

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE RÔLE OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD'S WORK

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§ 1. *How Far Sex Need Be Considered in This Survey*

WE have now brought our survey of human activities to a fairly comprehensive stage; we have got the whole ant-hill working, we have shown the workers busy and we have studied their motives and incentives. But still the spectacle is an extremely simplified one. Governments and politicians remain to be considered. No national flags have appeared. We have not yet brought the custom house and the barrack yard into the picture; we have indeed set aside the whole complex of national rivalry and war. The numbers of this human multitude and the increase of populations have yet to be studied; we have not mentioned crime and prison, and though we have alluded constantly to education, nevertheless the schools, colleges, instruction books of the world have still to be displayed.

And not a paragraph has been given yet to that intimate human activity, the relations of the sexes. That we will now take up.

While we have noted the progressive supersession of the autonomous home by collective services, we have refrained from considering how this has changed the mutual relations of man and woman in the ménage. Even in Chapter VIII when we set out the broad types of persona as the basis of our study of social interactions, we did not trouble ourselves with the fact that there are a feminine peasant and feminine nomad and (less important hitherto but not necessarily less important now) a feminine educated type. We would justify that simplification by saying that, roughly speaking, for the broad social ends of that chapter, the woman goes with the man of her class, that the peasant's woman shares his outlook on the world and has the feminine equivalent to his persona, and that the nomadic autocratic woman agrees also in all its main essentials with the ideology of her male.

"Roughly speaking," I write. But now let us try and speak and

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think a little less roughly, and take into consideration that every human affair is two-sided, that from the hut of the savage to the palace of the king or multi-millionaire the woman is thinking and acting with certain differences—perhaps ineradicable differences—of her own. Hitherto we have considered the net result, the common denominator, economically and socially, of male and female. Now we are admitting that this human drama may have been played, and may always have to be played, by two series of non-interchangeable actors. Each may have a kind of rôle which is inseparable from the drama. Through the looms of our world of work and wealth may be running two systems of lives, about nine hundred and fifty million individuals in each, having different dispositions and different ends.

We write "may be" and not "is." We are posing a question here. By way of reply we offer the suggestion: that there are indeed such differences of disposition and end, but that they are the slight differences of essentially similar as well as kindred beings. They are co-operative and not antagonistic differences. They can point to a common destiny. To the end of time there are things that will be better done and rôles that will be better played by women than men, there are things women will think more desirable than men do, and vice versa, and a large part, if not the larger part, of human operations are, and will remain, definitely assignable as men's jobs or women's jobs.

But let us ask first, how far does sex extend into the being of a man or woman? Are we male or female to our finger-tips? Many creatures are sexed, so to speak, only as far as reproduction goes. A herring has a soft roe or a hard roe, and that is as much sex as a herring seems to have. Nor is there anything particularly virile or ladylike about the male or female ostrich. It is only when incubation or suckling and the care of the young come into the life cycle of a species that we remark any wide structural or temperamental divergences. All these divergences are related to the reproductive specialization of the female. The Hominidæ do not present as much sexual divergence as most varieties of cattle; there is with them neither an all-round mental nor physical ascendancy of either sex; while, for example, a man is able to hit harder, run harder and toil more heavily than a woman, she seems to swim better, is quicker to learn the balance of a bicycle, and has more endurance for continuous low-pressure work. There seem to be very small odds

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against her when it comes to the handling of an automobile or aeroplane. The conquest of Power, the abolition of toil, is relieving woman of many economic disadvantages. The light machine has put her upon terms of equal competition with men in many once masculine trades. The progressive socialization of the household is detaching her more and more from traditional household drudgery, and birth control minimizes her ancient specialization as the reproductive sex. Our species, never very highly differentiated sexually, is now, it would seem, undergoing a diminution of sexual differentiation.

§ 2. *Women as Workers and as Competitors with Men. The Keeping of Wives and Families by Men in Relation to Feminine Employment.* *Social Neuters*

Let us now review very briefly the work of women, and particularly woman as an industrial worker, side by side and in competition with man.

Before the war there was a polite pretence, maintained by at least the middle and upper classes of the Western world, that women were incapable of doing ordinary industrial work. They could work in the household, but they could not "work for a living." Cooks, for example, were supposed to lack the intelligence needed for minding a machine; and housemaids, "up and down-stairs all day," the strength required for climbing the steps of tramcars. When, during the war, women appeared doing these things quite successfully, everybody expressed astonishment and admiration. Women themselves seemed to be as astonished as anybody. The newspapers were full of it. People wrote books about it. And yet in Great Britain alone, before the war, nearly five million females were working outside their homes for wages and over one hundred thousand of them were in the metal trades.

It is this sort of mass illusion and mass convention about women that makes it difficult either to estimate what they can do or to find out what they are actually doing. Nobody seems able to think about them without feeling strongly in the matter and being moved to pretences and concealments. Everything undergoes a conventional dramatization. Women themselves dramatize their behaviour in one way and men dramatize it for them in another.

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Cold, clear statements of fact are rare—we have only partial information, and statistics so incomplete that they cannot be compared one with another.

The industrial life of women goes on against the opposition of these conventions. In no period have men approved of their women working for money. To do so reflected upon the social position of the head of the family and implied a threat to his authority. The rich, from a mixture of good and bad motives, do not like their women to work at all. Even the poor resent their working away from home. It was only when engineering became coloured with patriotism, so that women in the factories became a credit to their country instead of being vaguely shameful, that the average citizen was prepared to realize what they could do there. And now that the war is over and its glamour gone, we are again at a stage when nobody seems to know or to want to know, fully and exactly, to what extent women are employed in industry, what they are doing, what they are being paid or the conditions under which they are working.

Women, as far as their work goes, may be divided into two main sections: those who work in and about homes, and those whose employment takes them into the outer world. The first group is engaged all over the planet in domestic tasks and crafts and agriculture. It is the huge majority of womankind. It includes, indeed, the American housewife with her heating from the main, her electric refrigerators and her country club, but also the savage wife—who, besides cooking and taking care of her children, builds huts, cultivates the ground, spins, weaves and makes baskets and pottery—and the whole multitude of domestic slaves and servants. It includes nearly all the women of India. Among these are scores of millions of Hindu wives, married before they are nubile, slaves not merely of their husbands and mothers-in-law, but of a rigid system of custom and superstitions, that makes the cardinal phases of life horrors of helplessness and uncleanness. Millions may never leave the homes and are thrust into solitary huts to bear their children. Most of these domesticated women workers are not paid in money, though money may be given them; where they are paid they are not paid very much. And in spite of the vacuum cleaners and gas cookers of the Western world, the bulk of this work is still done under conditions and by methods which are centuries out of date.

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The work is monotonous, lonely and imprisoning; it is set about with class distinctions; the performers have often no taste for it and have not been trained to do it, and they leave it whenever they get the chance. Woman may be a domesticated animal, but she certainly has not a domesticated soul. She loves toil and restraint no more than man. Housekeepers buy bread and send the wash to a laundry; the cook's daughter takes a job in a tea shop, and the intellectual young school teacher refuses to marry at all. In Russia, the Bolshevik authorities tell us, it is the women who take eagerly to the collective farms, who vote for "going collective" in village after village. What are supposed to be their deepest instincts disappear promptly when the chance of getting away from housework appears. According to the official figures there were over 13½ million Russian women working on collective farms in March, 1931, and the figure was then said to be increasing. The proportion of domesticated women seems to be falling, all over the world.

Manifestly there must be a corresponding increase of non-domestic women. One group of non-domestic feminine employees, however, is almost certainly shrinking. These are the mere poor drudges, the sweated, the exploited women, in corners or on the fringes of the industrial world, toiling at work so badly paid and disagreeable that men refuse to do it. Factory acts and laws dealing with public health are abolishing this type of employment in civilized countries. Filthy jobs like gut-scraping have been cleansed and disinfected; the beer-bottling and rag-sorting that used to be carried on in insanitary cellars are now performed in dry and properly ventilated workshops, often with the help of machinery. In the opinion of a high official in the Factory Department of the English Home Office real driving and oppression of women, so far as the modern communities are concerned, are now only to be found in domestic service, where in rare instances a little slavey has not spirit enough to leave a tyrannical mistress. As industrialism spreads into backward countries where there are no trade unions or restrictive laws, exploitation reappears for a time. Dame Adelaide Anderson's report on the employment of children in Egyptian industry describes cotton-ginning sheds filled with irritating dust where boys and girls of seven are kept at their work by whips. Women still coal ships in Japan. But international control in these

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matters is increasing, and unless there is some sort of world collapse, our great-grandchildren may very well live in a world completely cleansed from the barbarous industrial consumption of women drudges.

But the bulk of non-domesticated women now, the real modern women workers, are the product of education acts, trade unionism, and the light machine. It may be a lathe or a typewriter, but where a machine can be made light and easy they are drawn to it to perform, generally speaking, the less responsible kinds of work of which it is capable. In comparison with men they take down letters but do not dictate them, they mind machines but they do not set, mend, improve or invent them. And they receive, as a rule, from rather over half to two-thirds of what a man would get for doing a similar if not identical job. They are young (Sir Josiah Stamp has estimated that half the women in industry in Great Britain are under twenty-three), and they are badly organized.

A want of organization of women workers is a world-wide phenomenon. In Japan, where the number of men and women in the factories is almost equal—rather over a million of each—there are three men in the unions for every woman. In England thirty-two per cent of the "gainfully occupied males," as the census returns call our men workers, are organized, and only fifteen per cent of the smaller total of gainfully occupied females. The cause of this abstention does not seem to be hostility towards trade unions, but low wages and adolescent amateurism. The younger women regard their time in the factories as an interlude preceding marriage, and they want every penny either to collect a dowry or to pay for the clothes and outings which ensure a wider choice of husbands. When women's wages rose during the war and marriage seemed less certain, they flocked into the unions: since then they have lapsed into their old indifference to industrial organization.

It is claimed that the influx of girls into industry has had on the whole a civilizing influence upon working conditions. It was probably their appeal as unprotected minors to Victorian sentiment which passed the first factory acts, and when under pressure of foreign competition that sentiment hardened, its place was taken by a growing biological conscience. The presence of women in the factories seems to have raised the standards of cleanliness, decency and comfort there. And as soon as their working conditions ceased

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to be hopelessly degrading, their greater desire for colour in life, pleasantness, romance, their views on the subject of manners and conduct, have had a decisive influence on the industrial atmosphere. Filth and brutality have retreated before them. The general amelioration of life in the past half century may have had its share in these improvements, but the industrialization of women was the main progressive force.

What is the present outlook for women in industry? They seem likely to remain an important industrial factor—possibly in increasing numbers—but not as life workers. That girls should have somewhere to go between leaving school and entering into marriage is under contemporary conditions an obvious social convenience. But whether they will ever occupy more than the lowlier positions in industry is another question. Apparently, as a sex, they lack both a man's ambition and his disinterested mental curiosity. They do not mean to remain at the work and they are not willing—except in a few trades here and there like the Lancashire cotton trade to train for skilled or responsible positions. Moreover, employers, because of the possible transitoriness of their engagements, are unwilling to train even those girls who ask for the chance to qualify themselves for higher posts. It is difficult, therefore, to estimate the force and soundness of their disposition to take and use such a chance. The matter is further complicated by the fact that in the factories of Great Britain, trade-union regulations shut women out from entire industries and from the cream of the skilled jobs in most of the rest. In America the wages for unskilled labour have been so good relatively that it has been difficult to induce even men to train for the best positions, which to a surprising extent therefore are filled by skilled craftsmen from Europe. In Russia, where there are now no such barriers, 150,000 women, we are told, are being specially trained for skilled work, but it is too soon to say whether they will prove as valuable as men. In Latin countries an exceptional woman may be found doing anything—but she remains exceptional. At present, indeed, it is only in Scandinavia that women as a sex seem to be demonstrating any aptitude for the more skilled branches of technical work, and obtain employment to any perceptible extent on equal terms with men.

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THE KEEPING OF WIVES AND FAMILIES BY MEN IN RELATION TO FEMININE EMPLOYMENT

The industrialization of women on anything like equal terms with men goes on not only against trade-union bars and the distracting competition of the marriage market, but also against the long established prejudices of our race. The belief in woman's inferiority as a worker still prevails. This inferiority is not proven up to the hilt, because the handicap of the bars and distractions we have noted prevents a fair try-out, but it remains the established impression. Without bars and handicaps it is felt that she would still be inferior. This persuasion may be due partly to the fact that she is paid lower wages even on work she is better able to do than a man. To get sixty per cent of a man's wage means in effect only sixty per cent of his food, freedoms and self-assurance, and girls, from the first day they go to work, are accustomed to this attitude of inferiority to their brothers and accept it without demur. And because they accept it they are now being employed in many types of work instead of men. They have not actually driven men out of men's own jobs—they are generally prevented from doing that by trade-union agreements—but either they have followed domestic trades, such as sewing, cooking and laundry work, out from the home into the factories where they are now very largely carried on, or a skilled trade carried on by men is changed into a trade where the skill goes into machines which can be managed by young women—though this very possibly would not have been done if it were not for the woman's lower wage. This question of relative wage rates is likely to become more acute in the future. At present both working men and working women seem to accept the proposition that man, as woman's superior and as the potential keeper of a woman, is entitled to be paid more for what he does. The man protects his standard of living not by forbidding the woman to undersell him, but by shutting her out completely from this or that particular pool of work. The result is that new trades—such as electrical work for wireless apparatus—get very largely handed over to women, and there is a constant inducement to break up skilled jobs in this or that part of an old trade and get the rearranged operations classed as women's work. An intensification of this

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might at any time cause the present discrepancy in rates to be felt as intolerable, and men might then insist upon a uniform rate of pay for both sexes. That might check the increasing relative employment of young women for some time, though it might ultimately increase the proportion of skilled women who meant to make their jobs their life work.

At the back of the disposition to underpay women relatively to men is the old tradition that the man has to "keep a family." This is what the trade unions are defending when they bar women from the better paid types of employment. Modern industrialism knows nothing and can know nothing of marriage so far as its pay sheets go. If a factory were obliged to discriminate between married and single, put up the pay of each worker whenever he chose to marry, and give him a rise whenever his wife presented him with a baby, it is plain that in this world of competition it would have to restrict its employment to guaranteed bachelors or go into an early bankruptcy. The present state of affairs is a rough adjustment to social conditions under which young men leaving home and going into employment are strongly impelled to marry. The normal state of mind of the adult male in a trade union is that of an actual or potential family man. He does whatever he can through his union to prevent the girl underselling him by her unskilled labour, or getting beyond his reach by winning her way to skilled employment on equal terms. She does the former, but so far she has shown very little energy in doing the latter. And he tries to keep his wages up to a level at which he can "keep a wife."

It has frequently been asserted in the British press that a serious factor in unemployment is that women are driving men out of work. That is not true. Certainly, while the number of men employed has increased, the increase of employed women has been sensibly greater. But it has not been enormously greater. The gross difference between 1923 and 1930 shows a steady increase in the number of women employed in the industries covered by the British unemployment insurance, from a little under three million to three million and a half. If the pre-war rates of employment held to-day there would be about a hundred thousand more men and about a hundred thousand less women industrially employed. That is all. A large part of the increased industrial employment of women has nothing to do with the unemployment of men; it is a

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transfer of women from domestic to industrial life, because work that was formerly done in the home, laundry work, sewing, baking, urban lunch and tea service, is now supplied outside. Also the nursery has fewer children and needs fewer nursemaids. There were a quarter of a million fewer domestic servants in 1921 in Great Britain than in 1911. Nor, so far as Great Britain goes, is feminine employment responsible for male unemployment, which is greatest in the heavy industries where women do not compete with men.*

We may therefore dismiss the suggestion that the industrialization of women is to any considerable extent the cause of masculine unemployment. It is the ancient tradition for a woman to look to a man to keep her, and that in effect is what ninety-nine women out of the hundred, even in most "advanced" circles, still do. The modern woman likes to keep free and own herself, but she finds it as a rule more practicable still to do so at the expense of someone else. What is of far more importance in a study of womanhood under modern conditions, is the vast masses of unemployed men which are now appearing in every modernized community, who have little or no earning power at all. Instinct and tradition conspire to make nearly all of them want to "keep a wife," but a vast proportion realize that they will be quite unable to keep children. An increasing proportion of men workers, workers of the black-coated class as well as manual workers, must marry women with a certain apologetic air therefore and with the agreed intention of evading offspring. There is a steady increase in the number of childless ménages. A new sort of marriage and a new sort of home have come into existence unobtrusively but surely; a marriage which does not ensue in a brawl of children. It ensues, however, in a dreadfully unoccupied woman, whose leisure becomes a grave problem to the community. She lives a life of small economies. She feels her uselessness in the measure of her intelligence. At the side of that fruitless type of ménage there is also an increase of "bachelor women" on the one hand, maintaining themselves on their pay, and on the other, an increasing number of men at a level of pay and employment below the possibilities of even keeping one woman.

* The British health insurance figures show 70.5 per cent men to women in 1912 and 68.2 per cent in 1928. The percentage of males in the British Civil Service was 88.6 in 1913 and 77.6 in 1929.

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Deliberately sterile ways of living have existed for a long time. In France, for example, it has long been customary in a great number of bourgeois households to employ man and wife, often quite young people, on the distinct and carefully observed condition that they have no children. Such callings as that of the shop assistant, having gone on for a hundred years or more, impose a practical celibacy upon the majority of those who follow them. But the self-subsisting woman is—as anything but a social exception—practically new, and what is more significant is the rapid increase and wide dispersal of these hitherto exceptional types of life, which have no reproductive value in the community. In Roman times the proletary was that impoverished section of the community which contributed nothing but children to the commonweal. These new types constitute a sort of negative proletary which contribute few or no children at all.

Our mechanized civilization is thus producing, in increasing quantities, individuals whose sexual life is of no social importance whatever. That does not mean that they are not making love and leading a very full emotional and physical sexual life; many of them are. But this part of their existence produces no results that justify any sort of control of the sexual life by the community. From the biological point of view they are as neuter as the worker bees.

In Chapter XIII we shall deal with the main facts of the population question and then the high probability that this mass of neuters in our species will increase will become very plainly apparent.* The time may be quite close at hand when only a half or a third of the adults in our world will be producing offspring.

The social and economic utilization of the women of this neutralized mass is a much more serious problem than that of the men, because of the greater relative importance the reproductive (and not simply the sexual) side of life has had for womankind. At present this problem of feminine frustration and lack of rôle outside domesticity is overshadowed by the far more serious economic and political difficulties in which our world is entangled. But whenever those difficulties are cleared away this problem will emerge to

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primary importance. So far from the relative increase of feminine to masculine employment being a serious and threatening phenomenon at the present time, the much more serious fact is that so few women relative to the numbers who are now unproductively dependent are striking out for a social and economic independence of their own.

§ 3. *The Inherent Difference of Physical and Mental Quality between Men and Women*

It was only after the writer had set himself seriously to summarize the differences of man and woman that he realized how vague, vaporous, and useless is the enormous literature of the subject. It is like a wide, warm, damp, haze-filled gulley between science and literature, choked with a weedy jungle of pretentious writing. One has not so much to summarize as to mow down and clear away, thousands of volumes that in the guise of general discussions express merely personal prejudices and aspirations. The substantial matter of even profoundly "scientific" works is not so much a record of controlled observations as a series of casual remarks.

No really definite attempt has yet been made to discount the enormous subjective factor that enters into thought about the business, or to make allowances for the variations in the amount and nature of that subjective factor at various stages in the sexual cycle of the observer's life. Inherent and imposed qualities are recklessly jumbled by everyone. No clear recognition is made of the varieties of human type and race. No account is taken of age phases. A Bengali woman, a Patagonian woman, a Norwegian fisher-girl or a Hottentot woman, has each a definite difference from her associated male. She has an innate difference and an acquired difference. There are an innate difference and an acquired difference in Bengal, and they are not at all the same differences as those in Norway. And the woman passes from phase to phase in her life orbit—as her man does also—according to her type.

But in nearly all this sex literature these differences are assumed to be, if not the same, at least of the same nature. People write of "virile" and "feminine," of what men and women are and will do, regardless of pattern or phase. So far as one can generalize about these "studies," by "man" is meant a male of middling class and

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some education in one of the European or American communities, round about the age of forty, and by "woman," a female in the same social stratum, of from twenty to thirty-five. About whom the pens scribble uncontrollably.

Our task here is not to swell this already overwhelming literature of provocation, excitement and complaint. We have to state the material facts of the case as compactly and clearly as we can for the purposes of our spectacle. The rest matters no more to us now than—love poetry.

We may add a few observations upon the question of physical difference already posed. In all varieties of *Homo sapiens*, over and beyond the differences of the actual reproductive organs, we note that the female pelvis is relatively more capacious than the male, the upper parts of the legs are set differently, the breathing is more costal and less abdominal, the whole build is lighter, softer and finer. The difference is not so marked in some races as in others, but it is always a difference in the same direction. As with the other Primates, the fully developed human male is heavier than the fully developed female. On these points there can be little or no dispute. The relative fineness and lightness of the female extends to the head, neck and brain. The differentiation is obviously less wide in man than in the gorilla. And all these differences seem liable to great exaggeration through custom and social condition.

As Metchnikoff pointed out long ago in his *Nature of Man*, natural human life is full of incongruities. The human female is capable of sexual intercourse and excitation ten years before she reaches the age when she can bear children to the best advantage; she can have sexual intercourse forced upon her against her will as very few female animals can; she cannot resist as effectually; and in many^a savage, barbaric, and even civilized societies, the complete development of a large proportion of women seems to be greatly retarded by their premature subjugation to sex. They do not really grow up. Presently their stock of vitality is put under contribution for child-bearing. Or if they do not marry young they do not marry at all, and so go on to what may perhaps be considered another type of underdevelopment. The sexual life of the human male seems to be more passionate and violent but more transitory and incidental than that of the female. The storm passes, and he is quit of the urgency for a time. He returns to the work he was doing. He

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gets a better chance therefore of maturing according to his innate and individual possibilities.

These essential differences and these natural disadvantages have been greatly masked, distorted, and exaggerated by custom and tradition in all human societies. We do not know, with any certitude, anything that we can call the "natural" sexual disposition of either man or woman at any stage of development. So great has been the masking that in Britain and North America, for example, it was commonly assumed until a few years ago that the majority of women were, as the phrase goes, "cold"—devoid, that is, of strong sexual appetites—and that the minority who sought pleasure in sex were abnormal and reprehensible. This assumption prevailed during a period of repression, and it was only an intensification of an almost world-wide mental disposition. But it was no more than a convention. Now, simply through the annulment of various prohibitions and the lifting of a veil of secrecy, this assumption of feminine frigidity is no longer accepted. Now, it would seem, a great multitude of women are as sensuous and excitable, if not more sensuous and excitable, sexually than men. There is a difference in the tempo rather than the quality of their desires.

These again may not be permanently valid observations; we may be witnessing only the release and sur-excitation of feminine desire through the lifting of old repressions and the realization of new opportunities and novel systems of suggestion. Yet it is plain that until we have more definite knowledge in this field we are unable to decide upon almost fundamental issues in social life—such as our treatment of prostitutes—or in education. Our estimate of good or bad conduct must remain in many respects provisional.

It seems at least clear that women are more selective in their sexual conduct and more easily subdued to self-control. Sex in the normal male is more resèntful of control and more forcible in achieving its ends. Yet here again, while the male is more disposed for open rebellion against prohibitions and lapses easily into a rude, clumsy, aggressive, mean pursuit of reliefs and satisfactions, the subconscious urgencies of the female may in the end be a slower but more effective drive. He can be more easily put off with crude gratifications than she. It has always been possible to separate parenthood from sexual relationships in thought, and it is becoming possible to do so in practice. Traditional morality sets its face

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against such a separation, but modern ideas are changing that. It is asserted by many now, asserted but not proved, that through the larger part of adult life, physical and mental health is only possible while the stir and satisfactions of sexual relationships are going on, and that parenthood need not be involved in that emotional system. The sexual life of a woman earning a living for herself, if it is conducted in this spirit, approximates very closely to the sexual life of a man living under the same conditions. She is more in conflict with tradition, but beyond that there is no other important difference between the two.

On all such questions the physiological and psychological sciences give us as yet scarcely any clear, assured and measured information. They ought to do so, and presently, no doubt, they will. But as it is we are left rather to the immediate and superficial appearances of the case, and to guesses and intuitions. It is manifest that in the relations of men and women we are dealing with plastic mental material which can be moulded into a great variety of fashions by suggestion, law, custom and accident, but we are still incapable of stating the limits and conditions of that plasticity.

On the whole there seems to be a rapid and considerable assimilation of qualities and conditions going on, women are gaining freedoms, enlarging their scope, and men are losing privileges, authority, and personal prestige, but it does not follow that that assimilation will go on indefinitely until we return to the herring's immunity from all secondary sexual characters. Men and women may readjust to new and progressive conditions, retaining and even intensifying certain male and female characteristics. And we may find that there will be a definition and recognition of many more rôles than the traditional two, between various sexual types. The private sexual life is not our concern here, but we are concerned with all varieties of sexual rôle that affect the general social and economic process.

§ 4. *Motherhood and the Dependence of Women Because of Motherhood*

The life of the ordinary mammal, up to and including the more primitive human types, is almost entirely taken up by growth, sleep or basking, the search for food and reproduction. That fills

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the year. Up to our own times that was as true for human beings in the mass as for their humbler relations. They worked, they paired, they brought up a family. There was little margin to their days and by the time the family was completed and launched life was nearly consumed.

Men and women were pressed forward by custom and daily necessity from the cradle to the grave. Since the number of female births is roughly equal to the male, the normal state of affairs has been monogamy, with a certain amount of polygamy superimposed whenever exceptional men as chiefs and so forth got a chance of monopolizing more than their share of the supply of women. This was balanced against the greater liability of males to violent death, and the lesser resisting power of the male to many forms of illness. (The proportion of females to males is somewhere about twenty-one to twenty in western Europe.)

A certain obvious division of labour established itself therefore (with a variety of interpretations and minor variations) throughout the world. The frequent pregnancy of the female, and the young children's need of protection, made it natural and proper that the male should do the more heavy, active and adventurous part of the food-hunt or food-production, and that she should keep house and cook and stay with her offspring. Upon the basis of these necessities (which are necessities no longer) the whole tradition of feminine dependence was established.

But the business of parentage is as much the male's concern as the female's. It is as much the business of life for one as the other. The natural social man, as we find him expressing himself in the peasant persona, is benevolent and responsible, but tyrannous and possessive, towards his woman and his children. He is the captain of the home, and she is the mate. All mammals and all incubating birds make great sacrifices of personal freedom to the production and welfare of their young; man makes greater and more prolonged sacrifices because his young need protection for so long, and woman has made even greater sacrifices than man. Throughout the ages she has been obliged to concede leadership. If it is not in her nature to concede leadership it is woven now almost inextricably into her persona by the power of tradition.

This convention, the thrusting upon her of rather more than a fair half of the toil of the household, premature conception, the

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worries of children, have used up the majority of women rather faster than their men. In the past women *aged*, and where old-fashioned conditions prevail women still age, sooner than men. The man, when he has had the power and authority to do it, has therefore tended always to supplement his first mating and bring in younger wives. For many thousands of years there has been the urge towards the possessive polygamy of energetic and powerful men, either imposing itself openly as in black Africa and much of the Orient, or working beneath the conventional arrangements of society, against the necessary habitual monogamy of average men and women. Polyandry, on the contrary, is a Tibetan rarity, and is rather a fraternal shareholding of women than any equivalent to the possessive polygamy of the influential male. Where women have had great power and opportunity—the Empress Catherine the Second of Russia, for example—it is true that they have shown themselves as polygamous as men, but such occasions have been rare. Of prostitution we will speak later. None of these exceptions does very much to alter the fact that motherhood has been so great a disadvantage to women as to impose upon them a dependence and defencelessness that are almost inextricably woven into our social tradition.

But now very rapidly in the countries affected by the Atlantic civilizations, a conspiracy of circumstances has been changing and destroying all the foundation facts upon which that tradition was based. The chief elements in this conspiracy have been first, the restriction of births and such a hygienic prevention of infant mortality that physical motherhood becomes a mere phase of a few years in a woman's life; secondly the socialization of education and of most domestic services; and thirdly, the supersession of any protective function on the part of the male by the law and the police. Woman is left almost abruptly released and exposed. But the tradition of countless generations of disadvantage and real dependence clings about her.

§ 5. *Some Moral Consequences of the Traditional Inferiority and Disadvantage of Women. Feminine Acquiescence and Disingenuousness. Prostitution. The White Slave Trade. The Gigolo*

The quality of the life of women throughout our changing world to-day is determined by two main factors. First there is the

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mechanical factor in economic progress; the supersession of toil, particularly of heavy toil, and the socialization of many of the more important tasks that were once distinctively feminine. This mechanical factor makes for an equalization of economic importance and a release of women from the implication of inferiority. The only remaining physical differences between man and woman are becoming horizontal, i.e., differences between individuals in the same class, and not vertical differences, in which all women are put below all men, or vice versa.

But secondly there is a huge mass of tradition still operative by which the man is incited to take the overmastering and responsible rôle, and the women tempted to accept and make the most of the old-time subservience, instead of insisting upon the logical consequences of the new conditions. She finds she can get most of the traditional advantages and concessions, won for her by her past devotion to maternity and domesticity, while being in fact relieved of most of the burthen of that devotion. She finds this the more easy and excusable because the pride of the men with whom she has to deal in business or professional life is easily roused against her; it makes things difficult for her as an equal or antagonist; it makes it harder to play a man-like rôle than if (all other things remaining equal) her sex were male. On the other hand, it wins her unjustifiable "chivalrous" concessions.

Ancient tradition makes it seem right and proper to a man— even if he is an economically incompetent man—that he should have a woman of his own, under his control. The feeling is very widespread that every man should have a woman of his own, and there is plainly a sex consciousness like a class consciousness in the matter. There is sex solidarity. There is a widespread psychological resistance on the part of both men and women against the economic equalization that material changes are bringing about. A woman working on her own behalf does not get a fair deal from either men or women. Municipal authorities in Great Britain usually dismiss their women doctors on marriage, even when they are running maternity clinics. But a male doctor may marry, and marry again after the briefest widowhood, and no municipal authority will take cognizance of the matter.

There is more here than an envious prejudice against seeing two incomes flow into one homè. Nobody minds how many incomes a

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man earns, inherits and marries. What almost nobody really believes is that a grown-up woman has a right to manage her personal life as freely as a man. Not only is she expected to live more timidly, but large sections of the population feel that they have a right to compel her to do so. And the forbidding of outside work to married women, the shutting of them up in their homes, is bad for the home, where it produces a combination of restlessness and mental stuffiness, and bad for the reputation of women as workers. They are accused of emotional instability, of "bringing their feelings into their work," of lacking ambition, breadth of mind and human understanding. The traditional influences of which we have been speaking are powerfully reinforced by financial factors. Under all the talk about women's emancipation, and in spite of the considerable steps that have been taken towards legal freedom, there remains the fact that the overwhelming majority of women in the world are economically dependent—have no money of their own at all. Hundreds of millions of them are not allowed to own money or any property but personal jewellery. Over most of the world the husband has control of his wife's property: we find this state of affairs not only in backward countries, but in France, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, the State of Florida and the Province of Quebec. Where they may own it, custom—and the sincerely held belief that a man needs money more than a woman—diverts the flow of inheritance into male hands. Where money is left to women it is, more often than not, tied up so that they are not free to use the capital. We have already seen that as wage-earners they earn less for the same work than would be paid to a man. As a sex, when it comes to money of their own, they are poor.

The effects of this comparative poverty are so far-reaching that it is difficult to determine where they end. For one thing, it means that women on the whole are not educated to deal with any aspect of money but spending. They do not realize, imaginatively, its industrial and financial functions. They are urged by every magazine and paper they pick up, by the implications of almost every book, to regard themselves as spenders, as elegant or beautiful or, at the worst, subtle creatures, for the maintenance of whose elegance, beauty and subtlety an immense mass of spending is necessary and justified. We have already seen in our section on Cosmetics how this works out in detail. So when money falls

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unfettered and in large quantities into the hands of a woman, she is likely to be someone with no ideas about money but that it can be spent in amplifying and decorating her personal life—with a certain minor flow towards charity and the support of art and music—and she will receive far more admiration, gratitude and press publicity for doing that with it than for using it in any fruitful or constructive manner.

As for the women who have no money—or less money than the corresponding men of their class—they are hampered at every turn. It is not worth while spending so much on their education as on that of boys, because they cannot be expected to earn so much. The ordinary English parents may be as willing to make sacrifices for their daughters as they are for their sons, but if one or the other must be preferred, it is only common sense to invest in the boys. Then there is the question of capital—women, because of their customary poverty, cannot buy practices and partnerships or stock or premises; they have to remain as employees, assistants, secretaries. Even in a profession newly opened to women, like medicine, we find groups of doctors joining together to run a practice and taking in a fully qualified woman, not as a partner, but as a mere salaried assistant, to do the work they most dislike. And in such positions—partly because they are paid less, partly because there is the risk, if they are young, of losing their services on marriage—they are generally regarded as less valuable than men. This may not be true of the individual employer, who will readily admit that the women in his own office do their work as well as men would do it. But that does not prevent him from considering them inferior, as a whole, to the same sort of men.

The result of all this is that while the conventional relations between men and women are weakened, the much advertised new relations which are arising to replace them do not correspond to economic fact. Marriage and dependence still provide the most dazzling social and monetary prizes for women. Except for those born rich, prettiness, suitable clothes and pleasing manners are far more likely to lead to success in life than ambition, knowledge and intelligence. Women want children, homes, love-making, and on the other hand travel, entertainment and ornamental backgrounds. Men alone can give them these, and men prefer as a rule to give them only for personal and emotional reasons. "Emancipated" women

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at the present time are therefore likely to be inconsistent. They value freedom, and they claim equality, but unless they are prepared to give up every other side of life to these, they must not behave as equals except after they have got what they want. This may be as unfair to the man involved as the original predicament was unfair to the woman—it is not surprising that there is a great deal of talk about the relations between the sexes and a good deal of open hostility. But that does not mean that there is more sexual unhappiness. On the contrary, it seems likely that there has never been a time when there was so little.

Economic inferiority—not of actual gross earnings, perhaps (on account of the number of women who cease to earn after marriage), but of status and opportunity—will probably diminish. It is more difficult to see what will relieve the almost complete dependence of the married woman. Increasingly, parents are unwilling to provide dowries even in countries where they are under considerable social pressure to do so. The system which is proposed in lieu of them is that of endowment of motherhood or children's allowances. There are several ways of securing such payments—they may come from the State, or from the industry in which the husband is employed. But they presuppose a high degree of national organization. They would benefit women—there would be a considerable transfer of wealth direct from men to women—the mother would no longer be wholly dependent on her husband, the unmarried woman worker would find it less difficult to establish the principle of equal wages for equal work. On the other hand, they would almost certainly involve the lowering of the wages of single men, and in most of their forms they extend the dangerous principle of distributing public money whose expenditure is not subject to control.

In the meantime the majority of women are not yet insisting with serenity and steadfastness upon their legitimate autonomy. It takes a Hetty Green, for example, to keep a woman's fortune from the exploitation of her man. Few women with property have as free an enjoyment of their property as men have, the law and sentiment notwithstanding. They give way. They cannot, as they say, "endure a row." Nor do women insist as plainly as men do on their own tastes and desires. They have to "get round" the man. This is the story the modern novel and play have to tell over and over

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and over again in thousands of forms, the story of a compeller and an outwiter.

The testimony of contemporary literature seems to be that on the whole the outwitting defeats the compulsion. But it may be that the dominance of the male decision gives us neither plot nor drama, and yet in reality is the more widely prevalent state of affairs. A struggle for the "upper hand," as Samuel Butler describes it in *The Way of All Flesh*, occurs in a great number of pairings. In the past probably a greater proportion of women lost that struggle than at the present time, and it may have occurred more generally. A more intelligent education of children for adult life and sexual relationship, the progressive alleviation of mutual pressure in a broadening social life, and greater facilities to escape from marriage, may go far to eliminate any need for such a painful and intimate struggle in the future.

In a complete summary of human activities it is necessary to bring into the picture that ineradicable class of women, the oldest profession in the world, the prostitutes. The peculiar conventions of the pre-war age required writers to mention this trade only in terms of exaggerated horror. It flourished everywhere, and everywhere there was a pretence that it did not exist. It was outcast, unspeakable, untouchable. Moreover, in all ages the peculiar circumstances of these women have subjected them to legal extortions and illegal exploitation, and in default of the normal male husband-protector, they have had to resort to a variety of illegal defences. A type of man has been evoked to organize and profit by their necessities. And they have been less able to escape their special disadvantages because within, in their own minds, they were trained and prepared to acquiesce in the traditional standards of feminine conduct.

Let us consider dispassionately what a prostitute is. A prostitute hitherto has usually been a woman, though, as we shall note in a moment, this is not necessarily the case. And her rôle through the ages has been to sell feminine companionship to men who were in urgent need of it for limited periods. Excited moralists have been prone to exaggerate the purely physical side of her existence; those who are better acquainted with the realities of life know that the common prostitute has no particular skill or charm in her caresses, and that the element of sensuous gratification is of hardly more

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importance to her intermittent relationships than it is to permanent wifehood. If one notes the districts which prostitutes frequent, the social aspect of prostitution becomes apparent. Such women have abounded in seaports since the beginning of time; they walk near railway termini; they are in evidence wherever business brings men up from the country for a stay at some commercial centre; they hover where unmarried men are gathered. Loneliness, loose intervals of time in a friendless place, these call for the prostitute quite as much as gross desire. Prostitutes not only go with these lonely, comfortless men, but they hear their talk, they flatter and console them, they give and receive real friendship and affection. They do not in their normal rôle minister simply to lust; what they sell and give into the bargain is much more than that. It is womanhood. They witness in fact to the inherent dependence of the male mind upon women, of one sex upon the other. They are temporary wives.

But our world has never accommodated itself to this institution of temporary wives, much less has it made any effort to protect them, and so this type of relationship—so inevitable that never in any part of the world has it been stamped out altogether—has been subjected to every possible type of degradation. These women are tolerated and assumed to be intolerable, they are exploited both legally and illegally, prosecuted and persecuted; they are forced down into a festering obscurity where the thief, the bully, the blackmailer and the cruel coward, make life horrible for them. They take a colour from their surroundings, they succumb to the suggestion of their shamefulness; dissatisfied by a perpetual truncation of their friendships, they evoke vile male dependents, and often they themselves become mentally distorted. And across the disorder of their lives are drawn the threat and darkness of those contagious diseases lust transmits. The stigma upon them is so widely appreciated, their dangers are so great, that very few girls or women take to the life voluntarily. They fall into it. So that there has always been a calling, a trade, quasi-illegal, the White Slave Trade, to provoke and tempt and cheat young inexperienced women into it, and to find out, help and exploit those who have offended the established code of good behaviour and so are ripe for enlistment. And naturally the White Slave Trader is active wherever underpaid and insecure feminine labour is to be found.

In our interminable encyclopædia of work and wealth there would

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be space to discuss in detail the treatment of this persistent social element throughout the ages and in various parts of the world at the present time. It would be an intricate story of confused aims, general muddle-headedness, intolerance, jealousy and cruelty. Almost all its uglier and viler aspects would be directly traceable to the tradition of feminine subjection, and the necessary dependence of women upon some powerful protector. It is possible that in the future, as the equality of men and women ceases to be a mere sentiment and establishes itself in usage and law, there may be a relaxation of interference with the private sexual life of women, and the harsher and socially more injurious aspects of intermittent sexual associations will disappear.

Prostitution in the past has been chiefly feminine. That is not due apparently to any inherent sexual difference. It is a difference in rôle which puts men more in need of casual women. In the past women have stayed at home more than men and have been more firmly kept at home. It is the man, especially the man as traveller, sailor, merchant, soldier or student, who has been driven by the stresses of loneliness and boredom that lie at the base of this business, and who has had the freedom to solace himself. His womankind were driven to obscurer consolation or none at all. But now that types of free and prosperous women are developing, who can travel and get away from the observation and moral support of their own community, the parallel need evokes the parallel supply. The dissipated middle-aged woman is becoming almost as common as the dissipated middle-aged man. In the pleasure resorts of Europe and North Africa one meets now the wealthy lonely American wife or widow, looking for the consolations of masculine intimacy and picking up the "gigolo," the dancing partner, as a protégé, a companion and often a venal lover. She is almost as abundant as the Americans who visit Europe to get drunk. But the drifting, prosperous women are by no means all Americans. The gigolo is entirely the equivalent of the prostitute adventuress at the same social level, but because of the difference in his sexual tradition, no one has yet set about pursuing him with a *police des mœurs*, segregating him in brothels, banishing him from ordinary life and legislating against him. He does not seem in need of protection from Geneva, and the White Slave Trader finds him an unsuitable commodity.

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But if he can take care of himself, surely the ordinary adult woman, if she were given proper treatment as a citizen like any other citizen, could do likewise. The difference in the world's treatment of male and female prostitutes is a very interesting and significant consequence of the age-long traditional disadvantage of women. And of a changing attitude towards the personal sexual life. In that saner, better instructed and franker world to which we seem to be moving, when women will be able to fend for themselves, and will be as free to come and go and do this and that as men are, the peculiar needs, tensions, shames and distresses that have maintained the prostitutes' quarter, the red-lamp district, the Yoshiwara, throughout the ages, may be at last alleviated, and prostitution as a special and necessary aspect of social life, that enduring scar upon the mutual kindliness of the sexes, may be superseded and disappear altogether.

§ 6. *The Power of Women through Reassurance and Instigation. Women's Rôle in Determining Expenditure*

Let us turn now to another aspect of the contemporary relations of men to women which is also of very great economic importance. We have dealt hitherto with the disadvantages of women in relation to men. We have now to consider their very real power over men.

It is not exact to say men and women have a need for each other. They have all sorts of needs for each other. It has already been suggested that men resort even to prostitutes for much more than mere sexual gratification. They have a strong need for a general association with women. Their imaginations require that, perhaps more than the feminine imagination calls for the companionship of men. In many cases that desire may change over to repulsion and misogyny, but hardly any men are indifferent to women. Normally they want to be approved of and liked by women; they want their acts and successes to be sanctioned by women; women are the custodians of their self-respect. Women will observe men and attend to the demands of their personas, keep them in heart, keep them in countenance, in a way no man will do.

We write "normally." We are dealing here with the average commonplace human being, who makes up the body and substance

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of the economic process. There are exceptional instances, there are perhaps exceptional races, where the man will watch and sustain the woman's idea of herself and so determine her actions in a manner entirely feminine. And many women nowadays woo and flatter other women. But the general situation is that the woman throws the qualities of bravery, brilliance, cleverness, generosity, dullness, stupidity, elegance or inelegance, meanness, baseness or foulness over the various acts of the man. She owns the moral box of paints. The determination of the values of an extraordinary number of things rests with women. Even when they are slaves they are appraising slaves.

This appraising function of women, their power over masculine self-esteem, combines with their real practical ability to control his social and physical comfort to give them an economic importance out of all proportion to their legal ownership of purchasing power. The greater part of the wealth of the world is still in masculine hands, but a very considerable proportion of that spending power is controlled by or actually delegated to women. What, outside actual business needs, purchase of stock, material, premises, general investments and so forth, do men buy? They buy, one may say, railroads, war material, shipping, aeroplanes, public buildings. They buy their own clothes and their sporting outfits. But even when it comes to the railway and steamship, was it the male or the female demand that evoked the train or cabin de luxe? That we will leave an open question. But so soon as we come to actual living conditions, the woman's influence appears. Men may buy the sports car, but the comfort of the ordinary car is the woman's affair. In domestic architecture it is mainly her taste and needs, her consideration for herself and her consideration for her domestic servants, that have to be respected, and still more is this the case when it is a question of furniture. Household equipment and material, all food and her own steadily increasing wardrobe, are almost entirely in her hands. According to some rather sketchy statistics from America, 80 per cent of the shoppers in a large city are women.

This means that women, and especially the women of the more freely spending classes, exercise a great and perhaps a predominant directive influence on productive industry. They call the tune for most perishable goods. Textiles, furniture, building material.

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catering, are all manufactured and marketed with a view mainly to their satisfaction. They rule the tea shop, they now invade and change the spirit of the restaurant, and in America, where custom closed the drinking saloon to them, they voted and shut it down. The colours and fabrics, the tones and tastes of daily life, and whom men may meet outside their business and their clubs, and what shall be permitted in social life, are in our Western communities dependent upon their decisions.

So far women have exercised their enormous influence over the quality of daily life, with very little sense of any collective responsibility. It has been done individually with no perception of an aggregate effect. They have set about making homes and making up personalities, and have not thought that they were thereby making a world. Even with regard to their children, they have directed attention almost entirely to their present happiness and personal well-being, and disregarded as entirely the way in which social life as a whole would be affected by their upbringing. I think, if educationists were consulted, they would say that in spite of the immense debt of educational progress to particular women, the general influence of the ordinary mother is often tiresome and rarely directive. Her ideas are limited to immediate things; she notices health, feeding and good manners. The rest she leaves uncritically to the school.

She leaves it uncritically to the school because she has never been taught to ask what the school is for.

This is directly due to the fact that a great majority of women of the spending class are relatively uneducated. They have not learnt to ask what anything is for. So far, the ordinary girl of the more prosperous classes has not been educated as well as her brother, she has not had the stimulus of a professional career, and her instruction has been sooner discontinued. The men and women of the labour classes of the Western world are now fairly on a level in the matter of education, and have for the most part what we have termed in this work a peasant persona or an urbanized or industrialized peasant persona. But when we consider the class which prolongs its education beyond the elementary school stage, we get a much greater number of males who are educated to the level of what we have styled variously the "service" or "clerical" or public-spirited persona. There are more men infected with ideas

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of service, of professional and class honour than there are women. The woman's persona in the middle and upper classes still falls in most cases into the more primitive classes of peasant or predatory or a mixture of both. The woman of a good social position is peasant-predatory much more often than the man, and she sets the pattern for the main mass of women. Probably we are not dealing with innate sexual differences here, but only with a wide divergence of tradition and a long lag in woman's education. The experiences of the Catholic Church would seem to show that women can be educated to a service ideology as completely as men.

This lag in feminine education which leaves a dominating majority at the peasant-predatory level, is manifested most strikingly at the milliner's, the costumier's, the jeweller's, and the beauty specialist's. The tradition of service, the process of "impersonalization" through education in the Western world, has made men deliberately inaggressive in their costume, made them at least ostensibly public-spirited, and more and more amenable to official and business and creative preoccupations. This is not a natural thing: it is the result of formal and informal educational influences. The illiterate ancestors of these same preoccupied and creative Western men were more gaudy and splendid in their costume than their contemporary women; they wore conspicuous jewels, dyed their hair and beards, and had little sense of loyalty to anything but a person, prince, king or other leader. Their women had neither the same opportunities for a show nor the same chances of getting the stuff. To-day a great proportion of Oriental men retain that disposition of mind, and most Western women are still, as a sex, at the same barbaric stage. Quiet clothes and unobtrusive uniforms are to be endured only under protest, as acts of extreme self-mortification. And as a consequence, if the Western world were all men and the only buyers in the world, the pearl diver and the pearl imitator might now cease from their labours altogether, the dealers in jewellery and precious stones shut up shop, the trapper and hunter wear their furs themselves or go out of business (leaving a happy remnant of fur- and feather-bearing creatures to survive), and the whole great industry of cosmetics and all the costumiers and milliners would tumble into bankruptcy. The sale of splendid furniture for display and of architecture for great gatherings would also cease almost altogether. A few court officials

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and professional soldiers might still betray a craving for furs, decorations and cosmetics, the secret indulgence of the gorgeous dressing-gown and the vivid pyjamas might intensify, but these demands would be too infinitesimal to sustain all that multitude of workers and arrest the ruin that the disappearance of Western femininity would entail.

And although there is no possibility of Western women disappearing, there is a very strong probability of their standard of education rising to the masculine level and of a general westernization of their world. This opens a prospect of women more gravely dressed and more gravely occupied than at present. Women may presently want to outshine other women as little as contemporary men do, and that conception of jewelled, painted and triumphant, gorgeousness which rules our own social life now only so far as women are concerned, but which still rules the lives of men and women alike in the courts of most Oriental princes, will disappear altogether.

Yet to think of gorgeousness disappearing altogether from social intercourse is almost as painful as anticipating the extinction of humming-birds. Men, under the influence of science, puritanism and practical convenience, have taken to costumes as undistinguished almost as modern service uniforms, but those dressing-gowns and pyjama suits in their outfitters' windows betray how near to the surface the craving for gorgeousness remains. The popularity with them of "fancy-dress" balls and entertainments and of "dressing-up" parties confirms this testimony. Academic costume, the nodding plumes of the deputy lieutenant and the insignia of various American "orders of chivalry"—voluntary and unsolicited chivalry—give it further support. Perhaps the typical modern professional woman already approaches a quasi-masculine compromise, dressing with the greatest severity during business hours, and upon occasion expanding magnificently into an evening costume. But these half-private and occasional relaxations into splendour of serious men and women involve preparations and purchases of a much more incidental sort than does that sedulous, untiring hunt for elegance of the essentially barbaric women of to-day.

It has been asserted that a man's conception of his importance to himself and others seems to be more in his *doing* something than in

don't believe
this woman
is more than
ever.

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his *being* anything; while on the contrary the form in which women seem to see themselves lies rather in being something than in getting anything done. There is a certain truth in this if we may judge by the famous figures of our world. The famous men of our time have done this or that; the famous women are "personalities." They are ends in themselves; they exhibit, and it carries nothing forward. If anything is done by them it is a display stunt. They do something a man has done before—charmingly, I admit. These are persons released to some vigour of expression. In ordinary life both man and woman must live under the restraints of common usage, but there is sound reason for assuming that famous people are, in all things except their especial distinction, just ordinary folk let loose. They are fair samples of what most men and women would be and do if they had the same opportunity.

But this difference of doing and being between men and women as it is displayed to-day may not be a real difference between men and women at all; it is much more probably another aspect of the difference between the barbaric and the educated disposition. If that is right, then the reactions between men and women must be undergoing a change now. If woman is to become less of a gaudy incentive to man and more of a companion and collaborator, then her particular rôle of scrutiny, appraisal, encouragement and reassurance is likely to be played far more subtly and penetratingly than ever before. As she becomes less of a prize in a competition, she will become more of a judge of effort. She will have a different influence upon spending and the spirit of spending, and that means she will exert an increasing influence upon getting and methods of getting.

In our study of the working of contemporary financial arrangements we have shown by a concrete instance or so the immense mischief caused by the financial adventurer. Most of our readers know well enough, if only by repute, the sort of individual who flounders through the world of finance to bankruptcy or the jail, leaving ruin in his track. What is the vision that justifies his risks and toil? Essentially it is success in a world of vulgar display, a world ruled by peasant-predatory standards in which the approval of women and power over women play a large part. For them he becomes a divinity distributing the coveted means by which gorgeousness becomes possible. And that woman-made apotheosis

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enables him to dismiss all compunction about the method by which he has filched, sneaked or bullied his way to wealth. If he has arrived at divinity, he can afford to forget that the means of arrival were in no sense divine. An extensive infiltration of womankind by educated types would make much of the successful adventurer's gorgeousness seem tawdry and its methods of attainment unclean. Such women would bring a new set of social values to bear upon their estimate of personal quality. They would regard the successful peasant-robber not as a hero who had stormed the golden gates of opportunity, but as a greedy and extraordinarily tiresome and destructive parasite upon economic life. They would reveal his affinities to the gangster, pure and simple. All the money in the world in that colder light would not suffice to make him anything better than Clever Alec, the spoiler of things. They would tilt the balance of his self-esteem against him.

§ 7. *Is a Special Type of Adult Education for Women Needed?*

It may be that the pattern of man's education has been followed too closely in the planning of the feminine equivalent. Because men can be most conveniently trained and educated continuously and progressively from five to twenty-five or so onward, it does not follow that women can be educated in the same continuous fashion. Their phases of maximum educability may occur at different periods of their life history.

Since this idea arises naturally out of a comparison of the masculine with the feminine quality and life cycle, we may perhaps anticipate our Chapter on Education and discuss the implication of this particular suggestion here. The suggestion is that it may prove a better arrangement to have a resumption of definite study by women and the taking on of new tasks and new responsibilities by them round about the ages between thirty-five and fifty. A girl should, of course, be educated from the beginning to look beyond the romantic phase of life, to regard that phase as partial and terminable, to consider the concluding years of life not as a process of growing old—growing out of things, but as a going on to a new system of activities. The loss of youth should not be the tragic thing it is for women; it should at most be no more tragic for them than it is for men. But it is a less gradual change in one case than

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in the other, and their transition to the really adult phase needs to be more definitely recognized and made than is done at the present time.

Even where women are not constrained by custom to the premature acceptance of a sexual rôle, the emergence of sex seems to affect their lives in the opening phase of adult life much more fundamentally than it affects the lives of men. It is hardly too much to say that in the alert and curious-minded girl, possibly more eager for knowledge than a boy of her age, a new personality is born at adolescence. The change is greater and more revolutionary than it is with the ripening male. Its onset is relatively catastrophic. The new personality that emerges may be domestic, maternal, erotic, or religious, or a mixture of any of these—the choice will be determined partly by type and partly by circumstances—but it will be typically an acutely self-conscious personality and given to dramatizing its performances. In the course of two or three years this new-born personality seizes upon its rôle. In the average woman we may go so far as to say that the new system of interests and emotions for a time takes charge of her life altogether, thrusting the wider interests of a human being aside, or rather, making of them a mere background to this intensified individual personal life.

It may be biologically desirable that women should for a phase lose touch with broader interests and take themselves thus seriously and intensely as persons, both as lovers and the recipients of love, as wives and then as mothers; it may be altogether good that their minds should undergo this narrowing down to and concentration upon the personal life. In all these intimate rôles more is required of them to-day than has ever been asked before, and more still will be required as the level of civilization advances. The mothers of young children, at any rate in the more forward races, are generally aware of the new responsibilities placed upon them by modern advances in infant management, general hygiene, child psychology and educational practice. They are genuinely anxious to improve themselves. All over England and America there are circles of women, from the poorest wives of agricultural and casual labourers upward, who are studying these subjects and finding them enthralling. In fact, this seems to be the most important result so far achieved by the spread of education among women. Whatever else may be said in this chapter on their technical and professional

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performances compared with those of men, there can be no doubt that their mental emancipation has resulted in happier and healthier nurseries. The little children of 1931, class for class, are better grown, better looking, more scientifically fed and clothed, than children have ever been before, and their minds develop more freely. Let any reader whose memory goes back to the parks of one of our great cities thirty years ago, compare the uncouth and ragged hordes which poured into them when the schools of the poor closed for their holidays, with the friendly and intelligent little creatures who appear to-day. The change is startling; it is due, of course, to many factors, but it could not have taken place without the devoted efforts of the mothers of these children.

What we are now considering, however, is not the children but the mothers. The management of a nursery has never been such a highly skilled job as it is to-day, but it does not go on being a job for nearly as long. In almost all families the girls as well as the boys now go to school—the family itself seldom exceeds four—and by about thirty or thirty-five the modern mother is more or less out of work. The personal life has called her, and the urgent demands of her personal life have been satisfied. And now what is she going to do with the rest of her life, the thirty or forty years which remain?

The answer to this question is naturally dependent upon economic circumstances. If times are hard she will be obliged to dismiss the maid and do her own work, and even though this may leave her with time on her hands, there will be no money for books or fares or subscriptions; she will not be able to get about as one must get about if one is to fill any function outside the home. But if her circumstances are prosperous, then there are two possible roads before her. The majority of middle-aged wives can be carried by the community as parasites or semi-parasites, for the most part either sunk into nonentities or "developing their personalities" by spending as much money as they dare and snatching at their diminishing chances of sensation, or, on the other hand, some rôle, some sort of useful part can be found for them.

At present there is no such rôle for most of these women in the forties and fifties. Their old jobs, if they had jobs before marriage, do not want them back, and there are not nearly enough fresh openings. Individuals of an original turn strike out for themselves

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and take to charity, religion or politics, but no one who meets large numbers of middle-aged women can doubt that such occupations fail to absorb more than a few of this surplus. Some months ago a leisured woman wrote to the "Home Page" of a London evening paper and asked its readers: "Is there, after forty, any alternative to bridge?" They replied in large numbers, but the only alternatives they could offer were that she should feel ashamed of herself, or count her blessings, or find some blind neighbour to whom she could read aloud.

The instance sounds trivial, but the problem is profoundly important in the developing social life of the world. These millions of underoccupied citizens have votes, control expenditure and exercise great influence on the general body of opinion. If they are to be left to themselves because they are uninteresting, left to a narrow and frivolous personal life, the world is creating for itself a force of ignorance, prejudice and self-satisfaction, an atmosphere of mental stuffiness and sluttishness, which will impede all efforts to clear and widen thought and to build the future upon a controlled and courageous use of knowledge.

Here, it seems, a new development of our educational system is demanded. Here is a remediable waste. Here are great numbers of citizens, emerging from a score or less of vivid years of intense personal preoccupation, anxious to find new systems of interests, desirous as a rule both to be of use and to improve themselves, but failing for the most part to satisfy these wishes. A considerable proportion of these released women, released to complete triviality and ineffectiveness, are extremely unhappy. The widespread nature of their need is indicated by the existence of Women's Institutes of Canada and Great Britain and the Women's Clubs of the United States. These give some social relief. But there is need for something more systematic and scientific. It should be possible for a middle-aged woman, without feeling that she is not wanted, or making herself ridiculous, or getting in the way of young people, to re-educate herself. She may wish to take up again interests which she has neglected since her marriage. She may wish to extend her range—probably in the direction of some science dealing with human life—politics, economics, education, psychology, hygiene or history—or she may simply want to have some sort of interest taken in her by somebody, to find other people who

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feel as she does, to be shown how to use her leisure. Even at that, she constitutes an opportunity, she is unused raw material for social organization. She is a citizen, and there is work to be got out of her. She needs, as the automobile people say, "reconditioning" so that she can return to the open road of life afresh.

In the next section we will discuss the possibilities of distinctive work that present themselves to women in the continually more intricate weaving of the modern community, and in our Chapter on Education the nature of the moral and intellectual effort towards a more scientific organization of human society will be examined. In Chapter VIII we have defined what we call the educated persona. As our survey of the mental life of our world develops, the reasons will become more and more manifest why women should regard the highly sexualized and personal years that follow their adolescence as only a phase in their development, and find, in the later acquisition of the educated persona and disinterested work, an escape from this living death so many of them lead now as mere waste products of the social body.

§ 8. *Possibilities of Distinctive Work for Women in the Modern Community*

In the excited days of feminine emancipation at the close of the last century there was much talk of the changes and marvels that would happen when this ceased to be a "man-made" world. Women were to come into their own, and all things would be the better for it. As a matter of fact, the enfranchisement of women, the opening of every possible profession to them, such legislation as the British Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 meant that women were not coming to anything of their own, they were merely giving up their own—or, if you will, escaping from it. And now sufficient time has elapsed for everyone to see quite plainly that women had been not so much emancipated to a new and wonderful distinctiveness as—*despecialized*.

Certain distinctive types of work for woman remain. Everything that cannot be socialized of motherhood; certain forms of work such as nursing, where there is authority without initiative, remain especially hers. She has her distinctive beauty and that power of exploiting the elements of personality which reaches its climax in

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the great actress. These things are for ever hers. For the rest, she is free now to do what she can and find her level. She writes novels and plays, and when she restricts herself to the subtleties of social behaviour and domestic relationship she does better than any man. She pilots aeroplanes and hunts big game with due assistance. She does scientific work; she practises medicine, pleads in the law courts, owns and runs businesses, farms, and the like; there are very few things she does not attempt. A woman captain of a Soviet ship recently came into the port of London. The level of feminine achievement is often high, higher than that of second-rate men, but in none of the open fields, except domestic fiction, can it be claimed that any women have yet displayed qualities and initiatives to put them on a level with the best men in any such department of activity. Outstanding women may presently emerge, but they have not yet emerged. In literature, in art, in the scientific laboratory, they have had a fair field and considerable favour. They suffer under no handicap. But so far none has displayed structural power or breadth, depth and steadfastness of conception, to compare with the best work of men. They have produced no illuminating scientific generalizations. The most successful feminine criticism so far has consisted of temperamental responses and brilliant flashes of personal comment.

It seems fairly certain that women are not going to outstrip men or even to equal them, in the fields in which men are certainly successful. Is there any chance that they may make a special contribution in those directions in which men have so far fallen short of their own feats of mechanical invention and creation—the social fields, politics, administration, education, where interest is concentrated on human life and personality rather than on machinery or abstract thought? *Prima facie*, these are the matters in which one would expect women to display distinctive aptitude. They may have an instinct for management, and their curiosity seems to be naturally inclined towards the practical problems of life rather than mechanisms. Where they exercise political power—as opposed to personal influence over politicians—legislatures have found themselves obliged to take a greater interest in social questions. On governing bodies—in spite of the fact that women are hardly yet placed in such positions for their own sake, but only too often because they are the wives or daughters of some influential

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men—their work is admittedly of weight. Even if their share in the world movement for peace (see Devere Allen's excellent *Fight for Peace*, 1931) has proved a feeble one, there can be little doubt that Prohibition (with its still unfolding consequences) followed in the order of cause and effect upon their enfranchisement. In politics, as in factory life, they seem disposed to make things cleaner and to throw their weight in favour of open and decent conduct.

Nevertheless, it is only in one country that they seem to be rising to the most responsible type of position, and that is a country where conditions are unusual—Russia. Nearly all facts as to Russia are disputed, but there does seem to be a consensus of opinion that under the stimuli provided there—if the reader pleases he may regard them as monstrous and abnormal stimuli—women are losing some of the characteristics which lessen their usefulness in other countries. They are said, there, to display an intellectual curiosity, a mental energy, as great as that of men. Nobody shrinks from appointing a woman to any position for fear that as a woman she will be timid, personal, unscientific, limited in her outlook. Between the young women and the young men there is said to be no difference in these respects. Women are as free as men to choose what they will do, and they are, in fact, entering everywhere into the administration of the country. In the villages the peasant women sit on the local soviets and, as we have said, serve on the co-operative farms. In the towns they are largely employed as inspectors, welfare supervisors, and assessors and collectors of taxes. There are numbers of them in the army—a few are actually there as soldiers, but the majority either teach the men or are responsible for their health and their living conditions. And they are reported to do this sort of work not only as well as, but on the whole better than, men, showing themselves in this particular range of activities more conscientious and sympathetic and less liable to corruption than male officials. And this is in a country where the pre-war percentage of illiteracy among women was 65 per cent.

It is interesting to note that even here, where sex is actually no longer a bar to any occupation whatever, more women than men are studying administration and pedagogy, more men than women, technical subjects, such as engineering.

Yet it has to be noted, in spite of all this, that not one single out-

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standing figure in the direction of Russian affairs since the Revolution has been a woman. No women leaders have resisted the degenerative processes that have reduced the government of Russia from a group control to the harsh autocracy of Stalin. The opposition of Lenin's widow to Stalin was easily swept aside. No other women rallied to her. For all the releases and exposedness of women in Russia, the Soviet world remains a man-made, man-ruled world.

The change which is said to have taken place in the mentality of women in Russia may be exaggerated. Even if that is so, or even if, though real, it is a sort of adaptive coloration, it will still be interesting to consider the conditions which have produced it.

What are the operative factors?

In the first place, and as a key to the entire explanation, the women of Soviet Russia have to do without comfort. And it is in their homes that discomfort reaches its highest point. The overcrowding is appalling; all attempts at private cosiness are doomed to failure. Everything hopeful, stimulating or interesting is part of corporate life, attaching to the schools, the factories, the workmen's clubs, the communal farms. If you do not come out and mix and share, you have nothing to do but rot. Secondly, it is a time of intense intellectual excitement. Not only is the air full of new ideas, but at any moment some or any of them may be acted upon. In England we have come to rely upon a comfortable time-lag of fifty years or a century intervening between the perception that something ought to be done and a serious attempt to do it. Even in America they have time to think things over if they want to. Russia is obliged to think and act almost from day to day—it is important for a woman to know something of what is being thought, because at any moment it may be upon her, twisting the whole fabric of her life. Lastly, in Russia women are legally equal and they are really free. They have as many opportunities as men, and as much money; they are mistresses of their own bodies, and very great efforts are being made by means of crèches, nursery-schools and so forth, to enable them to shorten the periods during which economic dependence through maternity is inevitable. Above all, they cannot sell their sex—in Russia it simply is not possible to obtain a life of ease by physical attraction plus a little lying and a great deal of flattery. Or even by steadfast affection, personal

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loyalty and devotion to home duties. It is not possible, indeed, to obtain a life of ease in any way whatever. What is obtainable is a share in some of the most exciting work the world can offer. There is a whole nation to be taught—9,000,000 women are now taking the special classes for "the liquidation of illiteracy"—healed, organized, inoculated with the new doctrines. Bodily life in Russia may be sordid by Western standards, but the life of the mind seems to be extraordinarily dramatic and stimulating. Moreover, all this woman's work is manifestly wanted. That alone, for many women, must alter the colour of life.

It would be wrong to draw any conclusion from the Russian experiment except that women are adaptable—that in certain circumstances they can shake off that mental sloth and that intense concentration upon their personal lives which obtain in most other countries. It may be that in their hearts they are longing to slip back, that if, at length, the Communist State achieves material prosperity, its women will return with relief to reading fiction and following the fashions. Probably not. For all over the world even though women may not be scaling the higher peaks of achievement, the steady and continuing release of their spirits and the steady and continuing rise in the general quality of their work are indisputable.

It may be that they have latent in them a co-operative steadiness denied to the normally less stable, less calculable, less tractable male. The rôle women have played in assistance, reassurance and instigation has already been discussed in § 6. We return to the suggestions of that discussion here. The future unfolds a prospect of increasing team-work in which women may have to play a steady, harmonizing and sustaining rôle. In the past there have been countries and cultures where the support of women has defended religious observances and organizations against disintegration. Women have played the part of a social mortar. They seem able to accept more readily and with a greater simplicity, and they conserve more faithfully. In the more subtly moralized, highly educated and scientifically ruled world-society of the future, that world-society which is the sole alternative to human disaster, such a matrix function will be even more vitally necessary. That, rather than the star parts in the future, may be the general destiny of women. They will continue to mother, nurse, assist, protect,

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comfort, reward and hold mankind together.

Hitherto the rôle of woman has been decorative or ancillary. And to-day it seems to be still decorative or ancillary. Less frankly decorative, perhaps, and more honourably and willingly ancillary. Her recent gains in freedom have widened her choice of what she shall adorn or serve, but they have released no new initiatives in human affairs. This may not be pleasing to the enthusiastic feminist of the late *fin-de-siècle* school, but the facts are so. In a world in which the motive of service seems destined to become the dominant social motive, there is nothing in what we have brought forward here that any woman need deplore.