and to damn the souls of helpless women ?

“ IN DARKEST LONDON ”

But let us go back to London ; let us go with Mrs. Cecil Chesterton down into the lives of such outcasts as have not drifted into prostitution, but who manage to maintain a precarious existence on the husks and refuse which society allows them ; and contemplating their fate we may be tempted to ask whether, after all, the prostitute and the white slave are not somewhat better off :

This is the sort of thing that goes on among the homeless. Walking about until the body aches and the mind becomes half doped. Is it any wonder that to get shelter at night the destitute do desperate things ? This woman was not, I think, a prostitute, save at such times when self-preservation drove her to get money anyhow. I should say she had once been a shop assistant, or, perhaps, kept a lodging-house. One seemed to trace her steady declension, slipping from room to room at a cheaper and cheaper rent, and always leaving something behind, until at last, her whole wealth on her back, she is faced with destitution.

Soon one of the costumes will have to go. It will be necessary to sell it for food and shelter. And then her boots will begin to disintegrate, her remaining costume will grow dirty, she will be unable to change her underwear, and finally, perhaps, she will be discovered in the street in a state of collapse. Not improbably she will be charged at the police station for being without visible means of support. If she is lucky, she will be sent to the workhouse ; if things are against her, she may go to prison. In any case the interregnum will be a short one ; and she will emerge into the light of day to resume the walking about, the never-ending, monotonously-grinding walking about.

For the single woman well on to middle age to live

alone is to court a desolation of spirit that saps vitality. The loneliness of such an existence is intolerable. Few of these odd women have friends, or even acquaintances; they sustain their hold on life through the younger women they meet at the lodging-house. They feed their emotions on the emotions of others, gaining a spurious excitement from their tragedies and amusements.

Boots are an insoluble problem for the homeless, for they are always worn out. You will find the most shapeless and terrible apologies for shoes, broken in the soles, bursting at the sides, with huge cracks across the instep that chafe the skin and set up running sores. The cheapest pair of the most second-hand kind is beyond the means of the poorest type of outcast, for as the external condition deteriorates, so the earning capacity dwindles and the danger of being arrested as a beggar increases. Many of them replenish their footwear from the scourings of dust-bins. In the early morning you will often find a furtive figure turning over the refuse of the roadside. Crusts of bread are taken, and all kinds of garbage; but the treasure trove is a shoe, and if a pair is salvaged from the wreckage, physical contentment is assured.

It is when the world is freezing and the wind cuts to your very soul that you cry out blindly for a bed. At such time a dog kennel would seem hospitable; and yet all through the winter months hundreds of outcast women spend the night huddled in doorways, under arches, or keep themselves from freezing by that everlasting walking about.

Any one of the women with whom I came in contact—I do not include the little prostitutes—provided with a week's respite, in decent conditions, afforded the opportunity to wash her rags, to mend her clothes, and regain something of the human attributes of her beginnings, would emerge a different creature. But no! It does not matter what happens to the woman derelict; the policy seems to be that the sooner she dies of starvation and exposure the better for society.

There is no need, human or economic, to salve her. She is of no account.

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Along the pavement shuffled a pitiable-looking woman, with the worst pair of boots that I have ever seen. She was hugging a shabby-looking bundle and shivered every now and then with the cold. Her face was ageless with suffering, her eyes seemed to have lost all memory of hope.

“Is there anything you want?” said I. “Can I do anything for you?”

“It’s lonely like,” she said. “I’ve been by myself all evening. I felt I’d like to be near some one for a bit.”

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It has been said that Lord Rowton, who devoted so much energy and money to providing houses for destitute men, refused even to contemplate the problem of destitute women, for fear of countenancing immorality. But with the causes that drive a girl on the street few people are concerned. To suggest that she often sells her body to give herself a bed is an explanation very few have heard, but it is a true one. And if we get down to bed-rock fundamentals, a homeless woman, whatever her moral character, is still a terrible indictment of society. But while society refuses to face facts, or to act with normal courage, our streets will be full of derelict women, many of them as physically chaste as the most bigoted Puritan.

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My endurance had nearly reached the limit; I did not see how I was going to live through to the morning. Not so much because of the physical discomfort, but by reason of my tribulation of soul. The accumulation of experiences had reached a point where it was difficult to bear any more. The knowledge that I was but one of many hundreds of broken women, and that this hall held but a remnant of the legion of the dispossessed, frightened me. It was something in life that I had not guessed at; and the knowledge made me afraid.

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“ We have had B.A.s here,” said the Sister ; “ women who have taken the highest degrees in science. We have also had women doctors and a distinguished artist.”

There wasn't anything specific to account for their declension in the social scale ; none of them seemed to have been in prison, and there was no doubt as to their brains. Probably some shock, a big emotional strain, had broken them. They none of them attempted to get back to their professions, and when suggestions were made that they might be found work, they disappeared. They are distinctly not rovers, for they have no initiative. Something in their nervous or emotional machinery seems to have broken, and they have lost the desire to have it put right.

It was at a poor doss-house in the North of London that I saw a girl give way to sudden irrepressible grief. . . . She sat on her bed in the drab garment, discoloured by wind and weather, which had grown to her like an animal's skin, and the tears poured down her face. She had not a handkerchief on which to wipe them, and now and then she put up her arm, with its dirty coat-sleeve, and mopped her cheeks. At first we did not take any notice. It is not polite to offer sympathy or comment. But when her thin shoulders began to shake, and her hands opened and shut convulsively, we knew the breaking-point was reached. She explained that her feet hurt her, and we took off the unutterable pieces of leather, bound together by string, and the rags that had once been stockings. Her feet were a mass of running sores ; only the most superhuman courage could have forced her to walk upon them. We got round the old woman in charge of the place and persuaded her to produce hot water, and one of us bathed the poor feet and dried them on an apology for a towel. But we knew that in a very little while the flesh would be as discoloured and as painful as it had been. It was unthinkable that she should again put on those jagged bits of leather, those worn and evil-smelling cotton rags.

“ THE BLOSSOMS AT OUR FEET ”

Because we do not see them ! Because the more than half a million of them in London do not gather in Hyde Park so that we can look on them, our imaginations will not grasp their hunger and the loneliness of their hearts ; their want and misery and shame. Because we meet them in ones and twos we can trot out the usual platitudes about Christian fortitude and obedience to the will of God ; His will, forsooth ! We can do this because we are not oppressed by the weight of their numbers, or appalled by the spectacle they present ; but there are more than four million of them in England and Wales alone. They wither like trees whose roots have struck upon a layer of rock—the rock of our selfishness ; like the grass they are cut down in the morning-time of life with the dew of youth upon them ; like parasitic growths they are uprooted and torn from their place in the human family and left to rot in the sun ; like garbage they may be nosed and kicked by any stray dog that comes along !

And the heartless system which makes such thing possible is upheld in the name of Jesus Christ who came to earth not merely to institute among men justice which the Law of Moses represented, add mercy thereto.

II.—THE TESTIMONY OF THE BIBLE

THE word polygamy has, in the popular imagination, become a synonym for almost unlimited opportunity for the fulfilment of sexual desire. There is no justification for this ; it is a quite respectable Greek word meaning the state of being married to many wives. There is no reason for thinking of marriage as exclusively, or even chiefly, concerned with sexual fulfilment, and I shall use the word in these pages to signify any variation of the system of monogamous marriage under which we live. The fact that the word and what it represents have been abused in the past is not sufficient reason for banning it.

THE RELIGION OF SELFISHNESS

I feel assured that no honest man with a heart capable of understanding the needs and sufferings of his fellow-creatures can read the foregoing pages without coming to the conclusion that our present social system is founded upon ideals which make for selfishness and oppression ; but it is difficult to eradicate from the mind ideas that have shaped the thoughts of men for centuries, even after they have been proved to be false and injurious. My task in this and the following chapter will be to expose some of the delusions that have befogged the minds of men and led them into false ways of thinking and living ; foremost

among these are religious prejudices and misconceptions based upon a wrong interpretation of Scripture, and resulting from a blind and bigoted insistence on the letter to the neglect of the spirit of its injunctions.

Before proceeding to deal with the scriptural viewpoint as it affects our problem, it may be useful to examine the mental attitude of society towards certain sexual relationships and to note how twisted and perverse has been our thinking, how childish our taboos. There is not, as far as I know, any enactment by any civilized State which makes incest a crime ; yet that it is a crime against Nature, and a violation of every decent human instinct, few would be bold enough to deny. The man who marries two wives has broken the law of the State and has sinned against the sacred " right " of exclusiveness, the religion of selfishness, upon which society maintains itself ; he has set a dangerous example and must therefore go to prison ; but the man who marries one woman, then basely deserts her and marries another, is smiled on by society and ignored by the law ; our enlightened social system actually places a premium on cruelty and selfishness. How the devil must laugh !

WHAT IS ADULTERY ?

By a similar process of thought society maintains its exclusive rights by granting to a woman a divorce from her husband on the ground of his " adultery " with another woman, even though she is nobody's wife. I do not know what is the orthodox religious definition of adultery, but it is quite clear that in the

popular belief, based, no doubt, upon newspaper reports of legal proceedings, adultery is regarded as any sexual relationship between men and women outside of legal marriage. This is, of course, nonsense. The word is self-explanatory ; it means a mixing together of two dissimilar substances—like milk and water or butter and lard ; and as applied to sexual matters it signifies what takes place when one woman suffers the embraces of two men. The woman is the vessel, and it is only in her that the adultery can take place. Whenever adultery occurs three persons are involved, and two of them must be men. A woman who is not anybody's wife (and the word " wife " is used not necessarily, or merely, in its legal sense) cannot under any circumstances be a party to an adultery.

A glance at the Bible will immediately confirm what I have just said. Nowhere in the sacred writings can it be found that any man was reprov'd for, or accus'd of, adultery because he had sexual intercourse with more than one woman ; even the admittedly irregular relationship between Abraham, " the friend of God," and Hagar, the bond-woman, was not so characterized ; Hagar departed because she had aroused the anger of Sarah, not because God disapproved of her position in Abraham's family. Jacob had two wives, and these wives gave him also their handmaids ; in those barbarous days it was a reproach for a woman to be childless, and even a son or daughter vicariously produced was better than no offspring ; we in these enlighten'd times think just the opposite ! Anyway, the father of the patriarchs possess'd two wives, and

their handmaids besides, by whom he begat sons, none of whom was stigmatized as illegitimate or considered inferior to his brethren ; and, more important, God never said a word about it. I allow that this was before the Law, though I do not admit that God's attitude to wrongdoing has ever changed, or could change. But let us see what happened after the time of the great Lawgiver : David the " man after God's own heart," married (as might have been expected of a man of his temperament and capacity for feeling) many women ; yet it was only when he took the wife of Uriah that Nathan, the prophet, was sent to convict him of adultery. Solomon, his son, the wisest of men, possessed, we are told, hundreds of wives and hundreds of concubines, yet no prophet accused him of wrongdoing. He incurred God's displeasure not because he married hundreds of women, or even because some of them were " strange women," but because he permitted these strange women to introduce idolatry into Israel.

Some religious die-hard will say : " But Christ came to change all this." And I emphatically deny that He did. Never by direct statement or innuendo did Jesus suggest that the Law of Moses was not founded on righteousness. The only new commandment which He gave to men was that they should love one another ; men should not only be just, He said ; they should be merciful as well. Love, we are told, is the fulfilling of the law. The law in its restrictions and prohibitions aimed at securing that men should love their neighbours as themselves ; and the gospel of love is

merely a re-statement of the law in positive terms. There is really nothing mysterious about righteousness ; it is quite easy for each man to determine whether he is acting justly or unjustly by asking himself : “ Does my action (or lack of action, which is equally important) affect any one to his hurt ? ” *

And what, in the light of such a question, would be the verdict of our consciences in regard to the millions of women whom we exclude from our homes ? Under the old Mosaic law it would have been impossible for such to go unmated and uncared for ; must it then be supposed that the law founded on justice is more righteous and merciful than that founded on love ?

There is no ground for such a supposition in the New Testament. The passage in which Christ makes reference to the sin of adultery reads (Matt. 5 : 32) : “ *Every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress ; and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.* ” This is in complete agreement with the definition of adultery which I have given, and makes it quite clear that the sin of which a man is guilty when he puts away his wife and marries another woman is that of cruelty (hardness of heart) first of all, and of being the cause, besides, of any adultery which his desertion of her may lead her to commit. I am quite aware of the alternative renderings of this passage to be found in Matthew 19 : 9 ; Mark 10 : 11, 12 and Luke 16 : 18. These I am convinced represent

* The more awakened is the conscience, the more capable it becomes of detecting unrighteousness in the acts and motives of the individual. This awakening of the conscience is the chief office of religion.

treated as so much surplus goods to be sold out cheaply, or dumped !

SCRIPTURAL SANCTION FOR MONOGAMY ?

With a clear understanding of the foregoing facts we are now in a position to examine the claim of orthodox Christianity that the system of monogamous marriage is divinely ordained and is sanctioned in the sacred writings. It is hardly necessary to consult the Old Testament which even the blind can see does not support such a view. Let us therefore turn our attention to the New Testament. The passage upon which the Church's claim may be said to be based is that which contains the reply of Christ to the Pharisees who questioned Him with regard to the righteousness of a man putting away his wife "for every cause." "Have ye not read," He answered, "that He which made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife ; and they twain shall become one flesh ?* So that they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19 : 4-6).

Now the passage (in italics) which Jesus quoted is taken from Genesis 2 : 24, and was just as true in the time of David and Solomon as it is to-day. Yet no one suggested that these men, and others like them, had lived and acted in defiance of scriptural injunction. As I have pointed out, a woman does become biologically "one flesh" with her husband ; and this fact is symbolized in the biblical statement that woman was

taken out of man ; but there is no justification either in reason or in Nature for the assumption that only one woman may be so joined to any one man. But let us examine the injunction once more and we shall see there an example of how our perverse thinking has twisted this Scripture out of its original meaning. “ *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife.*” No one would imagine that this passage meant to convey that a man should “ forsake ” his parents, turn his back upon them and think no more of them, because he had married a wife.* Yet the Church has not only altered the intention of the passage ; it has widened its scope and diverted its application ; it has clipped and patched the original injunction to suit its own notions with regard to social relationships, and when at last the mutilated Scripture appears in its ritual it is seen in this form : “ *and forsaking all others cleave only unto her as long as ye both shall live.*”

And this, we are told, is scriptural ! Well, I don't see it there. It is distortions, mutilations and misconstructions of this kind that make religion a mockery in the eyes of thinking men.

But, these considerations aside, why should we regard any statement made in answer to the question asked by the Pharisees as sanctioning a system of monogamous marriage ? The discussion was concerning the righteousness, or unrighteousness, of divorce, and the whole force of Christ's argument was directed

* What this passage means to convey is that a man's wife should be regarded as a nearer relative than his mother and father, and that the practice of putting away wives is therefore even more unnatural than that of neglecting parents.

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against the breaking of an alliance once made.*
 “What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder”; He was not considering the question of plurality at all. But see how perverse we are! The practice which He denounced we permit with little or no penalty, while that with regard to which He had nothing to say we make a crime!

As was His custom, Christ confined himself to the subject on hand; but I have no doubt whatever that He who said: “Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered . . . ?” would, if He had been questioned with regard to a plurality of wives, have had as little hesitation in replying: “Have ye not read . . . ?”

And I shall go further and say that although Christ was not directly questioned with regard to polygamy He did, in reply to a question from His disciples, give an indication of His attitude in this matter. On the occasion of His discussion with the Pharisees concerning divorce His disciples, as was their custom, evidently continued the conversation after the Pharisees had withdrawn: “*The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry*” (Matt. 19: 10). If the passage as it stands means anything, it means: “Do the same rules hold

*The reasonableness of Christ's objection to divorce will be more apparent if we recognize His ideal of love: it is that we should love all human beings; not merely those who are bound to us by special family ties. If this be so, then a repudiation of an alliance once made is not only a frustration of Nature's immediate design, that of providing for the incoming generation, but also a recession from the ideal of universal love to which man is being led through his affections. In Christ's view, then, there can never be any justification, save the one He allowed, for divorce, since there should be no human being whom we are incapable of loving; and certainly no human being whom we should cease to love when such a one has at some time shared with us the most intimate of human relationships.

good when the position is reversed? If instead of the man putting away his wife, the wife repudiates and forsakes her husband, what should he do? Should he remain unmarried?" It should be borne in mind that under the law a woman had, for reasons already indicated, no power to divorce her husband (even in modern times this has only recently been the case); so that what Jesus was asked to decide was not what a man should do if his wife divorced him, but what he should do if she left him and yet, according to His own ruling, had not placed herself in a position to be divorced.

The reply of Jesus is illuminating: "*But he said unto them—All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it.*" This reply says quite emphatically among other things that the rules governing the conduct of men and women in such matters are not the same: that while a woman who is put away, whether lawfully or unlawfully, is committing (or is caused to commit) adultery if she marries again, the same is not true in the case of men; in this passage Christ gives an emphatic denial to those Procrustean rules which throw society into such perplexing confusion, stifle originality in the individual, and damn genius.

I expect it will be argued by the literalists that Christ and His disciples were discussing celibacy, and not the issue I have indicated above; and they will take their

stand on His use of the word eunuch ; but I prefer to believe that there is some reason and coherence in the Scriptures, and that the disciples would not have introduced a question concerning celibacy into a discussion that dealt with marriage and divorce. Moreover, in order to support the view that it was celibacy to which reference was made it would be necessary to suppose that what the disciples meant was "it is not expedient (for any man) to marry" instead of "it is not expedient (for that man) to marry." Such an interpretation would be absurd for two reasons : nobody in his senses would suggest that all men should or could remain unmarried ; and, besides, it would not be a reasonable or relevant conclusion to draw from the fact that "the case of the man is so with his wife," if it had happened to be.

It is quite clear that Paul understood the passage as I have interpreted it. He says : "*But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband (but and if she depart let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband) ; and that the husband leave not his wife*" (I Cor. 7 : 10-11). It will be observed that nothing whatever is said as to how the husband should act when his wife leaves him, although it has been emphasized that in that contingency the wife should remain unmarried.

Again, even Paul, celibate though he was, declared that it were better for unmarried women and widows "to marry than to burn." "*Let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband*"

(I Cor. 7 : 2). Not even he who wished (not by any means wisely : he evidently expected the immediate destruction of the world) that all men were as he was, would have for a moment thought of condemning millions of women to a life of unwilling celibacy.

When the facts here adduced are placed beside the commandment given by Moses referred to in Matt. 22 : 24, and cited from Deut. 25 : 5, that if a man die without offspring his brother shall “ perform the duty of a husband’s brother ” to his widow and raise up children to him, the evidence against scriptural sanction of a monogamous system of marriage becomes overwhelming. The Law nowhere provided that this procedure should be varied or abandoned in cases where the brother in question was already married ; and in the hypothetical case brought forward by the Sadducees it is quite clear that neither they nor Jesus considered it unlikely that seven brothers should have married one woman, although it would have been most unlikely that each of them would be marrying for the first time when he had her.

The system of monogamous marriage is so entrenched in tradition and custom, so barricaded about by religious and social prejudices, and defended by the armaments of selfishness, that even the bravest of us falter at the mere thought of polygamy. This exclusiveness has been exalted by our twisted thinking into a virtue, whereas it is only a glorified form of self-interest that seeks to close the door of the heart upon the rest of the world, thus circumscribing our outlook and understanding. We affect at one moment to

believe in the gospel of love which Jesus came to declare, and at the next we find it unthinkable that there can be room in a man's heart for more than one woman. The Apostle Paul asked : Is Christ divided ? I am constrained to ask : Is love divided ? Is love one thing now and then another ? No ! There is no division in love ; there is not one kind of love which we give to our wives and children and another, inferior, brand which we reserve for the rest of the world. We deceive ourselves if we think that He who asked " Who is My mother and My brethren ? " had any such distinctions in mind when He commanded that we love one another. If it is a Christian virtue to love my neighbour as myself, it is also a Christian virtue to love my neighbour's wife as sincerely as I love my own ; in the latter case the command is against my coveting her (but love does not covet) or desiring her carnally (but love is not selfish, seeketh not its own good, but that of others). In short, we need to rid our minds of their confusion between love and the sex impulse : the latter is made a thing of beauty, and is a source of blessing, when lawfully (I don't say legally) combined with love ; but it is degraded and made obscene when separated from it. It is dependent on love, but love is not dependent on it.

Our problem then is not whom should we love—for we should love as many as we are able to ; and the nearer we approach to the character of Jesus Christ the more capable of love we become—but under what circumstances may our love be lawfully expressed through the sex impulse ? I say any, except those

laid down in the 18th, 19th and 20th chapters of the Book of Leviticus. Those are the only scriptural instructions we have on the subject and they are eminently reasonable, their prohibitions being based upon the positive command : "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

OUR MORAL SUPERIORITY ?

But, it may be asked, is there no such thing as a higher standard and conception of morality ? Certainly there is ; but such higher standard and conception must express and reveal themselves in an increasing sense of justice in the relationship of men with each other ; in a more universal disposition towards mercy ; in a greater inclination to serve the welfare of others ; and in ability to partake of their pleasure and their pain. Our moral sense has been over-balanced by our obsession with sex ; a simple issue which is quite adequately provided for in the law, as are all the primary necessities of social life, has been confused by our religious delusions to the point where we are led to regard the only means provided by eternal wisdom for the perpetuation of our race as something to be tolerated, if at all, only under the most restricted conditions, and departure from those conditions as incompatible with any elevated ideas of virtue. The result of this obsession has been a neglect of the larger field of moral excellencies on the one hand, and on the other, a morbid preoccupation with the sexual aberrations which our repressions provoke. We scorn and persecute the woman who bears what we call an

illegitimate child, but we show no concern whatever at exhibitions of selfishness and cruelty, greed, envy, malice and hatred ; for giving life to a fellow-creature a man may incur the censure of his friends, but for driving a fellow-creature to despair, and perhaps suicide, by unscrupulous trading, he receives the admiration of his friends, is regarded as a valuable member of his church and may even be honoured by the community. I wonder we do not see how ridiculous we are !

And so we base our claim to moral superiority over the outstanding figures of Jewish religious history on the single fact that we permit ourselves, in the sight of men at least, less freedom with regard to the sex impulse. Some obscure, narrow-minded Puritan who imagines sex to be a synonym for sin is to be encouraged in believing that he stands nearer to God than the man who composed the Psalms, and out-tops in moral grandeur and exceeds in capacity of soul the wisest man who ever lived. Yet—strange contradiction !—the religious systems which accept as the product of divine inspiration the writings of these polygamists would regard as the most presumptuous blasphemy the claim of any writer to-day, though he be the strictest of celibates, to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit. Well, we can't have it both ways ; either we must admit that the sexual practice which we sanction has no relation whatever to morality or spiritual excellence, or we must cease to regard the Psalms of David, the Song of Solomon, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as the inspired word of God.

Could we rid ourselves of our colossal vanity and superstition we might begin to learn something of the true place that sex is intended to fill in the life of the individual and of the world ; we might see the part it plays in the development of personality and in the evolution of genius. It was not by accident that the man who is recorded as having had the greatest number of wives was also the wisest and most understanding of men ; and much of his wisdom and understanding was without a doubt due to his intimate approach to humanity on so vast a scale. There is a direct relationship between intellectual power and sexual force ; between human experience and spiritual growth. Spiritual things cannot be discerned by the intellect alone ; the heart, too, must understand ; and the heart can understand only through experience. This has been the trouble with much of our religious teaching : it has had no basis in experience ; and so it has failed to interpret the gospel in the light of the needs of a human nature which it is intended to serve ; and the less experienced the more bigoted have our teachers been.

The Church would do well to consider the significance of Solomon.

But if we glance again at the old Hebrew worthies we shall discover that the divine Spirit which inspired such God-like men as Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon, to whom polygamy was a necessity, also inspired such other God-like men like Samuel and Elijah, who found celibacy essential to their natures and missions : an indication not only that their attitude towards sex was not, as in our way of thinking, a

criterion of virtue, but also that these ancients recognized what we have failed to see : that the physical needs of individuals are not always the same ; and that a society in which a wider freedom of conduct is permitted must be regarded as built on more reasonable lines than one in which individual liberty is reduced to vanishing point by arbitrary rules which have little, if any, relationship to nature or to morals.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

So far I have tried to show that there is no justification whatever for claiming the authority of Scripture for a monogamous system of marriage. I have taken these pains for the sake of those who have been in the habit of exalting the letter (which they rarely understand) over the spirit of Scripture (which they cannot perceive). But for me no argument was necessary ; without examining the evidence I should know, from what I know of the character of Jesus Christ, that a system based upon special privilege and discrimination could not have originated in His mind or received its sanction. Could His responsibility in this matter be proved it would be the greatest argument yet offered against His claim to divinity ; for a system which denies the natural and fundamental needs of millions of human beings *cannot be right* ; a social order which places such inhuman disabilities upon persons nominally free cannot be regarded as anything but a species of slavery. No argument, or lack of argument, will change these facts ; and it is blasphemy to impute to the mind of Jesus Christ so manifestly unjust and

childish an arrangement. It may be characteristic of human mentality to attempt to deal with so complex an organism as humanity by the simple arithmetical process of one and one make two; but why saddle divinity with it? How can we dare to imagine that He who assured us that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's notice and that the very hairs of our head are numbered could be capable of so colossal an error as that which has resulted in the life-long misery and despair of vast multitudes of women?

If some one brought news to my wife that I had met a little child on the road and kicked it, short of believing that I had gone mad, she would very firmly reply to her informer that he was either mistaken or deliberately lying. She would be able to say this because she knows my mind. The same should hold good with those of us who claim to know Jesus Christ; we need not examine anything which He is supposed to have said to know what would be His attitude towards unjust discrimination and cruelty. We know His mind; and even if one came down in the form of an angel and told us that Jesus Christ, the compassionate One, the loving and merciful One, sanctioned or approved of a system which deprives millions of women of the lawful exercise of the functions for which Nature has fashioned them, we should quite emphatically tell him that he lied.

Let us put ourselves in the Creator's place. Would we, with our limited intelligence, our circumscribed understanding and small capacity for justice and mercy, if we had to create this world, make beings with certain

potentialities, certain functions, place in them the strong urge towards fulfilling those functions, and then withhold from them the means whereby they may fulfil them? Would we not consider the man who acted in this manner either a criminal or a fool? Yet this is precisely what we charge God with doing. As Genesis did not say "It is not good that the *woman* should be alone," we appear to think it doesn't matter if she is. But I for one find it impossible to believe in this kind of God; and I think I have shown that He does not exist in the Bible.

But in the minds of some people it appears to be the devil and not God who is responsible for the urge towards procreation. According to these, if we would allow God to have His way with us, the human race would long ago have ceased to exist on this planet. And it might not be so bad a thing if what we see around us to-day is the best that we can make of human life.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

And behind all this frustration and misery and deprivation stands the authority of the organized Church: the institution which theoretically represents Jesus Christ in the world, but which has failed to apply to human life the principles for which He stands. If the Church, working on a knowledge of the mind and character of Jesus Christ, had placed the welfare of humanity before every other consideration, it would have long ago discovered its error. Instead it has been doing precisely what Christ accused the Pharisees of doing: straining out the gnat and swallowing the

camel; insisting on what appeared to be the letter of the law and overlooking its spirit; demanding sacrifice instead of showing mercy.

In entering upon this portion of my task I am conscious of a very grave responsibility. There are unpalatable truths to be said with regard to the influence of an institution which has been the guardian and preserver of much that is of enduring worth in the life of the world; which has been the nurse of men whose love of humanity and pity for its sufferings have caused them to set their faces against injustice and oppression, even to the point of martyrdom; which has kept alive the hope which the human race possesses in the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let no man think that I am forgetful of these things. It is because I consider the office of religion so important to the welfare of humanity that I feel constrained to point out where it has failed and in what way it may serve humanity better in the future than it has done in the past.

It is to the organization of the Church, not to the Church itself, that I address my remonstrance.

And I say that the organized Church has been guilty of criminal blindness in this matter of the disability which its dogma has placed upon womanhood. It would not have dared to place such a disability upon any considerable number of men; yet by every reasonable consideration women, if a comparison of claims arises, are more entitled to the exercise of their natural functions than men are. They are more necessary to Nature. If the Church claims that the women who inevitably find themselves unmated,

should regard such a condition as the will of God, a cross to be borne "with Christian fortitude," why not then let its own members be the first to make the sacrifice? Why not stipulate that as Nature has seen fit to create more women than men that such women who profess to be Christians should deny themselves of husbands so that their less godly sisters who understand nothing about self-denial may not be led into sinful and suicidal ways of living? There would be something noble about such a gesture, even though it would be based on a delusion; but how many women would be found by this test to be Christian?

No! We talk very glibly about the benefits and practicability of continence until we are called upon to try it ourselves. We think it is good for others. We think we have the right to decide this matter for them. We go to church with an easy conscience with our wives, or husbands, and we vainly imagine that God is going to damn the woman next door for doing what He nevertheless permits us to do with impunity! Well, a religion that leads us to imagine such a thing is not good enough.

In the meanwhile our disability, coupled with the economic exploitation which secures that a portion of mankind shall be glutted with the good things of life while the other portion starves, drives these forsaken multitudes into unspeakable degradation and misery. These are not only outside the pale of society; they have got beyond the reach of the Church as well. Who preaches to them? Who inquires into their needs? Whose heart is touched with pity for their lot? Even

if we suppose for a moment that they are where they are through perversity and not necessity, are they not still human souls? Is it not they whom Jesus came to save—the lost and the friendless? Every Sunday we stand up and preach to people whose very presence in church announces that nominally at least they are Christians; but do we make any serious effort to reach these others? Apart from sporadic open-air meetings now and then, which we think they should be eager to attend, what do we really do for them?

After all, this going to church and singing hymns and psalms is, by itself, only another kind of selfishness; for six days we are occupied in looking after *our* bodies, and on the seventh we are occupied in looking after *our* souls, or so we think; and we call it service to God! Hear what He says of such service:

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. (Isa. 1: 11–17.)

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye

tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith.

(Matt. 23 : 23.)

And Paul was thinking along similar lines when he wrote :

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge ; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind ; love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh no account of evil ; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

(I Cor. 13 : 1-7.)

The position is still the same ! We have not changed ; we suffer from the same hardness of heart, the same putting first things last and last things first, the same selfishness and blindness, the same inability to feel the need and misery of others, the same refusal to practice justice and mercy and to admit that they are pre-requisites of our approach to God, the same worship of empty ritual and out-worn creeds. We build magnificent churches and vast cathedrals costing millions of money, to the Glory of God we say ; while thousands of outcast and destitute people sleep on doorsteps in the freezing cold, or walk the streets all night, also to the glory of God, I dare say. But when we think He is in the temple listening to our lip-service,

He is out in the by-ways of our cities, in the hovels of the poor and diseased, in the brothels and gaming houses, in short, wherever the devil is popularly supposed to be ; and He is asking : “ Where are the shepherds whom I commissioned to tend my sheep ? Do they not miss *these* from the fold ? ”

We approach the Lord’s table periodically and depart feeling that we have been good children of the Kingdom. There seems nothing more for us to do ; but, in spite of our prophesyings and other wonderful works, shall we be able to deny the charges He will bring against us, or avoid the condemnation ?—

I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick and in prison and ye visited me not . . .

Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these least, ye did it not unto me !

We are not satisfied to make prostitutes of our own women, but wherever we take the gospel of Jesus Christ we take with it also our system and persuade the heathen to turn their women on the streets so that they may become homeless prostitutes like ours. We are led to do these things by that very self-righteous blindness of which Christ accused the Pharisees : by our inability to understand that, even were a monogamous system of marriage the Christian ideal it is held up to be, it would be necessary for a primitive people to progress towards it like children who must pass through a school ; not to have it imposed upon a constitution and mentality unprepared for it. This

is what I consider the Church's greatest failure : this lack of appreciation of the needs, capacities and limitations of men. We thunder forth sermons which to the great majority of our hearers are meaningless. Spiritual growth is, like natural growth, gradual and, more important still, voluntary. It is not an imposition from without. It is worse than useless talking to men about sanctification and holiness when they have not learnt to be just to their neighbours. Most of our preaching has been concerned with driving into people the fear of hell ; but if any one thinks he will enter the Kingdom of Heaven not because he loves righteousness but because he is afraid to go to hell, he will find himself sadly mistaken. Teach men to love righteousness and to practise it and you will have created the environment in which spiritual excellencies will grow of their own accord.

But the Church's attitude has been that of dictator instead of teacher and shepherd. In one hand it has held up the torch of the gospel of love and produced great saints and martyrs, but with the other it has wielded the sword : it has waged and instigated cruel wars for the purpose of enslaving men's minds ; it has committed the atrocities of the Inquisition and burnt so called heretics ; it has opposed the abolition of chattel slavery—all in the name of Christ. In all these things it has proved itself to be the traditional enemy of human liberty. If it is true that out of it has sprung the increasing humanity which a man feels toward his fellows, it is also true that the bigotry and ignorance of its priests have clogged the wheels of

human progress and damned up the channels of life.

We shall have to do better than this. If organized religion is to remain a vital force in the life of mankind we shall have to find a way of ensuring that it is something more than a tyrannical imposition on the liberties of men. We shall have to recognize the fact that the minds of men are grown up and that they are no longer willing to be driven blindly; they are demanding reasons. We shall have to realize that the Kingdom of God cannot be built upon a foundation of social injustice and contemptuous disregard for the rights of others; and that a Church which does not find itself in active opposition to systems and institutions based upon special privilege is not representing its Founder. If the Church to-day finds that it is losing its hold, it is due to the fact that the religion which it practises is divorced from life; it has not got its roots in human nature. In matters touching the happiness and well-being of the individual (and religion is nothing if it is not personal) the Church has been satisfied to be guided by the decisions of an age characterized by religious bigotry rather than by human sympathy and understanding; it has preferred precedent to the Holy Spirit. Indeed we have ignored the Holy Spirit entirely; thousands of years ago He spoke and wrought through men who with His guidance met and solved the problems which perplexed humanity in their day; and their writings have come down to us. It is good that we should honour their memory and their work, and revere their writings; but it is not good that we

should regard them as the only source of knowledge when the power that inspired them is still waiting to inspire us. Our attitude to the office of the Holy Spirit is just as ridiculous as that of a man would be if he retained a lawyer permanently to advise him in his worldly affairs, then while this lawyer sat in idleness in his office, waiting to be consulted, he guided himself by a decision given a year before !

Perhaps the thing most needed in the world to-day is proof that true Christianity is not contrary to common sense and offers a practical and satisfying way of life, not only in the future but now. The Church has insisted on the "future" (that is after death), but has paid little attention to the "now," and appears to be of the opinion that life on earth, however unnaturally lived and however frustrated in its legitimate requirements, is amply rewarded by life "in heaven." This attitude is a libel on Christianity. It is unreasonable to expect the man of the world to believe in, or to be attracted by, such a religion. This fact is one of the strongest weapons in the hand of the unchristian writer and thinker. Yet it is only as we come to appreciate the all-embracing nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ that we can arrive at a satisfying solution of the problems which afflict human life.

"APHRODITE"

Not many days after I had reached the decision to undertake this work I came upon one of the latest contributions to this problem of sexual readjustment: *Aphrodite, or the Future of Sexual Relationship*, by

Ralph de Pomerai. Writers as a whole have, during recent years, treated the religious view of this matter with contempt. As I expected, this book was no exception, but I was glad to read it. It strengthened my own convictions in many important directions; and it indicated also where the weakness in what may be called the secular view of sex lies. If the sex instinct is based upon Nature, so is the religious instinct; our trouble up to the present has been due chiefly to our failure to realize that a life divorced from necessities of one kind or another which have their roots in Nature cannot be other than incomplete; so that a view of life that denies the claims of religion is just as dangerous as a view that denies the claims of sex. Our immediate problem lies in reconciling these claims, both of which are just and natural.

THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Now de Pomerai has made a very grave blunder in dealing with this matter of sexual readjustment. With this blunder I shall deal in the next chapter. Here I shall indicate why he has been led into error: in a few words, his error is due to failure to recognize the significance of Jesus Christ in the life of humanity. He regards Jesus Christ as a moral teacher on the same footing as men like Moses, Buddha and Confucius and as liable to error as they were; but to the man who sees Christ aright He is much more: His personality is the product of the accumulated experience and aspiration of mankind. In Him resides the collective instinct of the whole human race. His mind is there-

fore incapable of error with regard to human affairs. No view of life which ignores this fact can be complete. This is the true Christian's faith : he believes that all human needs find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ ; that all discords are harmonized in Him. Any religious view that denies the fulfilment in Him of the legitimate needs and natural instincts of humanity is necessarily false. He who said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, would have had as little hesitation in declaring that religion was made for man, and not man for religion. No lover of justice and liberty who gets a true glimpse of this personality can help being wildly enthusiastic about Him. A man of like passions as we are ! Yes, but a man of immeasurably mightier passions than any other single man has known ;* all the emotions of the human breast : all its hope, its joy, its pain, its baffled yearnings, its broken-winged aspirations, all that thrills and quickens, benumbs and deadens, all that uplifts and depresses, all the dream and tenderness and breathlessness of love, all the prophetic insight of its raptures, all the sunlit flashes and midnight gloom of genius, passed through His mighty heart and informed His universal consciousness. And it is to the mind of such a man that we would ascribe our contemptible system, so near-sighted that it cannot see the millions

* The Saviour of the world is, quite appropriately, represented as *thirsting for the souls of men*. The roots of this divine passion are to be found in the need of the human heart for love ; it is the glorious flower that has sprung from the lowly seed planted in human nature. The distinguishing feature of the Christian religion, as Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick reminds us, is the value it places upon human personality. For the man who must one day achieve a passion similar to Christ's, the time arrives when the attraction exercised on him by human personality becomes irresistible.

of homeless, starving ones standing outside its ring !

Where and when did He acquire His human experience ? The answer to this question is the key to the whole religious view of life : the rock upon which orthodoxy has stumbled.

It is my conviction that every human being is the embodiment of some idea, some spiritual necessity, which gives significance to his or her existence ; and that a man does not attain to his highest usefulness in the world until and unless he discovers the need to which he is the answer. This is certainly the case with great men ; and there can be little doubt that many men have missed greatness merely because of their failure to discover the particular need they were intended to fill, and for which Nature had specially equipped them ; or, having discovered it, they shirked the obligation. If this view be regarded as reasonable, then the statement that Christ is the product of the accumulated experience and aspiration of mankind will be seen to be more than a probability : the emergence of such a personality will, in fact, become necessary to human history. The whole human race, taken together, may be regarded as an aspect of God ; and Jesus Christ, as the embodiment, so to speak, of all humanity, is also an expression of that aspect of divine consciousness to which humanity is related, and to which it may aspire. “ The romance of all time ; the spectacle of the eternal spirit of Man gathering up itself, through every channel of experience and emotion, to express once and for all in the person of the man, Jesus Christ,

its conception of God-like beauty. The ages wrought for him (to borrow a phrase from the Australian poet, Dr. Allen). He is the masterpiece towards the execution of which the dreams of mighty nations have contributed; whom great seers and sages foresaw and of whom immortal poets sang. This aspect of the person of Christ, this romance of the ages, has been somewhat clouded by the traditional religious presentation of "The Man of Sorrows"; but to my mind the romantic aspect is that in which we should habitually regard Him, and that in which He is likely to make the greatest appeal to the imaginations of men. The poet and the poetry lover are no strangers to the ingredient of sorrow which is necessary to the appeal of the whole character; but we remember a passage which runs: "Who for the joy which was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame . . ." More, it has been our experience that life becomes intelligible only to the eyes of suffering, and joy is only complete in the heart that has known pain."*

THE CULT OF HUMANITY

It is to such humanity as He experienced—not that of a race or individual, but of all races and individuals—and to such divine consciousness that Jesus Christ invites each man; what He has achieved He has assured us we too can achieve. "I am the way," He says. If we use His methods we shall obtain the results which He obtained. But our trouble up to now has been that we do not really understand Him; we have not

* From "The Significance of Poetry"—article by the author in *The Cosmopolitan*, Christmas, 1930.

caught His spirit or adopted His outlook. "It is love that gives us insight and brings us sure knowledge; it is love that widens the horizons of our minds and clarifies our intellectual vision."* It was love that underlay the understanding which could say to the woman taken in adultery: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." And it is to such love that He calls us; not the narrow, selfish thing which we know by that name, but a reaching out of the personality to all around us, like the rays of the sun, bringing life and benediction to everything and every one it touches. The thirst of the lover of humanity, so far as his limitations will permit him, is to know humanity; and we can never know until we love. When Christ said: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" and "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me"; and "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these least ye did it not unto Me"; He had in His mind an idea identical with what these passages would represent if instead of *Me* we read "Humanity." It is towards such an idea that I humbly move on hands and knees; blundering and slow, I yet move: "It would be difficult to explain to you what I feel as I make my way through the throng of people in Piccadilly or Oxford Street; the animated panorama of forms and faces; girls with sweet lips and frank, wide-open eyes; matrons whom Time has not robbed of all sweetness; youths and men of all kinds. . . . A warm glow suffuses me, a rapture and a pain; men and women, humanity! They are a part of

* Extract from a letter written from London by the author to a friend in Jamaica.

me ; there is something which comes to me from them, and, certainly, something which goes out of me.

“ And in the slums, too, amidst distressing signs of poverty, the tears come to my eyes ; not so much tears of sorrow, as tears of tenderness and pity. I feel sometimes I could hug the little urchins that play about the streets ; and, oh, the women with that dazed, lost look in their eyes ; it hurts me so. I want to *know* them all ; to know what are their problems, their particular perplexities, the history of pain that lies behind those eyes. To be great is to feel yourself at one with humanity : one with its joys and sorrows, its hopes and its aspirations, its failures and its potentialities.”*

And so, I am persuaded, it is only through contact with our fellows, only through the active sympathy that comes of knowledge, that we can attain at last to the stature of the man, Jesus Christ, whose supreme greatness lay in the fact that He was in very truth the Son of Man ; He was Humanity.

* Extract from a letter written from London by the author to a friend in Jamaica.

III.—THE TESTIMONY OF NATURE

“ SOCIAL PROBLEMS ”

MR. HENRY GEORGE, the American economist, writing some fifty years ago, in his *Social Problems* on the system of economic exploitation upon which western civilization is founded, has this to say :

The salvation of society, the hope for the free, full development of humanity, is in the gospel of brotherhood—the gospel of Christ. Social progress makes the well-being of all more and more the business of each ; it binds all closer and closer together in bonds from which none can escape. He who observes the law and the proprieties, and cares for his family, yet takes no interest in the general weal, and gives no thought to those trodden underfoot, save now and then to bestow alms, is not a true Christian. Nor is he a good citizen. The duty of the citizen is more and harder than this.

The intelligence required for the solving of social problems is not a mere thing of the intellect. It must be animated with the religious sentiment and warm with sympathy for human suffering. It must stretch out beyond self-interest, whether it be the self-interest of the few or of the many. It must seek justice. *For at the bottom of every social problem we shall find a social wrong.*

The italics are mine ; and truer words have not been written. It is difficult to conceive of a more searching examination of the causes underlying the economic ills of our time than has been carried out in the work from which the above passage is quoted ; yet as we

listen again to this careful thinker—this time to a chance remark, which, nevertheless, proceeded from conviction—we are led to understand how even the “strongest intellects” can be deceived by theories that have “become embedded in common belief” and, consequently, we are constrained to an understanding tolerance of the prejudice of ignorance and comparative feeble-mindedness :

—It is only the strongest intellects that can in a little raise themselves above the accepted opinions of their times—No theory is too false, no fable too absurd, no superstition too degrading for acceptance when it has become embedded in common belief. Men will submit themselves to tortures and to death, mothers will immolate their children, at the bidding of beliefs they thus accept. What more unnatural than polygamy? Yet see how long and how widely polygamy has existed!

What Mr. George has here said could, except for the last two sentences, have been said with equal force by me in support of a view directly opposed to his. And in reply I in my turn ask, in view of the facts which I have pointed out, and shall point out, what more unnatural than an unvaried system of monogamous marriage? What more unjust, immoral and unchristian? For all these terms, and I say it with great emphasis, are interchangeable; unnatural, unjust, immoral, unchristian. If a thing can be proved to be one it has been proved to be all.

POLYGAMY UNNATURAL?

Mr. George continues to say: “Polygamy is unnatural. Obvious facts of universal experience prove

this. The uniform proportion in which the sexes are brought into the world ; the exclusiveness of the feeling with which in healthy conditions they attract each other ; the necessities imposed by the slow growth and development of children, point to the union of one man with one woman as the intent of Nature."

Let us examine these assertions. It is curious to note that on the very next page Mr. George says : " Man is not like the ox. He has no fixed standards of satisfaction." Yet it is quite clear that he has measured all humanity by his own rule, and imputed to mankind a uniformity of feeling and necessity which in itself must be a negation of the individuality which distinguishes the species.

First, " the obvious facts of universal experience " prove, if they prove anything, that it has been impossible even under religious compulsion, to persuade men in general to conform to monogamous marriage. It is unnecessary to stress the point ; every man knows it ; our divorce courts give daily testimony on the subject. The only difference between us and the countries which practise polygamy is that they are honest in this matter while we are forced to be hypocrites. The only result of the false standard we have set up is evil : for men in order to preserve the fiction that they are monogamous (and this is especially true in the United States of America) have made divorce an institution running parallel to marriage ; so that while they achieve polygamy under another name their sometime wives are forced into what are in truth and in fact adulterous unions.

But the conventions are satisfied and respectability is preserved ; and we hope that God will judge such actions differently from those of the poor peasant girl who bears two children in two years for two different men !

Apart from these facts, I am not willing to believe that such men as David and Solomon, whose writings, as I have pointed out, we revere as having been divinely inspired, led unnatural lives. And we must certainly admit theirs as a part of universal experience ! The chances are that it is we who lead unnatural lives ; the more civilized man becomes the more divorced from Nature is his mode of living. We have not yet learnt to combine civilization with Nature.

Mr. George's next statement : " the uniform proportion in which the sexes are brought into the world " is ridiculously false, as disclosed by the facts set out in the opening pages of this book ; and these conditions are not of recent growth, as I have pointed out. Even in the United States fifty years ago, in the midst of great natural resources, women were sufficiently numerous for some of them to be homeless. The following is Mr. George's own account of conditions which then prevailed :

In the paper which contained a many-column account of the Vanderbilt ball, with its gorgeous dresses and its wealth of diamonds, with its profusion of roses, costing \$2 each, and its precious wines flowing like water, I also read a brief item telling how, at a police station nearby, thirty-nine persons—eighteen of them women—had sought shelter, and how they were all marched into court next morning and sent to prison for six months. ' The women,' said the item, ' shrieked and sobbed bitterly as they were carried to prison.' Christ was born of a woman. And to Mary Magdalene He

turned in tender blessing. But such vermin have some of these human creatures, made in God's image, become that we must shovel them off to prison without being too particular.

Such were conditions in "the land of the free and the home of the brave" fifty years ago, where, one would have imagined, even if a woman failed to find a husband she could hardly have failed to secure food and shelter. Moreover, Mr. George's reasoning on the point in question is very loose indeed. The fact that polygamy has been widely practised is in itself a proof that the sexes do not exist in the uniform proportion of which he speaks; and I am yet to learn that any widespread scarcity of women has been experienced in the past as a result of such practice.

Even if there were an equal number of men and women in the world the enforcement of monogamous marriage would involve as its logical corollary the compelling of every one to marry; or we should still have the problem of persons who wanted to marry, but could not, because other persons chose not to marry. No one will agree that such compulsion would be a satisfactory state of affairs: it is more, not less, freedom of choice, both for men and for women, that we need. On this point alone, without the aid of any other argument, monogamy, as a universal system, stands condemned.

I do not deny the exclusiveness of the feeling, of which Mr. George speaks, in young lovers; but I deny that it is a feeling that persists, or should persist, except among such as have a very restricted and arti-

ficial view of life. The "healthy conditions" to which he refers need some definition, and at all events may be purely a matter of personal opinion. A man may be the best judge of the conditions suitable to his own taste and constitution ; but it does not follow that his judgment will be equally good in choosing for others. This exclusiveness moreover is nothing to be proud of : it is in reality merely an extension of self-love ; its very quality proclaims its narrowness ! There are men for whom monogamous marriage is expedient because their natures are too narrow and the orbit of their affections too restricted to permit them to be capable of loyalty to more than one woman ; there are other men for whom monogamous marriage may be expedient for quite other reasons : a man engaged in scientific research, for example, whose mental outlook is directed towards abstract ideas or natural phenomena, instead of towards human personality, may find two women one too many ; he may even be inclined to be a. celibate. A man may be of a very generous and affectionate disposition and yet for temperamental reasons, or on account of the nature of his work, he finds one wife enough ; but a man who really cannot be interested in more than one woman (at a time) does not love that woman so much as he loves himself ; he is but a variation of the type of man who is quite indifferent to women, as persons, and regards them merely as physical and urgent necessities like food and water. Some men are celibate by nature (from their mother's womb, as Jesus said), like John the Baptist ; some men, like Jesus himself, are celibate, for the

Kingdom of Heaven's sake ; for such men celibacy is a self-denial undertaken with the definite purpose of bringing blessing to others : they are not by nature celibate, but the exigencies of their mission in the world impose the state upon them.* There are yet other men to whom the call of human nature is the supreme call, whose feeling for their kind differs only in degree from what Jesus Christ himself felt for all humanity ; and who can and do find room in their hearts for many people ; not the negative thing which we conveniently call goodwill and charity, but positive and heartfelt affection. To lay down Procrustean rules governing the human relationships of individuals whose missions in the world, and consequently their natures and temperaments which are adapted to those missions, differ so widely, is not a procedure worthy of beings who pride themselves on their intelligence.

Mr. George's last point about the slow growth and development of children is, I consider, irrelevant to the argument. There is no advantage which children possess now under the present system, even at its best

* This truth about celibacy cannot be too strongly emphasized or too widely known. There are certain schools of thought which regard the celibate state as in itself a mark of great virtue ; a survival no doubt, as de Pomerai points out, of those early times when Christians looked for the immediate return of Christ and the destruction of the physical world. But there is no virtue in celibacy as such. It may be a virtue in the man whom Nature, for her own definite reasons, has adapted to it ; it certainly is a virtue in the man who voluntarily adopts it as a means towards fulfilling his mission in the world : but the man not specially adapted by Nature and not required by his particular task to adopt celibacy, becomes, if believing it to be a virtue in itself he practises it, the victim of a delusion which may be a grave danger to himself and to others, and which will most certainly arrest his spiritual growth and hamper his usefulness in the world. It should be clearly understood that celibacy like every other form of self-denial involves definite loss which is compensated for, and justified, only by a higher gain ; or, to put it differently, infringement of natural law or suppression of its working is permissible only when the object is the fulfilment of a higher natural law. A man who hurls himself before a bullet intended for his friend is a hero, and may be a saint ; but a man who obstructs with his body a bullet aimed at no one is a fool.

—and it is very rarely at its best—which, as I shall point out later, they would not possess in even greater measure under a less hide-bound practice.

EAST AND WEST

The civilization of the East is older and, in some important respects, superior to the civilization of the West. We excel them in the power and range of individual acquisition of material things, or, to put it differently, in our capacity for greed. This is a doubtful advantage. We excel them also in our adaptability to change; in the power of our minds to throw off cramping and outworn customs and creeds. This is a decided advantage; and it is only as we exploit this quality of our civilization that we maintain the superiority that comes with progress. But in the genius that makes for stability and permanence in human affairs, the East is overwhelmingly superior; instinctively it fastens its gaze upon eternal values, both in spiritual and in temporal things; and thus it is that its human institutions though bearing the defects of their virtues are, regarded as permanent institutions, more satisfactory than anything we know. If the people of the East labour under systems and customs that tend to arrest growth, those systems and customs in their fundamentals do not at the same time inflict intolerable suffering on vast numbers of them; it is precisely because of this that human nature has been able to support them, without change, for unnumbered years. The Chinaman, for instance, does not understand our eternal hustle; burrowing

underground and rushing to the surface in pursuit of some elusive benefit ; neither does he understand the mentality that turns up its nose at polygamous marriage, when it is so called, while permitting, as an alternative, the wholesale prostitution of its women.

The sooner we realize that wisdom does not reside in any one race or nation, but is the outcome of the crystallized instincts of all races and all nations taken together, the more quickly shall we arrive at a satisfying and harmonious way of life.

I have dealt thus lengthily with Mr. George's chance remark about polygamy because I consider the work in which it appears to be an important contribution to the solution of the problem of economic exploitation, which is the other side of this picture of social injustice with which I am dealing. All the arguments, it will be found, which have been adduced in presenting the economic case are equally applicable here for the simple reason that both problems arise from the same cause : "ignorance, neglect, or contempt of human rights." I can forgive Mr. George for failing to see that this exploitation of womanhood resulting from discrimination against women in the matter of marriage, is one of a piece with the exploitation of labour resulting from discrimination against men in the holding of land ; or, rather, I can forgive him for not having perceived such exploitation ; for, of the great tyrannies from which mankind has suffered, this is the last to be unmasked ; this the most difficult, since it entrenched itself in the very stronghold of righteousness, and made its appeal and arrogated to itself authority on

the ground of morality. Moreover Mr. George wrote fifty years ago, in the midst of an age which imagined that it had settled for all time the moral and social standards of the world ; and though he was aware of their inequalities in some directions he may well be excused for having overlooked them in others. We cannot make a similar plea : the social injustices which we tolerate are very obviously and rapidly destroying our social fabric. The old systems both on their economic and on their human side must go ; but it will depend upon our good sense whether they will pass out quietly, or to the accompaniment of such a tragic climax in social life as the world has never known.

THE WISDOM OF PROVIDENCE

Let us now turn to Nature herself and see whether there is anything that she can teach us ; for morality, properly understood, is a harmonious relationship between the individual life and that of the universe around it. Nature is an embodiment, and the laws of Nature are expressions, of God's will in the universe ; and what we call revelation is merely Nature's interpretation of that will through man. There cannot, therefore, be any conflict between religion and Nature : what seems so is the result of man's ignorance ; and the purpose of this chapter will be to justify in Nature what in the last we have been able to prove from the Bible. There is no such thing as positive law, as distinct from natural law ; the former is an invention of theologians for the purpose of bolstering up irrational ethical theories which, having no basis in Nature,

have created nothing but misery and confusion ; they fail to realize that Man is a part of Nature and that all the laws necessary to his development, whether physical or spiritual, are provided by her. And in Nature's economy nothing is wanting, nothing superfluous. If, therefore, Nature persistently produces more women than men, there is, as I pointed out in the previous chapter,* a very good reason for doing so ; besides, in connection with a creature who is being individualized as man is, Nature's all-embracing wisdom knows that no *system* could be universally applied. For some reason which we do not know pigeons are monogamous ; Nature has made them so ; but—what wisdom !—Nature also provides that the hen pigeon shall lay two eggs at a time, and two only ; and by no chance are they ever both male or both female. Had a system of monogamous marriage been Nature's intention in respect of man, as Mr. George asserts, she would have made a similar provision. But Nature knows that men are not pigeons : they are individuals, with the peculiar differences and predilections that mark individuals.

The domestic fowl, on the other hand, is a polygamous creature ; and so we find the hen laying any number of eggs ; and the cockerels among her brood are usually comparatively few !

MEN AND WOMEN

It is mischievously and foolishly thought, and implied in our social practice, that the sexual needs of

* See page 47.

men and women are identical. Nothing is further from the truth. A woman's urgent need of man has, as its ultimate instinctive motive, the bearing of children; when that is achieved the desire for a man becomes quite a secondary matter. On the other hand, a man needs a woman for herself. It is the mother in women that men are eternally seeking, and of which they stand always in need, and it is for a son that a woman really yearns. Both desires are complementary and fulfil each other; they are not identical.

The failure to recognize this truth is one of the prime causes of marital unhappiness; a woman has been taught to think of her husband as exclusively hers; her objection to another woman sharing his affections is not instinctive, but the result of tradition and custom (to which women are more so the slaves than men are*) and to the fear that she may suffer economically. In the meanwhile the arrival of children lessens the ardour of a wife's affection for her husband; for Nature decrees that a mother's face should be turned towards the coming generation—the world's hope—and away from the past. The man unconsciously becomes aware of this "looking away" on the wife's part and seeks

* In the newspapers, in which on almost any day one may read of a wife being granted a separation from her husband on the ground of his friendship with another woman, I saw some little while ago a report of a complaint by a Turkish woman against her husband, the grounds of which were his failure to carry out his promise to marry a second wife, thereby leaving her without any companionship except that of servants. Of the two grievances it appears to me that the Turkish woman's is by far the more reasonable.

A despatch from New York dated 27th November, 1931, reports that "because they feared their love for the same man would end their long friendship, two beautiful young girls lay down side by side in the kitchen of their luxurious flat, turned on the gas, and killed themselves."

Such tragedies are a direct outcome of the mischievous teaching to which the Western world has been forced to listen during these latter days.

another "mother" to make up the deficiency he feels. And there the trouble begins !

It should also be observed that while a woman's sex-instinct finds fulfilment in a series of actions—the embraces of her husband, the changes and developments of pregnancy, the suckling and nursing of her infant, a man's finds fulfilment in a single act. To imagine that two such different sets of conditions are equal is, as I have remarked, both foolish and mischievous.

THE LAW OF LOVE AND LIFE

If we glance at Nature we shall see in operation the law which lies behind the instincts whose tendencies I have just described. The sun is life-giving, the planets are life-receiving, life-reproducing. It would not be more silly to argue that the sun and the planets should act in the same way, or that the centrifugal force is equal to the centripetal, than to argue that the instincts of men and women are the same and should find fulfilment in the same line of conduct. For man represents the centrifugal force in Nature : radiation (a broadcasting of energy), activity, variety, change ; he is bored by anything fixed and stable ; he is for ever seeking new adventures, continually originating something and renewing something ; his affections flow outward from a centre. Woman, on the other hand, represents the centripetal force : conservation, productivity, stability ; her affections seek a centre. These are the opposite forces and tendencies upon which all manifestations of life are built ; each supplies what the other lacks ; and when

working together in their own natural manner they create harmony, beauty, life. This is the immutable Law of Love (which is also the Law of Life) upon which the universe rests; from the innumerable planetary systems "thronging Eternity" to the smallest particle of matter—the atom.* So that if any one form of marriage could be said to be *natural*, it is polygamy. But man thinks he is wiser than Nature; he thinks that the centrifugal and centripetal forces, which together support and produce life, are equal. He does not realize that the power and impulse to give life is much greater than the ability to receive and reproduce it; that the sun radiates more energy than any one planet could absorb; or that the life-force of a man concentrated on one woman is likely to injure instead of benefit her. Oh, what blind fools we are! We who pride ourselves on our reason, not realizing that reason is a poor, maimed thing cut off from instinct.

But it is the destiny of man to become a law unto himself: a sovereign in his own right, when he has learnt to bring that sovereignty into harmony with the universe around him; he is being individualized, and no single rule of conduct will be found to suit equally every man. What human society needs is the greatest freedom and variety within the limits set by Nature. Every other creature finds fullness of joy in living by obeying the laws of its being; man is the only creature that denies and frustrates the laws of his being,

* I do not think the attempt of science to split the atom will succeed; but if it does the results are likely to be disastrous. We are like children playing with weapons of whose destructive powers we are sublimely ignorant.

thereby limiting his capacity for life, in the mistaken idea that he is pleasing God. All fishes swim in the water ; but the flying-fish lifts itself free and skims over the surface for a considerable distance ; it is obeying a law of its being, and in doing so it hurts no one and no one hinders it. In our society we should say : " No ! You are a fish, not a bird ; all good fishes swim beneath the surface and so must you ; we cannot permit you to fly." And so we clip the wings of genius and retard the progress of the world.

There is an unmistakable unity in method and design which runs through the universe and which it is easy to understand once it is perceived. If we build our systems on these designs we cannot go far wrong. Our institutions, however, are at war with Nature ; ignorance of natural law and frustration of its working are perplexing life in all its relationships to-day ; especially is this true in sexual matters ; and our defiance of law is creating in us perversions and abnormalities which will eventually destroy us physically and spiritually. It is not Nature that tempts men and women to commit adultery, but a perversion of Nature. A normal woman who is mated experiences a feeling of physical revulsion on intimate contact with an alien male body.* Intercourse with such a man would be a violation of the laws of her being ; what would then take place would be an exact parallel of what would happen if an alien sun by any chance challenged successfully the allegiance of all or any one

* It is also true that a man of refined sensibilities (indicating a highly-organized nervous system) is repelled rather than attracted by intercourse with a woman already mated.

of the planets of our system ; and the catastrophic confusion which would result in the latter case would be similar to that with which the world is now perplexed in its social life. This explains in corroboration of what has been said in the last chapter why adultery is a grievous sin : it upsets the laws of life and being. It also explains why our present social order and the social sins which it provokes tend towards disaster for mankind. We ask too much when we expect to pit ourselves against universal law without evil consequences.

It is at this point that de Pomerai goes wrong in his forecast of the future of sexual relationships. He would retain the present monogamous system of marriage as an institution supported by civil law while permitting extra-marital relationships to both husband and wife, by mutual agreement ; and he would avoid the disagreeable consequences likely to arise therefrom by the employment of birth-control methods. This suggestion is quite clearly an attempt at compromise with the present system, which has mischievously taught women to regard any detail of conduct permissible to men as proper to themselves as well, and as in keeping with their claims to equality. As I have just shown, such an arrangement would be contrary to natural law. Unity in the midst of variety is Nature's order ; our present system provides for unity without variety ; now de Pomerai would go to the opposite extreme by suggesting a variety in which there would be no unity. It would not work, for the simple reason that it would be a violation of the nature of women ; it

would disorganize their nervous systems and in process of time render them incapable of fine feeling, or deep emotion ; it would arrest their soul-growth and cast a blight over their spiritual life. And the physical and spiritual results accruing to the children produced under such conditions and inheriting such disordered nervous systems would be far-reaching and profound.* These are of the things that destroy nations. The matter is so fundamental that adequate expression on the subject is hardly achieved. For sex is the central fact of life, from which branch out, in a complexity equal to that of the nervous system, all the subsidiary facts upon which our physical and spiritual well-being depends. To misuse, abuse or suppress it is to poison life at its very roots.

This serious flaw in an otherwise admirable work has been made possible by the author's failure to recognize, as I have already said, the significance of Jesus Christ in the life of humanity. Christ's condemnation of adultery was a sure indication that it is a violation of the laws governing human nature.

INSTINCT AND REASON

Nature, far from encouraging vice, or instigating it, punishes it very severely ; and our instincts, when unperverted, warn us against infringements of natural law. But the old theologies have taught men to distrust their instincts and to regard the promptings of Nature as the whispers of the devil. "They are

* One is not surprised to learn that the son of Ninon de Lençois fell in love with his mother and ended his life a suicide.

dangerous guides, the feelings," mocks Tennyson. So haunted have they been by this whispering devil that they have become afraid of themselves. Human nature is evil, we have been told, and our bodies are vile ; we can save our souls only by repressing the one and mortifying the other. This libel against Instinct began with the false idea that man was first led into sin by his giving way to a natural prompting, whereas it is quite clear that it was a misuse of reason that was, as it still is, man's undoing. It has perhaps never occurred to theologians of the old school that the "voice of the Lord God in the garden" which Adam heard was no other than that of Instinct—the accumulated experience which resides deep down in human nature and which comes forth on the moral plane as conscience—or that the whispers of the tempter in Eve's ear was man's misguided attempts to use his new acquisition, Reason, in defiance of Instinct. The story in Genesis unmistakably discloses the fact that it was Reason which led man astray : the arguments of the tempter are quite clearly set out ; yet we have built up whole systems of thought around the delusion of an inherently evil human nature, and have done our best to maim and deform the instincts by whose aid alone our reasoning can be of any account. The law has been given to us not to frustrate and nullify Instinct, but to keep it from overstepping the bounds where it becomes a menace to the welfare of others. The law, in fact, is the outcome of a collaboration between Instinct and Reason, and which we can never properly understand until these two powers

are combined within ourselves. Reason cut off from Instinct is—like proof without data—an absurdity.

“ THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY ”

Robert Bridges, the late Poet Laureate, has in *The Testament of Beauty* dealt in an elaborate and convincing manner with this misuse of Reason by mankind. So pertinent to the present discussions are the facts he presents that I can do no better than quote at this juncture from an analysis of the poem which I undertook some time ago.* “ The argument of the poem is worked out in the course of four books and deals with the evolution of man from a creature guided by selfish instincts to a being claiming affinity with the divine Spirit of the Universe and living in harmony with it. This argument is based upon the fable which, Plato relates, was told by Socrates to Phaedrus

‘ on a summer morning as they sat beneath a lofty plane tree by the grassy banks of the Ilissus talking of the passions of men.’

Socrates in his fable saw the Spirit of Man as a chariot speeding ’twixt earth and heaven, drawn by winged horses ; the names of the horses were Selfhood and Breed, and the charioteer who controlled them was Reason. The horses represent man’s primal instincts, Selfhood being the elder and stronger, Breed, once the foal of Selfhood, the livelier and finer of limb. The poem’s chief purpose is to show that there is an important element missing from Socrates’ fable, excellent as it is ; and that element is the power of beauty in shaping

* From a discourse on *The Testament of Beauty* before the Jamaica Branch of the Poetry League on 26th March, 1931.

man towards his highest destiny. To this end Book I makes a review of human achievement since such time as Reason may be said to have been its guiding principle, and the poet shows that Reason in man's present state of development is limited and comparative: it has not saved him from the horrors and devastations of the wars that have been waged ever since empires began; nor from the misery and disease which is the lot of the mass of humanity in every age; and, in spite of Reason, men knew not

' as they fell
desperately unrepentant to the " scourge of God "
how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies
punished them so; alas, then, in what plight are we,
knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul
that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor stay;
for Reason had lost control of his hot-tempered steed
and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness.'

" The futility of human reason is again demonstrated in the state of politics and has been made the occasion for one of the poet's most picturesque metaphors. *The thicket of the people will take furtive fire from irresponsible catchwords of live ideas.* It is mightily to the reproach of Reason, he continues, that she cannot save or guide the herd, and minds who else were fit to rule must win to power by flattery and pretence. Man, in the toilsome journey from conscience of nothing to conscient ignorance, mistook his tottery crutch (that is, Reason) for the main organ of life, and human reason is shown to be the poor thing it is when compared with the instinct that guides animal behaviour, and which never errs. The great mistake in human thought, a

mistake which has had far-reaching consequences in the destinies of mankind, has been to regard Reason as something detached from Nature and to be used not in harmony with but in opposition to natural instincts. Reason is an outgrowth of the natural instincts of man, an evolution comparable to that of the flower which is

‘ but a differentiation of the infertile leaf
which held all this miracle in intrinsic potency.’

Man’s mind cannot be isolated from the other works of Nature ; it is the mirror which she has provided herself, not to condemn what she has herself created, but working in harmony with the main intention of life, to improve and finally to bring to perfection.

“ With this as a premise, the poet proceeds in Books II and III to trace the development of Selfhood and Breed, the two horses in the fable of Socrates, and to show in Book IV how these instincts in man may evolve into true wisdom or (as a later edition puts it) conduct, which lies ‘ in masterful administration of the unforeseen.’

“ All conscious manifestations of life depend upon the instinct of Selfhood for preservation and sustenance ; survival is achieved by personal effort and is invariably gained at the expense of the weaker or less intelligent. This is an acknowledged law in the natural world ; it is only when we reach man that we find selfishness denounced as a trait unworthy of human nature. Yet it is not to be thought that in this Nature shows herself at variance with her own design ; this new quality of mercy and toleration in man is an outgrowth of self

and takes its rise from the instinct of parenthood which seeks to protect its offspring and to secure preservation of the species where at first only the individual was considered. This blind motherly instinct is the source of man's purest affections and is the emotion most inimical to war ; out of it arises family life, communal and national life, and a recognition of social obligations. All this has been attained without the intervention of Reason ; indeed, such influence as Reason has had upon the matter has been decidedly baneful ; for, pursuing her old distrust of Instinct and failing to recognize her own relationship to the latter, she would deny all rights to the individual, and taking the social impulse beyond Nature's intention, would impose virtual slavery upon the individual in her mistaken solicitude for the community.* This is the basic error in all utopias ; and the civilization of our day is coming dangerously near to committing the great folly of ignoring the value of individual enterprise and the claims to individual development in its anxiety to promote national and international welfare. To quote again from the opening lines of the poem :

‘ Our stability is but balance, and conduct lies
in masterful administration of the unforeseen.’

Our salvation lies neither in a denial of instinct, nor in blind obedience to its dictates ; but in a judicious blending of instinct with reason.

“ Book III brings us to a consideration of the instinct

* It may be useful at this point to compare Goethe's philosophy of self-culture and to note how society's neglect or denial of the claims of the individual to independent development damages society by reducing the quality of the individuals who compose it. I shall return to this matter in the next chapter.

of Breed, which, next to self-preservation, constitutes the strongest impulse in Nature. The poet argues that since perpetuation of the species could have been achieved without differentiation of sex (as is actually the case in some forms of life), Nature must have had some purpose other than propagation for this instinct ; this purpose he finds to be the improvement of the species by an enlargement of the field of individual choice, thus making possible a variety of combinations. The attraction felt as the outcome of this instinct contains the germs of man's idealism and is the source of all his ideas of beauty, for which he finds expression in the arts.* Thus, all that is lovely and desirable in Nature, all that inspires our wonder and wins our admiration, all towards which we vaguely aspire, have their roots in the instinct of sex. Because they have been created by men, almost all the world's great works of art celebrate the goodness and beauty of womanhood. Perhaps the greatest example of this is to be found in Dante's immortal poem in honour of Beatrice. Of this Bridges says :

' 'Twas of that silent meeting his high vision came ;
 rapturous as any vision ever to poet given ;
 since in that Sacrament he re-baptized his soul
 and lived thereafter in Love, by the merit of Faith
 toiling to endow the world ; and on those feathered wings
 his mighty poem mounted, panting, and lieth now
 with all its earthly tangle by the throne of God.'

(III—238-244.)

* "It has been long recognized," says de Pomerai, "that a creative genius is always more highly sexed than is an ordinary man—Sex—is a primary requisite of creativeness—it is also essential to the attainment of mastery of life—to the maximal development of human potentialities."

But the best easily becomes the worst ; and so Nature commissioned Reason to hold the balance evenly and to prevent degeneration of the most desirable into the most repulsive ; but again Reason failed to recognize her true office, and at the urge of religious bigotry would have degraded sex into an obscenity and banished it from its rightful place at the gates of the fountain of life. The long struggle between natural instinct and religious fanaticism—a struggle in which there was much bloodshed, as the history of Europe will show—ended in a compromise in which the sex instinct was made respectable in the eyes of the Church by being raised to the dignity of a sacrament, and a limited freedom accorded it in monogamous marriage.

“ Thus it is seen that the primal instincts in man contain in themselves the germs of a higher life. Reason stands in the chariot, and the success or failure of the journey will depend upon the skill with which the horses Selfhood and Breed are handled ; but this skill comes not of logic ; it is in itself a kind of instinct, an unconscious aptitude born of long practice and experience ; it is Wisdom, which proceeds from the marriage of man’s thought with man’s intuitive worship of the beauty crowding in upon him from the world without, and telling him of God :

‘ Beauty, the eternal Spouse of the Wisdom of God and angel of his presence thru’ all creation.’ ”

THE EVIDENCE OF UGLINESS

It is of such wisdom that the world stands sorely in

shown, has degraded and deformed our primal instincts out of all recognition ; of Selfhood we have made such hideous selfishness and greed as have become a veritable nightmare in human life ; the cause, as Bridges declares, of half our woes and shames. Economic exploitation, founded on the fallacy that a man can win happiness and well-being for himself by denying them to others, issues in cruel and wasteful wars and disease, and degrades society by degrading the standards of the majority who compose it ; of Breed—what have we made of Breed—the fine high-spirited colt of Socrates' fable ? We have transformed it into a vampire which feeds on the blood of our women and converts humanity into a cesspool of misery and crime : the cause of the other half of our woes and shames. Before my mind's eye passes long-suffering womanhood ; womanhood crucified upon a cross of ignorance. I see overburdened, overworked, poverty-stricken mothers condemned to a life of child-bearing with no leisure for recreation or self-culture, with no prospect after rearing their brood but an ineffectual middle age, and then death ; I see their offspring (who constitute the majority of children in the world) starved and robbed of everything that makes for robust, healthy life, with little heritage in brain or brawn.

Most of these children come into the world as the result of absent-mindedness ; damned from their birth by the unnatural conditions which surround their advent. For it is only too true that men oftentimes rush to the sex act as a last refuge from utter boredom ; that the excesses which take place within

marriage (which slowly but surely reduce the attraction which a woman should exert upon her husband by slowly but surely reducing her nervous energy, and of which no one ever hears) are usually the outcome of futile attempts to recapture a lost joy, or dispel a vague feeling of disquiet and disharmony. And so even during the period of gestation a woman must submit to the embraces of her husband. Of all creatures that I have been able to observe man is the only one who cohabits with his mate during this period. The instincts of other animals teach the female of the species to shun or to resist coition at this time. The instincts of our women, perverted through long years of abuse, now make no such remonstrance* ; nevertheless the race pays the penalty in progressive physical decline and poverty of intellect. It is Nature's ordinance that a woman after she has conceived should have no sexual intercourse with her husband ; after conception there are certain changes which take place, necessitating physical readjustments to which her nervous system must adapt itself ; coition retards and hampers these readjustments by using up nerve force in an unprofitable direction, and affects adversely the physical nucleus of the new life which is being formed.†

* This instinct still survives in what we are pleased to call "peoples of inferior cultures."

† I know it has been argued that the nervous system of human beings, being more highly organized than that of, say, the lower mammals, requires that their emotions should find expression in an eroticism which is unknown to the more elementary instincts of the brute. I admit this : I agree that the sex function in man serves a higher purpose than that of mere procreation in the same way that his organ of sight and taste, for instance, serve higher purposes than their primary ones. I grant that it has an emotional and spiritual value which is not lessened because it is employed with no thought or intention of reproduction. The sexual act is in itself a complete process and is its own justification : but the point which I would make here is that with conception Nature begins an entirely new process with which the first process inevitably comes into conflict if carried out while it lasts.

The same is true of the period during which the infant is being suckled. Here again coition confuses the nervous system of the mother whose energies are then being directed towards building up the body of her offspring. It therefore appears that a woman after conception should abstain from copulation for about eighteen months ; certainly for the period of gestation and a reasonable time after childbirth. This causes her no hardship if her instincts are pure ; for then her sex-life is taking a new course. But under our system—which permits unrestricted breeding (especially among the poorer classes) on the one hand, and forcibly excludes from marriage vast numbers of women, on the other, such a practice would inflict considerable hardship on the majority of men, who simply could not be persuaded to adopt it. Yet unless a man clearly recognizes the limitations which monogamous marriage places upon him and voluntarily adopts them as suitable to his own nature and temperament he has no claim to be considered monogamous ; and Nature condemns as immoral the present abuse of wives, whether we recognize it as such or not. The self-appointed guardians of morality are either ignorant of these things or they are indifferent to them. Our Christian consciences are quite satisfied so long as the man does not seek another woman ; it does not matter that his ardour and too frequent child-bearing are wrecking the health and shortening the life of the woman he calls wife ; it does not matter that the physical and moral constitution of his offspring is profoundly affected by his intercourse with her during

pregnancy ; it does not matter that the woman loses all individual freedom, being tied hand and foot to the wheel of domesticity ! On the one side our moralities are higher than Nature, and on the other they are lower than the profoundest hell.

It is small wonder, when the majority of our children are thus conceived and nurtured, that the light and beauty of genius appear so rarely in the world. In our characteristically loose way of thinking we maintain at one time that sexual intercourse should have no other purpose than the production of children ; and at another we appear to forget entirely that the primary object of the sex-function is to provide bodies for the new generation, and that such children have a right to the best physical endowment possible. Common sense suggests that the higher the character of the man the more he should be encouraged towards procreation, so that humanity might have the benefit of his quality ; our practice tends towards the discouragement of procreation (except within the ring) in men of outstanding character as something base and unworthy, while the vicious and the ignorant are permitted to multiply themselves unchecked. The more I think of these matters, the more idiotic our social system appears. . . .

And side by side with the mothers whose habitation is Sorrow I see other creatures in whose eyes there lives a hunger for the very things whose superfluity is having such tragic results in the lives of their sisters ; whose health would be so much the better for their having borne and suckled some of the infants that are

sapping the vitality of the women by their side ; who would have been spared the tortures and mutilations of surgical operations if their wombs had been permitted to carry out the functions for which they were made ; whose nervous systems need not therefore have been shattered and life made one long nightmare ; who would gladly have shared the burdens of the struggling ones and made life less dreary and monotonous for themselves. Some of these women, in accordance with the law of Nature already indicated, love once, and only once ; if the man they love happens to be already married our system forbids them forming an alliance with him. Yet so strong is the attraction which they feel that even where the opportunity occurs they are never able to give their allegiance to any other man ; and so they go through to the end living stunted, thwarted, twisted lives.

There are men so unaccountably dull and callous as to imagine that because women do not shout their need from the house-tops, such need does not exist. When we argue in favour of monogamous marriage we appear to think that women love in the same manner as men do ; but when we are confronted with the result of our simple subtraction we pretend to believe that women need not, or do not, love at all. It is remarkable to what lengths we will go in order to deceive ourselves ! Yet were we to gather the years of misery and desolation spent by these who are condemned by the caprice of men to a celibacy they have not chosen, whose hearts cry out for human love—the dear, human contacts that make the world

something less than a wilderness—were we, I say, to sum these desolate years, what an eternity of misery they would make ! Is it any wonder, when the collective memory of humanity is crowded with such anguish that life for the most favourably placed of us is a very sad affair ? Do we imagine that we can achieve immunity from the blight which rests upon the lives of so many ? Is not the very air we breathe reminiscent of untellable things and charged with unutterable grief ? For these pass out at last with the burden of their baffled, unfulfilled lives upon them ; with empty hands, but with hearts full to overflowing with the treasures, the gifts, that have never been claimed. Perhaps it was thought akin to this that led Constance Renshaw to write :

“ What strange renunciations, what divine
Anguish are 'wake in earth's big silent places !
What swift half-memories haunt the dark, what traces
Of bygone griefs thrill in each wind-stirred pine !
Dead dreams flash out, as stars, that were not, shine
Suddenly from the blue of far sky-spaces ;
And all my soul is full of shadow-faces
Whose wistful eyes look dumbly into mine.

“ These have put life away, with its unending
Pains and hypocrisies and sick surmise ;
But all their lost lone songs are dimly blending
With the eternal beauty of the skies.
They love with God's love—vast, all-comprehending,
But there are human memories in their eyes.”

And now I see those wretched ones whose bodies are being slowly destroyed by loathsome diseases ; who daily sacrifice themselves on the altars of lust for the

bare necessities of life. It is surprising how widespread an ignorance prevails as to the real evil of prostitution. The consequences of adultery to the woman who commits it are mild in comparison to what happens to the victim of prostitution ; for, however unlawfully, the feelings of an adulteress are engaged in her act, the outrage on her system is partly mitigated by the presence, usually, of strong passion ; but the crime of prostitution lies chiefly in the fact that the feelings of the woman, who has calculatingly sold herself for a material benefit, are not involved ; it is a veritable crucifixion of her nervous system which does not long survive. Such wholesale sacrifice of women is a permanent institution, and a direct outcome of our civilization. Yet we send missionaries to the heathen to preach against the immolation of human beings !

This unnatural commerce even takes place within the marriage ring ; for some of the contracts we call marriages are ten times as immoral as that which the basest outcast makes ; for the latter most often is impelled by the necessity of the hour, while the former is built upon a mean design to obtain money and social position. Is it any wonder that marriages which are based upon any and every consideration except love, in which women considered respectable daily prostitute themselves for the material things of life should go to pieces ?

And I see the abominable thing ! The terrible revolting ugliness to which women resort out of sheer desperation and self-pity ; which like a deadly disease is

spreading all over the Western world to-day, where women, multitudes of women, find that they have no right to any companionship save that of one of their own sex. I hear their screaming nerves on the rack ; I see the gradual death of their souls, as like unwatered flowers they droop and die. Oh, the heart-break of it all !

These things we refuse to know—we are afraid to face the facts ; like the ostrich we hide our contemptible heads in the sand and pretend that the evil thing that pursues us does not exist.

But this is by no means the whole picture : the subject is really inexhaustible. On the findings of medical science and on the records of lunacy and crime I have no authority to speak except with regard to such facts as are obvious to every intelligent person. Many books have been and are being written dealing with these aspects ; and proof could be drawn from every department of Nature, from every fact of our haphazard, frustrated existence, to show how this system of ours, together with its reactions, saps the life-blood of society, wastes its energies, reduces its quality, fosters selfishness and all manner of crimes, cruelties and hatreds, creates misery and suffering, privations, poverty and disease, and revolting abominations in social life.

And it may be said without hesitation that it will finally destroy the world, as we know it ; for it is founded upon a defiance of natural law ; and Nature cannot for ever be defied.

IT MUST COME DOWN !

If you who read this have seen, as I have seen, some so-called woman of the streets of London, whose tragic, staring eyes held yours in a fascinated gaze, waiting for the signal which would proclaim that she had prospect of such employment as society allows her ; if you have looked upon that form, as I have looked, and seen in the bearing and in the pitiful, sensitive mouth unmistakable signs of a not too remote respectability ; if you have marked, as I have marked, the despair in that pinched, pallid face, such shame and misery as the Thames so often mercifully conceals ; if you have wept, as you passed on, as I have wept, bitter tears, tears of sorrow and pity at the sight of it all, then you will want to go into the street and shout with all the strength you have that the heartless system which makes such things possible **MUST COME DOWN**

IV.—A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

CREEDS AND SYSTEMS

“TO pretend,” says John Stuart Mill, “the Christianity was intended to stereotype existing forms of government and society, and to protect them against change is to reduce it to the level of Islamism or of Brahminism. It is precisely because Christianity has not done this that it has been the religion of the progressive portion of mankind. There have been abundance of people in all ages of Christianity who tried . . . to convert the world into a sort of Christian Mussulmans, with the Bible instead of a Koran, prohibiting all improvement : and they have been their power, and many have had to sacrifice their lives in resisting them. But they have failed ; and the resistance has made us what we are ; and the world will yet make us what we are to be.”*

It should hardly be necessary to re-state so self-evident a fact as this. The whole history of human progress since the advent of Christianity is a tale of the struggle against great odds, and the final triumph of liberating ideas, to which, a few years after their establishment, society adapts itself and forgets that it ever held contrary views or followed different customs. To this generation it seems almost incredible that less than a century ago men were bought and sold like

* *The Subjection of Women.*

cattle, among peoples who professed Christianity, or that slave owners could go to church with an easy conscience. Even less credible is the fact that certain sections of the organized Church found it possible to oppose with all the weight of their influence and authority the abolition of slavery.

And a century to come, men will look back at this age and marvel at the curious tangle which is its life, at the strange, inhuman tyranny which society exercises over the individual and at the virtual slavery of millions of women which professedly Christian nations tolerate.

. . . Oh, I say, is the lesson that history teaches; yet at the commencement of every new epoch it has been found necessary to remind men that Christianity was never intended "to stereotype existing forms of government and society"; rather it is a dynamic force that tends to destroy whatever makes for petrification: a heaven which is not but surely, and continuously, changing the habits of men's minds. But like the lazy scientist we like to imagine that each new lesson is the last; and we become furious when it is pointed out to us how shallow, yet, is our experience, how small our store of wisdom and how superficial our understanding. Creeds and systems are but expedients whose usefulness is severely limited, and which become dangers if permitted to outlive their time. The divisions of Christendom are themselves sure indications that we have as yet arrived at a very partial and distorted view of Jesus Christ. It is certain that when peace and happiness finally come to the world

they will come to a world in which there will be no organized churches or religious systems. Men will then practise goodness, not preach about it, as the prophet Isaiah has foretold, and as Jesus Himself informed the woman of Samaria. I very much doubt whether it was Christ's intention that any system or organization should be set up in His name ; He Himself preached on mountains and by the sea-shore ; inevitably, these systems and organizations come to be more and more, and the truth which they find to contain—even as a stoppered bottle of sunlight—comes to be less and less of the temple at Jerusalem marking the beginning of that time when “ the Most High dwelleth in our hands.”

The quest of every true man cannot love God who loves truth by which alone life is found and find the happiness and the quest must be an old and well-loved quest. says Christ, “ and I will be in the world.”
 The Rev. F. W. W. W.
 City Temple, J. J.
 1931, said, in his book
 changed things and
 yet it is essential to
 the Christian life
 higher values and
 understandings

and the damnation of their bodies. "When between those who work and want," says Henry George, "and those who live in idle luxury, there is so great a gulf fixed that in popular imagination they seem to belong to distinct orders of beings; when, in the name of religion, it is persistently instilled into the masses that all things in this world are ordered by Divine Providence, which appoints to each his place; when children are taught from earliest infancy that it is, to use the words of the episcopal catechism, their duty towards God and man to honour and obey the civil authority, to order themselves 'lowly and reverently to all their betters,' and 'to do their duty in that station of life unto which it shall please God to call them'; when these counsels of humility, of contentment and of self-abasement are enforced by the terrible threat of an eternity of torture, while on the other hand the poor are taught to believe that if they patiently bear their lot here God will after death translate them to a heaven where there is no private property and no poverty, the most glaring inequalities in condition may excite neither envy nor indignation."*

"We have had the morality of submission," says Mill, "and the morality of chivalry and generosity; the time is now come for the morality of justice. Whenever, in former ages, any approach has been made to society in equality, Justice has asserted its claims as the foundation of virtue."†

And so to men imbued with a similar spirit the view that there is some mysterious divine purpose for

* *Social Problems.*

† *The Subjection of Women.*

committing millions of women to the torture of living in lifelong denial of a basic need of their natures must be for ever unacceptable ; for the divine will is expressed as unequivocally through Nature as it is through what we term revelation, which is itself an act of Nature. They must reject as an absurdity any process of thought which seeks to ascribe to a religion based upon righteousness an arrangement which gives to a man the power to decide which of two women shall be privileged to fulfil and express herself in marriage and motherhood, and which shall not ; and they must regard such power and privilege as relics of the ages in which women were treated as personal property, and as incompatible with any recognition of the equal rights of men and women as human beings. They must see such an unjust arrangement as the logical corollary of an equally fundamental injustice : the system of economic exploitation upon which society rests and by which women as usual are the greater sufferers. For quite apart from the religious scruples of these latter days, there can be no doubt that the system of monogamous marriage has maintained itself very largely on the selfish and shortsighted plea of economic expediency. But it does not matter whose wife a woman is, or whether she is anybody's wife at all : her presence in the world entitles her to the prime necessities of life : food, clothing, shelter and human love and companionship ; and I say that a civilization that fails to provide these things for vast numbers of its women folk, and permits such conditions as Mrs. Cecil
ster'on's investigations have disclosed, possesses

no claim to the name of Christian. The barbarities of the heathen to whom we feel obliged to preach are humane when compared with the subtle cruelty with which we crush the life out of our women. That poverty exists is not to be blamed on Nature. The earth produces enough to satisfy the needs of all its denizens ; but while thousands of starving Polish girls are being led into captivity, millions of bushels of wheat are being burnt in Australia to keep prices up for the consumer, and the cotton which Nature produces to clothe humanity is being ploughed back into the earth in the United States of America for a similar reason. Truly, there are times when I fail to see how mankind can claim to be more intelligent than the brute !

In making this demand for a recognition of the right of women to live in accordance with natural law, I am asking for no innovation. Westermarck in his *History of Human Marriage* observes :

“ Monogamy as the unique and exclusive form of marriage, in the sense that bigamy is regarded as a grave criminal offence and a sin as well as a sacrilege, is very rare indeed. Such an exclusive ideal and such a rigid legal view of marriage is perhaps not to be found outside the modern, relatively recent development of western culture. It is not implied in Christian doctrine even. Apart from such isolated phenomena as the recent Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and the heretical sect of Anabaptists (16th century) polygamy was legally practised and accepted by the Church in the Middle Ages, and it occurs sporadically

as a legal institution accepted by Church and State as recently as the middle of the 17th century."

The religious fanaticism out of which the Puritan revolution was born may have justified itself in many ways ; it may have been necessary as a corrective to the licence and corruption of the age in which it came ; but like all extreme tendencies it merely replaced one set of vices with others far more dangerous. The way of Nature, as Bridges reminds us, is that of balance ; and this way it is the mission of the epoch now opening before us to find. The majority of men are and ever will be polygamous by instinct. It is Nature's intention that they should be so ; the possibilities for a variety of combinations which it is Nature's purpose to achieve are not nearly exhausted by our social practice. The veto of the Church cannot change this instinct, and the laws of society place no disability upon it. It is the women alone who suffer ; who have no choice but to suffer, whether they decide to defy Nature or to flout the laws of society. What is being asked here is that society recognize the law which is higher than its own, and give to these women and their offspring the protection to which they are entitled. Let us give people a chance to be honest ; why create artificial sins when there are so many real ones to combat ?

The objections to polygamous marriage for those who desire it will not bear scrutiny in the light of the facts set out in the second and third sections of this book. Moreover no man need be polygamous if it is distasteful to him. What the objectors are really

thinking of is the sacred "right" they have hitherto enjoyed of managing other people's lives for them, and of placing on conduct arbitrary restrictions which bear no relationship whatever to morality or to Nature, and which are calculated to benefit no one. Liberty to do the thing that gives pleasure to the individual can only be wrong when it causes injury to the individual himself or to some one else. Any doctrine that teaches otherwise is false. Mill, I find, expresses this in almost the same words: "The modern conviction, the fruit of a thousand years' experience, is, that where the individual is directly interested, things never go right except when left to his own discretion; and that any regulation of them by authority, except to protect the rights of others, is sure to be mischievous."*

THE LIGHT OF HISTORY: A CHANGING WORLD

At all events the conscience of mankind will no longer tolerate the tyranny that has battered upon ignorance and has caused such widespread misery. The time has come when men must know that the only kind of suffering in which men should glory is that which is borne for the sake of truth; that the only kind of self-denial and self-sacrifice in which men should take pride are such as intended (by the individual himself, not by some one else on his behalf!) to bring blessing to their fellowmen; and that all other sufferings, self-denials and self-sacrifices are crimes against human nature. The world is standing upon

‡ • *The Subjection of Women.*

the threshold of a new epoch ; in which humanity shall be exalted above races and nations and classes and systems and creeds ; in which the phrase : “ Brotherhood of Man ” will have something approaching its true meaning. Such an epoch, in fact, as Mazzini foresaw, and which he thought was dawning for Europe a century ago. He was indeed a prophet : he lived and felt ahead of his time ; for Europe was not then ready, certainly the world was not then prepared, for the doctrine of human brotherhood and equality. (For there can be no brotherhood without a recognition of the oneness which underlies the superficial differences between the races of men, the necessity for equality of opportunity for all, and the fact that the welfare of each is bound up in the well-being of all. This is the truth which the world is destined to learn from its present perplexities.) The Age of Individualism which as Mazzini points out* had produced as its supreme and final expression Goethe on the one hand and Byron and Napoleon on the other, was indeed passing out ; but it was not to be succeeded, as he thought, by the age of co-operation and loving effacement of self in the interest of the whole. His dream for humanity is not yet fulfilled. The subjective egotism which Byron represented has, shed of all its nobler qualities, degenerated into extreme selfishness and gross materialism in personal relationships. The world is to-day a vast battlefield where men wage deadly warfare on each other for the possession of material things ; and where women are simultaneously

* *Essay on Byron and Goethe.*

engaged in an equally desperate struggle with each other for the possession of men. It is not a spectacle of which we ought to be proud. On the other hand the objective egotism of Goethe whose chief defect, as I shall show, consisted in what by its very nature it overlooked, has been succeeded by the tyranny of society in the social relationships of men; a hideous distortion of Mazzini's dream of mutual responsibility and co-operation. Under western civilization liberty of action on the part of the individual is almost non-existent; in matters of personal conduct a man is ruled by the opinion of his neighbours although they are not in the least degree affected by what he may elect to do, or not to do. This is so whether we regard such trifling examples as the purchase of a new car, which he knows he cannot afford but which he must have if neighbour So-and-So is not to laugh at the shabbiness of his old model, or neighbour So-and-So's wife not make his wife unhappy by a parade of financial superiority; or whether we view such colossal impositions upon individual predilection as the recent Prohibition in the United States, or a veto on the acceptance of royal favour by the citizen, as in Canada. In the smallest considerations of our daily life, as in the greatest, we have grown to regard the opinions of men before our own legitimate needs and wishes, or those of our families; and men have come to believe that they have the right to inflict their opinions on their fellows in matters which, however, do not concern them. We are afraid of each other; afraid to think our own thoughts, or to make them known when we dare to think the^{ms}

and so there exist among us, as they have perhaps existed in no age before ours, intellectual dishonesty of a particularly damning type and rank hypocrisy in social relationships. These things are eating away our manhood ; soon we shall be incapable of looking ourselves in the face ; morally and spiritually we are crawling on our bellies. And in the meanwhile truth and the possibilities of truth in us are overlaid by the false standards and dishonest sentiments of our daily life : stifled, killed. It is hardly necessary to say that the roots of these ills are to be found in our dictatorial religious systems. "God made men free," says G. K. Chesterton in a recent issue of the *Daily Herald*, "that they may love Him and serve Him—or not—as they choose. It follows, therefore, that a Christian must be a rebel against the modern world, which more and more enslaves men, which gives them less and less power of choice. The evil thing has been put into a phrase—making men good by Act of Parliament, instead of by their acceptance, their voluntary acceptance, of the grace of God."

"Divergence from the beaten track," says Professor Harold J. Laski, "has become permissible only to those whose genius can no longer be denied ; and, even then, we less welcome the divergence than accept it as the price of a divine madness. We are the slaves of custom, and we have begun to hug our chains—we live in such terror of the new or the unexpected that to welcome them is regarded as proof of original sin."

Such is the world of to-day : a strange medley of chance and frustrated purposes, privilege and depriva-

tion, overmastering greed and impotent poverty, cant and bigoted intolerance. Better by far the subjective egotism which sought to play its own hand, coupled with the objective egotism which knew little and cared less what the other man did, than the unrestricted economic exploitation coupled with the social tyranny from which we suffer. To-day even poverty from which the majority are not permitted to escape, has become (what irony!) a social offence. The man who fails to get on, in a world in which hardly any one *can* get on without robbing his neighbour, soon finds that an inexplicable resentment against him grows up among his friends, and even in his own family. So it has come to this, that a man may not even be honest with impunity!

SELF-CULTURE

The social instinct has reached a point where it is becoming a danger to society; it is time that some attention be paid to the claims of the individual to develop along independent and original lines, provided his conduct does not work a hardship on his fellows; for only by this individual development can society maintain and improve its quality. Goethe has been severely criticized because he preserved an unruffled calm and unconcern with regard to the burning questions which agitated Europe in his day. He was so busy developing his own possibilities that he had no time or energy to spare for society. By this attitude of indifference Goethe lost the opportunity to "see into the life" of the things which were the subject of his

art and the object of his contemplation ; and it is in this that the defect of his philosophy is to be found. He would have served himself better had he had a mind to serve and understand humanity ; yet it cannot be claimed that in serving himself and his art he has not also served humanity in the achievement which he has bequeathed to it. Goethe's idea of self-culture is only half the truth ; but it is nevertheless an important half : for self-culture, previously undertaken, renders self-sacrifice more valuable. Thus conditional service becomes at once the highest expression of individuality and complete self-effacement in the interest of humanity. Here, again, we have need of balance.

If we apply this truth to our social life it will readily be seen that many of the acts and ways we have been accustomed to regard as virtuous are mean, cramping, narrow things that in many cases render a life barren and deprive society of its possibilities. Some of these so-called virtues enslave not only those who practise them but also those on whom they are practised. Foremost among these is the self-sacrificing devotion we have been accustomed to expect from our wives and mothers. Were we to follow this "virtue" through all its reactions it might surprise us to see how much the world loses by it. It is certain that however much a woman may gain in spiritual quality of a kind by a lifelong devotion to her family to the exclusion of all else, she sustains definite loss in the arrested development of her intellect and the broadening of her sympathies. Her domestic duties leave her no leisure for the cultivation of the arts, and as each day passes she

gradually loses touch with the mind of her husband (and perhaps therein finds cause for further sorrow and self-sacrifice). These conditions, in turn, limit her ability to endow her offspring with the intellectual gifts which will mean so much to them and may mean so much to the world. But apart from these things such devotion is not good for either herself or her family. A mother who loves her children, will be led by that love to care for all children ; but a mother who is devoted to her children usually has no affection to spare for other people's children. Thus devotion is seen to be merely an extended selfishness, which, like all other instances of selfishness, reacts to the detriment of the individual. I have known husbands so devoted to their wives that in twenty years of wedded life they have never been separated for a whole week ; and as the husbands' duties or circumstances have prevented them taking a holiday it follows that the overworked wives have never during that length of time had a breathing space ; and the husbands have never known the joy of reunion after a month's absence ! Some of this devotedness is pitiful to see : instead of the harmony and beauty of the planetary system we have the monotonous revolution of two spheres around each other ; their eyes become incapable of observing the world around them. It is often in such a union that we find the most callous disregard of the rights and feelings of others ; while the attitude of the parties to each other very nearly approaches the sin of idolatry. As a matter of fact we have it expressed in the words of our religious ceremony : " with my body I thee worship."

We hope that this is not an expression of idolatry, but we deceive ourselves : the body cannot take part in any worship from which the soul is excluded ; for the body is but the instrument of the will, and takes its life and significance from the soul. The same applies to the absurd belief that one human being can have proprietary rights in another.

The voluntary or involuntary sacrifice of the wife and mother for the supposed good of the family is affecting the attitude of the modern woman towards matrimony ; this is especially true of the woman with an income of her own ; and the new methods of birth-control have offered further inducements to the independent working girl to dispense with formal marriage as being more of a disability than an advantage. There is noticeable to-day a marked tendency on the part of women towards extreme selfishness, which is, quite clearly, a reaction against the self-sacrifice that has hitherto been demanded of them. The whole situation is fraught with serious possibilities ; the structure of our social customs is being undermined from every point of the compass, and unless we meet the danger boldly events will simply overpower us.

And the majority of wives are now chafing at the inexorable demands of domestic life. Piqued at the new freedom of the working girl the cry of every middle-class wife and mother is against the grinding domestic servitude to which she is condemned. The servant problem becomes daily more acute, and in the heart of the housewife is a vague resentment that girls of the servant class are finding it increasingly possible

to devote themselves to their own household duties. Servants in the old days were a class of women who obligingly had no aspirations to housekeeping on their own account ! But times have changed. A man with, say, a wife and six children will feel that he ought to employ, if his income permits him, a nursery governess to relieve his wife of some of her duties. This governess will not be expected to have a family of her own ; she will be required to live with the family employing her, and to lead what is called a respectable life. And if by good fortune she happens to secure a husband and leaves just when the children have become attached to her, the family somehow feels that Fate has been unkind to it.

Yet if the duties devolving on that governess could have been performed by a member of the family who had a personal interest in its welfare, how different life would have seemed for every one !

The plain truth is that our comforts and conveniences are built upon a denial of the comforts and conveniences of others ; upon sacrifice of others instead of upon co-operation among ourselves : whether it be in the relationships of the home, where the mother is sacrificed, or the servant denied rights whose possession would render her no longer available for service, or whether it be in the larger sphere of national life where some are secure because others are unprovided for. Our economic system like our social system falls to the ground the moment we introduce into it the element of justice and equality. It is clear from the developments of our day that the family in future must depend less

upon the service of outsiders in its domestic affairs ; it must achieve something approaching independence ; it must be self-contained ; and to this end it must break down its boundaries and build wider ones. It is equally clear that we shall not achieve national happiness and well-being until the millions who are excluded from our economy are brought within our system and permitted to co-operate with us for the benefit of the whole. Just as we shall not achieve world peace until all nations are bound together in a common brotherhood and possess equal rights and opportunities. Hitherto life has found its orientation in Self ; our systems of thought and our ideas of virtue have been built upon Self. To substitute Love for Self is the mission of Christianity ; and this substitution will be found to be something more than a moral and spiritual necessity ; it will be a social and economic advantage as well.

A NEW CONCEPTION OF LOVE

Based as it is upon self-interest, our conception of love is as mean and narrow as is our attitude towards devotion. The ideal which we have set up for ourselves is one of exclusiveness ; and with unabashed absence of logic we declare our ideal to be founded upon the character of a man from whose affections no one is excluded. We cannot imagine Jesus Christ centering His affections on one human being, yet there was never love like His : " Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." And it is to love like this that Nature is leading us on, each of us, using our human relationships as stepping-stones

to that goal. The love that we know is different in degree, not in kind, from the love of Jesus Christ for all humanity. We profess a desire to attain at last to His divine consciousness, but we refuse to use the means to this end which Nature has provided. There is no other way.

A detailed examination of our exclusive ideal will show not only how illogical it is but also how definitely inferior to that we now in our ignorance despise. In the parable of the lost sheep we have represented the true lover's attitude : there were ninety and nine in the fold but the shepherd's heart went out after the hundredth that was lost ; the one that stood in jeopardy and need. And this is precisely the position of woman in the Western world to-day ; ninety-nine,* perhaps, are protected and provided for ; but the hundredth stands in certain jeopardy and need. Out upon life's highway she stands upon the brink of a precipice ; one more step and she will have plunged to hideous ruin. I pass along with my wife clinging to my arm. I see that girl's danger. Every brave man, every *man*, would for the moment leave his wife in the roadway and run to the rescue of the one in peril. But I—I hesitate ; I cannot leave my wife. In the next moment the crisis of the other woman's life is upon her. She is lost !

And for this, when it happens on the physical plane, I reap the just contempt and condemnation of my fellows.

And for this, when it happens on the moral and

* Ninety would be nearer the truth.

spiritual planes : when the stake is not merely a mangled body but a soul irretrievably ruined as well—I win the approval of religion and the admiration of those who claim to love virtue !

Again, what is it but self-interest that leads us to choose beautiful, well-favoured, *virtuous* women on whom to centre our affections ? We love and admire their beauty, their excellent qualities, their accomplishments, as we should ; but we do not rest there ; we seek to possess ourselves of that beauty, those excellent qualities and admirable accomplishments. This is the popular ideal, the general endeavour ; and the man is thought somewhat of a fool who does not own them. Well, if I may be permitted for a moment to be personal, I see another ideal which I believe to be superior to the one just mentioned, and which, moreover, strongly resembles that of Christ Himself.

The woman who is beautiful and good I love and desire ; but I feel that she is independent and does not need me. But the woman who quite unmistakably has all her own defects of character, who seems unstable and unreliable, who nevertheless, to the sympathetic eye, holds out a promise of better things, of noble possibilities—that is the woman I should find it impossible to resist. She is the woman who would cause she seems to need me. All the Magdalen women of the world are my sweethearts ; poor darlings ! I should have made a better thing of life if there were only one with the spirit of Jesus Christ to show me that love really is !

When I am forgotten for the moment it will readily be forgotten how beautiful on the life of a man,

having the capacity to appreciate them, could be the influence of women who brought to him different qualities, each presenting a different aspect of loveliness and combining in a harmonious whole like the flowers of a bouquet : each presenting different failings and defects and providing new exercises for virtue, new tasks for love's accomplishing. And the love offered to each would not be less because it was shared. We sing this quite readily in our hymn : "For ever shared, for ever whole," but evidently we think such sentiments have no relation whatever to practical life ; our religion appears to be very largely mere theory ; or perhaps we think our loves too mean to share in this divine quality.

Maybe we are right. At all events our social and religious taboos preclude our being on terms of intimacy with more than one woman ; we are forced by our conventions to regard the rest of the world through a keyhole, and we pass through life with a circumscribed vision and a narrow understanding, deceiving ourselves that by so doing we are attaining to virtue. We claim to love a humanity to whom we have never approached. Yet, see how we hypocrites hoodwink ourselves ! While our wives live we bow to convention and pretend we are incapable of loving any other woman ; but if she happens to die we discover within a twelvemonth that there is, after all, some one whom we are capable of loving, and we proceed to marry her ! Is love, then, concerned with the body only ? Does it die as soon as the body dies ? Is this the kind of love we have to offer ? I have loved many women ; some are dead ; I still love them ; for they whom I loved

were more than flesh and blood ; they were personalities, living souls, whom the death of the body does not destroy. While they lived I should not have pretended that I was incapable of loving any one else. Now they are dead I can still claim to love them although there are others whom I love. And I maintain that love of this kind is as superior to the gross thing that binds itself to clay as the butterfly is to the caterpillar. Both worlds are mine : the world of Spirit and the world of Matter ; most people, it would appear, can live in one only at a time.

That sexual fulfilment is but an incident, though an important one, in marriage is more clearly deducible from polygamous than from monogamous unions. Quite obviously, it is something beyond bare sexual need that is responsible for the polygamous instinct in men ; and if the sex impulse were indulged in, as it should be, only at rare times of supreme passion and mutual tenderness, its beauty would be better understood, and the practicability of the love of one man (only a fractional part of which should find expression in the sex impulse) being shared by several women would not seem so remote ; but the ordinary mind's conception of marriage is an opportunity for continual indulgence, often joyless and prompted by a sheer desire to escape from boredom ; a plurality of wives to such an imagination means merely increased opportunity for debauchery. So that were I disposed to countenance any sort of interference in such matters I might be inclined to agree that only men of admittedly high character should be permitted to contract poly-

gamous marriages ; and in this matter our legislation would not be far from the intent of Nature.* This, incidentally, would seem to indicate that of the two forms of marriage (I am not now discussing systems) polygamy is, speaking generally, the superior, needing as it does a higher type of character for its proper consummation. But there are weighty reasons, as I have shown, why such arbitrary restrictions should not only be discouraged but also opposed. Nature is quite capable of regulating these matters herself.

Iconoclastic ? Yes, perhaps. The breaking of many of our images is long overdue. As it is with the ideals I have examined so it is with others ; patriotism, national and racial pride, the blind worship of power and possessions, military glory and naval supremacy—all mean, narrow, cramping things which humanity has outgrown. It is ready for the next step forward : for the aristocracy of intellect and character, the pride of loyalty and kindness of heart and the power of humility and love. The world is moving by way of disaster towards international brotherhood. It would be incongruous if the watertight compartments in which the family has hitherto existed should remain. Nature, as I have pointed out, is using the device of the family to lead us into love of our fellow-men. We regard our children as peculiarly our own, and so we love them ; but in reality they have no more claim to our affection than other children have ; or, to put it differently,

* It is a well-known fact that men of outstanding character and personality prove almost irresistibly attractive to several women. With commendable artistic insight Temple Thurston in *Judas Iscariot* presents the mob as shouting, as one of the charges against Christ : " He hath bewitched our women ! "

Compare footnote on page 96 and text on pages 57 and 101.

other children have just as much claim to our affection as they have ; similarly we love our wives (when we do) because we regard them as our own ; but other women have just as much claim to our love as they have. This is not an argument for the abolition of the family, but for a widening of its boundaries. Unity in the midst of variety is Nature's way. The experiment which Russia is making with the Platonic idea is for this reason doomed to failure. It is necessary that the unity of the family be preserved, if for no other reason than that the variety of the species should not be lessened ; for with such a social practice as, Plato mentions, was proposed by Socrates, where all family boundaries would be broken down, not only would confusion in the biblical sense occur, but a man might marry his own sister without knowing it ; and such inbreeding has been proved to have a deleterious effect upon the quality of the species.

Oh, if we could cease from our blundering extremes and find the happy mean, how beautiful, how wonderful life might be ! Romance !—the blush and bloom of life which we brush off in our eagerness, the frail, beautiful flower which we crush with our grasping fingers ! It eludes us because we have not yet learnt to love for love's sake ; we still believe that we can possess a human being, and imprison a personality ; that we can monopolize the warm sunlight of love by closing the windows and doors of our hearts. It is this that has maimed and frustrated so many of the world's finest spirits : they beat their bruised and broken wings against the bars of our dull, unimaginative

conventions. Strange it has never occurred to us that almost to a man the flaming geniuses of our race have found our system intolerable !

BIRTH-CONTROL : AN INSTRUMENT OF DESTRUCTION OR REORGANIZATION ?

I have said that our infringement of law leads inevitably to certain consequences which will in process of time bring about the disruption of society. The problems out of which has arisen the expedient of birth-control, and those which, in its turn, the practice of birth-control is creating, are among these consequences. This matter is exercising the minds of many people at the present time, and opinion is sharply divided. It may bring us nearer a solution if we consider the question in connection with the grave issues to which I have called attention. For this purpose let us once more direct our thought to Britain. It cannot be denied that the nation's birth-rate has reached a dangerously low figure ; and in this fact the opponents of birth-control possess a very strong argument. On the other hand it must be admitted that the lives of many women, usually of the poorer classes, have been wrecked and often prematurely ended by too frequent child-bearing. Here the sponsors of birth-control have an undeniably strong case : a case for human sympathy and consideration. No amount of protest from those who talk glibly about substituting self-control for birth-control will alter this fact. Human nature cannot be changed overnight ;

and if it could I am far from certain that self-control exercised in this way would be beneficial to any one, least of all to the man who practised it. The fact is we have got our values and theories of moral right and wrong hopelessly confused. The idea that abstinence may in itself be a virtue is, I repeat, erroneous ; it may no more be a virtue than abstinence from food would be ; in certain circumstances it may be criminally foolish. It is a mistake to imagine that the sex function is intended to fulfil one object only, namely, procreation. To maintain this on moral grounds would lead us into curious difficulties ; we should, for instance, be forced to declare intercourse between married persons immoral after child-bearing had ceased ; we should also have to admit barrenness as sufficient ground for the dissolution of a marriage. But, these things aside, are we not playing at our old game of self-deception and hypocrisy ? Who would be so bold as to pretend to the belief that men and women marry for the purpose of producing children ? Rather is it not that Nature, having first created a human need, makes that need serve, incidentally, her primary purpose ? In the economy of Nature there is hardly a function that has not a primary, a secondary and sometimes a tertiary object ; and the higher the organism the more complex are its functions.

But even were this not so, those persons who would solve the problem of a falling birth-rate by withholding knowledge from the people, or by adopting some more positive means of compulsion, are working along lines which are now, and have been in the past,

destructive of human liberty and have created much misery in the world. It is the same old game of social and religious tyranny. Let it again be said that *no action, or lack of action, arising out of compulsion or ignorance possesses any moral value whatever*. Only when the individual deliberately chooses a line of action believing it to be right is his act of any moral account. Christ said: "Whosoever will may come." Our teachers and leaders up to now have worked along exactly opposite lines; but action based upon any authority outside the individual conscience is bound, sooner or later, to provoke revolt from such authority: for man was made to be a free agent. And so the more complex our system of prohibitions and restrictions grows, the more confused become the consciences of men, and the greater the ease with which they evade laws which increasingly they regard as menaces to their freedom and happiness.

Furthermore it should be pointed out that the acts which are categorically right or wrong are comparatively few, while those which may be right or wrong, according to the motive underlying them, are many. Birth-control is one of these. If practised with the selfish motive of escaping from the obligation of bringing children into the world, and caring for them, then it cannot be too strongly condemned; but if a family has produced as many children as its economic circumstances will permit it to care for, or if the health or life of a woman be menaced by continued child-bearing, or if temporary conditions and circumstances would render child-bearing embarrassing and

inconvenient at the moment, then there is nothing immoral in the use of contraceptives. As I have pointed out, it is not correct to assume that the sex function serves only one purpose in Nature.

Now whether birth-control (whatever its moral implications to the individual may be) will prove a way of destruction or reorganization to society will very largely depend upon how society deals with the problems, arising out of social injustice, which face it to-day. On 6th July, 1931, the London papers published the preliminary figures of Great Britain's census which showed a surplus female population in England and Wales of nearly two million, coupled with a greatly decreased birth-rate—the lowest in the world save that of Sweden. *These figures were accompanied by a warning from the Registrar-General to the effect that it would not be possible to maintain even a stationary population with the present birth-rate.* On 14th July, 1931 (eight days later), Lord Buckmaster, in the House of Lords, in the course of a debate on London's slum problem, declared: "*It is my conviction that until you can provide some method by which this unrestricted and uncontrolled birth-rate can be brought to an end you will never be able to make permanent improvement. The man who will devise some perfectly certain and simple method by which birth can be put into the control of married people will be as great a benefactor to the human race as Simpson or Lister.*"

If I were a king, and my ministers brought me two such contradictory reports on a matter of such vital

importance to the happiness and safety of my realm, I should probably have them locked up together until they had decided which of the two had uttered nonsense. But what does it mean? How does it come about that two responsible servants of the State have been led to contradict each other upon so important a matter? It is that they have each been considering particular aspects of the problem only, whereas what is needed is a sane review of the whole matter as it affects the life of the nation. It means that while the poverty-stricken dwellers in the slums are producing more children than they can possibly care for, England's aristocracy, preoccupied with horses and dogs, spending its wealth upon deer parks and game preserves, has no time or inclination to produce its share of the nation's children: that the nation's birth-rate is not sufficient "to maintain even a stationary population" in spite of the "unrestricted and uncontrolled birth-rate" in the slums, because the women of the privileged classes refuse to bear children, while millions of other women are forbidden by law to do so. It means that the selfish and cruel system of economic exploitation which deprives the masses of the people of the bare necessities of life while short-sightedly throwing upon them the burden of providing bodies for the incoming generation, is rapidly reducing the quality of the nation: that the majority of England's children are born heirs to squalor and under-nourishment, and a general lack of the conditions that make for robust, intelligent manhood and womanhood: that in a very short while this dispossessed, underfed, underbred,

rapidly growing majority will for all practical purposes *be* England ; it means, in short, that the nation is destroying itself ; that it will decline in quality, as in numbers, and at last go down as other great nations before it have gone down.

With what feelings of sorrow I make this pronouncement it is impossible to describe ; yet such are the conclusions to which an intelligent examination of the facts inevitably leads. These are the terrible consequences which our social practice and our economic system have sown ; these are the results of the travesty of Christianity which we have permitted to darken the lives of so many. From whatever angle we view our situation its perils are the same. The State rests upon its womanhood ; a strong and joyful people cannot be built upon a foundation of misery and despair : of frustration and cruel, soul-destroying exploitation ; yet in this great empire of ours there are millions of women who are being destroyed by prostitution, venereal diseases and forced abortion ; millions of women upon whose lives descend the blight of loneliness and child hunger, for whom existence has been robbed of all joy and physical well-being ; yet millions of women whose health and lives are being menaced by too incessant child-bearing. It is madness ! It is unthinkable that reasonable men can permit such conditions to continue.

This then is the position : birth-control coupled with our present social practice means national suicide ; but employed in conjunction with a saner, more natural practice, such as I am advocating, it may

become a factor in social reorganization of a beneficial and far-reaching character. In a State where all the available women may, if they choose, assume the privileges and responsibilities of motherhood, birth-control may be a means of ensuring that only the physically fit reproduce themselves : that the children of the State will be blessed with the best possible physical heritage ; and this will be achieved without reducing the birth-rate to dangerously low levels. With a more equitable distribution of the duties of motherhood women will find the necessary leisure for self-culture ; and all women will be healthier, happier, more intelligent and therefore (the circle returns upon itself) better fitted to be the mothers of the nation.

I have here indicated a way of controlling both the quality and the numbers of the population and of ensuring at the same time that a family will not be handicapped with the maintenance of more children than it can provide for ; but my conviction is that Nature would take care of this matter without any interference from us ; that, with all women eligible for motherhood, the increase in the birth-rate would not be in direct proportion to the increase in the number of women bearing children. There would merely be a new distribution in the incidence of birth. I am of the opinion that there are laws having their origin in the world of Spirit which govern this and other matters, and of which we know nothing. Were we permitted, as the servant of Elisha, the prophet, was, to see for a moment "into the life of things," to get behind

phenomena at the real meaning of existence, we should doubtless become aware of a mighty host of human spirits—poised upon the air which envelops and permeates us—thronging the gateways of life. Eager to enter the medium of experience, and impatient of an opportunity to do so, they crowd about the portals with insistent clamour. They cry: "Let us in! Let us in! Oh, why are there so many barred doors!" Above some of these gateways are kindly eyes and warm, generous hearts. They throw the portals open wide; too wide; for now there is a crush at the entrance, and some of the little ones are hurt; and the keepers of the gate find it difficult to give attention or advice to all... yet not far off is another entrance and from the window above a man and a woman look down upon the little army that beat their fists in vain upon the iron doors; they smile, a smile of amused indifference and worldly wisdom, and presently turn their backs upon the pleading, gesticulating eyes and arms... Yet further on is a strangely moving sight: from the window above one of these gateways a woman looks down, her face alight with love and pity for the half-expectant, half-bewildered child forms that gaze up at her; she is speaking; she is trying to make them understand something: No key, she says; she is really a prisoner, but she has never seen her jailer; she hopes that one day he will come to release her; and then they will be welcome; she hopes; but will he ever come, she wonders; he will never come, she half fears. No key! No key! Why is she a lonely prisoner? What crime has she committed?

And so the tale of human injustice, ignorance and misery reaches heaven.

THE NEW ORDER

These then are the proposals which I submit for a new social order in the firm conviction that they are based upon a correct interpretation of natural law, and more nearly approach the divine intent for man at this stage of his evolution than anything we have hitherto set up :

Let each woman have the right to make an alliance *with the man of her choice* if he will have her and (if he be already married) provided his wife agrees to the arrangement. The value of this provision will be three-fold : it will indicate that the bond of love between husband and wife is so secure that the latter can with confidence permit another woman to share his affections ; it will indicate also that the man is big enough to be entrusted with the affections of another woman ; and it will ensure that prior to such an arrangement the women concerned have reached a basis of mutual understanding and confidence. The impetus towards goodwill and co-operation which such a provision gives, is too obvious to be stressed.

Let each woman, therefore, be in a position to exercise, if she so desires, lawfully and without reproach, the function of motherhood for which Nature has endowed her. Let the stigma of illegitimacy be abolished from social life, and the children of every woman be accorded equal rights and recognition. The idea (except in births resulting from adultery) that a child's existence can be unlawful is laughable.

Let the economic arrangements arising out of such alliances be left to the discretion of the parties concerned ; but it should be understood that both parties to an alliance are equally responsible for the maintenance and protection of any children arising therefrom. The days are now passed

when it may be considered natural for women to be kept in idle luxury and treated as playthings and decorations. In the civilization which we are about to build each woman should be given the opportunity of contributing to the economic independence of the family to which she is attached. Not all women are fitted, and not all will be needed, for domestic duties ; a woman should be given an opportunity for pursuing, while enjoying all the privileges of her womanhood, the activities for which she has a taste and special capacities.

With the adoption of such a practice it will be found within a generation :

That the best women have gravitated, naturally and inevitably, towards the best men ; this will ensure an immediate improvement in the quality of the children of the State.

That the quality of men as a whole will have improved, and that the class known as " confirmed bachelors," the majority of whose members prey upon defenceless women, will have disappeared. Hitherto selfish, reckless and irresponsible men will find it necessary to exhibit better qualities if they are to attract worthy women : *for women will no longer be a cheap commodity on the market, and men will no longer be at a premium.*

That men who cannot be cured of the meanness and selfishness that permit them to be cruel and faithless to women will find it increasingly difficult, and finally impossible, to obtain wives. This will be as it should be.

That divorce which makes for the disruption of society and works a cruel hardship on children will gradually pass, like an outworn creed, out of existence. Women who have the opportunity of choosing the man they love will rarely want to go back on their choice ; and such incentive, arising out of the thwarting of their natures, as men have had for breaking away from alliances will have ceased to exist. Besides, there will be no army of unattached women to tempt them.

That prostitution, that scourge and blot upon the face of civilization, will be no more. No longer will women be forced by want and stress into this damning and unnatural way of life.

That, consequently, venereal diseases will gradually disappear ; these are prospects which should make the Church, and all who have the welfare of humanity at heart, leap and shout for joy !

That women instead of waging cruel, relentless war against each other, and fostering within their hearts all kinds of base passions and desires, will join together in happy comradeship and co-operation for the welfare—not work for the disruption—of the family. Because human nature is still what it is there will be petty jealousies, no doubt ; but who would compare them to the blind animosities and resentments and heart-breaks of to-day ?

And that, above all, justice, plain justice, will be done to the millions of women whose natural rights have been withheld from them, and whom a cruel and selfish society has excluded from its economy.

Can society and religion afford to forgo benefits such as these for the mere will-o'-the-wisp of a doctrine having no foundation in Nature and provoking such devastating crimes and cruelties as I have outlined ?

Are society and religion prepared to accept the dire alternatives ?

Let society and religion say.

If we must have punitive measures regulating the sexual life of the people then instead of the present idiotic ones, which place a premium on vice and cruelty, let the man who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife be sent to prison ; and if he does it twice let him be permanently kept out of society where he will not be a menace to the welfare of others. I should mete

out no punishment to the woman ; a punishment that falls on one, and that one usually the aggressor, will be a greater deterrent than a punishment which falls on both. There is always solace in a community of misery.

There will not be, as far as I can see, necessity for any other measure under the new conditions. And so we should return once more to the simplicity of the old Mosaic Law which, after all, is infinitely wiser than anything we have devised. So will emerge a social order which, unlike the present one, will indicate that there is sanity and justice in its composition ; where no one will be forced to marry against his or her will, and where, also, no one will be forced to be celibate against his or her will ; where the individual will have an opportunity to develop along the lines Nature intends, his only limitation being the natural one of justice and fair play to his neighbour ; where women, at last accorded the full rights of human beings, will not be the playthings they were in times past, but comrades on the road, sharing our joys and sorrows and helping us to a clearer understanding of life : to that breadth of sympathy and depth of insight which is the only true basis of intellectual power.

And in this return to sanity let England lead, as she has led in the past whenever the cry has been for human freedom. The English are, of great nations, the most conservative ; but they are also the most ready to see an injustice when it is pointed out and to set it right. If England will follow up the abolition of chattel slavery and the granting of political franchise

to women, by removing this social disability as it affects the lives and happiness of millions of women, and consequently that of the rest of the world, then she need not fear the future ; she will remain (she will not be able to help it) the greatest nation on earth ; she will be the super State in which such things as surgical operations for the correction of the results arising from the transgression of law will be unnecessary expedients ; and Blake's vision of the new Jerusalem " in England's green and pleasant land " will be fulfilled in her. It is righteousness (if we would but believe it !) that exalteth a nation.

The path will of necessity prove difficult. No reform that made for righteousness has ever been welcomed by established systems ; its sponsors have always been mocked, stoned, crucified, burned, beheaded, imprisoned or exiled. Yet society has always been compelled by the logic of events to adopt their proposals. It will prove an ironical fact that the greatest opposition to the abolition of the present unnatural system will come from women, although its bane falls most heavily on their sex ; for the bad, old spirit of selfishness which has been humanity's undoing up to now will still be at work. No woman will believe, if she be young and unmarried, in her own inability to secure a husband (for herself alone) ; and the attitude of those already married will be : " What I have I hold and the devil take those who haven't." The single woman of between 30 and 50 will understand by bitter experience ; but the married woman of any age and the young woman of between 20 and 30 will regard me and those who

think like me as dangerous lunatics. It is ever so. Yet whatever scorn and anger these pages provoke will be well borne for Love; whatever is lost will be well lost for Love! All through the years Love has pursued me, pleading and inviting, breathless and triumphant, despairing and sorrowful; I have heard her pitiful cry in the valley in the dark and lonely nights; I have beheld her magnificent upon the heights at dawn, her voice a summons to a sleeping world; I have felt her strength and tenderness, like the embraces of a passionate woman who will not be denied; I have felt her helplessness and trusting faith like the hand of an innocent child seeking for my own. . . .

And now. . . . Oh, England! Country of my soul! A name that has thrilled my ears ever since I can remember. England, with its rolling moorlands, its stately trees, its quaint old-fashioned farmhouses, its peaceful suburban villas, its majestic palaces, its spacious parks, its inviting roadways, its wind-swept uplands, its sweet smelling lavender, its kindly women's eyes, its lovely laughing children, its silent moving traffic, its swift trains darting into the night, its theatres and music-halls ablaze with light and colour—England, dear England, do I not love thee! Do I not grieve that such beauty should be marred, defaced, nullified by the social injustice that is eating at thy heart, do I not mourn that the cry of the outcast and the oppressed has hitherto failed to reach thy ear! Is it too late, England? May we not, even now,

ascend into the Mount of Vision ? May we not, even now, fulfil thy great destiny to bring the blessings of peace and righteousness to the Sons of Earth ? England, I implore you, I adjure you.

“ It is the ’witching hour of dawn, arise
And let us to the mountains ! ”*

• Daphne IX.

APPENDIX

OUR GREAT SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

(ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE "DAILY CHRONICLE"

30TH JULY, 1917.)

It is interesting to note the divergence of opinions expressed by some of our leading men of thought as to the cause or causes of the low moral standing of our Island, and certainly more interesting to note the remedies suggested. Truly, all mean well, but many come short of dealing with the subject from the proper view-point. Some, it may be noted, impute the fault exclusively to men; others, exclusively to women.

Here error begins, and the results of the efforts made must necessarily be unsatisfactory. We have all erred and gone astray, and the fault lies not with one particular sex, but with both. Adam was just as much to blame as Eve was in disobeying God's explicit command, although the initiative rested with Eve. Woman is morally weaker (perhaps) but not more morally base than man is. Her will is less firm, and this fact lies at the root of her many misfortunes; but as a sex she is more amenable to reform. Her heart is incapable of the callousness often exhibited by man where things spiritual are concerned. On the other hand it is certainly useless to implore man to discourage the "advances" of woman made to him, and instead to give her a helping hand on the road to moral rectitude. This is possible only in individual cases and could never be performed by man as a sex. A great ideal, but certainly impracticable.

Besides this, the policy of laying the blame for the present relations between the sexes on one or the other is certainly

that of a house divided against itself, and will sooner or later reduce the Social Purity Association to the level of a debating society. The side that bears the blame in either case must without doubt feel prejudiced against the efforts of those who would bring about reform. If, as one speaker declares, it is held that woman is wholly to blame and the only way to relieve the situation is for man to avoid her, woman must naturally as a sex feel injured at the insinuation, and consequently prejudiced against the cause that her accusers represent. The same applies to man when the opposite view is taken, and the efforts of these would-be reformers must ultimately end in having both sexes antagonistic to the cause of social purity. God in His infinite wisdom saw that it was not good that man should be alone. He thought woman was essential to man's welfare then ; and with all her faults she is still essential.

One would take it that the Social Purity Association is meant for the uplifting of both sexes. The proper attitude to preserve, therefore, is one of compassion for both, not indictment of either. The attitude of Christ with regard to the woman taken in adultery is a fitting one for reformers to adopt. Man is a rational being but a very sensitive one ; he refuses to be driven into doing anything, even if he is convinced of profit to be derived therefrom ; but he will be led. This being so, it will be found more practical to convince man of the benefit to be derived from discontinuing certain vices than to convince him of the wrong he commits in practising them.

If one sees a man in a ditch and wishes to convince him of his perilous position, the obvious thing to do is to call to him from *above* and bid him look up to where you are ; not to call his notice to his surroundings (with which he is well acquainted) ; for these, he will argue, present as firm a foundation of earth as may be desired. Bidding him look up, however,

and holding out to him the prospect of a freer atmosphere and more sunshine, must certainly prove a better inducement for him to endeavour to ascend, with your hand helping, to where you are. The great Reformer came not to denounce man, but by the example of a guileless life to lift man to his level.

A thoughtful review of the subject will convince us that woman looms larger than man on the horizon of moral perverseness, not because she is baser by nature, but because her temptations are greater ; and this may be shown as follows :—

For some reason, which it is beyond the scope of this article to assign, woman outnumbers man in the ratio of about four to one ; which means that three out of every four women are deprived of the right to marry.

In the world of industry woman, partly from her physical limitations and partly from the selfish control exercised by man, occupies a very insignificant place. This obviously makes her for the most part man's dependant.

Given, therefore, a percentage of twenty-five dependent on husbands, a possible percentage of fifty dependent on fathers (and this in most cases only for a limited time, and in cases of illegitimacy often at no time at all) we have a percentage of twenty-five lawfully dependent on nobody, and without visible means of existence. If the fact that a considerable part of the male population remains unmarried is taken into account, this percentage will be appreciably increased. It will therefore be seen that woman's temptation to wander from the path of virtue in order to find the means of existence (which way seems the only way her country provides for her support) is great.

To attempt to deal with our social problems from the moral point of view alone is therefore like attempting to change the

course of a river at its mouth. Begin with the origin and not the end of the situation, with the cause and not the effect. Industrial and political enfranchisement is necessary before moral enfranchisement can be effected. When woman becomes independent, when she is admitted to the fields of industry that are now controlled solely by, and for the benefit of, man, then she will gain self-respect, and will be an asset to and a power for good in, the country of her birth or adoption which owes her the right to live, and live well.

Woman, though the greater, is not the only sufferer in this respect. Man also is crowded out of the fields of industry, and consequently deprived of the right to exist, by his more avaricious brother man. This necessarily incapacitates him as regards his rightful responsibility—that of rearing a family. He naturally evades a responsibility that he is incapable of assuming and the ultimate result is illegitimacy and resort to houses of ill-fame. There are exceptions always, and every man is not actuated to vice by the same circumstances, but in the main these answer the question.

The aim of our Social Purity Association should therefore be to press for reform in our industrial and political life while attempting to appeal to the consciences of men and women. Poverty helps to deaden the conscience and often offers excuses for crimes that would not otherwise be committed. Purify the stream from its source and the mouth will become pure automatically; and above all observe the policy of tolerance and compassion, not seeking to impute the fault but to remove it.

HUMANITY.

1.

Oft, as I sit and ponder, comes a strange
Mysterious longing : a desire to know
And cover with one glance the thoughts and deeds
Of all Mankind ;—not a presumptuous thirst
For omniscience, but the all-quick'ning touch
Of comprehensive human sympathy :
The knowledge that in every child of Man
There beats a heart akin to mine, a soul
Oppress'd by kindred problems ;—and withal
The self-abasing thought : this little world,
An atom in a boundless Universe,
Too great, too spacious far for Man to comprehend !

2.

Yet Fancy flies where Knowledge may not tread :
I hear the deaf'ning clamour of the world's
O'ercrowded cities : in the haunts of men
The hooded Tragedy of human life
Peeps from his smiling mask and shows a face
Contorted by conflicting whims of Fate.
Sorrow and Guilt and wanton Pleasure lurk
At every turn ; hysterical laughter drowns
The qualms of outraged conscience, or the stings
Of misery worse than death ; onward they whirl
Down the dark, troubl'd stream of Destiny,
Knowing not where they go and caring not to know . . .

3.

These dwell in palaces and Splendour waits
 Upon them ; but the gold for which they fought
 Their fellows, often trampling in the dust
 The weak and helpless, hurling to hideous ruin
 Their mangled victims, binds fast even now
 In unrelenting chains their narrow minds
 And wither'd, palsied souls ; they go through life
 Captives of their own greed, and the dark crimes
 Of those they drove to fathomless despair
 Weigh down their leaden hearts ; the happiness
 For which they sold themselves eludes them still
 The brimming Cup of Gold is bitter in its dregs ! . . .

4.

Hungry and cold and bare these pass through life.
 Who cares ? Who notes their pale and wither'd cheeks ?
 Who sees the joy of living slowly pass
 From out their tear-fill'd eyes, the blank despair
 That settles on their faces ; and who feels
 The whelming bitterness of their bursting hearts—
 Their soul-destroying ineffectual rage
 Against the unrelenting hand of Fate ?
 Theirs or their fathers' sin ? Neither, perhaps !
 The sphinx-like face of Time divulges not
 Its secrets, and by nameless horrors tended
 They too pass headlong down Oblivion's dark abyss . . .

5.

Love comes, expectant, like the rosy Dawn,
 Breaking through cloudy curtains of the East
 With shimmering shafts of light ; behold her now,
 A purple girle clasp'd about her waist,

Her lips quivering, parted, bosom burning !
 Yet will the blushing cheeks of Morn grow pale
 And leaden clouds o'erspread her burning gaze
 With misty shadows : Love, unrequited, goes
 The way she came, but with a bleeding breast,
 A looming terror and a broken heart ;
 And darkness closes o'er the haunting scene
 Of dying splendour—lost ! Irrevocably lost ! . . .

6.

These thirst for power and the bloated pomp
 Of fame ; fiery Ambition lures them on
 In their mad quest for glory ; they espouse
 The cause of trampled Freedom, and the crowd
 Of credulous, deluded worshippers
 Give of their substance, of their flesh and blood.
 They, gloating o'er the bodies of their victims,
 Strut to and fro like vultures, and the stench
 Of their black treason rises up to heaven.
 Oh, what avail Man's dying agonies !
 A crown imperial decks the traitor's brow,
 His form is robed in royal ermine dyed in blood ! . . .

7.

The piercing northwind strikes the ice-bound hut
 Of Lapland ; sounding avalanches pour
 Accumulated debris from the womb
 Of snow-clad mountains. Afric's burning sands,
 Stirr'd up by scorching desert-winds, fly heav'n-wards,
 Like glowing embers from a smouldering fire.
 Man finds a home there ; perhaps happier too ;
 Untramell'd by Convention's empty laws
 And Fashion's useless covenants, he lives

Owning allegiance but to nature's God ;
 A king unto himself, a soul unwarp'd
 By petty lust of gold, nor curst by Tyranny !

8.

Civilization's enervating grasp
 Reaches him not ; he breasts the withering blast
 Of snowstorms, or the pestilential wilds
 Of burning deserts, wresting from their arms
 His scanty but sufficient livelihood.
 No guilty conscience haunts him ; he abides
 Stern Fate's decrees with philosophic calm,
 And smiling gazes with unshaded eyes
 On Nature's terrible majesty ;—the roar
 Of falling mountains, or the blinding glare
 Of dewless skies, ne'er daunts him ; unperturbed
 He moves with steady tread to Mankind's common doom.

9.

Yet all are human ! all one family !
 Refreshing rain and gladd'ning sunlight fall
 Alike upon the evil and the good,
 Alike upon the humble and the great ;
 What though the splendour of thy palaces,
 The glory of thy monarchs, be unknown
 To him who makes the wilderness his home—
 His dwelling-place a rude and lowly hut,
 O Earth !—they are thy children, every one !
 Bound by a common tie to thee, and owe
 The same allegiance to a supreme Power
 Whose mighty Hand doth guide the circling Universe.

10.

And I can feel the glory and the pain
Of Monarchs seated on the tottering thrones
Of State and Industry ; and I have gazed
Upon the blackened heart and quaking soul
Of conscience-stricken Murder, whether he
Be seated on a throne, or dwells apart—
An outcast among men ; the misery
Of vermin-caten Poverty has touch'd
My human heart and weigh'd my spirit down ;—
I feel it all, the sorrow and the guilt,
The heart-break and the shame !—and in this lies
The power that begets a world-wide sympathy.

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