

## **The over-production of women and the remedy / by Mrs, Erskine.**

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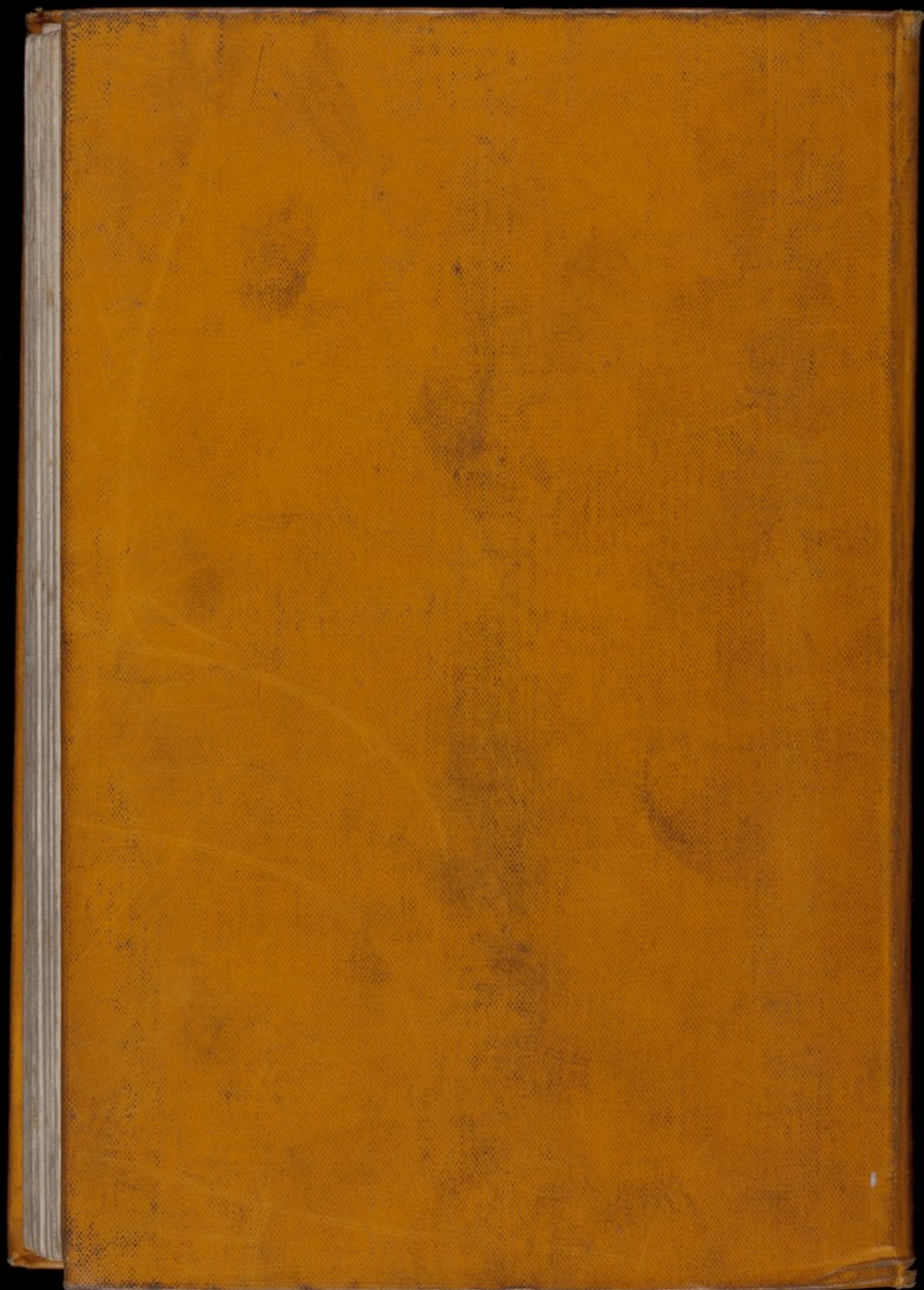
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THE  
OVER-PRODUCTION  
— OF WOMEN —

*And the Remedy*

*Mother! Make not thy Child a Girl,*  
*For sad is the lot of Woman.*







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CAR. I. TABORIS.



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THE PROTECTION  
OF WOMEN



THE OVER-PRODUCTION  
OF WOMEN

THE  
OVER-PRODUCTION  
OF WOMEN  
AND  
THE REMEDY

MRS. JENNIFER K.

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THE  
OVER-PRODUCTION  
OF WOMEN  
AND  
THE REMEDY

BY  
MRS ERSKINE

"Mother ! make not thy child a girl,  
For sad is the lot of woman."

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## PREFACE

It is said that there is nothing new under the Sun, that even the latest inventions are but unearthed treasures, which through centuries have lain buried, like the ruins of Pompeii, under the lava of Time.

If I offer this little book to the Public, it is not as a piece of literary conceit, but as a blunt record of circumstances as I have found them, and as leading up to a discovery marvellous in its potentiality, which can only have hitherto escaped observation by reason of its transparent simplicity. And if I express thoughts and desires that most people conceal, it is merely with the object of exposing a diseased social condition—a condition which must ensure a warm welcome for the remedy I have to propose.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and I have felt compelled to face publicity and extend a helping hand to an over-burdened sisterhood. Marcus

## PREFACE

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Aurelius says that "All people work in some measure towards the ends of Providence—some with knowledge and design, while others are not sensible of it. . . . . The grand design is carried on by different hands and different means." Women have been modified long enough by circumstances. Let them now modify the human race in their turn: and this, I am in the position to assert, *lies entirely within their power.*

This is my message.



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# THE OVER-PRODUCTION OF WOMEN

## AND THE REMEDY

### CHAPTER I

#### THE CAUSE

What are the Laws of Nature? To me perhaps the rising of One from the dead were no violation of those Laws, but a Confirmation; were some far deeper Law, now first penetrated into, and by Spiritual Force (even as the rest have all been) brought to bear on us with its material force.

CARLYLE.

**T**HE cause . . . of what? of England's transcendent greatness or remote shame? of her secret weakness or increasing might? How denominate the unique fact of an existence, within her shores, of a gigantic army, over one and a half million strong, of surplus British women?

Their influence on the whole status of England, socially, materially and economically, is

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more far-reaching than the imagination even can follow ; but before venturing on this complex subject we must ascertain the primary cause of this extraordinary over-increase of Britain's female population. By scrutinising the conditions which have led to the present order of things, we may not have far to seek for the true reason of this anomaly.

Great Britain may well be proud of her huge Navy. Her military forces will, God willing, prove always adequate to the nation's requirements. Her commerce, in the full enlightenment of freedom, must keep forging ahead to satisfy the demands of her large population. Her colonies must grow and increase, nurtured as they are by the most humane of pioneering governments the world has ever known.

The shining Lamp of Liberty throws its powerful light over the whole Empire, and, as long as Justice, Honour and Love of God and Home exist, she must advance, till her ultimate goal reach the highest summit that the history of nations has ever recorded.

That unlimited freedom, to which she owes



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her power to a great degree, has given to her men the "élan" necessary to the increasing development of their noblest faculties ; and, in time, her women also have gradually participated in the beneficial influence of that liberty. Under the sun of those life-giving rays, they have grown morally, mentally and physically.

But they have grown in numbers also to an extent both marvellous and alarming ! It is by the sheer force of their huge collectivity that they have been literally hurled out of the "beaten track," pushed from the ruts of a densely-crowded road into by-ways and fields hitherto totally unexplored by the feminine community at large.

These surging battalions of British women invade every space now open to them. Borne on by the irresistible current, they are thrown out into the world, and, forced to do their uttermost to keep up with the rest, they endeavour to seek a living, to create their own shelter (to avoid the word home) and earn their daily bread. For all this suppressed



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vitality, the strength and energy of a million and more beings, an outlet *must* be found.

Let us stand on one side—this is difficult, for they are on every side—“ Women, women everywhere, and scarcely one a wife.” Let us watch them as they pass, struggling forward, striving upward, pushing, fighting, panting, sweating, in their efforts to *live their life*.

March, march—tramp, tramp—there they go in never-ending procession, and over them all hangs the cloud of forlorn isolation, the sadness of destiny unfulfilled — darkening their path, and making their way a weary one to tread. They are the Great Unwanted—the martyrs of a great empire—they are deprived of their inheritance, kept out of what should be their own—their Promised Land !

And yet, at whose door—at what door—can we lay the blame of this curiously national and calamitous state of affairs ? Whom have we to thank for providing this land with so many hundreds of thousands of lonely woman-souls, who, by mere reason of their sex, may never dare hope to find a mate.



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People of other nations have often wondered why this unique legion of detached women should exist in England alone. How has it come about? Why has it enlarged and spread to such a disproportionate size as compared with every other nation in the world? It is only by recalling the whole history of the British Empire that we may hope to find an answer—for one cannot fail to realize the great influence that the growth of her colonies must have exercised over the entire existence of English womanhood.

Great Britain's enormous possessions, which have to be peopled and colonised by her manhood, are a constant drain on her male population; hardly a family exists that has not a son, a brother, or a cousin, in the colonies. Our lands overseas require armies and navies for the protection of their shores; and only too frequently comes a bloody war to destroy the flower of our youth; and not warfare alone, but decimating and climatic fevers, naval and other disasters, must be added to the list of accidents whereby so



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many that go out are prevented from ever being able to return.

There has, it is true, been some effort of late to further the emigration of women—women servants have been called for in Canada, Australia, New Zealand. But the number of females sent out so far is infinitesimal in comparison with the male emigrants; and, broadly speaking, it may be asserted that women are free from the dangers of empire and colonisation to which men are exposed: and if, in addition to these dangers, we take into consideration mining and other catastrophes at home, we shall understand readily enough why the death-rate of Englishmen is so much higher than that of women.

Thus though according to most authorities and statisticians, the general birth-rate in European countries (except after a war, when the number of boys is overwhelmingly increased) is in the proportion of one hundred and five boys to every hundred girls, my argument as to the too great number of women being brought into existence is in



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no way invalidated. Last year, for instance, one thousand one hundred and sixty-four deaths of English males took place to every thousand deaths of females. The birth-rate in Great Britain for 1907 was 468,000 boys to 450,000 girls ; but the male deaths *exceeded the female by fourteen thousand*. Of the total estimated population (of England and Wales) in 1907, 18,066,091 were females, and only 16,879,509 were males—a *surplus of over one million women*.

In the City of Westminster alone there are 38,730 marriageable women under forty-five years of age, and of this number only 18,164 are married. Whether in the town or in the country, whether in society or in the working classes, the problem is the same. The *opportunity* of marriage for every woman—"a Jack for every Jill"—is not to be found—

"The lioness seeks her mate,  
The she-tiger calls her own,  
Who made it woman's fate  
To sit in the silent alone?"

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



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A telling incident occurred lately at a public meeting, attended by a number of Suffragettes : one of these interrupted the speaker with cries of " Votes for Women."—" Go home and mind your baby," said the orator severely. " I have no baby or husband," promptly rejoined the lady, " and little chance of getting either ! " And here lies the problem in a nutshell. Probably if this woman had had a baby to mind and a house to look after, she would not have been where she was. Mary Mortimer, in referring to the question as to whether or not a woman should earn her own living (and this seriously ! in 1908 !), says :—" Women work because they are self-respecting and because they must. They work because in this enlightened age they have learned to look upon marriage as something more than a mere vocation, a means of livelihood. In this twentieth century it is getting to be looked upon as a disgrace, a disreputable thing, for a woman to marry for the sake of a home.

" But there is another phase of this matter which might be taken more into consideration.



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The woman who goes out into the world and works among men who are real men has more frequent and better opportunities for happy marriage than has her stay-at-home sister.

“ Personally, I have yet to meet the normal woman (and normal women are certainly in the majority) either in England or the United States who would hesitate for one moment between marrying a man whom she respected and loved, and who was fully capable of supporting her, and running a typewriting machine in the City or keeping books in New York’s ‘ down-town ’ section. All other things being equal, trust your modern normal woman to take the man, the home, and the child.”

Then again, Cicely Hamilton, in her spirited reply to the same question, remarks that “ if man wants to keep us out of the paid-labour market, there is only one way to manage it. He must support us—all of us. Not just the one woman he happens to have married, but all of us. Sisters and aunts and cousins, widows and spinsters—here we all are. We want food, we want clothes, we



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want house-room, and a lot of other little things besides. If we are not to earn them for ourselves, man will have to work double tides and earn them for us. Is he going to do it ? ”

The discontent prevalent in so many classes of women, the strong “*féministe*” movement making itself felt all over the civilised world, would doubtless never have been called into existence but for the strained position of a large mass of women in the midst of the ever-increasing *world* population.

And this in spite of the well-known fact that large and even moderate families are becoming more and more rare, and that the birth-rate is getting less and less per thousand. According to the Registrar-General of births and deaths, the falling birth-rate, if continued at the same ratio as at present, will cause the population of this country in 1950 to become stationary ! In 1867 the birth-rate was about 36 per 1,000. In 1907 that for the whole country of England and Wales was only 26.3 per 1,000, namely 0.8 per 1,000 lower than in 1906, and *lower than any other*



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*year on record!* This is a decadent state of affairs, which, starting in France, is gradually creeping from England through Europe, finally affecting even that stronghold of family life, the German Fatherland! In the upper and middle classes especially, this alarming decrease is chronic, and it is now beginning to spread in a noticeable degree to the masses. For British working-class parents of good antecedents, to use the words of an American economist, "have become increasingly unwilling to bring forth sons and daughters who will be compelled to compete in the market for labour and in the walks of life with those whom they do not recognise as of their own grade and condition."

The old-fashioned English paterfamilias, with his numerous progeny, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, and in course of time, at this rate of retrogression, it would not be surprising if the Government were forced to give some encouragement by way of subsidy to those parents who are willing and able to bring up a large family. The Biblical expression of the "quiverful" has



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been held to signify a family of five children,\* that being anciently considered the perfect average family. Few nowadays think it necessary or advisable to have their quiver full ! Even “le choix d’un roi,” which consists of three, is looked upon nowadays by many as a doubtful blessing. The “ideal couple” of children will soon be on the wane, and, if things go on at the present rate, we shall shortly arrive at an almost universal rule of a family of *One* ! This calls to mind the story of the Englishman, who, in chatting with a Frenchman, enquired how many children he had. “Monsieur,” replied the latter, “my family consists of one daughter.” On which the Englishman drily remarked : “In England we should call that an *accident*—not a family ; and being a girl, *one hardly worth mentioning !*” The story must be of very ancient origin, as it does not at all apply to modern conditions of life. But what we want to know is how further restrictions in numbers will affect the future *female* birth-rate.

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\* The original quiver was so fashioned as to contain 5 arrows.



## THE CAUSE

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According to accepted statistics, which agree with those independently collected by the writer, nearly 70 per cent. of all first children are girls. Now, supposing that a large percentage of women just produce one child each, and that only 30 per cent. of the whole number are boys, it is easy to see what disastrous results will obtain with regard to the male birth-rate! The ratio of adults now being, in most parts of the country, three women to every two men, it will then be nearer three to one, provided, that is, things go on as they are now, and no remedy were to be discovered.

But a remedy, and a radical one, has been discovered; for the startling assertion must here be made that the cause of the natural phenomenon of first children being more often girls than boys not only can be easily explained, but in future can be obviated. With the same weapon with which we can prevent a dearth of boys, we can destroy the evils attendant on an epidemic of girls. The possibilities offered us by the discovery of the secret of the sexes open up vistas of

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almost unlimited scope, extending over the whole social horizon ! The power of manipulating and completely transforming the existing order of things will be placed in the hands of *Woman*, to be wielded according to her free will for the controlling and disciplining of Nature to the highest ideals and purposes of mankind.



## CHAPTER II

Alone I walk the peopled City  
Where each seems happy with his own !  
Ah ! friends, I ask not for your pity—  
I walk alone ! . . . . .

LONGFELLOW.

### THE SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN

THE charitably disposed person will always say : “ There is plenty of room for everyone in this world,” but is there really sufficient and respectable room for the drunkard, the loafer and, above all, that human parasite, “ the superfluous woman ” ? The two former are tolerated and even supported by the State, when they come to grief, by means of luxurious work-houses and a hundred and one charitable institutions ever ready to receive them ; but what door is open to the odd women, gentle or otherwise, in our midst ?



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To be happy, a woman must feel that she has some aim and object in life. As the mother of a family, her time is so fully occupied that she has small opportunity for brooding over her troubles. But the case with her unmarried sister is different ; she has more time to put her woes into words and as a rule she is not backward in doing so.

Of course I do not intend for one moment to imply that married life alone can offer happiness to women ; but it is good for woman's self-respect to feel that she is not a negligible quantity, that her charms are valued at their worth. How can these things be, while there are three eligible women to every two eligible men ? One of the three, unless she takes up some work or hobby that is profitable to her, must feel that she belongs to the category of the superfluous woman. It is not because she does not marry that I call her "superfluous" ; but because she has not, and cannot have the opportunity of marriage ; *had* she the opportunity, she might very likely refuse to avail herself of it—she might very conceivably prefer to take the veil, or



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follow a scientific or artistic career, or otherwise prove herself a useful member of the community.

Let us start from the upper classes of society and work downwards. First we will take the case of the country gentleman with a large family of daughters. How can each find an outlet for her energy and ability ?

The cares of the home and responsibilities of the parish devolve probably on the mother or elder sister ; the younger is apt to find the study of special subjects which may interest her hard to pursue in the country home. The usual amusements, such as hockey, tennis, hunting, etc., do not, perhaps, appeal to her. She begins to reflect on the emptiness of her existence and discovers that vegetating is not living, for " Life loves no lookers-on at his great game." Finally her brain, if normal and healthy, will impel her to break away and embark on a more active career.

She makes up her mind not to waste the best years of her life in acting the part of the forlorn maiden waiting for a possible Romeo.

Leaving the family circle she pluckily takes



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wing to London, hires a small room and becomes a typist, secretary, or something similar. Thanks to a small parental allowance her struggles are of a mild description ; she thinks she is happier than she was at home because she now feels free and independent, and her occasional pleasure will be to entertain a girl friend at her club. She may meet and mix with lady workers of her own class, but often she will have to cope with humiliating experiences, thanks to an inferior set of associates or vulgar employers, who have not the perception to discriminate between a lady worker and one who is not.

Meanwhile neither by birth nor education is she adapted to the requisite mode of living. Surely her prospect of a truly successful career will be remote.

Her stay-at-home sisters, lacking the dash requisite to explore the unknown, gradually settle down to a humdrum existence and become "molluscs" ; or worse still, they, perhaps, fall a prey to chronic melancholia as a result of having nothing to do and nobody to live for.



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Despite the growing recognition that scope must be allowed to women of to-day, the most far-thinking and level-headed people assert that the working lady is taking the bread out of the wage-earning man's mouth, thereby adding to the difficulties of unemployment, and lessening for both sexes the chances of marriage. The complaint of a would-be Benedict which appears in a recent daily paper is thus worded :—

“In early youth I yearned for some position  
Which should at least enable me to wed,  
But in these days of female competition,  
I own that that ambitious hope is dead ;  
For lo, wherever money may be made,  
I find the strenuous petticoat invade.”

To sum up, the situation amounts to this : for a woman to stay at home and not marry is to be a source of disappointment to herself and her people, and to go and earn her own livelihood is rather to be condemned than commended. There are times in her life when she must come to the regrettable conclusion that it might have been better if she had never been born !



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Of course one knows of many girls amongst one's relations and friends who are really happy and useful in their self-made careers, and who provide also a source of pleasure and interest in their environment; the strenuous work and regular hours of professional life being adapted to their energetic temperament and ambitions. In fact one could not imagine these women differently or more worthily employed than as they are, and many great writers and artists of the day are evolved from the numbers of clever and charming women who have the courage and capability of asserting their independence in some such manner as has been described.

The best social workers in the cause of suffering humanity, the many self-sacrificing toilers for all charitable purposes, are drawn from this class. These are far indeed from the category of the Superfluous Woman. They are, in fact, the many exceptions to the rule. And I venture to add that in the same way that there are unmarried women who more than fulfil their lifework in the world, so there are plenty of married women who fall far



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short of the ideal, and are a disgrace to the sex to which they belong. But this does not in any way invalidate my argument ; for this is no matter of sex—in every department of life we meet with people who merit the query “ Cui bono ? ” as to the aim and object of their existence.

Nevertheless the query is peculiarly applicable to a woman who has not been able to make her way as she could have wished, and has proved herself a failure abroad as well as at home ! Perhaps the chief reason why so many girl workers do not make a success of their lives, is that at the back of their minds the refrain “ Till *he* comes ” is for ever echoing. Their hereditary dependence unconsciously undermines their various careers, and keeps them always on the look out for the magical *Him* to appear, to rescue them from surroundings satisfactory enough in themselves. This is the cause of many dismal failures amongst the wage-earning women, who, as toilers, are thus rarely able seriously and fully to concentrate their energies on their professions.



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This may be simply one of the various symptoms of a transitional period, and as time progresses and women feel they are on terra firma as regards their status in the world, they will adapt themselves better to the new condition of life.

With the calm self-assurance that a strong position affords, they may in time know better how to hold their own with the best in the field of industries and organised labour, and yet be true to their sex.

But, meanwhile, the occupations pursued by women up to the time of marriage are seldom in any way calculated to fit them for their position as wives and mothers. Pity indeed that girls are not taught the rudiments of house-keeping, domestic economy and dressmaking, rather than the new-fangled smattering of French and music and other high arts, which are but poor compensation for a badly-cooked dinner in an ill-organised home.

Then again, could anything be more pathetic than the lot of poorly paid governesses, companions, etc.? I mean those who, through reverses of fortune or other causes,



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are driven to seek a sphere to which they are not by birth suited. Often treated as inferiors by the family, they are generally looked down upon by the servants. In fact they are neither "fish nor fowl." How often is it not the case that the "Parvenu" engages a lady to bring up his children, and yet she is not good enough to come down to dinner, but "sups" in solitude in a remote corner of the house! Surely the lot of the domestic servant is Paradise as compared to this; they at all events have each other to talk to, and live on the fat of the land.

Perhaps of all others the servant's lot is one of the easiest and most free of cares and responsibilities; it may not always be a bed of roses, but it is less thorny and better suited to the feminine nature than many others; and to thinking minds it must remain a matter for surprise that so many girls, in order to preserve a merely nominal independence, prefer the work of the factory to domestic service.

As regards the class which forms the bulk of womanhood, what has life to offer them in



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the way of compensation? Is the life led by the girl behind the bar an enviable one from the point of view of health, morals and society? Does one ever see the bloom of youth on the faces of those thousands of waitresses in the crowded London teashops, as they drag their flagging steps from table to table? Is it conducive to happiness and well-being to sew from morning to night, so many shirts at 1s. 3d. a day, which forms the occupation of masses of both British and alien women in the East End?

Quoting Mary MacArthur, Editor of the "Woman Worker":—"I know many women who make shirts at 1s. or 9d. a dozen. Sometimes they sub-let them to other women. I have found the actual worker making shirts at 5d. a dozen which had originally been given out at 8d. a dozen.

"There is a girl in Woolwich. She has one child, aged two years, entirely dependent upon her. She is a shirt finisher, and does buttoning and button-holing by hand. She is one of the workers whom I took a few months ago to give evidence before the Select



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Parliamentary Committee, which for two years has been considering such evils. She is paid 5d. a dozen for collars.

“ Remember, this is high-class hand-work. Cotton costs her from 3d. to 4d. a week. Her average earnings are 4s. 6d. weekly, or from  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. an hour. Every day she has to spend an hour and a half in fetching her work, as it is only given out in very small quantities. Often she has to wait for it. Sometimes she has worked with hardly a break for twenty hours, from six a.m. one day until two a.m. the following morning.

“ For the five weeks before last Christmas her actual wages each week were 4s. 4d., 3s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2s. 7d., and 3s. The rent of her basement room is 1s. 6d. weekly.

“ All this she told the Parliamentary Committee. The members of Parliament were aghast. Some were incredulous.

“ ‘ But how do you live, you and the child ? ’ asked one M.P.

“ ‘ We don’t live,’ she replied, with more passion in her tone than I had ever heard



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before. And she added, after a moment, 'Often we have not enough to eat.'

"The Committee recalled me afterwards.

" 'I know that every word of it is true,' I told them."

Whichever way you turn, from the shop to the factory, from the stage to the street, everywhere the futile struggle confronts us and the tragedies of woman's life are being enacted. There is no need to emphasise or belabour this point; all thinking women nowadays study social conditions and have formed their opinions as to the lives of the women toilers who plod on hopelessly, broken down in health, never earning sufficient to make provision for old age, their ultimate bourne the hospital or the workhouse.

No doubt legislation has improved, and will further improve, the conditions of our workers, but legislation can only be a palliative and not a cure. There are too many women competitors in the world, and the elimination of a great number of them is urgently needed.

To quote Dr. Macnamara, M.P.: "there are too many married women in the labour



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market whose husbands can, and ought to, maintain them at home looking after the children. For did she stay at home she would not then be competing with her husband in the labour market, and she would be bringing up her children, instead of handing them over to others to be looked after." In the North of England this is specially the case, where the Lancashire wife, though often sufficiently well off, insists on going to the factory from morning till night, leaving her luckless babes to the care of any underpaid and often careless hireling. The "stay-at-home" life does not appeal to her, and the inherited instinct of domesticity is dying out more and more. Surely this type of woman scarcely deserves the title of Wife and Mother! She is merely a wage-earning machine causing a glut in the already over-stocked labour market. Would not the suppression of all married female workers, or mothers of families especially, greatly help to solve the problem of the North Country *male* unemployed?

And so, this time from the economic standpoint, we return again to the root and purpose

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of this book. *What is required is the elimination of the preponderance of the female element in our race, the establishment of a new order in which a superfluity of women shall be unknown.* Eve was the unthinking progenitor of mankind in its beginnings. *We* are called upon to be the thinking mothers of the race that is to be. Our first step is to use the power that may be ours to regulate the production of our sex.



### CHAPTER III

"I follow Nature!" Follow Nature still,  
But look it be thine own.

YOUNG.

#### THE MOTHER AND HER FEMALE OFFSPRING

**I**S not Motherhood the most beautiful illustration of the just law of compensation which is given to woman to soothe and support her in her chequered career?

But even the joys of maternity are not unalloyed, tinged as they are so often with fears for the future and a remote disappointment when another girl instead of a boy has been added to the world's population. Have any of you, my sisters, felt that intense pity of love as you lay gazing on the face of your newborn baby girl? Many of you must have experienced a sad presentiment when your thoughts wandered into the future of that infant, doomed to the everlasting helplessness of her sex.



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What has maid-child here to gain,  
Born to weakness, tears and pain ?  
To the coffin from the cot  
Heiress to the Mother's lot !

The thoughtful parent must feel with regard to a daughter that everything that she can need as a child can be found for her, but not so later on. Our boys will have, or should have, a career to rely on, but to girls is left to learn or do what they may, and then wait for what Fate may, or may not, have to offer them.

We have brought them into the world, hampered from the start by the sole reason of their sex, by the fine sensibility and nervous susceptibility of their feminine nature, crippled morally and physically by the morbidly delicate fibre of their system, and entangled, materially and spiritually, in the ample folds of their woman's garb ! It is true that, as a child, a girl, if strong and agile can climb a tree as well as many a boy, but generally at the risk of a torn frock and a severe reprimand from the mother ! You may say : " Why should she necessarily



## MOTHER AND FEMALE OFFSPRING

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climb a tree? There are other pursuits more suitable for a little girl!" But the reply to your riddle, if you set it, is easy. Why also, if she be a woman, should she lead a man's life? But what alternative is there to offer a very large percentage of girls in England?

The other day, in summing up a breach of promise case, Mr Justice Grantham remarked that "the natural instinct and ambition of every girl is marriage!" We think, however, that his lordship made a rather sweeping assertion in saying also that "the one *object* ladies have is surely to get married!" This is far from being the case. But the fact remains that it is the general opinion. Yet we have shewn that only two out of every three girls in Great Britain can hope to get married and lead a real woman's life—the life of Wife and Mother. And the remaining one out of every three, what of her? Well, metaphorically she must climb trees in her petticoats and work for her living as hard as any of her male fellow-bread-winners, for about a half or two-thirds of their stipend.



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Of course there are always some of the "odd" women who are left well off, or with a sufficient income to enable them to live quite independently. But what of the enormous numbers of girls who at the death of their father, or even before, find themselves stranded, without enough money to keep body and soul together. If fathers have an atom of parental love for their girls, they should provide for their future. No matter how modest the portion, they should not let them go dowerless to their husbands, or wade penniless through their spinster life !

The French have always set a good example to British parents in starting the "dot" of their daughter by laying aside for her whatever little sum they can afford, from the time of her christening ! That Devonshire farmer who gave out, on every market day, the fact that his seven daughters would each get £50 on their wedding day, was a father to be admired and respected. For though the daughters were many and plain into the bargain, they each soon found a suitor and lived happily ever after.



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This recalls the story of a rich father of two unattractive daughters. As a likely "parti" for one of them this wily parent singled out a smart young Guardsman. After giving him a good dinner, he ventured to discuss with his guest, in a seemingly artless way, the prospects of his girls. Finally, warming up to his subject, he said—"Whoever marries either one of them will get £50,000 with her, paid down on the wedding-day!"—"Make it one hundred thousand," replied the gallant officer, "and I'll take 'em both!"

It is noticeable that a girl, who has been brought up alone with one or more brothers, is generally a success in after life. The self-confident girl develops into the efficient and self-respecting woman. And this is because at home she has always been appreciated at her proper worth, which is rarely the case where girls are in the majority. The other day, in chatting with my laundress, I was struck by the truth of her words: "Yes'm," she said, "it's an orful affliction for us pore people to have a lot of girls. I'd rather 'ave 'ad a dozen boys with only one arm



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apiece than my five girls with two, for *they* can't come to the same 'arm as wot girls does ! And as I often sez, I'm sure everyone thinks alike, only they all sez different ! ”

How much it is possible to learn from uneducated folk who have not quite forgotten how to put things as they are, and who, if there's only a cat to eat for dinner, don't, like our neighbours *d'outré-mer*, pretend it's a rabbit !

We have all read of the ancient Chinese practice of putting surplus female infants out in the branches of trees for the jackals to devour. This horrible custom it has long been the object of missionaries to repress.

In fact, hundreds of these hapless babes are being yearly rescued by these excellent people and brought up in schools and convents under their charge.

Among the Hindu tribes, called the Jarejah, in the West of India, it was the custom to destroy female infants. The mother herself was commonly the executioner of her own offspring. Women of rank may have had their slaves to perform this office, but the



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far greater number executed it with their own hands. And if, by any means, the girl child escaped for a few years, her existence was regarded as a reproach to their caste.

They had various methods of destroying the infant, but two were most prevalent.

Immediately after the birth of a female, they put into its mouth some opium, or drew the umbilical cord over the face to prevent respiration. And this was no merely instinctive barbarity. Its defence was most eminently rational. The tribes alleged that: "the education of daughters is expensive; that it is difficult to procure a suitable settlement for them in marriage; that the preservation of female honour is a charge of solicitude in a family; and that when they want wives, it is more convenient to buy them from another caste than to breed them themselves." Abhorrent to natural feeling as this may appear, it is certain that it is only an extreme example of a *principle*, which is common to all the nations of the earth where Christianity is not known—namely, a disposition to hold the female in contempt.



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Everything in this world is comparative, and though it is a dreadful thing to have to admit, in the case of thousands of girl-babies in our country it would have been better had they also remained in embryo. We have only to peruse the pages of any pamphlet relative to the work of the Salvation Army and other great and noble efforts for reforming the slum world of our great cities, to form an opinion as to the lot of those poor little outcasts of society, and their prospects.

Born into the midst of misery, squalor and vice, they are bound to go to the wall in the struggle which must be theirs—a struggle in which every woman in existence—to some extent—shares, but which for the poor and the unwanted is nothing less than terrific.

Frances Kemble says: "I can't believe that women were intended to suffer as much as they do, and be as helpless as they are in childbearing; but rather that both are the consequences of our many and various abuses of our constitutions and infractions of God's natural laws." But surely she forgets the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of Genesis,



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which plainly sets forth the curse of woman as an inheritance which must go from mother to daughter from generation to generation. "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. . . ." Yes, even be he a liar, a drunkard and a thief, the law of right of the stronger must prevail for ever and ever in this world, however greatly the evil may be mitigated.

Do mothers think deeply enough, with regard to this subject, of the heritage of woe they bequeath to their female offspring? In their over anxious wish to bring about the supposed future happiness of their child, do they consider sufficiently what sort of husband they encourage her to marry? Too often they are inclined to speak like the match-making Scotch mother, who in arguing with her daughter as to the merits of a suitor, exclaimed, "Weel, lass! A mon's a mon, an' there's na ower mony in the warld!"

And probably hundreds of ill-assorted marriages are brought about by a maternal speech of that description. A scathing utterance, as found in the *Geisha*, is more pregnant



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with truth, "that *enfant terrible* of the virtues," than anyone cares to admit: "Sell girls at a profit during the London season! Why, you can't *give* them away!" And as a specimen of Miss Corelli's humour, in "Holy Orders," we read: "As ef gels worn't as cheap an' common as blackberries on a hedge, waitin' for men to gather 'em, an' turnin' sour, too, ef they ain't gathered when ripe."

Acting on the principle inculcated by their mothers that any husband is better than none, more girls than people have any idea of drift into matrimony from sheer ennui and lassitude. Unreasoning custom too often makes slaves of mothers to the detriment of their better judgment, and just as they have perhaps suffered through the erring suggestions of their maternal parent, so do they, in their turn, all unwittingly, guide their daughters' feet into the way of sorrow and disillusion.

I believe that really the whole trouble of parents is that with regard to their girls they do not reflect at all—or very little. And, in



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so far as they do, they do it too late. It is "too late" when the child is born, unless her life has something suitable and proper to offer her. *The only fruitful time for thought is before she is thought of!*

Life without a plan,  
As useless as the moment it began,  
Serves merely as a soil for discontent  
To thrive in; an encumbrance ere half-spent.

Only lately Mdle. Gabrielle Rossignon, the well-known Belgian champion of modern education for girls, was discussing with me the vital subject so dear to her heart, and on which, as her life-work, she has centred all the energy and resources of her unique intelligence. "My one wish," she said, "is not only to make accomplished ladies of my girls, but also women in the truest sense of the word, and to succeed in rendering them fit to fulfil the highest destiny that may perchance be awaiting them. But," she added sadly, "a high destiny does not always await them, and often when I have turned out my '*jeunes filles*' as they should be, I wonder



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what sort of future their parents or Fate have to offer them, which is in any way suitable and worthy of what they have a right to expect ! ” — “ Against stupidity the Gods themselves are powerless. ” Mothers, wake up ! Use the intelligence given you, not only for those things in life that you deem worthy of its attention, but bring it also to bear on every act accomplished of your existence ! If you have nothing to offer your future girls, *leave them unborn !*

For your sons there are generally useful careers to select from—at any rate they can be used to defend the empire. And as regards their future wives, there will always be plenty of mothers who, willy-nilly, produce daughters galore, and sufficient to go round ; there will be no dearth of mothers for the continuation of our race !

I wish it to be most distinctly understood that the action I am about to advocate is not “ modern ” or abnormal in the smallest degree—it is not in fact even medical or scientific. I have made a discovery and, I am now wishful to render it of the widest



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possible use to my fellows. To those women, and I know them to be many, who shrink from any investigation or extension of knowledge in these matters, I would plead the utter national failure of the prevailing conventional attempt to identify ignorance with innocence, and remind them that we are *responsible for the use of our intelligence in every department of life*. On the use you make of it to-day depends the destiny of the woman of the future—the offspring of the woman of to-day.

## CHAPTER IV

“If thou wilt indeed look on the affliction  
“of thine Handmaid . . . . . give unto thine Handmaid  
“a Man-child.”

I SAMUEL, Chap. i., verse II.

### NO SON AND HEIR

**H**AVE you ever thought of the life tragedies of those wives on whom devolves the all-important necessity of giving a son and heir to a throne, or to a great title? And have you ever realised the bitterness of the mother's lot to whom Fate has sent girls only, as last scions of a noble race?

We need not look far nor high to find hundreds of women's lives entirely spoilt or marred by their inability to produce a boy to carry on his father's name. And is it not the secret wish of every mother “to give a man-child to the world,” an event which has, from time immemorial, been looked upon as the consummation of her destiny!



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To start from the beginning, we have only to open our Bible and peruse the old Testament to see the crude simplicity with which the patriarchs differentiated their views with regard to the sexes. According to the laws of Moses and their whole teaching, the superiority of man, as against the inferiority of woman, was duly impressed on every Israelite, and the national mode of living and code of ethics were arranged in accordance therewith.

From verses in the twelfth chapter of Leviticus we learn that the mothers of newborn girls were subjected physically to far more stringent sanitary regulations than the more blessed mothers of males.

The wife who omitted to give a son to her lord was looked down upon with pity and contempt, whilst the more fortunate mother of sons felt herself to be supremely superior to her luckless sister. Indeed, the many instances the Bible gives us of those barren women praying for male offspring, go far to shew how all-important it was to them and their status in the society to which they



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belonged, to bring forth a man-child. It is also characteristic of the tone of that era that not a single case of a mother and her female offspring is recorded at any length in the whole of the Old Testament or in the New ! The female child was doubtless considered a negligible quantity—perhaps a necessary evil ; but never worthy of any mention in detail in the Book of Ages, as handed down from generation to generation !

The same view with regard to the female child, in any uncivilised population, exists still in all parts of the world. In India the law permits any Hindu husband to divorce his wife, or take another in addition, if, after eleven years of married life, she persist in giving him female progeny only !

In China, three hundred millions of women are only too proud to live with their crunched up feet if only they become mothers of *sons*. If more than one daughter should fall to their share the mite will be submitted immediately to the torture of foot-binding and the parents will start looking out for a purchaser to relieve them of a superfluous burden.



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In Japan, where Western ideas prevail more and more, there exists still strongly the sense of superiority of the male species, and the mother of sons is a being admired and upheld by all as a supporter of the empire, and as one who has fulfilled the complete duty of wifedom. She has provided for her husband sons who will ensure a better and higher place in the next world, to their father and his forbears, than these otherwise could have hoped to obtain.

In Turkey and all Oriental harems, the single wife runs serious risk of having to share her husband's affection with a rival, if, as the years go by, an *Arslanum* (little lion) or son be not born to her! Curiously enough the father of many daughters is apt to be treated with ridicule in the land of the fez. To illustrate this fact, a story is told of how a man, being called away from a Government assembly on account of his wife's sudden illness, returned to his colleagues, stating that the cause and happy result of this domestic incident was a newly-born child. On being pressed as to its sex, he ruefully admitted



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that it was a third daughter. Thereupon, with mocking hilarity, his Turkish friends set upon the unfortunate paterfamilias with their sticks and fists, and only permitted him to escape on his promising never again to commit such an offence on society.

Some years ago I had the good fortune to know His Excellence Nourry Bey, who, as Minister of Turkish Finance, was making a prolonged business stay in Paris. On paying us a visit, he used, whilst alternately sipping his numerous cups of black coffee and glasses of cold water, to discourse at great length on the subject of his five sons. Of his two daughters he rarely spoke, except sometimes to mention some pretty saying of the younger one, a winsome little girl of seven. "She is very pretty and clever now," he said in reply to my questions, "but in a few more years she will wear the veil and I shall not know much more about her; then she will cease to interest me." But as an *arrière-pensée* he added: "Only the other day, as I came away, she said, 'Ah! Babba, take me with you to that strange country where I need not



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grow up and have to wear a Tchartchaf and be always shut up ! ' Ha, ha ! She is indeed a droll child ! " Thus spake the Turkish potentate, and his ample figure shook with laughter as he repeated this pathetic speech of his little girl !

Strange to relate, only last year I saw in the newspapers a long account of the escape, with her married sister, from a harem of that same daughter of Nourry Bey, which filled a column of the latest sensational news.

It is easy to understand the power that may be acquired by the Odalisque, in the Royal " Serail," who is lucky enough to produce a son—a possible future sultan, and one may guess also at the intrigues that surround the fortune of that mother and child, and the many dangers lurking in store for them in consequence of the jealousies and envy awakened in the breasts of their less favoured rivals.

Though we have touched on some of the relatively uncivilised parts of the world, we have not spoken of the feelings as expressed or harboured by our western civilisation in



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respect of the mother who has failed to fulfil her mission in life, by not giving a man to the world. Human nature is everywhere the same ; it is only a question of "more or less," wherever we look, wherever we go. "Le relatif ; l'absolu n'existe pas."

We turn to Russia and to that Empress who so long disappointed the people who looked to her to give a son and heir to the throne of All the Russias. Heaven knows what the result of a fifth daughter to the Czar at that time would have meant, when the coming of the long-wished-for heir alone prevented a terrible cataclysm occurring in the bloody history of that country. Fond mother of her children though she be, the Czarina could quite well be imagined as echoing the sentiment of the Hindu woman on the same provocation, who, on seeing one of her children accidentally killed in the street, exclaimed, "Thanks be to Allah, who hath taken the *girl* and left me the *son* ! "

Then again there is the Queen of Italy, with her three daughters and only one son : it would certainly have been more satisfactory



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to herself and the nation had the reverse in numbers of sex fallen to her share.

And nearer home we know of many great families who would gladly part with some of their riches if they could thus ensure the birth of a son to carry on their race. What must it mean to the disappointed parents, thus situated, when "another little girl" arrives on the scene! It reminds one of the French story of the visitor enquiring of the little daughter of the house how her mother was and what the new little sister was to be called. "I don't know yet," said the little girl, "what her *real* name is, but Papa calls her 'une grosse déception'!"

In the past generation it was the fashion to write the births of every fresh member of the family in the big Bible, often handed down from father to son. The following inscription is yet to be found in the one lying on the book-shelf of a certain old-fashioned homestead:—"Birth of seventh child—a puny girl. Birth of eighth child—a boy, God be praised!" This is typical of thousands of



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cases to be found all the world over ! Who does not know the significance of the veiled answer to the query as to the sex of a newly-born infant ? “ It’s a fine child ! ” A “ child ” always means a girl, for in the reverse case it is always “ A fine *boy* ! ” The most disagreeable mother-in-law ceases to find so many faults in the daughter-in-law who gives her grandsons, and the mother forgives her daughter many past offences if, when married, her offspring be of the “ right sex.” An American lady, on describing her family to a friend, remarked : “ I have one son and three daughters, but I reckon I think a deal more of him than I do of the girls, though they are a good bit brighter than he is.”—“ Why so ? ” asked her friend. “ Well, I guess it is because he *is* a boy ! ” was the frank reply. On visiting a friend lately, who had just become the mother of a fifth son, I asked her if she would not rather it were a girl. “ Personally,” she replied, “ I should have preferred a little daughter, but, on the other hand, I feel very proud to have many sons, and I can’t help noticing *how much more*



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*my friends think of me for having had a large family of boys."*

This may all sound exaggerated and even ridiculous, but it is true nevertheless, and many of my readers, I feel sure, could supply countless anecdotes and truths, equally pointed from their own *entourage* and personal experience—facts entirely based on truths, unobserved perhaps by many, but palpably present always to those who have ever thoughtfully considered the question.

To any unprejudiced observer, willing to face facts, it is only necessary to lift the thin veil of conventionality to see them, aggressively realistic, doomed to last as long as routine runs in its present groove, allowing the laws of man and Nature to take their unnatural course. *Unnatural*, because, in not seeking to understand Nature, we are apt to misinterpret her laws altogether, and thus, despoiling them of their original simplicity and purity, use them to abnormal and fundamentally wrong ends.

The old saying, "Help thyself and Heaven will help thee" applies to all the laws of

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Nature with regard to man, and more especially to that law appertaining to the subject of this book. The time has come for us to help to right that wrong that we have brought on ourselves, by listening only to the lower instincts of Nature and heedlessly ignoring her higher dictates.

Let there be no more mothers, who, smarting under the disability of being able to give a man to the world, cry in vain for a son and heir. For at last we are in a position to lighten their burden and raise their self-respect, by encouraging them with every hope of satisfying their natural wish to bring forth a child of the sex they most desire, and thereby benefiting mankind.



## CHAPTER V

. . . . . Good for a few  
Evil for all the rest, is what we have ;  
Good for the many, and Evil for the few,  
Is what we want, and what we mean to make ;  
There's no best way only the choice of ills.

F. DAVIDSON.

### CONSECRATED VITALITY

THE early Victorian Era, I make bold to say, did more harm to the cause of woman's enlightenment than any other period of English history. And from the aftermath of that era we are still suffering.

It was a time when men, fired with enthusiasm for pioneering, left by thousands for the colonies to follow the innumerable careers which the increase of our over-seas possessions opened up to them, new fields to reconnoitre, new lands to conquer, new lives to enter on ! What wonder then that, spurred on by the glamour of adventure, they travelled North,



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South, East and West, to take up the varied occupations of colonial settlers, leaving their countless sisters, cousins and possible sweet-hearts behind !

“Left to blossom and bloom alone,  
To fade and die—unseen, unknown !”

It was clearly impossible under the circumstances to do otherwise than leave their womankind at home, for how could they have been expected to cut their way through virgin forests, explore unknown regions, and risk the dangers of expeditions of every description, hampered by petticoats ? The venturesome spirit was quite a sufficient incentive to spur man on to further exploits of daring or moneymaking during that lengthy reign, so productive of wealth and prosperity to the empire. Great and powerful as Britain became under her gracious Queen, yet the lives of her womankind stood out as a sorry contrast to that of the other sex. It seems all the more astonishing that this should have been so, when a woman, and so good and respected a one, ruled over



these dominions ! This part of the nineteenth century may well be called "the crinoline and tallow-dip period," with the environment which that description implies.

With their unlovely coal-scuttle-shaped bonnets and their preposterously hideous gowns, their "bread-and-butter Miss" countenances and simpering airs, women of that day cultivated with the "prunes, prisms and potatoes" smile, a hysterical tendency to faint on the slightest provocation. When this fainting took place—and it occurred easily owing to the wasp-like minuteness of the prevailing fashion in waists—they were plied with smelling-salts of various kinds, and thimblefuls of "cordial" were administered. Thus trained and equipped to the greatest physical disadvantage, these early Victorians were pleased to spend their long days and evenings in bringing forth the fit products of their uneventful and dead-alive existence.

They sat hour after hour on a hard, straight-backed chair (of which our well-known kitchen "Windsor" is a remnant), embroidering yards of ugly mantel and chair covers, or in knitting



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warm petticoats for the undressed nigger girls of some tropical clime, in aid of the missionary societies, these being the only public-spirited enterprises deemed fit for women to take an interest in. As the evenings drew in, they gathered round the table, near the fire, and they stitched or knitted, crotchet-worked or darned, with monotonous diligence.

At other times they would vary their exciting operations by sketching or painting, with infinite painstaking, those wonderful but profitless works handed down to us by our grandmothers : those cobweb etchings and lengthily copied poems in exquisitely fine handwriting : those marvellously coloured flowers of minute design, all testify to the endless patience of ladies of that school. We keep and possibly treasure these remnants as curios of a by-gone age, but we can attach no sense of real value, ornamental or utilitarian, to them, beyond that of witnessing to the monumental perseverance of the woman of those days.

With what *ineptitude* they worked at these occupations of needle and pen, and similarly



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with what microscopic narrowness they viewed the whole side of life as seen from their feeble standpoint ! This is proved by the works of Thackeray, Dickens, and other writers, portraying, with pitiless sarcasm, the weakness of human nature as indulged in by our grandmothers. Anything beyond the immediate requirements of their domestic affairs they do not seem to have viewed with any degree of interest ; for woman and her advancement, moral or material, there was little thought, the rank and file following the example of their Queen, who intensely disliked woman to aspire to anything beyond being a fireside companion !

Like the present German Kaiser she believed that the round of female interests should be restricted to " Children, the Church and the Kitchen," and it is recorded that, in speaking of a certain supporter of woman's rights, our late Sovereign severely remarked that " Lady —— ought to be *whipped* ! " In a similar vein Miss Elizabeth Smith wrote that : " Woman has need of extraordinary gentleness and modesty to be *forgiven* for



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possessing superior ability and learning.” Our grand-parents seemed to ignore the obvious fact that “to produce a fine race of men, it is necessary first to have an enlightened race of mothers.”

Day’s “Sandford and Merton,” in discussing the education of those days, says that : “If women are in general feeble both in body *and mind* (!) it arises less from Nature than from education. We encourage a vicious indolence and inactivity which we falsely call ‘delicacy,’ instead of hardening their minds to the severer principles of reason and philosophy. We breed them to useless arts which terminate in vanity and sensuality. In most countries they are taught nothing more to which they can pretend to give the name of intellectual, than the modification of the voice, or useless postures of the body ! Their time is consumed in sloth, and trifles become the only pursuit capable of interesting them. We seem to forget that it is upon the qualities of the female sex that our own domestic comfort and the education of our children depend, and what are the comforts or the education



which a race of beings, corrupted from their infancy, and unacquainted with all the duties of life, are fitted to bestow ? ”

In exaggerated contrast to his woman-kind, the Englishman of the Victorian era stood out as the over-sexed tyrant of all he surveyed ! The “ three bottle man ” was the beau ideal of the diner-out, and in polite society it was considered quite correct for dawn to break on the unfinished carousal. “ A taste and knowledge of wines and cookery appeared to our ancestors to be the sign of an accomplished *roué* and manly gentleman,” and they seemingly endeavoured to outdo Epicurus himself, who, though esteeming happiness to consist in pleasure, yet was temperate, as Cicero observes. The Spartans brought up their children to loathe drunkenness by shewing them a drunkard, whom they gazed at as a monster ! It is lucky for our forbears and ourselves that the family portraits depict them in their more sober moments, for otherwise the reverence and love that we cherish towards our ancestors would have been at a sad discount !



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Their interest in women was usually confined to the "Pink Bonnets" of the day, and as long as they were "dem fine girls, egad!" little else was of any importance. Women were considered in no other light than as so many painted idols, who were to allure and gratify men's passions. There seems to have been many a gay Lord Kew who, though himself used to the society of "pretty ladies whom nobody knows," yet saw fit to admonish the rebellious Ethel Newcomes of that period on their innocent levity, lecturing them gravely on all those duties, domestic or otherwise, which befit an "entirely good woman!" This took place when these gentlemen deemed the time come for them to quit the "Company of jolly Prodigals," and settle down to matrimony and respectability, with a "young, virtuous and beautiful wife." A one-sided state of affairs indeed! Far be it from me to say that this was a general rule of life, but at all events it was a prevalent one.

Is it not the natural sequence of the whole state of that society in the process of empire-building, to find man the conquering hero,



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worshipped and spoilt by poor silly "stick in the mud" woman? And was it not consistent with the whole trend of events at that time for the few surviving "stay-at-home" men to be followed, seized upon and adored, as a human species rarely to be met with, still more difficult to obtain and invaluable to possess! Even to this day a certain amount of that spirit survives in the breasts of many.

Constance Clyde says that: "Beneath all her sex-antagonism the English woman has an admiration for the man of her country . . . . which is beyond all reason. She will never truly take her proper place till she believes in herself more and in the Englishman less." As it is, he owes it to his naturally fine nature and innate British modesty that he was not irretrievably ruined by all those years of mad adulation on the part of his women-folk! Nevertheless it must be admitted that never were drinking, smoking and all similar indulgences cultivated and tolerated to such an extent, amongst men of all



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classes, as in those stupid dog-days of the Victorian Era.

Little did our forbears realize that the result of their self-gratification would be to cripple their descendants with hereditary rheumatism, gout and other kindred diseases.

“Evil is wrought by want of thought,  
As well as want of heart.”

And had they stopped to reflect, they might have put the curb on their inordinate appetite and saved their posterity a mint of trouble. But these free libations, the copious repasts and the gormandising and stuffing that Dickens delights in portraying, were the order of the day, and to those few precious menfolk left behind to enjoy life, or home on leave from their colonial enterprises, much licence was permitted and much forgiven them—for, were there not hosts of loving women to welcome back each much be-whiskered truant, however erring he might be !

It was at this time that the lamentable cry of the “ Old Maid ” became common.



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Bereft of her lover and of any other possible husband, owing to the scarcity of numbers, she was left forlorn to face the world, and a life of often piteous hardship and loneliness ! As a consequence of this alarmingly general state of female celibacy, the scorn and derisive ditties, “bons mots ” and foolish jokes, ridiculing in a cruel way the condition of spinsters, became the fashion amongst most of the narrow-minded exponents of social trivialities. And the effects of such heartless jibes were all the more mischievous in that they drove many a girl to an ill-assorted marriage, in the dread of being stigmatised as an Old Maid ! In their frantic fear of remaining unmarried, they aimed at *Matrimony* in the abstract ; not *the* man, but *any* man.

The census tables of 1870 prove how very scarce eligible *partis* were, for the figures show that out of every hundred husbands, fifteen, between sixty and seventy years of age, were allied to *young wives of under twenty* ! We hardly think that the reason could have been because the latter preferred being “ old men’s darlings ” to “ young men’s slaves ! ” It



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seems rather as if they were haunted by the thought of being "irretrievably lost, were they not *sealed* to a man in marriage," according to the false doctrine of Brigham Young. Certainly the witticisms and literary works of those years seem to entirely endorse this idea, belabouring the point, and emphasizing the fact to their helpless womenfolk.

"*C'est toujours la femme qui paie,*" is the wise French saying, and none better than women of this country should realize the enormous price paid for England's greatness!

For it is the *heart blood* of woman that flows in every war waged by her sons to maintain and increase that power so dearly bought. It is the *soul* of woman that is pierced by every bullet that wounds the gallant soldier or sailor protecting Albion's fame.

" For every man laid low,  
Two woman hearts, I trow,  
Lie stricken, jagged and bleeding — "

Mother and wife, sister or fiancée, each had to pay the price—the bitter price, shorn of all the glamour



## CONSECRATED VITALITY

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“of duty nobly done,  
Honours manfully won!”

There is no Victoria Cross to be offered to the widowed mother of brave sons lost in fighting their country's battles; there is no promotion given to the bereaved sweetheart of the warrior cut down in the pride of his youth. There is no distinction awarded the untold thousands of girls condemned to spinsterhood by the loss of their would-be husbands lying dead and buried on the battlefield or under the hungry waves of the ocean deep!

And people have laughed! And have made sport of that most sacred and sorrowful of creatures

“the unwilling Virgin!”

Heaven forgive them! They surely could never have realized the true state of affairs, the heart-burnings in their midst, the depths of sorrow unfathomable of those never permitted to live their lives—of those *robbed of their birthright* to pay for the glory of England's empire!

It is courteous and kindly meant on the



## THE OVER-PRODUCTION OF WOMEN

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part of statesmen, Church dignitaries and others to comment on the unmarried female portion of our population in eulogistic terms. Perhaps they believe what their words imply, and are able in all sincerity to congratulate themselves on England's generous supply of spinsters. Certainly by dedicating their undivided attention and energies to the cause of humanity they are able to do unique work for their country and their compatriots of all social classes.

The idea, originally obtaining in the Roman Catholic Church and bearing fruit in the convents and monasteries so thickly strewn over many countries, was that of the complete dedication to Heaven and suffering humanity, of the *whole vitality* and resources, untrammelled by the fetters of matrimony, of those sons and daughters of the Church who elected to renounce the world. But even amongst these were many instances of young girls who could say in Kingsley's words :

“I was not good enough for men  
And so was given to God!”



## CONSECRATED VITALITY

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It is so convenient to be able to pop superfluous and not over-dowered daughters into convents open to all and therefore to those for whom the world has no place. But the difference between the vocation of the nun and that of the good Protestant spinster lies in the fact that generally the first takes the veil of her own free will, whereas the latter, more often than not, remains unmarried through sheer force of circumstances, and without the solace of religious enthusiasm to lighten her path into the way of peace !

Was there ever such an absurd theory as that advanced by a responsible Minister of the Crown that celibacy was of any advantage to the State as a whole ? Because, forsooth, there happen to be some distinguished politicians or great women of that persuasion ! Perhaps the only great authority who endorses the view of the aforesaid statesman was St Paul, when he treats of marriage, but this he qualifies when he says "it were better to marry than to burn." Lord Bacon says that : " Celibacy and absence of kindred are a qualification only for flight,"



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and also that "the love of country has its rise in family affection." Shakespeare, in speaking of the mating of man and woman, says :

"He is the half part of a blessed man  
Left to be finished by such as she ;  
And she, a fair divided excellence,  
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him."

To Lord Beaconsfield is attributed the cynical remark that "*All* women should marry, but only a few men." For a man of such distinction, and who was himself so happily mated, it seems a humorous, but rather inconsistent assertion to have made. On the other hand Ben Jonson says that "there are two things in life a man never regrets, one is getting up early in the morning and the other is marrying early in life." Here we have two views diametrically opposed, but we incline to think the latter is the correct one and calculated to do the least evil in the world.

It is curious to note how few unmarried men there are who are not eaten up with



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selfish boredom, and how much more "Old-maidish" and cranky they grow with age than their spinster sisters.

In some cases a man may remain single for the worthiest motives best known to himself, but the great majority of male celibates in England owe their state to the fact that they become so spoilt and difficult to please, owing to the numbers of the fair sex competing for their hand, that, waxing weary of the vain attentions of the *many*, they omit to seize their real and proper chance of true felicity when the *one* crosses their path—

"What wonder man should fail to stay

A nurseling wafted from above,

The growth celestial come astray—

That tender growth whose name is Love."

Not long ago in Paris, a shopwoman asked me how it was that all English ladies were *Miss*, so very seldom *Mrs*, and proceeded to ask further *why* "les Anglaises" did not marry! To her no doubt this state of affairs seemed an inexplicable anomaly, as in France the sex numbers are much more equal, and it is rare to meet with "une vieille fille."



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We often mistake the *modes of existence* of various people for their *motives of action*, and attribute to wisdom or folly, virtue or vice, that effect which resulted from the eternal series of successive causes. Is it their will or desire that drives women here or there, in quest of occupation, work, distraction or anything rather than a hearth and home, husband and children? In a minority, yes, perhaps. In the majority, no—circumstances alone are responsible for the abnormal quantity of female celibates.

Whatever we think of our ancestors, we justly imagine ourselves, of the present age, wiser; and if we be not blinded by the prejudices of education and custom, must see that we can, in many respects, improve upon the institutions they have transmitted to us. As Dr Southwood Smith says: "There is no proper boundary to human investigation but the capacity of the human mind; whatever the faculties enable it to understand, it ought to examine without any restraint on the freedom of its enquiry, and with no other limit as to its extent than that



which its great Author has fixed, by withholding from it the power to proceed further."

By common consent the leaders of the thinking women of the twentieth century are determined to promote and carry on a crusade for the amelioration of the status of their sex. In order to undo the harm resulting from the prejudices of the nineteenth century, an immense and sustained effort will be necessary, coupled with the gradual restriction in the ratio of the numbers of women to men.

The mass of mankind are so much occupied in providing their daily subsistence that they have not time to look around them ; they are obliged to reason upon the few facts which fall within their sphere of observation. And that is the reason why some of the *simplest laws of Nature* have so long remained undiscovered. Take for example the vital knowledge to which this book is but the stepping-stone. Observation, patience and a minute questioning of causes and effects were the principal weapons necessary in the assault and capture of this citadel of the unknown. And yet, looking



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back, how easily that citadel surrendered to the attack, protected only as it was by the thin veil of false delicacy and unobservant ignorance.

It only remains now to take full advantage of the victory to the greatest extent, and to apply the result to the cause we have at heart. Perhaps when this is accomplished, we shall hear less about what is apologetically termed "the Consecrated Vitality."



## CHAPTER VI

So, Sister, be thy Womanhood  
A Baptism on thy Brow,  
For some thing dimly understood  
And which thou art not now ;  
But which within thee, all the time  
Maketh thee what thou art ;  
Maketh thee long and strive and climb  
The God-life at thy heart !

MACDONALD.

### THE LOT OF WOMAN

**A**N ardent believer and supporter of Spiritism told me that she knew as a fact that the future punishment dealt out to all men who had wrought any suffering on women would be to find themselves condemned to lead a woman's life in the next world. A just punishment indeed !

Should an assembly of the fair sex of any class of life be asked what lot they would have chosen had they been given a voice as to their existence as a man or a woman—out of



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twenty, fifteen will declare for the male sex, four will smilingly evade any candid reply, and the last will perhaps aver that she finds happiness in being a happy woman, preferring this to being a possibly unhappy man.

I do not intend for one moment to imply that all men are happy and all women unhappy in their lives ; on the contrary, the latter, expecting so much less, are more easily satisfied with what they get out of life than members of the opposite sex, to whom much larger possibilities are offered. Even if women start from the same standpoint, their aims and ambitions must necessarily be limited and their soaring imagination knock itself against the ceiling of their material and physical life, the ceiling which is the floor trodden by the ponderous feet of superior man ! For the Koran assures us that “ the Paradise of Woman is under the sole of her husband’s foot ! ” This saying has given rise to serious doubts in Oriental theologians’ minds as to the possibility of any future Heaven for the unmarried females of this world ! And this creed, preached openly by the Mahomedan, exists in the spirit, if



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not in the letter, all over the civilised or uncivilised world ; it varies only in degree in accordance with the Eastern decay of barbarism, or the Western growth of Christianity.

It is common knowledge how great an influence has been exercised on the conditions of woman's lot by Christianity. Unless a man can consider a woman as a partaker of the immortality of the Gospel, and as "an heir together *with* him of the grace of life," he will not account her his equal, or as entitled to equal honour. He will estimate her being in the scale merely of brute strength and of intellectual power ; that is, he will consider her as his inferior, and as formed to be the slave of his pleasures.

It is on record in the annals of nations that Philosophy, as well as Idolatry, debased thus the female sex. Voltaire has remarked that although the estimable qualities of women were possibly greater than those of men, they were principally discernible between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, and that they gradually diminished afterwards till old age, when very few of them were to be



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found. The infidel philosopher most probably spoke satirically, or could it have been according to the spirit of his time? For the world with all its boasting is scarcely out of swaddling clothes, and has little notion of throwing off the prejudices in which it has been nursed.

Among its fallacies, can any be more gross than the principle on which it awards superiority? *Woman*, whose soul is "as fine an emanation from the great fountain of spirit as that of man," who has higher responsibilities, more important duties in the world, and pays a heavier tribute to it, being accounted the *inferior sex*!

If the laws of Moses with regard to the Israelite women were relentlessly discriminating and "according to the hardness of their men's hearts," so, on the other hand, was the preaching of Christ respecting women as strikingly loving and merciful.

But in spite of the amelioration of their social condition, will they ever acquire complete emancipation? Will not that shadow of ages ever darken their path, hovering imperceptible yet ever present, cast on all the children of Eve by



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reason of the initiative fall of the Mother of Mankind ?

Whereas the law of compensation was granted to fallen man, and woman more especially, the opening of the Christian Era brought with it hope also to lighten her lot. Hope for the future of her sex, and prospects of a larger field of activity and increasing scope for the development of her abilities. As the time goes on, she aspires to become still more the shining light in the world of intellect and progress and not merely a fitting helpmate of man and a guardian angel of hearth and home.

Thackeray asserts that the Englishman is as much of a Turk at heart as the best Mussulman, and that if in point of fact he does not countenance the harem, the spirit that created that degraded institution still lives strong in him—and this forsooth in the land “par excellence,” where woman at man’s side is supposed to hold high the flag of freedom.

In the same way we learn that, even in France, modern husbands have in general the most obsolete ideas on marriage. They believe, as they did centuries ago, that the



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wife is an inferior being, who must remain at home and govern the household and see to the children.

M. Marcel Prevost, in his *Lettres à Françoise Mariée*, tells us that, "Husbands, as a rule, pitilessly deny their wives whatever superiority they may really possess, and, nine times out of ten, they object to their intellectuality and fight against it ; in fact the only way for a prudent wife to persevere and keep intact that superiority, is to develop her own culture only when the husband is out of the house ! "

At all times and in every country, woman's life has been a repressed one, an existence to a great extent governed and controlled by fear ; like the sword of Damocles hanging over her head, so has an instinctive terror of uncertainty dogged her steps in every direction. An example of this is her strange proneness to presentiments of evil, an inheritance left her by centuries of suppression and despotism exercised on her by man—her natural task-master of olden days and would-be master of the present.

Individual exceptions may seem to exist



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in history, and also in the lives of many of the brilliant women of modern times ; but, if we could see behind the scenes, we should still find that phantom lurking near them, and in their mental cupboards we should see seated in grim derision the skeleton of Fate.

Take Catherine the Great of Russia as a case in point ; her greatness was that of the sex which would have become her better than her own ; but her weaknesses, and they were many, were those of the woman she was, undisciplined and uncontrolled. So good Queen Bess, powerful woman as she appears in history, was ever thwarted in soul and mind by reason of her feminine nature, and died broken-hearted as the result of actions inspired by jealous pique towards Leicester and Essex, the erst-time masters of her heart. In the literary world we find the great brains of Madame de Stael and Georges Sand carried away by their too vivid imaginations and feelings, and succumbing to the weaknesses occasioned thereby.

If we go further back many names come to memory, such as Lais, Cleopatra, Hypatia, all great and famous by virtue of their charm and



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fascination, but seldom by reason solely of the strength of their *moral and mental* development.

In almost every case the key to their supremacy seems to have lain in their emotions and sensations, as inspired or inspiring ; love was the instrument of their fame or their undoing, in whatever rôle they figured.

Alas ! we women are all slaves to love, the strongest sentiment of which our natures are capable ! And that perhaps accounts for much of the sadder side of our lives : that all-governing power, manifesting itself often in weakly and sentimental affection, is what chains woman to her moral harem or metaphysical prison ! It is the power love wields that makes its victim a coward to the world and to herself, which stultifies her brain, lulls her energy and renders her so often the helpless martyr of her environment, or, worse still, reduces her to the substance of the flotsam and jetsam drifting on the seas of humanity.

Yet if love be not woman's master, is her life worth living ? May she not rather say with the Poet :



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“Salt tears my eyelids stain ;  
I live in bitter pain,  
Because I live in vain ? ”

It is true there are women who are perfectly happy in filling their lives with charitable actions and unselfish thoughts for all around them ; and there, if you look for the motive, you will find it written large and plain across their countenance—the Love of God. These good women, of all others, know best the perfect fulfilment of happiness, and joy in its truest and purest form. But they are few and far between—and the name of the others is legion !

Striving and fighting against great competition, and amidst unequal conditions of life, woman seeks to obtain that one thing without which her existence leaves her unsatisfied. She rises or falls, sinks or swims, mainly in accordance with whether or not she obtains this object. Having got what she tried for, by fair means or foul, she may either settle down to a comparatively peaceful lot, or face shipwreck on the sands of disillusion and despair.



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*Competition* is met with at every turn of woman's life.

*Competition* in love, which is the source of many sorrows and heart-burnings most dreadful to bear—the cause of many untold tragedies, understood by and generally known to women alone—the substance of the greater number of novels, dramas and stories of fiction and real life, the mother of jealousy, that green-eyed monster, more cruel than the grave.

*Competition* in marriage, which led to the institution of polygamy, one of the first solutions of that mighty problem—the superfluity of women! Surely this is also what reduces society to a species of polite slave market, in which the best grown and fairest girl hopes to draw the biggest prize in the matrimonial lottery.

*Competitive* vanity and thirst for admiration, which often leads woman into the crooked path and which largely accounts for the 70,000 unfortunate souls who, in London alone, eke out their wretched livelihood of shame!



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*Competition* in all branches of feminine employment, which prevents woman from being able to earn her living in the same conditions and for the same remuneration as man. There being always numbers of helpless workwomen out of regular employment, as many as necessary can be had for any small wage, and this is the cause of *Sweating*.

Woman is, and always must be, at a discount, if we do not help her to her proper value—her intrinsic worth. A glut of diamonds even must eventually bring about a fall in their market price—how much more must the steady and at-all-time glut of women affect their position in the world's market? There is no monopoly of woman's goodwill, no registered patent of her charms; she is often in request, it is true, but almost universally the demand for her is far and away exceeded by the plentiful supply! And therefore her lot in all countries, at all times—in varying degree—has been that of an inferior being, subject to the will of man and his man-made laws.

A certain poet tells the world to :



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“Use the Woman tenderly, tenderly ;  
From a crooked rib God made her slenderly :  
Straight and strong He did not make her,  
So if you try to bend you'll break her.”

The spirit of this reminder, which breathes gentle consideration to the “weaker vessel of humanity,” has seldom been comprehended or heeded. Urgent reality is attendant on “Le droit du plus fort.”

Buffetted about from pillar to post, a necessity to some, a toy to others, bullied or caressed, beaten or spoilt, picked up or dropped, adulated or despised, poor patient woman plods along, with a brave heart and a forlorn smile.

The old adage, voicing the opinion that :

“A woman, a dog and a walnut-tree,  
The more they're beaten, the better they be !”

has only lately been allowed to drop out of currency. Moore, in his ode to “Woman,” impatiently exclaims :

“Away, away—you're all the same,  
A fluttering, smiling, jilting throng !”



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In the "Bondman" we read that women are sent into the world "for men to love them all, from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet—the darlings, and to pick out one in particular!"

A not dissimilar idea of women was that of the Turkish Pasha, who, as he lay dying, summoned to him the youngest and fairest of his forty-six wives. In a weak voice he said to her: "Put on your richest costume, your most brilliant jewels, deck your hair with pearls and brighten your finger-tips with henna." The young wife blushed, for even in her grief she was flattered. "And why, my lord," she said, "do you desire me to make this sumptuous toilette?" "So that Death, when he comes," the man replied, "seeing you so very beautiful, may perhaps carry you off instead of me."

On one hand fed up with cheap praises of a questionable nature, on the other held up to sneering ridicule by the "beaux esprits" of all times, woman has rarely, if ever, received her due, or known true appreciation; for the reason that "Sex—that fundamental Blunder



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of Creation " is for ever being hurled at her head. What wonder, then, if many be driven to unburden themselves of those feminine attributes of grace and charm, and of much that goes to make up their womanliness. In the fear that if they remain unmated or left to fight for themselves, their female nature, possibly *over-sexed*, clinging and timidly dependent, prove a serious handicap to them in their self-made path through life, they throw off their natural weakness, partly inherited and partly acquired by habit and upbringing, only to find that they have ceased to excite any personal interest in man, who promptly labels them " Un-sexed."

Never mind ! The worm will turn !

General Booth says : " My feelings and opinions with respect to woman generally are known throughout the world. First and foremost, I insist on woman's equality. Woman is as important, as valuable, as capable, and as necessary to the progress and happiness of the world as man. Unfortunately, a large number of people of every class think otherwise. They still cling to the notion of bygone ages—that



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as a being woman is inferior to man. To many she is little more than a plaything for their leisure hours. To others she is like a piece of property ; a slave in everything but in name. Oft-times she is treated with less consideration as to health and comfort than the horses that run in omnibuses or beasts that are fattening for slaughter."

It is interesting to picture to oneself society as it may be thirty years hence. The marriageable spinster will be as much in request as is at present the much sought after bachelor, and the morals and manners of the latter will improve all the more when hostesses and chaperones have ceased to court every eligible whipper-snapper who, "*faute de mieux*," helps to fill up the numerous vacancies at most English social functions.

There will be a larger majority of happy marriages when girls, being mistresses of the situation, can afford to choose the man they know to be suitable as a life partner, and whom, according to their loftiest ideals, they deem worthy of their love. The "*pis-aller*" match will become a "*rara*



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avis," and there will be less talk about "leasehold marriages" and "amicable divorces" as being the best palliatives for present-day matrimonial troubles! It is to be hoped that most of these difficulties will vanish into space when wives are appreciated in the spirit as well as in the flesh, and women seek to inspire man with more respect and love for their moral and intellectual qualities rather than with the evanescent and degrading passion of carnal materialism.

Madame Sarah Grand, speaking on this subject the other day, said: "It is a rosy future to which women have to look, I am convinced, and theirs almost for the asking, but it is apathy, the result of their chronic debility, that is against them. Let women learn and show how the race will gain by every improvement in their position, and they need only ask to have all that they require. Apathy is their bane; the very metal of which their chains are forged."

The truth of this statement cannot be denied, and having grasped it, let us shake ourselves free from these self-forged chains, helping each



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other on in all loyalty and true fellowship.  
Let us :

“Keep our aims sublime, our eyes erect,  
Although our Woman-hands should shake or fail.”

Men stand together, and women can stand by men, but what we want is more real solidarity amongst women, and the earnest desire on their part to help on the great cause that must be of such vital importance to each one.

If it indeed be true, as some people say, that women have attained to the position they already occupy in the civilised world by the sheer force of their numbers, then surely the time has come for them to keep and improve that position by reason of their *qualities* rather than of their *quantities*. And to improve the former, and *reduce the latter*, must henceforth be the aim and object of every thinking person.



## CHAPTER VII

“Truth—whose eye guilt can only make dim.”

WORDSWORTH.

### THE VOICE OF TRUTH

THERE are sure to be dissentient voices in response to the statements made in the preceding chapters ; from the majority of women *as they are*, one must not expect anything but denial of fact. Even did they discern the truth, many of them dare not allow themselves the luxury of forming opinions or speaking out what they know. Hereditary slaves, their birthright is deception !

The natural nobility of woman has been stunted from the cradle, tightly laced in the corset of custom, draped round with the veil of artificiality and robed with the garb of convention. Woe betide her if, unfastening for a moment that cloak which so closely



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envelops her, she allows the instinctive impulses of Nature to burst forth ! The burial garment of the corpse in its coffin is the most suitable exchange for the discarded mantle of duplicity. Goldsmith says with regard to this :

“ When lovely Woman stoops to folly  
    . . . . The only Art her guilt to cover  
    . . . . . is to die ! ”

Perhaps we are waxing too pessimistic ; the word *deception* is too strong, misnaming altogether that quality which is as the second nature to almost every living female ! “ Deception,” nay, modesty, ignorance supreme, commonly called innocency ! Are not these far more suitable names for that cloak which we hug round our shivering frames and minds ? It is unwise to shock human susceptibilities by exposing facts that are rotting in their holes for lack of pure air. An unearthed truth is as unpleasant to the odorific senses as to the fastidious mind. Bury it quick ! Close the mantrap fast, and let the overflow of white falsehood run its undistilled



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course down the drainpipes of our areas and gardens.

Mother Hypocrisy is ever officiously busy at her everlasting garnishings. She pins up curtains here, and stretches sheets over there, while she varnishes the dirty board of humanity, ingrained with the dust and dirt of ages. Having, like the bad housewife that she is, swept up all that is visible, and left the corners untouched, she sallies forth to buy fresh flowers of the season to deck out the front windows of her sorry old house. And those unswept corners remain the festering root of all evil,

“Heart-buried in the rubbish of the World—

The world!—that gulf of Souls, immortal Souls!”

they remain hidden to view from generation to generation.

Montesquieu, in his book entitled “*L'esprit des Lois*,” presents to his readers a laboriously worked-out explanation of the laws of man, as seemingly dictated by the laws of Nature. There is a saying that “an explanation is never the truth,” and this eloquent apology, though correct and perfect



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in its main issues, strikes now and again a hollow note, a forced tonality which leaves one unconvinced and disenchanted with life as it is.

Nature, as God's creation, is subject to His divine will, and is not a sort of Frankenstein's Monster, working independently for the upholding of man's selfish and inefficient legislative inspirations.

If the Law of Nature *has* made woman smaller and weaker than man, rendering her physically his inferior, does not Christianity claim to have interfered and mercifully lifted her in many social aspects to a partial equality with man? Has not even unaided civilisation partially recognised her compensating gifts of soul and mind, and thus helped to further her progress and influence in the world?

And why should not the forces of Nature, hitherto untamed and uncontrolled, be placed still further in abeyance? As this becomes more and more the case, so will it become possible and feasible for man's code of honour to be that of woman, and woman's code of morals, that of man also! As public opinion and



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moral tone rise to a higher level, that which is condemned in woman will cease to be condoned in man.

As the weaker sex attain to an ever higher degree of intellectuality, so must woman increasingly command the respect of man, and his adherence to the cause of her bettered position.

Individually she is learning more every day how to look after herself and her own interests on independent lines—lines unheard of twenty years ago. Her mother wit, sharpened for the fray, is growing equal to any emergency in her frenzied fight for liberty and justice! *Apropos* of this, an example of smart repartee was given by a Suffragette at a meeting recently. "Don't you wish you were a man!" sneered a heckler. "Don't you wish *you* were!" she retorted. Yet bullies and cowards have yet to be silenced in more ways than one ere gallant womanhood can hope to reach the summit of the heights she is climbing, and many customs and institutions, degrading to her sex, have yet to be abolished before



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she succeeds in coercing mankind to her manner of thinking.

Polygamy as a word causes the Western wife to shudder ; Mormonism produces resentful indignation in the broadest minded, as tolerating a system which has been likened to that of the domestic cock and his twelve hens ! And yet the *Social Evil* in its lowest forms, bringing in its rear all the attendant horrors and piteous consequences of vice, is permitted to exist in our very midst.

Neatly covered over with the threadbare counterpane of outward respectability, held together by the innate modesty of the Britisher and by the purity of the Press of this country, the evil is barely recognised by the majority and winked at by the remainder of our population.

Part of the recent opposition to granting votes to women has been coming from men who object—"all the street-walkers would have it." And why should they not, as much as every drunkard and loafer who waits at the street corners for some poor soul to urge on the downward path, or some young



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innocence to destroy ? Were men's morals called to account when the vote was granted to them ? Are the seventy thousand men—pickpockets—known to the police in London alone, debarred from having a voice in the government of their country owing to their suspected dishonesty or irregularity of calling ? Is my neighbour's thieving or drunken game-keeper refused a vote because of his blatant offences against society ? No, but yonder Lady of the Manor who pays rates, taxes, and employs half the village and supports the other half—is to be, because, forsooth, erring women are touting for a meal by the only means left to them in the present state of society.

The individual "unfortunate" is often more sinned against than sinning : it is the institution that is wholly and entirely corrupt. Every department of woman's welfare is threatened and attacked by the existence of the monster of prostitution. She is a relic of barbarism casting her infamous shadow on civilised life ; she is the serpent, fed by man, fastening a deadly grip on



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womankind vicious or ignorant, dragging the whole sex in the mire by her very existence.

And why should the institution exist? You may say that it always *has*; but do we consider it a reason, because up till quite lately the world has "knocked along" with imperfect methods of sanitation, that henceforth it should not improve its whole sanitary system and fight the germs and microbes of disease on a sane and practical basis?

I contend that once the superfluous woman ceases to exist, immorality in its most cruel form will cease to pollute our cities. The numbers of women remaining (barring those exceptions which must always exist in every community, like the few black sheep in every flock), will be so taken up by their own special work or surroundings, so fully occupied, each in her own proper sphere, that, for sheer lack of incentive to lead a vicious life, they will fill their proper place with dignity and self-respect.

The social evil, so closely allied to the



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problem of the superfluous woman, would be dealt with and greatly mitigated, if not summarily destroyed, by putting into practice the theory this book is to enunciate, which must command the interest of all those who have the welfare of humanity at heart.

And for the introduction of some new and fundamental policy our time is pre-eminently ripe. The air echoes with cries of "Votes for Women." We cannot open any daily paper without seeing proofs of the gigantic proportions the "Feminist" movement is taking, and the strides it is making in the general trend of events.

One day we read of a "Miss M——," who turns out to be a knight's daughter in disguise. She finds "nothing for her really to do at home," being one of five sisters, so she becomes a Suffragette and is nearly kicked to death at Peckham.

The next day we read of Miss Ken Ware, the leader of the London waitresses' strike, who, with the heroic Mrs Despard and Mrs Cobden Sanderson, declare that "this is the beginning



## THE VOICE OF TRUTH

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of a campaign to see that all women shall receive what is their due."

Again we see the portrait of the beautiful Turkish Princess Ourossoff, who, escaping from the harem in which she passed her young womanhood, dares to show up the iniquitous and abnormal conditions of existence of her countrywomen.

For the past thirty years the Mohammedan Feminist movement has grown steadily, in Turkey specially, where just lately a document, signed by thousands of veiled women of the East, has been addressed to the Duma, pleading for more freedom generally and deliverance from the tyranny of their despotic husbands.

"Say, what is Freedom? . . . Rightly understood,  
A universal licence to be good."

And now that Female Suffrage, Temperance, Non-sweating, and so many other vital questions are being promoted to the front rank of political strife and Parliamentary discussion, why should not that burning



## THE OVER-PRODUCTION OF WOMEN

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question, the worst canker of civilisation, have a hearing also ?

We do not wish to parade this subject as food to the morbidly inquisitive members of society who cannot, and do not, wish to offer any practical remedy for the evil, nor for the sake of merely satisfying ordinary interest appertaining to most questions of ethics. There are plenty of problem-plays, novels and literary works of all kinds, for those who love to indulge in idle thoughts and in fruitless speculation concerning the sad complications resulting from our diseased social system. No ! What we want is to bare the evil with one hand, *while with the other offering the remedy.*



## CHAPTER VIII

Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop  
Than when we soar.

WORDSWORTH.

### THE CURE

**H**AVING enumerated many of the evils attendant on woman's lot in life, we now turn to the subject of the remedy for this condition of things ; a remedy so simple in its application that one may well marvel that it was never thought of till the present time.

Although many people will not openly admit that there is a super-abundance of women in the world, we know, by experience gathered from all classes, that such is the case.

After deducting the huge percentage of boys born who never reach maturity, or who are never able to settle down and marry in their own country, it has become necessary, in order to bring about any sort of sex equality,



## THE OVER-PRODUCTION OF WOMEN

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to produce at the least three boys to every two girls.

Most of us have read numbers of books which have lately appeared on the subject of woman, viewed from every standpoint. Some are works of great ability and literary value, and all of them are in agreement as to the progress woman has made and as to the necessity of her lot being further improved. Such treatises are useful in that they ventilate this vital topic, and cause organised efforts for woman's advancement ; but there is no attempt in any of them to offer more than a *palliative* for present conditions. Has the career of one individual been substantially benefited by the perusal of these works ; and, having carefully studied their contents, is anybody a whit more satisfied in their mind, or nearer to the attainment of their social ideals ?

One authoress suggests emigration as the panacea for all evils : another tells us that "leasehold" marriages will bring perfect contentment. A third says women must work, presumably in opposition to the old song :



## THE CURE

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“For men must work, and women must weep!” Seriously, however, this last is the only one of the many proposals which is worthy of consideration, were it only a feasible one.

Undoubtedly a great step forward would be made if remunerative work could be found for every woman, *but this is not possible*. We cannot all be lady-doctors, nurses, typists, or growers of mushrooms in cellars, for profit; nor yet can we all take to chicken-farming or gardening, unless it be to the detriment of those who at present pursue these avocations. The already over stocked labour market will be yet further crowded, and keen competition will be keener still. Surely something more radical in effect must be found to alleviate the many complications resulting from woman's half-evolved social condition. Difficulties will increase at every turn of the wheel, unless we prepare to deal with them as they arise.

*Competition* is the *bête noire* that must be tackled before we can derive any benefit from the advice tendered in the books above



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mentioned. No true woman cares for advancement at the expense of her sisters, and yet, in the present congested state of the labour market, the suffering of others is an inevitable result of her elbowing her way to the front.

No, to effect a radical cure, we must probe far deeper and strike at the very source of the trouble. This can only be done by stifling competition, that is, *by lessening the number of the competitors*. THE REMEDY LIES IN THE POWER OF DIFFERENTIATING AND CONTROLLING THE SEXES AT *CONCEPTION*.

This power is to be obtained by putting into operation an extremely simple, and hitherto unobserved, law of Nature. For many years I have been accumulating evidence, piling statistic on statistic, examining into hundreds of cases, sought amidst all conditions of life, and have *never* found one single exception even to make the proverbial rule hold good ! I may bring a hornets' nest about my head by daring to anticipate a discovery that in the course of time would probably have been made by the medical profession. But if there are rebuffs to be



## THE CURE

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encountered I am ready and willing to meet them.

Ours the shame to understand  
That the world prefers to lie !  
That, with medicine in her hand,  
She will sink and choose to die !  
Ours the agonizing sense  
Of the Heaven this Earth might be,  
If, from their blank indifference,  
Men woke one hour and felt as we !

This book is written in the first place for women of the more educated classes, and the subject, by its own natural weight, will filter through till the foundation of society is permeated. It deals with no narrow subject to be cut up like quarters of an orange and sampled by people holding divers creeds ; it is entirely outside party politics ; the country clergyman, the Bishop, the Pope must all advocate any remedy that is not fundamentally wrong in principle or practice. There is nothing in it capable of shocking the most sensitive conscience or the purest mind ; on the contrary it will appeal especially to moralists, entailing as it does no small a measure of self-control.



## THE OVER-PRODUCTION OF WOMEN

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There are cynics and there are critics. The former carry little weight, the latter must be treated as friends. Yet no criticism can be acknowledged that is not friendly to the spirit in which this book is conceived; neither any which seeks to impute interested motives. It is not an advertisement for "Mother Seigel's Syrup" or "Pink Pills for Pale People," but a genuine attempt to benefit humanity, endowing it as it does with a power hitherto unknown of *differentiating, controlling and regulating the birth of the sexes*.

In putting into operation the law that I have discovered—in enabling woman to elect and determine the sex of her children—lies the most certain cure for the falling birth-rate of our country. Thousands of mothers cease bearing children from the fear of being over-burdened with girls. In my own immediate surroundings, I can count numerous young wives who admit to their intimate friends that, were they *sure* of giving birth to a boy, they would joyously embark on a family without qualms or further delay. And how many married women are there



## THE CURE

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known to us all who, having had one daughter, are afraid of running the risk of a second.

The time has arrived when, thanks to science and observation, we need leave nothing to chance. There is no reason henceforth for a falling birth-rate, or for gloomy forebodings, at present so prevalent, as to the pass our country may come to for lack of men to man her guns and protect her dominions beyond the seas.

Oh ! ye wives ! Put away childish fears, and summon the splendid common-sense and the divine intelligence of your motherhood to join me by the exercise of your free will and knowledge of a plain fact, in eliminating that most desolate and pitiful "pariah" of society—the *Superfluous Woman*.





# THE OVER-PRODUCTION OF WOMEN

## NOTE

Owing to the extraordinary interest the subject of this Book has created and the enormous amount of correspondence it has entailed, the Authoress has found it quite impossible, personally, to cope with the same.

It has been a matter of deep concern and consideration how best to circulate, and make the most of, her discovery for the benefit of those thousands of parents, who have experienced bitter disappointments.

It will be obvious to every reader that the subject is of too delicate a nature to admit of its being dealt with in detail in a book for the public at large.

The Authoress has, therefore, appointed a fully qualified Deputy, from whom intending beneficiaries can obtain full information :—

Mrs Loftus,  
28, Gloucester Street,  
Warwick Square,  
London.

Interviews by appointment *only*.



There is no other way of doing the  
subject of this book, but it is the  
most important of all, and it has  
been the author's duty to treat it  
in the most thorough manner possible.  
It has been a matter of duty, and  
not of choice, to put in the most  
careful and complete manner possible  
the subject of the law, and to do so  
in the most thorough manner possible.

The author has endeavored to do this  
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and to do so in the most thorough  
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