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WOMAN, MARRIAGE  
AND  
MOTHERHOOD

ELIZABETH SLOAN CHESSER

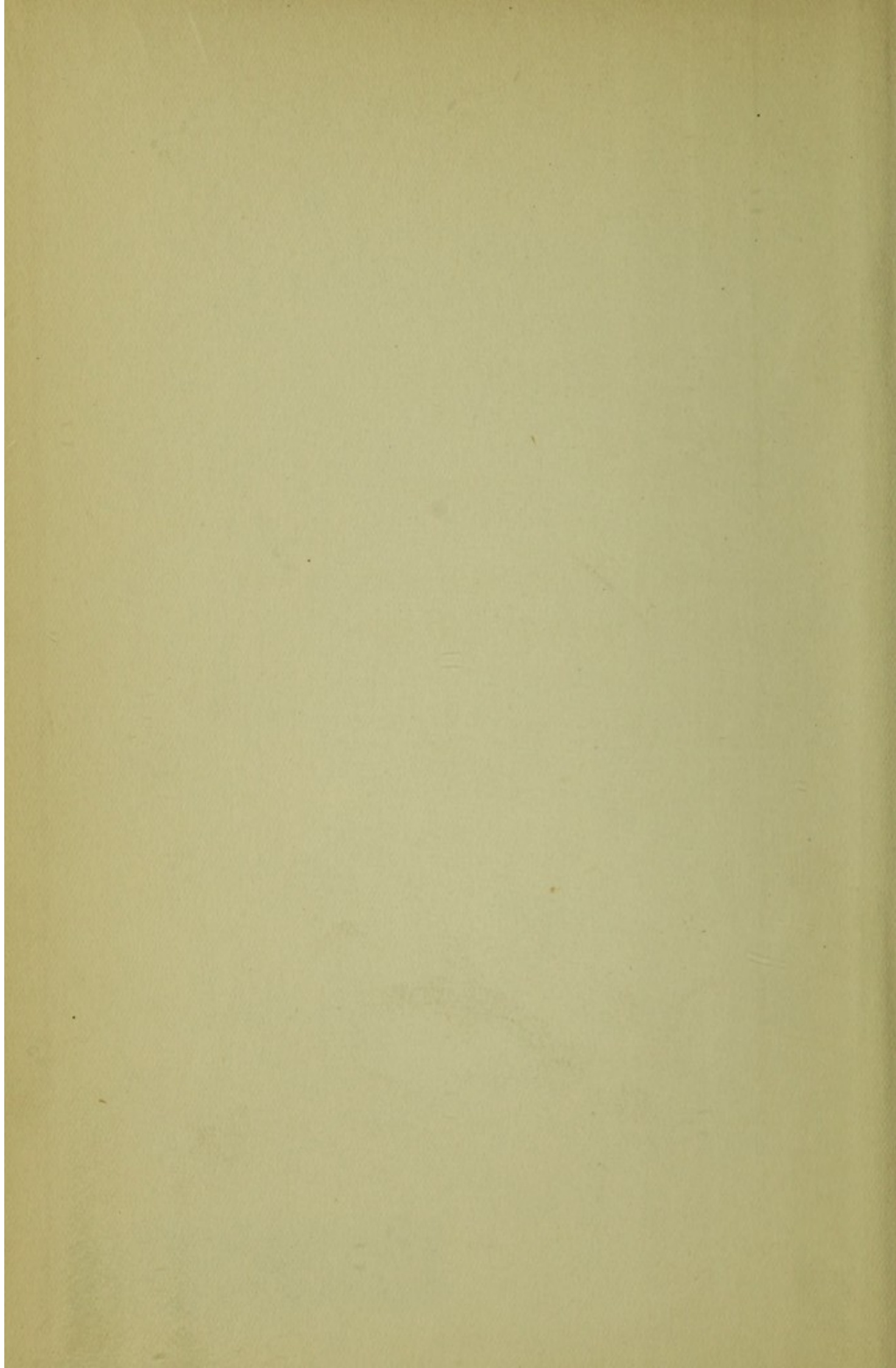




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# WOMAN, MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD

BY

**ELIZABETH SLOAN CHESSEY, M.B.**

Author of "Perfect Health for Women and Children"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
LADY BETTY BALFOUR

*"Rise up, ye women that are at ease."*—ISAIAH

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PRESENTATION



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## PREFACE

IN writing this book my main endeavour has been to emphasise that in social reform the best results can be obtained by going to the sources, instead of dealing merely with the effects, of wrong and of suffering. I have advocated far-reaching reforms, but I fully realise that social evolution is dependent upon many different factors, upon influences and interests that are often conflicting, and that social betterment is necessarily a very gradual process. I am quite aware also that some of the reforms outlined in these pages would involve so considerable a financial expenditure and so extensive a readjustment of social conditions that they can only be brought about by slow degrees.

On what is called the social evil I have written frankly as a medical woman, in the belief that fuller knowledge of the terrible consequences of an evil that is largely preventable cannot but be salutary.

It may be objected that I have laid all the stress upon the importance of efficient, protected motherhood, and have had little to say about the interests and rights of fatherhood. But I have written as woman and as mother, on the theme of motherhood. I have written, too, as a woman doctor who has seen something of the burden and suffering of unprotected motherhood in many countries of the world—in Europe, Asia, and America. And



## Preface

I believe that a woman can write about her own sex in a special way—in a somewhat different fashion from a man, whatever qualifications he may possess.

In order to give completeness to the presentation of each aspect of my subject, I have not scrupled to indulge in an occasional slight repetition. My readers will not, I hope, feel that I owe them an apology on this score.

I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Editors of certain reviews for their courteous permission to reproduce material previously supplied to them. The chapter on the factory mother and some part of that on motherhood and eugenics have appeared in the *National Review*, and the first part of the chapter on women prisoners in the *Contemporary Review*, while the chapter on the sweated mother in the home was published in the *World's Work*.

Finally, I must thank various friends, more especially my husband, my father Dr. Samuel Sloan, and Mr. Edward Conder, for helpful criticism and valuable suggestions.

ELIZABETH SLOAN CHESSEY.

BEAUCHAMP HOUSE,  
NEAR GLOUCESTER.



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## INTRODUCTION

BY LADY BETTY BALFOUR

“WHAT are women’s grievances?” is the query constantly put by those who are indifferent to the Woman movement. All who are capable of asking such a question should read this impressive book by Dr. Elizabeth Sloan Chesser.

Motherhood is the great central theme of it; how this is affected by our laws and customs, by the legal position of wife and mother, by the ignorance of natural laws of hygiene, by the industrial conditions of the sweated worker and the factory operative. Here is told with unvarnished but unsensational truthfulness the result of the unchecked propagation of the feeble-minded, the physically unfit. The causes are examined which underlie the terrible percentage of infant mortality, that hideous “waste of mother energy”; the economic dependence of women; the destitution which tempts to vice; the wages of sin which are disease and death. Nothing which should be known is shirked, but there is no conjuring up of horrors to harrow the reader’s feelings without the suggestion of a practical remedy. In this respect the book differs wholesomely from the average writing on such subjects. The reforms proposed may not meet with universal approval—I am not prepared to subscribe to them all myself—but if one remedy is not accepted, another must be found. The only intolerable



## Introduction

attitude is that of acquiescence in things as they are. Indifference with regard to the subjects of this book can only be compatible with ignorance.

In Olive Schreiner's book, "Woman and Labour," there is a striking passage describing a conversation held by her with a Kafir woman. The woman's story was one of pitiful toil, pain, and subjection. It was bitterly felt, but not resented. There was no trace in the woman of rebellion or resistance. "Women of no race or class," this author says, "will ever rise in revolt or attempt to bring about a revolutionary adjustment of their relation to their society, however intense their suffering and however clear their perception of it, while the welfare and persistence of their society requires their submission"; but "whenever there is a general attempt on the part of the women of any society to readjust their position in it, a close analysis will always show that the changed or changing conditions of that society have made woman's acquiescence no longer necessary or desirable."

Here, I think, we have the key to the attitude of revolt in women to-day. It is clearly thought by some and dimly felt by many women that the welfare and persistence of the race claim their uprising.

Two changes in the conditions of society have contributed to bring about this attitude.

The first change lies in the awakening of women's sense of civic responsibility. This is directly due to the call which the State has been making in ever increasing and widening degree for their services.

The second change arises from the fact that their



## Introduction

domestic concerns are being more and more invaded and interfered with by the State. Legislation, not so much of a grandmotherly as of a governessy kind, is yearly imposed upon them—legislation interfering with their labour, the upbringing and education of their children, their concern with the sick and the aged.

The most womanly women have come to see that the worst evils to be found in our social conditions, evils of poverty, disease, infant mortality, child and woman slavery, can be affected for better or worse by State legislation; but that that legislation, if it is to provide a sound solution of such problems, must be the concern of the women as well as of the men of the country. This is why there has come to be an element of fierceness in some of the agitators in the woman's movement, comparable to that of the lioness defending her cubs.

And yet it is not legislation in all probability that will ever supply the golden remedy for existing evils. Of far deeper importance than any measures of legislation, be they wise or foolish, is a change in public opinion, and such a change will assuredly be quickened by the publication and widespread distribution of such a book as this. It is therefore to be hailed as a weapon of progress. "Rise up, ye women that are at ease," is a finely chosen motto, for it is upon the rising up of those hitherto indifferent, upon the seeing and feeling of those hitherto blind and insensitive, that the effectual grappling with these evils must depend.



The first part of the report deals with the general  
 condition of the country and the progress of the  
 various departments. It is found that the  
 country is in a state of general prosperity  
 and that the various departments are  
 making steady progress. The  
 government is well administered and  
 the people are contented. The  
 revenue is increasing and the  
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 industry is also making  
 progress and the country is  
 becoming more civilized. The  
 government is well administered  
 and the people are contented.

# WOMAN, MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD

## CHAPTER I

### THE WOMAN'S SPHERE

IN the chaos of modern life, amidst the problems of our complex social organisation, two imperative needs make insistent appeal—the need of the child and the deeper need of the mother. The protection of childhood has begun. We have legislative measures. We have societies and associations, national and international congresses, to further the interests of the child. And now at last the mother force is beginning to be felt. The latest phase of public hygiene and social reform is the demand of enlightened men and women for the protection and the uplifting of motherhood. The whole world is recognising that the problem of motherhood is the most vital, the most urgent, of all questions, and that the claims of the mother, as the source and guardian of life, can no longer be disregarded if civilisation is to progress. Even the woman movement is acquiring a new significance—a demand for the recognition of the rights of motherhood, the claim of women, as mothers, to have a share in all questions that concern the children of the race.

So many social problems remain unsolved because we have ignored the claims of the mother. We have been fighting the *effects* of vice, alcohol, crime and disease.



## Woman, Marriage and Motherhood

The twentieth century must be the era of preventive work, when the *causes* of the many social evils in our midst will be dealt with.

The chief of these is bad and often vicious parentage. Ignorant, neglected and diseased motherhood is poisoning the race; and not until we recognise the claims of the mother will the efficiency of the social organism be ensured. Of those whom to-day we call immoral, criminal, or degenerate, how many are so by reason of early environment and lack of good motherhood? How many of the mothers themselves have a chance? Faintly we are realising that evil is often another name for ignorance, that sin is waste, and that right teaching and right training will point a new way of life to thousands of our fellow-creatures who otherwise are doomed to misery and despair.

**"Mother work."**—The outlook is hopeful. Social obligations are being everywhere better recognised. Women are awakening to their responsibilities. There are spheres of social activity demanding the service of women from which they are now excluded, more especially all work which has to do with the preservation of new life and the safeguarding of childhood. The conservation of life is pre-eminently "woman's work." What is the function of women? Not only to bear children, but by their work and influence to evolve, purify and beautify the higher nature of the race; to protect and uplift those of their sisters who have less opportunity for self-development, knowledge, and efficiency. Living is not an end in itself. Our lives are valuable in proportion as they serve a useful purpose. A woman is not necessarily a more valuable unit in the State because she is a mother. Unless her children are of a certain standard of fitness or quality they were



## The Woman's Sphere

better unborn ; and unless she manifests the true mother spirit in the rearing of her children she is unfit for motherhood. The unmarried and the childless woman can fulfil her maternal function by the service she gives to the State. And every State has need of the "mother work" which women alone can do.

The conditions that face women to-day differ fundamentally from those that obtained fifty years ago. Much of the work, many of the duties, of women have been taken from the home. Man's inventive power has brought about a redistribution of work. Whereas in olden days every woman had her work in the household, which called for skill and effort in providing clothes and food for the family group, that work has largely been taken out of the individual home to the factory and the workshop. Housekeeping is becoming generalised: the bakehouse, the laundry, and the manufacturer are doing more easily and more economically on a large scale what women did individually in the home. So woman's work in the community has now fuller opportunity to develop. In the school—one of her chief fields of labour—her maternal instincts benefit the whole community. So also in the hospitals she responds to the need of the sick and disabled. Mother service such as this is helping to bring love and spiritual ideals into the material world, the spirit of mutual help, the feeling that men and women are interdependent. How much better will the world's work be accomplished when sex antagonism gives way to the friendship and co-operation that must come with better understanding.

A woman's first duty is to those in her own home, but she has no right to neglect the cry of the helpless and the unfortunate in multitudes of other homes which



## Woman, Marriage and Motherhood

go to make up the State. So many women are apathetic from ignorance of the existence of pain and suffering which they might alleviate. The awakening of mothers, the drawing of women together for mother service, would liberate vast potentialities for the good of the community. And the next effort of social reform must be to apply women's special gifts and services to the organisation of the new social order which civilisation is struggling to attain, a new order in which all child life will be cared for and glorified, and all mother service will be adequately recognised.

**The protection of motherhood.**—The community must recognise its duty to the mother, not only from the ethical standpoint, but as a factor in national regeneration. The degradation of motherhood is the degradation of society. Every nation which neglects its motherhood, which fails to protect its necessitous mothers, pays a heavy penalty in crime, disease, and racial decay. The task of the age is to promote, out of the chaos of unorganised charity, an organised constructive scheme of social reform which will ensure a minimum standard of health and well-being for the next generation. The race is suffering from maternal exhaustion. The remedy is an awakened public opinion on the whole subject of motherhood, to compel an investigation which will bring to light the hidden causes of infant mortality and diseases of motherhood. A Royal Commission on Motherhood and a national scheme for the protection and education of the mothers of the country would be one of the strongest forces for the moral and physical regeneration of the community.

In the childhood of the twentieth century let us give serious consideration to this question, with the certainty that mother protection is child protection, that mother



## The Woman's Sphere

welfare is world welfare. Sociologists and eugenicists are concentrating their attention on means to obtain healthy human beings best fitted to hand on the torch of life. The exclusion from parenthood of the feeble-minded, the insane, and the chronic alcoholic has reached the stage of political discussion, and we must work to secure the economic and legal protection of motherhood in the immediate future. Apart from the mentally and physically degenerate, there is splendid national material among the submerged. In many cases men and women sink to the lower social depths for lack of help before they have reached the level of destitution and despair. We spend millions annually on our criminals, our paupers, our "defectives," which could be saved to the State by a constructive scheme for mother protection and for raising the standards of parenthood—both motherhood and fatherhood. For all the claims we make upon the mother apply also to the father. An incalculable amount of suffering and sin is due to irresponsible fatherhood. The ideal home exists where father and mother work together in harmony and love for the welfare and happiness of the child. The two parents are equally responsible. They must be recognised by society as co-guardians of the child's life and welfare, and the law must give the mother the status which biologically and sociologically she has the right to claim.

The expectant mother must be free to direct the energy and vital force of her being towards the making of the new life she is giving to the State. She must be freed from poverty, so that the child may be born healthy and mature; and, before marriage, she must be free to love, to choose the father of her child, unhampered by economic pressure, that children may be



## Woman, Marriage and Motherhood

born and reared in an atmosphere of love, in the ideal home. Only thus can men and women of higher types be created, civilisation progress, and the race evolve.

**Efficient motherhood.**—How can we promote the evolution of efficient motherhood? Women themselves, by solidarity and organisation, can help to set in motion the machinery for the accomplishment of far-reaching reforms. A campaign for better motherhood would be of the highest eugenic value. The woman movement has drawn women of different nations together. Now, we must unite the *mothers* of all nations into a close bond of mutual service and mutual friendship. Solidarity is in the air. Leagues for Mother Protection have been formed in America, in England, in Germany, in Austria; and they can be extended. Apart from the political pressure they can exert, they can organise and unite mothers of all classes and give a wider outlook to the women whose sphere is the home. The ideal of motherhood cannot be restricted to care of one's own children. The mother spirit must go out to every child who needs us and whom we can serve. The joy of motherhood must find expression in the desire to help those mothers to whom maternity means only suffering and sorrow. What a power in social reform might we not have in intelligent mother love awakened, eager to serve! Let mothers determine to do away with the conditions which bring tainted children into the world—conditions which cause the death of one child out of five before the first anniversary of its birth, and to which is due a vast percentage of survivors maimed in body, mind and soul from preventable disease. If we trace the evolution of motherhood, we find that the progress and survival of the higher species are dependent upon maternal care



## The Woman's Sphere

and maternal efficiency. Study the problems of motherhood and we find that degeneration proceeds wherever maternal neglect and maternal exhaustion exist. The mother is the source of all life, and we can only ensure an enduring race if our parenthood is sound, healthy, clean and efficient.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVOLUTION OF MOTHERHOOD

TO trace the evolution of motherhood we must go to the origin of life. The human organism, like all other forms of life, whether worm or shell-fish, bird or chimpanzee, starts as a single cell. The cell is the "biological unit" of life. The simplest individual, the amoeba, consists of one cell—a particle of living jelly, without limbs, eyes, stomach or mind. And yet this microscopic organism lives and moves, feeds, grows and multiplies according to the law of life. It thrusts out on all sides long tentacle-like processes, which draw food into its interior, and at the same time serve as limbs for locomotion. It is in a sense its own parent and its own child, because it reproduces itself by dividing into two daughter cells, which attain the size and likeness of their mother, and in their turn divide.

Higher in the social scale we have organisms composed of a colony of cells, a group of which bud from the side of the mother and begin to lead an independent existence as a new individual. As we ascend the ladder of evolution this primitive form of reproduction becomes more and more complex. First, we have a form of reproduction called "conjugation," in which two cells that appear to be alike join together for purposes of reproduction. Higher still, we have the birth of sex, and the continuation of the species is dependent upon the union of two different cells—paternal and maternal. At this stage each individual is multicellular, consisting



## Evolution of Motherhood

of millions of cells which have specialised functions. Certain cells are set aside for digestion, others for locomotion, others for purposes of reproduction. Some individuals are male, others female; and, for the continuation of the species, union must take place between a germ cell from the female and a germ cell from the male, the two forming what is called the "fertilised ovum," the biological unit. This ovum, under suitable conditions of warmth and nutrition, is able to divide and subdivide to form a mass of cells, which gradually constitute the embryo, infant, or young individual.

With sexual reproduction the evolution of motherhood becomes possible. The preservation of a species does not necessarily depend upon maternal care. In the lower forms of life this does not exist. Progeny is produced in such enormous numbers that even though ten thousand young die to every one that survives, still the continuation of the species is assured. It is not until we reach the higher molluscs that we find any trace of protection of the young by the maternal parent; and among the invertebrates generally the mother's responsibility is confined to carrying the eggs or the young in brood chambers for a short time after birth. The female insect has a more definite maternal instinct, and shows anxiety concerning the fate of her offspring after birth. With the appearance of the vertebral column the parental instinct becomes more than a suggestion. And so we find traces of parental protection even in fish, reptiles and amphibians. The stickleback is a frequently cited example of paternal care. He builds the nest for the young, safeguards his wife and offspring, and is an excellent helpmate—an example to many irresponsible husbands much higher in the life scale.



## Woman, Marriage and Motherhood

Parental care increases as we ascend in the scale of evolution—as the number of offspring diminishes, and their preservation therefore becomes of more importance in nature. When we reach the birds and mammals we find not only maternal forethought and care evolving, but also forms of union or association very similar to marriage and the family in the human species. Sex association may be promiscuous, polygamous or monogamous in animals as in man, but, according to Letourneau, whatever form of marriage exists, the male always shows much less affection for the young than does the female. The female continues essentially maternal; the love of the mother for the young amongst mammals being often intense during the period of their dependence upon her.

**Maternity evolves into motherhood.**—But it was not until life on this planet had passed through many millions of years of evolution that “motherhood” came into existence. With the appearance of the first human mother on earth maternity evolved into motherhood, and the union between parent and offspring then came to rest on an ethical as well as a physiological basis. “No greater day ever dawned for evolution than this on which the first human child was born, for there entered into the world the one thing wanting to complete the Ascent of Man—a tutor for the affections. Millions of millions of mothers had lived in the world before this, but the higher affections were unborn. To create motherhood, and all that enshrines itself in that holy word, required a human child.”<sup>1</sup> To motherhood we owe the birth of unselfishness, sympathy and love. In the primitive human mother such emotions were probably transitory, unstable. For ages the law of self-preservation was the

<sup>1</sup> “Ascent of Man,” by Henry Drummond.



## Evolution of Motherhood

paramount impulse in the human as in the animal species, in the female as in the male. The primitive mother, disturbed by the approach of a saurian monster, no doubt saved herself and, without sense of loss or remorse, left the child of her body to be destroyed. But through the centuries motherhood was evolving. One day a human mother sacrificed her life for her child. In that moment true "self-sacrifice" was born into the world. The moral sense stirred in woman, and it has grown and developed through the centuries until unselfishness, self-sacrifice and suffering are attributes of motherhood universally accepted in all classes and all nations.

To motherhood we owe the origin of family life and the birth of the noblest faculties of mankind. The mother was the originator of the family as a social factor, the true civiliser, the moral artist of life. Through the instrumentality of the first savage mother, a new, a beautiful social state, domesticity, became possible. "While man, restless, eager and hungry, is a wanderer on the earth, woman makes a home."

It was the primitive mother who, stirred by the needs of her child, made the first rude shelter or lair—the primitive home. She planted the seeds and gathered the harvest. She was the agriculturist, the architect, the inventor, the doctor, whilst man occupied himself with sport and war. As primitive society progressed, and the woman became clever at making the "home" attractive to the man, the family evolved—father, mother and child—and man gradually became *the* domesticated animal.

Love, as we understand the term, could not have existed between primitive woman and her savage mate: distrust, fear, desire—but never love. Love of child



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must have been born far earlier than love of husband and wife. First love of mother for child, then love of father for child; and the father, through his feeling for the offspring, became protector of and food provider for the family. The longer and the closer the association between father and mother, the greater the protection of the children; and so we have the need of the child supplying the incentive to "marriage" and social life—the beginning of civilisation. Families united to form family groups or hordes for mutual protection in the struggle for existence. "It is probable," says Ratzenhoffer, "that in the horde there existed a certain individual equality between man and woman. There is much to indicate that the woman was the uniting element in the community." Various writers have collected material suggesting that a "mother age" lasted for many thousands of years, and that it was, with its mother-right customs, a civilisation largely built up by the energy, the activity, and the skill of women. According to Karl Pearson, "It was an age within the small social unit of which there was more community of interest, far more fellowship in labour and partnership in property and sex, than we find in the larger social unit of to-day."

Unmistakable traces of the matriarchal age are to be met with amongst Aryan and Semitic peoples, whose ancient records indicate a widespread system of descent and inheritance in the female line. Mother rule existed in ancient Egypt, and amongst the Lycians matriarchal customs persisted for many centuries. The children were called by the mother's name, and succession was through the mother. A number of "uncivilised" races at the present time trace kinship through the female, and have a more or less complete system of



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mother rule and mother right. The customs of the maternal family are, for example, preserved among the North American Indians. The clan is matriarchal, the children bear their mother's name, the eldest daughter succeeds to the property—the wigwam of her mother. It seems also as if the woman has the right of discarding her husband, and a man's mother-in-law occupies a position of dignity and importance, for she has the power of taking away his wife if he proves an unloving husband or an unsatisfactory son-in-law. Women take part in the councils of the clan, but at the same time they undertake the greater share of work.

**Motherhood in Greece and Rome.**—In the primitive Græco-Roman world maternal filiation and mother right existed. The Cretans spoke of "motherland," not "fatherland." To the child was given the mother's name. The ancient Greeks realised the importance of healthy motherhood to a nation. They taught mothers the duty of maintaining health of mind and body during their child-bearing period. The fame of Spartan mothers as child-rearers has come down to us through the ages. In early Greece the women of higher rank considered it an honour and a duty to nurse their own children. Sons and daughters were brought up to treat their mothers with special respect and reverence, although the control of purely domestic education ceased at the age of 7 years, and the boys were then handed over to be trained by trustworthy young men in courage and endurance. The position of the mother was to a considerable extent independent. Later, the status of Greek women declined. When the paternal family—the patriarchal system—was initiated the woman came under the subjection of the husband. The Romans firmly established the patriarchal family or father rule.



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The Roman mother was under the control of the male head of the household. It was not until Justinian revised the Roman code—allowing the wife control of her money and entrusting widows with the care of their own children—that the lot of the mother was improved. And yet the ancient Romans revered motherhood. They derived many of their customs from the Etruscans, a people who traced their descent through the female line. No divinities of Roman Great Britain are more interesting than the “Deæ Matres.” These mother goddesses were worshipped by the early German and Celtic peoples. With the decline of Greece and Rome, and of the moral status of woman, family life suffered, and although the ideals of Christianity ultimately raised women as well as men, the early Fathers helped to keep women on a low social plane for many generations by reimposing upon the sex the civil and legal disabilities which had been removed under the Roman law. The Church aimed at a truer equality in the marriage relationship than had previously obtained; but, on the other hand, the propagation of the doctrine of marriage as a necessary “evil” for the prevention of sin debased sex, one of the greatest and holiest forces in life, and exalted persistent celibacy, which is an abnormal condition for healthy human beings. And so woman was regarded as a temptation, the “tool of the devil,” an evil in the pathway of man’s aspiration after the highest sanctity. But in the person of Mary, the Holy Mother, the Church glorified woman the mother, and mother reverence was definitely accepted as part of the religious teaching of the modern Christian world.

**Motherhood in the Middle Ages.**—In mediæval times the status of motherhood was not very high. The wife and mother had no right of holding property, but



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was herself deemed to be the chattel of her husband so long as he did not desire to get rid of her. The writers of the Middle Ages revel in vituperative and hysterical abuse of women. The horrors and cruelty which, on the plea of suppressing witchcraft, were meted out to women who possessed ability and personality, or who had offended a superstitious priesthood, expressed the prevailing spirit of that era.

In the age of chivalry, with the dawning of romantic love, the spirit of sex equality prevailed. Woman gained some measure of protection, freedom, opportunity. With the birth of chivalrous or romantic love, a new relationship was for the first time made possible between the sexes. Men and women formed ideals. The civilising effect of reverence for women was made apparent in the literature, the romantic exploits, the achievements of the time. It is to chivalry we owe the metamorphosis of love. Transforming a mere sexual instinct into a psychical emotion, with immeasurable possibilities, its birth and development made the equality of woman possible. But her real emancipation was not yet due. After the Reformation woman's position was again gradually degraded. She had never regained the legal status of the Roman matrons, and in many civilised countries to-day women are still labouring under disabilities put upon them by the early Christian Fathers.

**Feminine emancipation.**—At the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the dawn of the humanitarian age, the movement for the emancipation of women was hastened. The evolution of motherhood was stimulated in the latter part of the nineteenth century by certain factors—the striking development of higher education, the opening of schools, colleges and universities to women; this provided the main stimulus to the modern



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woman movement as we know it. Coincidentally with improved education, opportunities were given to women and girls for a more outdoor and healthy life. The mental and physical development of women consequent upon these new opportunities has an immense bearing upon motherhood and upon racial evolution. Intelligent and efficient motherhood is only possible through education.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the rapid development of industrialism. Women were drawn into the life of the factory and workshop. The making of the materials for food and clothing passed from the home to the factory. First, the work was undertaken by men, but with the advent of machinery it was found that women could do the work as well and at a much lower rate of pay. The home now ceased to be the workshop, most of the "women's work"—jam-making, pickling, curing, weaving, tailoring, dressmaking—being transferred to the factory. It is for the present generation to determine whether it is to the best interests of the family that mothers should be removed from industrial life and return to the home, or whether there should be an entire readjustment of our work conditions. Things cannot go on as they are. The social conscience will not much longer permit mothers to work for starvation wages during the child-bearing period, the children having to be left neglected and hungry in the home because the mother has to go out "to work." The problem is a difficult one, but it is not insoluble. Maeterlinck says that it takes a thousand thoughts to make one act. The thoughts of social reformers, the work that is being done, are bearing on this problem. The demand for a minimum wage for workers, for a minimum standard of nurture for



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children, the fight against poverty, dirt and disease, all tell to the advantage of the mother. Progress will be hastened if effort is concentrated for a time upon the mother problem. Biologically, the mother is paramount. Socially, the mother is the basis of racial progress. Ethically, intelligent mother love is the strongest force in the world. The higher the type, the greater need of good motherhood if it is to survive. Human evolution, though it has occupied millions of years, is still only in its beginnings, and it needs good motherhood if new faculties are to be born, if character is to develop, if moral and spiritual progress is to be achieved, for the mother holds in her hands the fate of the whole human race.



## CHAPTER III

### MARRIAGE LAWS AND CUSTOMS

THE union of one man and one woman who are physically attracted and psychically in harmony comprises "marriage" according to the modern Christian ideal. We know something of the origin of marriage. Its further evolution and its adaptation to new social conditions are inevitable, because life is transformation and continual change. Evolution has given us monogamous marriage, the principle of which is essential to social security at the present time. But monogamous marriage also must evolve, must be adapted to new conditions and new ideals, must be elevated and purified for the protection of motherhood and the race. The question of marriage and parenthood, associated as it is with the problems of heredity, race culture, and race development, is the most important question before the civilised world. Human happiness and human progress are largely dependent upon the furthering of conditions which will increase the sum total of marriages founded upon love, and provide a sufficient number of healthy, efficient children to perpetuate the race. This question involves the consideration of various types of marriage which have been evolved through the ages, and the comparison of marriage laws and customs in different parts of the world to-day.

Throughout the ages every conceivable form of marriage must have existed. For thousands of years "marriage" was a transient union, a temporary tie



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which up till quite recent times has never been very binding upon the man.

According to Westermarck, the simian progenitors of the human race had probably a pairing season. The young were born at that particular time of year when there was ample sunshine and plenty of food. Emerging from the period of animal laxity or promiscuity, some of our ancestors would practise monogamy, polyandry (the union of one woman with several men), or polygamy (the union of one man with several women), as custom and preference and circumstances dictated. We have seen that matriarchal rule was followed by the patriarchal system. Women became subordinate, being regarded as property procured by capture, and later by barter or purchase. Polygamy prevailed in the early patriarchate. The advantage of polygamy from primitive man's point of view was that it permitted the servile labour of women, exempting the physically superior sex from hard and uncongenial work. Wives under this system were a source of wealth through their power of labour and their servitude. Letourneau believes that polygamy was the first stage of marriage, and that it was practised by all primitive races. It arose probably out of the inequality in numbers of the sexes owing to the high mortality of males. In times of constant warfare, when large numbers of men were killed and their womenfolk captured by rival tribes, polygamy was the natural condition.

Marriage by capture was followed by the purchase of wives when man settled down to more peaceful pursuits. Marriage by barter existed in the middle period of civilisation, and among certain people—Hottentots, Kafirs and natives of Central Africa—it persists even to the present day. It implies the degradation of women



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to a position of submission or subordination to their husband-proprietors. Except among matriarchal peoples (as in ancient Egypt), early marriage customs enforced the slavery of the woman. Later, the mere fact of purchase raised the status of the wife to that of a property of some value. Very gradually the next stage of marriage was attained, the transition stage between polygamy and monogamy, where there is one legal wife and a varying number of inferior wives or concubines. Polygamy, in primitive times, must have been the prerogative of the strongest and fiercest males, and thus it had some eugenic value. Later it became the privilege of the rich, the better-off males of the community having many wives, the less well-off being limited to two or three, and the poorest having to be content with monogamy or celibacy.

**Evolution of monogamy.**—Various writers assign the institution of individual and hereditary property as a powerful factor in the establishment of legal monogamy. Morgan considers it the sole origin. But something must be allowed for the evolution of the moral sense in mankind, the moral social sense which developed very gradually but very surely through the centuries. The later Greek and the Roman civilisations were very imperfect, if we accept the aphorism that the "condition of the women is the measure of the moral development of a people." In Athens and Rome women were the property of men, and the custom of lending wives is freely mentioned in the literature of the time. Marriage by purchase was universal. Indeed, the Roman law draws no distinction between marital law and the law of property.

The value which the Greeks placed upon citizenship strengthened marriage in one sense, but the wives, in



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order to safeguard their matronly virtue, were kept secluded. The virtuous women, the wives and mothers, led very restricted lives as domestic slaves compared with the hetæraë, the Grecian courtesans, who were yet the friends and comrades of philosophers, the inspiration of the greatest men of their age. Women had no choice in marriage. A father had absolute right of disposing of his daughters, but with the development of the dowry system the Greek woman acquired more independence and a more assured position. The choice of the men, so far as their legal wives were concerned, was also considerably restricted. Citizens could only wed citizens of equal rank. Wives could not be taken from the slaves or from foreign classes. The fact that in Athens during the year 309 B.C. there were 21,000 citizens, 10,000 foreigners and 400,000 slaves indicates that their marriage customs must have had a very serious anti-eugenic effect upon the nation. The in-and-in breeding, the laxity of morals which prevails in all polygamous communities, the inferior status of the mothers compared with the courtesans, all contributed to the decay of Greek civilisation.

Among the Romans also marriage was a civil obligation, but the wife and mother was treated with more consideration than was the case with the later Greeks. Girls were given in marriage by their parents, but they had more liberty than Greek women. The wife was the property—indeed, according to law, the daughter—of her husband, who had control of her possessions and the right of physical chastisement. Three types of marriage existed among the Romans. There was marriage by purchase; there was marriage between the patricians; there was the "usus," which required no contract or ceremony of any kind. The fact that the system



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of lending wives existed in the highest classes sufficiently indicates the position of the women. Some writers declare that the growth of the third form of marriage—a temporary arrangement terminable at the desire of either party—prepared the way for the Christian ideal of monogamous marriage in Europe. In contrast to the civil marriages arranged for political or family reasons, these unions were founded on mutual affection, and provided many examples of love and devotion between husband and wife.

At this period of history the races of Northern Europe were establishing family life on a surer foundation. In Germany the wife was the helpmate and partner of her husband, and when the Germans and the Gauls overran the Roman Empire they impressed their domestic customs and ideals upon the morally lax race they had conquered. For many centuries following upon the dawn of the Christian era, marriage was a purely civil contract, and down to the eleventh or twelfth century matrimony was celebrated without ecclesiastical authority. In the ninth and tenth centuries some progress in the evolution of marriage took place in England. The woman could choose her husband. She "could hold her own property and keys, and the penal law of the husband ceased to weigh with her." Letourneau believes that this progress was independent of Christianity, and it was certainly in opposition to the teaching of the Church. But that Christianity more than any other influence has raised the status of motherhood, of marriage and of family life, must be allowed. It established monogamy and made marriage a life-long contract between man and woman.

It is only in monogamous marriage that we meet with conjugal love, a sentiment which is far removed from



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natural sexual love as it existed between primitive man and primitive woman. It is only possible where there is some recognition of sex equality, mutual respect, and mutual interests. It was unknown in polygamous times because polygamy is the monopoly of woman as property, and the possibility of equality or independence on the part of a wife is in polygamous communities undreamed of. Monogamy develops with the moral consciousness of a people. Even at the present stage of human evolution two-thirds of the race are polygamous.

**Polygamy.**—The chief argument against polygamy is eugenic. It brings about the degradation of the sex instinct, the growth of sensuality; and, by eliminating natural selection, hinders development and racial progress. A degraded motherhood is a suicidal policy for any nation. Polygamy involves the enslavement of the women. It hinders the development of the whole people, because the men are sons of slaves, born of women with the vices and the characters of slaves; and mother influence is the strongest force for good or evil in the world.

Polygamy was primarily established amongst Eastern races by the teachings of Mahomet. Mohammedanism, with its sensual self-indulgence, its attitude towards women, and its marriage customs, has helped to retard the civilisation of the East. When polygamy is associated with an enclosed life, with the absolute seclusion of women in an atmosphere calculated to develop the lowest traits of human character, it degrades not only the women but the men. The teaching of the self-indulgent prophet who founded the religion has kept its adherents in a low state of civilisation for centuries. Eastern progress and the era of modern civilisation can only begin with the emancipation of Mohammedan



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women, the reform of their system of marriage. Recent events in Turkey have illustrated this truth. In the struggle of the "Young Turks" against corruption and disorder, women were the inspiration of the movement. For a brief time after the revolution they tasted liberty, but their freedom was crushed and they were driven back into the harems as summarily as Turkey has since been driven back to the Bosphorus by nations whose women are free.

**Marriage in China and Japan.**—The Mongolians comprise perhaps one-third of the polygamous peoples of the world, and they follow closely the Mohammedan customs. There is, however, no compulsory *purdah* in China. One sees the upper-class women moving freely about the cities in their chairs, while the women of the labouring classes work shoulder to shoulder with the men in the rice fields and factories and on board the junks and river boats. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese mothers succumb to tuberculosis in the steaming atmosphere of the ill-ventilated silk factories, where babies of five or six years, with the hereditary tendency to tuberculosis, work from sunrise to sunset for three or four cents a day.

The wives are slaves who can be hired out to work or sold by their masters without formality. The Chinese themselves distinguish between the legal wife and the concubines, but the country is polygamous, and the women occupy the degraded position invariably associated with this form of marriage. The legal wife can be divorced for having no children, for disobedience to her mother-in-law, for jealousy, or for talking too much; while the presence of secondary wives and the fact that a woman is subordinate to her parents-in-law does not make for domestic happiness and respected



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motherhood. The secondary wives have no legal status whatever, and may be discarded whenever the husband desires to get rid of them.

Already a reaction is stirring amongst the younger generation of women in the Far East. Chinese women fought side by side with the men in the Revolution. When, subsequently, they asked for the franchise, they were denied the rights of citizenship. Twenty seats, however, in the Chinese Legislature were granted, as a compromise, to the women. The revolt of woman against the marriage laws in China, in some instances, takes the form of suicide. Young girls' suicide clubs are being formed. The members pledge themselves not to acquiesce in the existing conditions of marriage, and, if forced into marriage by their parents, to take their own lives. The number of tragedies which have occurred must compel the authorities to consider the advisability of reforming the law in respect of women and of marriage.<sup>1</sup> The custom of girl infanticide is still prevalent amongst families too poor to be able to afford a marriage dowry when their daughters grow up. That foundling hospitals exist in most of the large cities for the reception of girl infants left about the roads or by the rivers or the seashore indicates that a public opinion is forming adverse to this practice, which is already discouraged by the authorities. At the same time girl infanticide is not considered a crime. Lady Blake writes that it is usually the baby's father who decides "whether or not the little girl is to be 'passed under

<sup>1</sup> It is, of course, true that the Chinese do not value life as the Western peoples do. In one town, when we were inspecting an execution ground, the person in charge offered to arrange for us to see an execution in half an hour, remarking that he could easily procure a volunteer if we were prepared to pay a sum of money to the victim's family. We did not accept his offer!



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the bridge,' as the process of drowning the child is euphoniously termed. A large wooden pail for carrying water, spanned by a handle, is bought. If the father considers it not advisable to rear the girl, directly she is born she is dipped into the bucket and drawn under its handle—a process which effectually disposes of an unwelcome addition to the family."

Emancipation of women in China, with improved education and economic freedom, would raise the value of female life and to a large extent abolish female infanticide. The organisation of several women's societies, with their programme of rights and liberties, proves that emancipation has already begun.

The desire for freedom is stirring also amongst the women of Japan, but the tradition of sex subjection is difficult to eradicate. Ambitious, eager for knowledge, assimilative of Western ideas of progress, the Japanese, however "Europeanised" he may be in other respects, is Oriental in his conception of women. White slavery in Europe is "under the surface," but the *yoshiwaras* of Japan are recognised institutions. Men sell their daughters into sex slavery as children. A girl may serve a term of years as a public prostitute and afterwards marry, but most of them live and die as slaves of the public. I have visited the *yoshiwaras*, and shall never forget the misery of the women who sit, dressed in their grotesque *kimonos*, with hideously painted faces, in window enclosures barred like cages, for customers to view. The casual pedestrians and even the children who wander into *yoshiwara* districts seem to take what is almost incredible to Europeans as a matter of course. The marriage laws enforce the subjection of women, and the wife can be discarded or divorced for trivial reasons.



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At the same time the woman movement is gaining ground. As clerks, journalists, teachers, typists, and even doctors, Japanese women are winning educational and economic independence, of which sex freedom is the inevitable consequence.

**The child wife in India.**—Marriage laws in India supply a very striking example of the perversion of a natural state and the subjection of women by religious fanaticism and superstitious ordinances. According to the sacred books of Manu, the Hindu wives are the "property" of their husbands, marriage is indissoluble even by the death of the man, and although suttee was abolished by English law in 1829, the position of the Hindu widow is terrible at the present time. Only the women doctors know the tragedies of child marriage in India, the terrible suffering involved to the girl children who, at 6, 8 or 10 years of age, are physically at the mercy of men—40 or 60 years of age, it may be—to whom their parents marry them.

The medical women who, a few years ago, petitioned the Viceroy on behalf of the child wives declared that Indian marriages may be consummated not only before the wife is physically qualified for maternity, but before she is able to perform the duties of the conjugal relation, thus giving rise to numerous and great evils. This marriage practice has become the cause of gross immoralities and cruelties which are practically protected by the law. The present system, in addition to the physical and moral effects which the Indian Government has deplored, produces sterility, and consequently becomes an excuse for the introduction of other child wives into the family, thus leading to polygamy.

In 1891 the law raised the age of consent to 12 years, but it has remained a dead letter, and no reform



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can be anticipated until the just punishment of offenders is carried out and freedom is extended to the *purdah* women of India. The agitation against child marriage must be conducted on a very wide scale. The provision of better medical relief for the women of India would do a great deal to protect childhood and motherhood in the country. There is urgent need for an organised State service of medical women, with hospitals and dispensaries staffed by women. Under present conditions, high-caste native women die in large numbers rather than lose caste by consulting a medical man or attending a hospital staffed by men. The statistics of disease and mortality consequent upon neglected childbirth in India would, if they could be procured, startle the Government which is responsible for the welfare of these British subjects. Secluded women are not allowed to consult a man doctor, and there are but four hundred medical women in India at the present time, working under great disadvantages and a heavy handicap, because they have no official standing or State support. Forty million women are living in seclusion. There are twenty-five million widows, and of these 115,000 are under ten years of age. Premature maternity ensures an enormous child and mother death-rate. A recent census gives the excess of girls over boys up to the age of 5 years as 639,000, but between the ages of 15 and 20 the boys are three and a half millions in excess. The reason for this remarkable alteration of sex proportion is alleged to be the high mortality rate of girls from premature motherhood and lack of medical assistance. An agitation against child marriage has begun, and the establishment of schools for widows is helping to improve the conditions of a small number of these children, but there are still tens of thousands of child



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widows doomed to a life of miserable dependence by Hindu custom. Already a spirit of rebellion is stirring amongst the women of the East, and it seems as if this century will see the emancipation of the women of the East, as of the West, from the old order of sex dominance and subjection. The new Brahmo Somaj movement, which is affecting the Hindu world all over Northern India, teaches the fundamental principle of complete equality of the sexes and the emancipation of women.

**Marriage laws in Europe and America.**—The nations of Europe differ somewhat in the prevailing ideas about women, and the various legal disabilities of Western women in marriage and divorce will be considered in another chapter. Monogamous marriage is practically universal in Europe and in America. Its association with prostitution and the white slave evil cannot be ignored, and must be seriously faced by women in this generation. Monogamous marriage is the ideal. Monogamous marriage, with women recognised by society and by the law as having equal rights, privileges, opportunities for self-development with men, equal recognition as legal parents and guardians of children of the union, equal opportunities to dissolve a marriage which is not good but evil in its consequences, is the only type of marriage which can possibly survive. Marriage laws, from the racial point of view, must be founded upon choice, natural selection, mutual love. It is a biological fact that where there is affinity between parents the children gain physically and intellectually, and Lester Ward declares that aversion between man and woman means that their union will result in some defect or imperfection in the offspring. This is vitally important. So long as marriages are arranged for



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financial or social reasons, so long as young men and women are encouraged to make marriages of convenience, and girls are educated with the idea that they must either marry or be stamped as social failures, we must be prepared for the birth of children who are "defective"—morally, physically, or mentally warped—because they are not, as every child should be, the product of love, of a physical and psychical union perfect in its completeness.

If life-long monogamy is the ideal marriage, the principle of permanence in marriage is essential to any nation that is to evolve towards higher standards of thought and conduct. The strengthening of the principle of mutual responsibility and mutual obligation between husband and wife offers the best chances of human happiness to the individual and to the community. Marriage has gradually evolved, as we have seen, from promiscuity to monogamy through every variety of form, and has developed with man's endeavour to regulate the relationship of the sexes for the benefit and maintenance of family life. Our present form of marriage was established, first, by custom, afterwards being legalised, and later, several centuries after the beginning of the Christian era, solemnised as a religious ceremony by the Church. The view of woman's subordination or subservience to man, propagated by early ecclesiastical authority, is inconsistent with Christ's teaching of the relationship of man and woman or with the real Christian ideal of marriage.

**The Marriage Service.**—If marriage is to be a contract based on mutual consent and affection, with mutual privileges and responsibilities—which is the only conceivable view of marriage between modern man and modern woman—there seems to be no object in main-



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taining certain parts of the Anglican Marriage Service which are in opposition to this higher ideal. That the wife should "obey" and "serve" her husband, submitting herself to him in all things, that she should be "given away" by her parent, is a relic of sex inequality, of the inferior status of woman, which cannot be much longer permitted to survive. As expressed by Lady Aberconway,<sup>1</sup> the Service insults the wife "by a wholly untrue and unsuitable declaration as to her reasons for marriage, and it obliges her to take a vow of obedience to her husband which neither the Roman Catholic Church nor our Nonconformist bodies impose upon her. It commits the husband to the entirely false declaration that he endows his wife with all his worldly goods, when he usually neither does nor intends to do anything of the kind. It also abounds in expressions only suited to a coarser age."

The present Marriage Service in the Church Prayer Book dates from the Reformation. The wife was not required to "obey" in the early days of the Anglican Church. In the ancient Hereford Use the word "obey" does not occur, the vow of the wife being:

"I N. underfygne The N. for my wedded housband, for better, for worse, for richer, for porer, yn sekeness and in helthe, to be buxom to the tyl deth us departe, as holy Church hath ordeyned and tharto y plight the my trowthe."

The old word "buxom" sometimes meant yielding, and could be converted into submission by the strict and severe Reformers. More generally the word signified, as now, lively, healthy, and no doubt was so interpreted

<sup>1</sup> "The Women's Charter," by Lady Aberconway."



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in the Marriage Service. The word could also be read as well-mannered, obedient to custom; but in early English times the obedience of the wife to the husband was not demanded by the Marriage Service, as is customary to-day in even civilised countries, with very few exceptions. In Norway the word "obey" has been deleted from the marriage ceremony.

**Marriage reforms in Europe and America.**—In what respects do the American-European marriage laws require reform? They no longer satisfy modern women, because they imply that women are economically, legally and sexually under the dominance of the husband. Modern marriage law must be based upon equality, and the law dates from a period when sex equality was unrecognised. It suggests that the woman is the property of the husband, given to him by her father; that she must submit her will and her individuality to his. Women will not be satisfied until they have equal rights in marriage, mutual guardianship of the children, the same rights of dissolving the contract. A growing army of women are gaining economic and personal independence. In many cases the wife shares the economic responsibilities for the family with her husband. The present law is obsolete for such women, whilst in many instances it presses hardly upon helpless wives; and it detracts from the dignity of wifehood and motherhood if the rights of civic and personal independence of the married woman are inferior to those of the unmarried. In many countries the wife is under the guardianship of the husband, who has the management of her property. In most countries, if not in all, the father has actual guardianship over the children—in such matters as education and religious training, for instance. The husband has the right of fixing a domicile. He can,



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in many countries, forbid his wife taking up any business or profession. According to the Scottish law, a husband has the right to refuse to allow his wife to undergo an operation. Thus the situation might arise of a medical woman graduate deciding that an operation was necessary for her own health and safety and being forbidden by her lay husband to have it performed.

The actual position of the wife and mother is, of course, better than her legal position. The wife who meekly and literally "obeys" the clenched demands of her autocratic spouse is a type that is rapidly disappearing, as is the husband who desires literal obedience. So that there is no need to retain the empty form of a law which is unworthy of men and women who have evolved to the present stage of comradeship and mutual respect, while those weaker, more brutal, more domineering men, with prehistoric views on the subject of women, ought not to be supported by any such formality.

The dissatisfaction of many women—and many men also—with the present form of marriage is no evidence of lower conceptions of moral relationships, as has been asserted, but rather the expression of a demand for higher ideals of love, for a deeper, truer, finer relationship in the sex union. The present form of marriage fulfils only to a limited extent the needs of men and women at this stage of evolution. It fails to satisfy increasing numbers. The great need of the human soul is for companionship. Nine out of ten women would acknowledge that in marriage there is not enough affection and comradeship, as distinct from passion. How far this fact may be traced to lesser opportunities for education and self-development on the woman's part it would be difficult to say. Friendship between man



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and wife must be based upon some measure of intellectual equality.

Every wife has an economic, a personal, and a biological value. The biological value of a woman, as of a man, depends upon the ability to propagate human beings of a high type. Her economic value is based on her efficiency, her usefulness in the home and in the community. Her personal value lies in her capacity to love and serve.

“Marriage,” says Nietzsche: “I call marriage the will shared by two to create the one—the one that is in itself more than its creators. Reverence for one another, I call marriage; such reverence as is meet for those whose wills are united in this one act of will.” This ideal may not be fully realised until many more generations of men and women have lived and died. Whilst we know that no legal or religious contract can compel the continuance of love, or any extraneous circumstances ensure soul fidelity, it remains true that monogamous marriage is best for the great majority of people, and so it must be conserved. As Sir Francis Galton has wisely said, it “is the best that has hitherto been devised for the parties primarily concerned, for their children, for home life, and for society.”

The world is evolving—indeed, it has already evolved—towards higher conceptions of freedom and sex equality. The sexual relationship of men and women may be productive of the best or the worst in life. Marriage may ennoble or degrade. There are marriages which should never have been permitted to take place: the marriage of the diseased and the healthy, the union of the young girl with the elderly, wealthy libertine, any marriage which is founded upon other basis than mutual love and respect. There are marriages which are



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impure, unhallowed, degrading, more immoral than any union of lovers without legal or religious sanction. The birth of worthless children, the propagation of disease, the sacrifice of women who are compelled to bear children in fear and repulsion and after years of sex exhaustion may pay with their lives—all this takes place in the name of marriage. Truly there is much need for the elevation, the purification, of the institution of marriage, so that it may be founded on no other basis than love and friendship. Then will its fruits be children of promise who will make for the evolution of the race towards greater perfection.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE LEGAL POSITION OF THE WIFE AND MOTHER

OUR study of the evolution of marriage suggests that time has mitigated to a considerable extent the social disabilities of women. With the establishment of the patriarchal system we find the wife a slave, who could be disposed of in any way that happened to appeal to her husband proprietor. Through unnumbered generations her subjection continued. But as societies became more civilised, the husband's rights were gradually curtailed. The wife remained the possession, the servant in subjection, but was afforded some measure of protection. The gradual emancipation of woman from slavery was spread over thousands of years. After many generations she is emerging from servitude, and there are signs that her complete emancipation will not long be delayed.

**The Married Women's Property Act.**—In England wives remained in almost absolute legal subjection up till our own day, because it was not until the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts, 1882 and 1890, which followed the less drastic statutes of 1870 and 1874, that a wife was recognised as an individual capable of controlling her own property and of retaining any money she earned. These Acts conferred upon well-to-do wives that freedom which the undisputed possession of property in any form invariably provides. It may be said that they raised the status of wives in general. But the economically dependent wife



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still labours under many disabilities in every country in Europe, while the laws of inheritance, devolution, and intestacy as they affect women are in urgent need of reform.

**The mother's legal disabilities.**—In many countries the mother occupies a legal position no higher than that of her youngest child. She is a minor who is under the authority of her husband, and even now, in most countries—in Germany, Austria, Italy, Holland, and Sweden, for example—she has no control over her property. She must live in the domicile chosen by her husband, and she is forbidden to exercise the municipal rights which she may have possessed as an unmarried woman. With few exceptions, in Europe as in the East, mothers are not recognised as the legal parents of the children they have brought into the world. Parental power is in the hands of the father even in England, Germany, France, and Austria.

The law in England is full of anomalies. In spite of the evident desire of our law-makers to bring the legal and economic position of the wife more into agreement with modern lines of thought and social development, old disabilities are retained, and in recent years legislation intended to improve the situation has in some cases added to the general confusion. In early Saxon times a law was passed giving the wife the "right of dower"; it provided that the widow was entitled to a provision amounting to one-third of her deceased husband's estates. This law still operates in Scotland, but in England the Dower Act of 1833 abolished the right of dower by giving the husband full power to regulate the amount of the wife's interest in his lands. As the law now stands, the husband in his lifetime can convey his property from his wife and the mother of his chil-



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dren by deed; he can bequeath it to public charities, or to his relatives or his mistress, leaving wife and children destitute. In such a case, whatever straits or difficulties of wage-earning she may encounter, the widow has no claim upon the fortune left by the man whose vow of "endowment" at the altar is an absurdity and a lie.

**Economic disadvantages.**—The economic disadvantages of the wife and mother are considerable. A woman marries when her wage-earning capacity is at its height. She spends the best years of her life in unpaid, unstandardised domestic labour. If, by self-denial and the exercise of economy, she helps her husband to amass a sum of money, she has no legal claim upon it whatever. Most men, it is true, are better than the laws they have made. It is only when a marriage is unhappy that a wife discovers how powerless she is if the husband cares to exert his rights. Against her will a mother may be separated from her children—her daughters may be sent to schools abroad, her sons educated for a profession she disapproves of, brought up in a religion which is repugnant to her. The economic question may never be a very acute grievance in many homes. The majority of wives are provided for to the utmost capacity of the husband. But the fact remains that men can legally ignore their duty to the wives who have served them through a long period of years for "board and lodging." The wife and mother is not a partner in the marriage contract. She may work as cook, nurse, char-woman, laundry hand, serving-maid, housemaid, in addition to fulfilling the duties of wife and mother in the home, and never possess one penny except what is given, in some cases grudgingly, by the "bread-winner." If she has a housekeeping allowance and saves a few pounds, the money legally belongs to the husband and



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can be claimed by him. The injustice of the law with regard to the economic position of the wife presses more hardly where there are children of the marriage, because without some command of money the right to share in the control and upbringing of the children may be purely nominal.

"I have often," says Mr. Cecil Chapman, the Metropolitan police magistrate, "heard separated women say that they had never known what it was to enjoy their children until they had received definite sums from their husband by order of the court and could spend it upon their children without being beaten for it."

It is only when an appeal to the law is made that more reasonable conditions and the rights of the mother as parent are recognised. The court has the power of deciding all questions of custody, upbringing, and access, and under the Matrimonial Causes Acts, the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1886, and the Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women) Act, 1895, the interests of the children are rightly considered before even the interests of the innocent party.

**The doctrine of coverture.**—The old doctrine of coverture is productive of some curious anomalies at the present time. Married women living with their husbands are not legally liable to pay income tax. It is probably ignorance of the existence of this law rather than generosity which accounts for the fact that £1,500,000 per annum is paid by married women in income tax. When a woman's income is derived from property her tax is deducted at the source. Note where the doctrine of coverture hits the wife and mother. She is not, according to the Income-Tax Act, obliged to pay anything. Granted that her tax is deducted, she cannot claim abatements, allowances for children, insurance,



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etc., however small her income. She must pay in full, and any refunds are made to the husband, even if the latter has no income of his own. It may be said that any honest man will pay his wife what he receives from the authorities in rebate. But honesty is a relative term. Further, instances exist of the wife supporting the family, the husband living in idleness in her house or elsewhere, and pocketing the money which he claims from the Revenue authorities.

Again, it is unfair both to married men and married women that their incomes should be lumped together and taxed as one. A married couple with £700 a year between them have no claim for rebate, although as parents of a young family they are less well off than if each had the control of £400 and £300 a year respectively. The Income-Tax Act is unfair to the husband. By the Married Women's Property Act he has no claim to his wife's income, and he should be freed from responsibility for the tax on her goods. An excellent object lesson on the need of reform of the law as affecting husband and wife was recently supplied by the case of a man who went to prison, refusing to pay the income-tax of his wife, a medical woman, who had already on suffrage principles resisted the tax. The assessment and rebatement of income-tax is based on feudal principles which are obsolete to-day, namely that husband and wife living together are one person. Under all circumstances the husband's income and the wife's are treated as one. But if the total income is under £500, and any part of it represents the earnings of the wife, the husband is allowed to claim abatement twice. The Women's Tax Resistance League quotes a case where a wife with an income of £170 a year married to a man with £230 a year paid a tax of £9 18s. 4d. a



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year, deducted at the source and irrecoverable. The husband's tax is 2s. 6d. As an unmarried woman she would pay nothing.

Such are some of the anomalies produced by the law of coverture.

Under the law of coverture also a man can embezzle his wife's property and the woman has no redress. He can publish the most malicious libel about his wife without fear of punishment, as the wife cannot take any legal action on her own behalf except with his consent.

The protection which is afforded to a woman against bankruptcy is frequently quoted as an instance of the advantages women are granted under the law. It is, however, a distinct disadvantage, because a woman in business is handicapped by the fact that people are as loath to enter into contracts with her as with a minor. Thus her operations in business are hindered and she is put under a disability.

**The husband's rights.**—In England, as a woman is under the guardianship, custody, and control of her husband, he has the right of regulating her mode of life, her domicile, and her domestic arrangements. If the husband becomes a naturalised subject of a new country, the wife immediately loses all the rights and privileges of an English subject, even her right to an Old Age Pension, and is bound by the laws of her husband's new domicile. She can be repudiated or divorced according to the laws of the country which she is compelled to accept, even against her will. Further, an Englishwoman is insufficiently protected by the law of her own country if she marries a foreigner and goes to live in his country. According to the Foreign Marriage Act, 1892, the marriage is valid in the British Empire, but not necessarily outside.



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In spite of this law, the wife is not sufficiently protected even within the Empire—in India, for example. The position of Englishwomen married to Indians who do not profess the Christian faith is intolerable. According to a writer in the *Times* (May 12th, 1913), “any Indian who is not a Christian can go to England, marry an Englishwoman, bring her to India, and promptly desert her. If he does this, the wife has no legal remedy whatsoever, unless the husband is guilty of conduct which gives her ground for divorce.”

In the case of mixed European marriages, also, the wife is insufficiently protected. A Russian may go through a civil marriage, for example, with an Englishwoman in England, and if he returns later with his wife and their children to Russia, he may discard the wife and repudiate the children as illegitimate. An Englishwoman married to a foreigner follows the nationality of her husband. The only British women subjects who retain their nationality when married to foreigners are the women of Australia and New Zealand.

**Maintenance of wife and mother.**—The law with regard to maintenance of wives is very inadequately enforced. A mutual obligation rests upon husband and wife to support *each other* and their children out of any money they may possess or earn. While the wife is child-bearing her earning capacity is necessarily reduced, and the economic dependence of wives makes the question of maintenance a very important one. According to the Church of England Marriage Service the husband endows his wife with “all his worldly goods,” and the law so far recognises the obligation of the husband in that wilful neglect to provide for his wife is, in certain cases, a ground for a separation order. The wife, also, is presumed under the law to have the husband’s



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authority to pledge his credit to obtain the necessaries of life, but no machinery for ensuring the maintenance of the wife and mother exists either when she is living with the husband in the home or in the event of a separation order being obtained. Her right to pledge credit for necessaries is valueless to the working woman, who can only obtain credit for a brief time in shops where she is well known, and whose credit very soon comes to an end when the tradespeople realise that no money is to be got from the husband, whilst a man escapes liability if he proves that his wife was adequately supplied with "necessaries" when she incurred the debt, or that he forbade her to pledge credit in his name. Further, the working-class wife and mother has no command over any definite sum from her husband for the up-keep of the home. The man can spend what he pleases upon drink, tobacco, picture shows, gambling. He can, indeed, spend all his earnings upon himself and let the wife work for the rent and the necessaries of existence for the family. The only remedy open to the woman is to break up her home, appeal to the guardians, and go into the workhouse with her children. If she obtains a separation order it is usually accompanied by an order to the husband to pay a certain sum weekly to his wife; but in the majority of cases any such order is useless, for there are no means of enforcing payment. Nothing can legally be deducted from the husband's wages, and a man can escape payment if he so desires. The wife, it is true, can have her husband sent to prison after four weeks of non-payment, but it is extremely unlikely that she will take such a course, risking the vengeance of the man, jeopardising his employment, and destroying the last hope of any allowance in the future. In cases where the husband is willing to pay, the maintenance



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order granted by most magistrates is for one-third of his income provided the amount of maintenance is not more than £2 a week; this sum cannot be exceeded even if the husband should have an income of £10,000 a year. The sum usually granted, say seven or eight shillings a week, is quite inadequate to support a mother and children. Her only refuge, if she is unable to earn sufficient herself, is the workhouse. Our workhouses contain an appalling number of deserted wives. The husband who wishes to desert his wife has few difficulties put in his way by the law. To constitute desertion, the wife must prove a definite intention on the part of her husband to break off matrimonial relations. If he has simply departed, the court will not accept this as proof, and the fact that a fortnight generally elapses after a summons is taken out against the man gives him ample opportunity to make himself scarce. The boards of guardians and charitable associations are unwilling to give out-relief to deserted wives for fear of collusive desertions. If the man has sufficient money to go abroad he cannot be extradited under the law. No money can be obtained from him even if his address is known and he has ample means to provide an allowance, so long as he remains out of England. Thus it will be seen that the penniless wife and mother has no assured claim upon the husband, the father of her children.

Women must demand the recognition of the principle that when a man marries he contracts, legally as well as morally, to maintain his wife and children. No husband should be permitted by the law to spend his earnings as he likes when he has a wife and children to support. The wife, if she is a fit person, should be able to claim a definite proportion of the family wage for feeding, clothing and housing herself and her children.



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In cases of desertion, when the husband is ordered to pay a sum weekly to his wife, this order should be made a charge upon the husband's wages, obtainable from the employer if necessary. It is indefensible that a woman should be required to apply week by week for the money which the law has awarded for her maintenance to a man whose conduct has been so brutal as to compel a separation. All maintenance grants should be paid to an official of the police courts. In Liverpool and in a few other towns where this system has been adopted, under the Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women) Act of 1895, its advantages, according to magistrates, police court officials and workers amongst the poor, have been very apparent.

**Inheritance and intestacy as affecting women.**—Lady Aberconway, in "The Women's Charter," has clearly and concisely detailed the legal disabilities of women in regard to the laws of inheritance and intestacy. If a married woman dies intestate, her personal property, whether she leaves children or not, goes to the widower because it is vested in him by marital rights under the common law. And this principle is unaffected by the Married Women's Property Acts. By the curtesy of England, also, a man is entitled to a life interest in the whole of his wife's real estate, if children are born of the marriage, unless it is entailed in another branch of the family. When the husband dies intestate the wife receives, not all, but one-third of his personal property, if he has children, and half if he has no children. Since 1890 she has got, in England (in Scotland since 1911), a sum of £500, if the husband's estate is worth so much. If a man dies intestate, leaving a widow and no other relatives to inherit, the wife gets the £500 share, her dower in the real estate,



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and one-half of the personal estate, and the remainder goes to the Crown.

Compare the position of the mother of an intestate with that of the father. If there are no descendants of the intestate, son or daughter, the father takes the whole of the estate, and the mother gets nothing. This injustice is especially marked in that the intestate's estate may include property bestowed by the mother or from the mother's family. If the father is deceased, the mother has only an equal share with the intestate's brothers, sisters, or brothers' or sisters' children.

**The mother not a parent.**—As the law stands in England, and in many other countries, a mother is not the legal guardian of her child unless she is unmarried. The mother who has brought her child into the world, in agony and at the risk of her own life, who is the sole nourisher and nurse during the early months of life at least, is not the child's parent before the law! The claims of a mother with her infant in her arms, under the Vaccination Act, can be refused by a magistrate, who can demand that the father—the legal parent—should make the appeal. She must at least satisfy the Bench that her husband has authorised her to apply on his behalf. Surely a *reductio ad absurdum*. A mother has no right to the custody of her own children during the lifetime of the father, who is the sole guardian of all children born in marriage. The only right she possesses is one of access to the children until they are sixteen years of age, if granted by an order of the court. She has no power of deciding the education or the religious training of the children she has borne. This aspect of the law presses hardly upon mothers whose religion is a matter of vital importance to them and whose faith may be different from the father's, for



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he is not even bound by a prenuptial promise or deed consenting to the children being trained in the religion of the mother. All power of choosing the profession or mode of life of the children belongs to the father, and any property possessed by the child is under his control. The mother has the right of appeal, but this step will only be taken in extreme cases, and the decision rests with the judge.

The law also involves hardship upon the children in many cases, especially where there is a question of guardianship after death. The father can nominate a guardian of his children, who can practically enforce his own wishes in opposition to the mother's. The mother has nominally the right to appoint a guardian to act jointly with the father after her death, but this law is a dead letter. It cannot be enforced unless it can be proved that the father is not a fit person to act as guardian of the children. If a widower remarries, the stepmother may have full control of the children. She cannot be interfered with by any guardian appointed by the mother or by the mother's relatives.

**The mother's claim to equality.**—Biologically, the mother is the more important agent in reproduction, the parent the more closely related to the child. Mothers must demand equality of legal recognition. Where any question of religious education or the upbringing of possible offspring arises, contracts entered into by either parent before marriage must be legally binding. If serious differences arise afterwards, and no contract has been drawn up, all disputes should be settled in a domestic court, due consideration being given to the rights and welfare of the child.

Every mother should have equal right with the father of appointing a guardian to act with the surviving



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parent. In the event of remarriage this guardian's authority should come before that of stepmother or stepfather. Authority over children should be shared by father and mother, and if it be asserted that one must be nominal head (which I do not admit), then the mother, who works just as hard as the father in the home, even if she is not a wage-earner—and millions of mothers *are* wage-earners—the mother who has suffered more for the child and has been more closely associated with the process of reproduction, she, and not the father, should possess the superior rights of parentage.

Women do not desire special privileges under the law. They ask for equal treatment, equal recognition with men as legal entities. There is a strong feeling amongst many women in different countries that the husband's power of guardianship over the wife should be abolished. The law of coverture, for example, should be done away with in England.

In every country the wife should be regarded as a legal entity with definite rights and responsibilities. The right of the wife to a share or claim of her husband's property during his lifetime, and the right of inheritance of a certain proportion of it on his death, should be legally recognised.

There should be some international agreement to protect the interests of those wives who may be called upon to live in a foreign domicile.

Legal and economic equality of wives would raise the status of motherhood, and the whole question is thus invested with deep moral and racial significance.

The married mother must have the same rights with regard to her child as the law at present gives the unmarried mother.

A co-guardianship law should be passed in every



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country which does not already possess it, to provide that the mother shall be recognised as a legal parent having equal authority with the father over the children.

In some countries the wife now enjoys control over her own property and earnings, but the mothers who need protection most are those who have no private fortune and who, through the exercise of their function of motherhood, find it impossible to earn a money wage. The wife who is absolutely dependent upon her husband, and is penniless save for the money she receives for household expenses, has no means of finding out whether she can obtain legal relief for an unhappy marriage, whether she has any reasonable ground for applying for separation or divorce.

**Women as administrators of the law.**—In every town there should be a State lawyer, acting under the town clerk or mayor, to whom the poor could appeal for legal advice. Such a post might for many reasons be admirably filled by a woman. The fact that women are debarred from taking part in the administration of the law is a very real grievance and cause of discontent.

The working women who gave evidence on behalf of the Women's Co-operative Guild before the Royal Commission on Divorce over and over again spoke of the need of women magistrates and women jurors.

“Only women can understand the woman's case and know how fatal to right motherhood undesirable conditions are.”

“In sexual questions the woman's side is only understood by women.”

“I should like to see women on the Bench.”

“If inquiry officers were appointed it would be advisable to have women officers as well as men, for the reason that



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there are many cases where a woman would understand a woman's need and grasp the situation before a man, who has not had a woman's feelings and need to aid him. And also a woman would more readily speak to one of her own sex on delicate matters which often induce or cause separation or divorce."

The exclusion of women from the administration of the law is a loss to the community as well as an injustice to women. From policeman to judge, every position in an English court of law is filled by a man. There are many cases, such as offences against morals or criminal assault, in which it is an outrage on womanhood that the cross-examination and the medical investigations alike should be conducted by men. No child, no young girl should be left in a court of men without the moral support which the presence of a matron or a woman official would give her. The unfairness of the present system of justice is better realised if we try to imagine what the feelings of men would be if they were charged in courts where judge, counsel and jurors were women. Apart from the absurdity of the situation, a man might reasonably assert that the masculine point of view could not be understood by a court of women, that a man had a right to be tried by his peers. And that is what many women feel. The young girl on trial for infanticide, the woman suing for a separation, the wife defending her honour in the divorce court, are not allowed the option of a woman counsel. More than one woman's society is giving serious consideration to the question of agitation for women jurors to try women accused of such crimes as infanticide, and there is a great deal to be said in favour of a jury of married women in such cases. The jury should at least include



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one or two women doctors; and, until the law is reformed to the extent of providing women counsel for accused women, in such cases counsel should invariably be instructed by a woman doctor as to the physiological and psychological aspects of the case. Under present conditions it seems less than justice that a court of men should be empowered to condemn to death the girl whose act, even if proven, has been committed at a time when every woman doctor and nearly every mother realises she is mentally irresponsible. Indeed, these cases should not be tried in our public courts at all. They should be considered by a committee of matrons, and brought before the county court judge or before a special court presided over by two magistrates, a man and a woman, who would compel the attendance of the father of the dead child, if his identity could be discovered. Special courts for women have been advocated by the Penal Reform League, but the necessity for separate courts would be in most cases superfluous if women were more fairly represented in our present courts of law.

The good work which is being done by women under the probationary system will pave the way for the appointment of women police officials. Experiments in this direction have been made in various parts of the world with success. A woman has been added to the Canadian police force. At Strasburg the Ministry has appointed a woman police assistant to the morality section of the force. Her duties include the investigation of cases in which women are accused of immorality, theft and drunkenness. She is empowered to assist women and young girls to regain honest positions in life and to throw off evil associates. She has jurisdiction over first offenders, and does all she can to prevent them



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from coming into the police court. After expiration of the sentence the woman policeman exercises supervision, and, if possible, finds suitable employment for the discharged prisoner.

A petition of women has been presented to the Council of San Antonio, Texas, asking that women should be allowed to join the police force, and a woman has already been added to the constabulary at Baltimore and at Philadelphia. The claim for the appointment of women police will increase in intensity within the next few years, when the social evil comes to be seriously considered by the nations. There is work for women constables, official or semi-official, in every large town in the safeguarding of women and young girls. Women with knowledge of social work, of the type of which Salvation Army officers are composed, armed with some degree of constabulary powers, could be utilised at railway stations and ports, in connection with juvenile courts, and for work in connection with lodging-houses and girls' hostels.

The appointment of women magistrates would meet with a good deal of opposition, but women have proved themselves so efficient and so satisfactory in municipal work, on boards of guardians and councils, that there is every likelihood that their introduction into the police courts would be attended with success.<sup>1</sup>

In certain European countries—Norway, Russia,

<sup>1</sup> When the psychology of crime is better understood, careful investigation will be made into the mental, physical, and physiological condition of the prisoner. The introduction of women doctors into the police courts would ensure that inquiry would be made in respect of health matters upon which it is undesirable that a woman should be questioned by men. The cyclic variations of health and the influence of pregnancy in diminishing the power of self-control are important considerations in many cases.



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Switzerland, Italy and France—women are making their way into the law courts. The French law has recently been amended to permit women lawyers to act as fully qualified magistrates in children's cases. In Germany also this reform has been inaugurated. Russia has publicly acknowledged the inconsistency of admitting women to the study of law without permitting them to practise. Russian women have instituted a system of providing gratis consultations by qualified women lawyers for poor women requiring counsel and advice. All over Europe there is stirring the same demand that women shall no longer be excluded from official positions in the law courts. In America, as in Australia and Tasmania, the rights of women in this respect are better recognised. Women are allowed to practise as lawyers in nearly every State. At Brooklyn the police court has already appointed a woman to sit with the presiding magistrate in certain cases, and there are American women judges. In the Court of Domestic Relations, Chicago, one of the most important posts—that of secretary to the court—is held by a woman, to whom the woman prisoner and the girl in trouble are enabled to tell the story of their difficulties and from whom they can obtain advice. This court was established in 1910, as a branch of the municipal court, with the idea of removing women and children from the evil influences of police court environment and of providing means of searching out the causes of delinquency in children and checking them. The court also provides for prompt trials and speedy justice, and has inaugurated a system whereby deserting husbands may be promptly compelled to support their wives and children. It exercises a watchful care over necessitous women and children by placing them under the protection of



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some person or organisation to advise and help them and put them in the way of becoming self-supporting. The Court of Domestic Relations has proved a potent force in settling domestic differences, in keeping the home together when this is advisable in the interests of the children. The possibilities of a well-conducted Court of Domestic Relations in social service work are endless. By advice and gentle admonition of one or other partner in a dispute, it may prevent the storm in the domestic teacup assuming tragic proportions. The officials of the Chicago court are not content with preventing separation or divorce. They reunite the estranged, and reconstruct family life, by going to the home, helping, counselling, and supervising families for as long as may be necessary. The court is worked in association with various societies and organisations of public service.

The establishment of such a court in England, where the female probation officer has already proved so valuable, would provide a means of associating women more and more with the administration of the law. It would make possible the settlement of many cases without the intervention of the criminal or public court. It would protect the interests of the children by maintaining home life and encouraging higher standards of parental responsibility. It would deal, for example, with the man who resolutely refuses to support his wife and family without actually deserting them. The parasitic husband who permits the mother of the family to go to work outside or drudge in the sweated home industries to provide the few shillings a week which, with outdoor relief, keeps the family from starvation, should be far more summarily dealt with than is possible under the present law. Non-support of wife and family



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by an able-bodied man who could get work if he liked is a crime against the community, which a Court of Domestic Relations would have power to deal with, as also with the payment of maintenance orders to deserted wives and of alimony to the mother of the illegitimate child.



## CHAPTER V

### THE UNMARRIED MOTHER

ONE of the most pressing problems of motherhood which we have to face at the present stage of social evolution is the relationship of the State to the unmarried mother and her child. The subject of illegitimacy is distasteful to the average person. In many social circles it is taboo. But it is a vital question to those tens of thousands of women and girls who comprise our "unmarried mothers," and it must be reckoned with. The complexity and difficulty of the subject are self-evident, but all social workers are agreed that investigation is required, and that we shall be compelled to reconsider the whole question, if we are to prevent the waste of human material that is now permitted in our midst. This yearly crop of shame-branded babies—Great Britain has 50,000, Austria 120,000, Germany 180,000, France 75,000, Italy 60,000, Belgium 12,000, Spain 30,000—recruits the world's army of the hopeless and the submerged in the next generation. In England, stillborn births are not registered, but in those countries where records are kept the proportion of stillborn illegitimate to legitimate children is so high that the presumption is that the actual illegitimate birth-rate in this country is much higher than statistics at first sight imply.

In Germany the proportion of stillborn illegitimate children is more than twice that of stillborn legitimate children. The infant mortality rate, high as it is for the children of married parents, is doubled in the



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case of illegitimate children. Three times as many children born out of wedlock die before 18 years of age compared with those born under the protection of the law. In many towns in England, the death-rate of illegitimate infants is twice that of children born in marriage. In 1910 the illegitimate infant death-rate was nearly 195 per thousand for England and Wales, for Scotland 150. But no statistics reveal the misery and despair, the secret abortions, the concealed births, the child murders which never come to light, the stillborn children who would have been born alive with the minimum of care. In some countries the illegitimate birth-rate is decreasing, but so, of course, is the general birth-rate. The decrease has been greatest in England, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Italy; in Denmark, Belgium, Norway and Scotland to a less extent; whilst in Sweden, France<sup>1</sup> and Germany the illegitimate births have increased in twenty years.

The ethical and practical aspects of the question are very serious. On the one hand we have the world's attitude to the unmarried mother, based upon the assumption that harshness of treatment will make for a higher moral standard in the community. We have mothers sacrificed, driven to immorality and death, whose lives are of value to the State. And we have tens of thousands of helpless, innocent children, through the cruelty of our laws and the short-sightedness of our outlook, and from no fault of their own, forced downwards in the social scale.

Illegitimacy has a far closer relationship than is generally understood to the social problems which it helps to feed—crime, prostitution and racial degenera-

<sup>1</sup> More than one-third of the births registered in any one year in Paris are illegitimate.



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tion. The law regards it as the duty of fatherhood to maintain the children born in marriage. Surely the claim of the child who is smirched with the stain of illegitimacy to his father's maintenance and care is even greater! Whilst men should be protected from spurious charges, the responsibility of fatherhood must be brought home to them when paternity is definitely proved. Our moral code and the law alike deal lightly with the unmarried father, whilst we make of unwedded maternity an almost insurmountable disgrace, and term the new life the "child of shame." The English law will not even legitimise the child on the marriage of its parents. Is this justice, equity? Is it even common sense?

**Unjust treatment of the illegitimate.**—Our treatment of the unmarried mother and the pressure of economic necessity operate against the welfare of such children. They have not a fair chance. They are stigmatised by society and the State—and unconsciously they take their revenge. In Germany a short time ago an investigation was made into the life history of illegitimate children. In physical unfitness, criminality and vice they compared unfavourably to a striking degree with an equal number of legitimate children taken from the same class. And this not because they are inherently defective—no one is physically, mentally or morally the worse for being born out of marriage—but because society penalises the innocent for their parents' sin.

The illegitimate child is handicapped from the beginning. Before birth, adverse influences are arrayed against it. The mother's health is jeopardised by fear and anxiety. She is overworked, underfed. She neglects her health. Far from considering its welfare, she may try to "get rid of the child." Even if it is born healthy,



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it has far less chance than the legitimate child of living until its first birthday. No wonder that the infant mortality of illegitimate children the world over is twice that of babies born in wedlock. Inferior in physique, they are more liable to succumb to their environment than the children of married mothers. They are all through life less safeguarded, more liable to yield to temptation. In English law they have no fathers. They are "filii nullius, filii populi"—nobody's children. They are without kin. They have no ancestor from whom they can inherit. If they purchase land, and die intestate and without issue, the land reverts to the State, and *the mothers receive nothing*. How does the law deal with the mother?

**The prodigal girl.**—When a girl has got herself "into trouble" she is "up against" the whole moral forces of society. If she is the daughter of respectable parents she realises the terrible disgrace she has brought upon her people, and her mental suffering is, in most cases, acute, unless she is one of the mentally defective girl-mothers who constitute a problem in themselves. Her physical suffering she shares in common with all mothers, but the sympathy, care and consideration of her child's father and of friends are lacking. If she is in domestic service, as is frequently the case (more than half the unmarried mothers confined in workhouses are domestic servants), she is dismissed with the certainty that she has forfeited her character and seriously jeopardised her chances of securing similar employment in the future. Such, it may be said, is the penalty of wrongdoing. But, so far, her partner in guilt has escaped. No physical suffering nor dread of the future for him. The girl has all the burden of suffering and shame. She may try to induce the man to make "an honest woman"



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of her. She usually fails, and she knows that if she gives birth to a living child the future is black indeed. If her people refuse to let her remain with them, if no friend can be persuaded to give her refuge, what is she to do? If she is fortunate, she may be admitted into one of the maternity homes which provide care and the opportunity for a fresh start. But these places can cope with but a very small number of cases owing to lack of accommodation and inadequate funds. For the majority there is no refuge but the workhouse, where, according to the Report of the Royal Commissioners on the Poor Law—

“Expectant mothers are herded with prostitutes, and often left to await their confinement in the midst of imbeciles and epileptics. They are not even allowed to make any clothes for the infant; still less are they instructed how to do so. There are no separate bedrooms; there are not even separate cubicles. The young servant out of a place, the prostitute recovering from disease, the feeble-minded woman of any age, the girl with her first baby, the unmarried woman coming in to be confined of her third or fourth bastard, the paralytic, the epileptic, the respectable deserted wife, the widow to whom outdoor relief has been refused, are all herded indiscriminately together.”

The association of the young unmarried mother, who has taken her first step downwards, with the older women in the workhouse, many of whom belong to a low moral class, has the worst possible influence upon her future.

At the same time, the illegitimate child is perhaps safer in the workhouse than if its entry into the world takes place outside an institution. It is during the first few days after the child's birth that the danger of



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infanticide is greatest. The physical ordeal, combined with the great nervous strain inseparable from her position, which the girl-mother has emerged from, disturbs her mental and moral equilibrium. The psychology of infanticide is not even faintly realised by the men who try, judge and condemn the unfortunate girl convicted of destroying her own child. The crime is an indictment of our social system; our methods of trial and punishment are a horrible travesty of "justice." How many men have any conception of the mental condition of a girl who has passed through the greatest ordeal of womanhood and has to face all the horror of unsanctioned motherhood and the social ban which illegitimate birth entails?

Give the unmarried mother the sense that she will be helped to redeem her mistake, let her feel that she is not alone responsible for the child's future, that she is not morally destitute and friendless, and she will not have to face the terrible temptation of seeking, through her child's death, a way of escape from the darkness around her. Many worthy people will be found to declare that severe treatment of the sinner is called for as a deterrent to evil, as a factor in maintaining the moral tone of the community.

In reply, it may be said that punishment falls on one partner in guilt. The man practically escapes retribution.

Secondly, in moments of temptation the consequences of actions that are prompted by passion are not considered. The fear of punishment is practically negligible. The assumption that a girl will go through the stress and agony of bearing an illegitimate child just because she is assured of help is devoid of all reason. A girl's weakness and folly, the world's condemnation,



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the young mother's helplessness and panic—step by step the stage of crime is reached. *Facilis descensus Averno*. The child is so easily done away with, and the mother, hardly more than a child herself, stands in the dock charged with murder.

**Psychology of infanticide.**—The first unmarried mother I attended in childbirth told me that she would smother her baby some time during the night. "I can't keep it unless I goes on the streets," she said, "and as it's a girl, it's what it'll come to, too." I made her promise she would not kill the child that night, but wait to see what the morning would bring. Next day the promise had to be extracted again. On the third day, with the physiological rush of milk to the breasts, mother instinct, mother love, and mother protection definitely stirred. The girl lost her tortured expression; she was at peace, even happy. As she suckled her child her consciousness held neither fear nor pain, neither desire to kill nor power to hurt. She was the mother awakened.

Infanticide is committed under the influence of temporary insanity. No woman, no girl-mother who has given birth to her first-born, would commit the crime against nature of murdering it unless she was for the time being insane. Why, then, should she be condemned to death? The sentence will not be enforced, but it is unspeakably cruel, and also futile, to compel her to endure the agony of death in imagination and anticipation. Surely the father of the dead child has some responsibility, if he has knowingly left her to face the world unhelped, penniless, miserable and alone? Then why does he not stand in the dock beside the mother of his child?

**Futility of the law.**—After the child is born the mother



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starts upon a tedious, difficult, heart-breaking task—that of obtaining from the father of her child some share of its “keep.” The man, whatever his financial or social status, is not legally responsible for the expenses of his child’s birth, although the justices may subsequently make an order for him to defray the cost of the confinement. No such order can be made out in the case of a stillborn child. The mother has, in that case, no claim, and, unless she is one of the insured, she must meet the expenses of the birth, including the doctor’s fee, herself. In practically every case of a first-born child a doctor’s attendance is essential to the safety of the mother. The father may or may not be liable for some part of the child’s maintenance. If the girl-mother feels that she has a fair chance of compelling him to help her she proceeds as follows: First she has to obtain a summons, for which she pays 3s. 6d., with an additional 2s. for delivery of the summons if beyond the limits of a city or borough. This summons must be issued within twelve months after the birth of the child. It may be that the man has disappeared during the mother’s illness in order to escape liability. If he can be reached he is called to appear before the magistrates some time after six days, an interval which provides him with an excellent opportunity of removing elsewhere, the girl having proved “troublesome.” But granted that he answers to the summons, that the unmarried mother will face the ordeal which she knows awaits her—the cross-examination in a court administered by men, the brutal suggestions of the solicitor, the difficulty of proving that this man is the father, that he is the only possible father—granted, too, that she succeeds in her effort, it still rests entirely with the bench to determine what sum the defendant shall pay. Accord-



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ing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the mother is successful in ninety cases out of a hundred; but the people who come in touch with the problem declare that not 5 per cent. of unmarried mothers obtain an affiliation order, which in most cases is fixed at 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d. per week, and in the case of soldiers in the ranks at 1s. 9d. Further, the cost of the order—9s.—is a stumbling-block to friendless girls, unless some charitable association is prepared to pay.

If the affiliation order is granted, who is to ensure that the mother will ever get the pittance granted by the law? The man is exempt from payment for four weeks, during which time she has to support the child. If he is resolved to avoid paying, he can do so very easily. In the first place he is only "liable if the application is made to him *by the mother in person*."<sup>1</sup> He is at perfect liberty to leave the neighbourhood, knowing that in most cases the girl will not have the heart to apply for a fresh summons. If the case is followed up, and the man refuses to pay up arrears, preferring to go to prison, his punishment wipes out the debt, and the position of the mother is more hopeless than ever. Indeed, imprisonment in these cases does more harm than good. Thus in a vast number of cases the entire responsibility for the maintenance of the child falls upon the parent who is the less fit economically to bear it. The maximum weekly payment that the young mother can receive by law, whatever the man's income, whatever the need of the mother and child, is five shillings, payable until the child reaches the age of 16. This sum, even if it can be obtained, is insufficient to keep a child. It will be said that the mother must contribute her share; but a large number of these girls are mentally or

<sup>1</sup> Ethel Naish. "Whose Children are These?"



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physically defective. They are not fitted to earn a living wage for themselves, far less for another. There is one way that they can take if they are not adequately protected, and the army of prostitutes is recruited by many thousands of these girls every year.

What of the child? The social ban upon these children is one of the cruellest conventions of society. There is only one thing more sad than the boy who has no legal father, and that is the little girl whose defences are at once weakened by the fact, and whose heritage of shame is in many cases the impetus of her own fall. Our attitude to the children is almost a cynical mockery of justice. Prejudice, ostracism, indifference and reproach—these we give to the helpless and innocent child.

**Necessary legal reforms.**—From an economic point of view our method is a direct encouragement to the waste of valuable lives and careers. We lose, from lack of protection of the mothers, good citizens for the State, and increase the numbers of those who fill our prisons and workhouses. Thus in our own interests, for the sake of the respectable members of society, we need reform of the law. All artificial difficulties preventing the mother from obtaining alimony must be removed. She should not be asked to pay for summons or service. The man's opportunities for escaping the law would be materially reduced if the case were undertaken by a selected official guardian, who would probably reduce the interval between summons and trial from six days to twenty-four or forty-eight hours. Such cases, as we have said, should not be tried in the police court. They provide instances of the great need of domestic courts where women would be properly represented. The girl



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mother should be put under the care of a female probation officer, and have any leading questions of a painful nature put to her in private. In many cases a settlement out of court would be possible if the girl's interests were better guarded and the man had to face the certainty of an adverse decision.

Once the mother has obtained an affiliation order, it should be the duty of the State to enforce payment. The weekly payment should be made to the guardian or his official representative, and the money should only be handed over to the mother if she is a fit person to expend it wisely in the interests of the child. The State should be regarded as the guardian parent of these helpless children whose parents have already proved themselves lacking in the sense of responsibility.

Further, the maximum amount fixed by the law for the maintenance and education of an illegitimate child is inadequate. The cost of living makes the sum of 5s. quite insufficient to feed, clothe and provide the necessaries of life for a child up to the age of 16. The law should be altered to increase the amount, at the discretion of the court. If the father belongs to the well-to-do classes, he should be responsible for the upbringing and education of the child during its minority. Associated with our domestic courts there should be a department or bureau for tracing and bringing to book the fathers of illegitimate children, and if a girl has no means to pay the expenses, it should be possible to take the money from a special fund. It would be cheaper for the State and the community in the long run to trace the defendant, and, in suitable cases, though by no means in all, induce the parents of the child to marry. Society the world over fails to make the father properly



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responsible for his illegitimate child.<sup>1</sup> In every country the unmarried father must be made more directly answerable for the welfare of the new life he has helped to create. It is not the child who is "illegitimate," but its father and mother.

If the father cannot be traced, still the social conscience can no longer permit the girl-mother to pass through her ordeal unhelped, nor the country afford to manufacture anti-social men and women out of material which, given a fair opportunity, would provide splendid citizens for the State.

**How to help the unmarried mother.**—There are many points which require consideration and adjustment. Co-operation between rescue societies and boards of guardians would make it possible to keep unmarried mothers out of the workhouses altogether. We must have extension of the voluntary home system, with State subsidy and State control. These homes, whether managed by private individuals, by the Salvation Army, the Church Army, or other societies, have proved to be the most successful means of giving unmarried mothers a chance of retrieving their mistake. The managers receive the girls into the home a few weeks before child-birth, draft them into the infirmary for confinement, and receive them again after the child is born. The girls are kept for nine months, with their babies, in the homes, where they are trained for domestic work and drafted into employment. This work deserves, and should have, State support. Any expenditure of money would be

<sup>1</sup> Japan is in one sense exceptional, in that there are no illegitimate children in that country, because every child has its father's name as protection, and is provided for by its father. In Germany, which is ahead of us in protecting unmarried mothers, it is found that only 16 per cent. of unmarried fathers provide for their illegitimate children.



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more than repaid by the moral preservation of the mothers and their children. Without help these girls inevitably drift downwards, and they and their children ultimately cost the community a far larger sum than they would if they enjoyed the protection of the State.

The great need, if we are to ensure to illegitimate children fair physical as well as moral opportunities, is for some scheme by which these babies can be nursed and brought up by their own mothers. It must always be an advantage to the mother if she can nurse her own child, and our aim should be to keep mother and child together, unless where the association would tell markedly to the disadvantage of the child.

An excellent system exists at Versailles, where at the Pouponnière a home is provided for unmarried mothers and their infants, and the same plan is carried out at two places in Roumania, at the Materna and the Leaganul. The children are kept in the home until 4 years of age. The babies are breast-fed. Each mother nurses one child and looks after two or three older ones. The mothers are paid a money wage. They are taught domestic work. They usually stay about eighteen months, when situations are found for them outside. A certain number of babies are admitted without their mothers—some free, some on payment of half or full fees, according to circumstances. The great advantage of these homes is that the mother is allowed to nurse her child whilst still earning her living. Cases helped are "followed up," and the unmarried mother is safeguarded by advice and help and the provision of remunerative work in the future.

The success of the Salvation Army homes for unmarried mothers in England and abroad is unmistakable.



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They should be State supported or aided in England, as they already are in several foreign countries.

In reply to an inquiry I made as to the work being done in Norway for the unmarried mother, a Salvation Army officer replied that the results of the working of the home for unmarried mothers fully justify its existence. My correspondent adds:

“Experience shows that in most cases the applicants before entering would much prefer to be allowed to go into service or factory work soon after the confinement, leaving the care of the child to the Salvation Army, or handing it to some nursing mother. In fact, they are careless about it; but after they have nursed it themselves for a little time it seems that the mother instinct awakens, and they develop tender feelings towards the child. Thus, when the time approaches when they shall leave the home, most of them manifest a desire to keep the child with them, if by any means possible, which is surely a healthy sign.

“Statistics have also proved thus far that very few of these mothers go back into vice, and it is, of course, a testimony to the value which is set upon our Mothers' Home that the Government and Parliament subscribe 3,000 kr. per annum to its support, and Christiania town another 1,500 kr.”

One of the most interesting schemes for the benefit of illegitimate children is that at Leipzig, where, under the management of Dr. Taube, systematic house-to-house visiting is organised amongst illegitimate children placed out to nurse with foster-parents. The association has a scheme for registering the fathers of illegitimate children and obtaining part of the cost of maintenance from them. Prizes are awarded to the foster-parents, and



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extra nourishment and medical advice are provided for the children in case of illness. The society has been particularly successful in obtaining the co-operation and assistance of fathers of illegitimate children. Most of the work is done by women, who give their services gratuitously, or in return for expenses and a small honorarium.

The world's attitude towards the unmarried mother already shows signs of improvement. The desire to mitigate the social and economic disabilities of illegitimate children is stirring in every land. That special measures are necessary to protect the child of the unmarried mother, that the responsibility of the unmarried father should be better enforced, and that the mother should be assisted to regain her position in society—such ideas are finding acceptance on all hands, and are being crystallised into legislative projects.

Uniformity of the bastardy laws in the different States of America and in the different countries of the civilised world is required for the protection of the children and of the community. Legislation in all civilised countries for the adequate protection of the illegitimate child must come. The injustice of penalising the child for the sins of its parents cannot much longer be disregarded by the awakening social conscience. We see already evidences in the different countries,<sup>1</sup> in the tentative legislation which progressive nations have initiated, that the unmarried mother and the "love child" are coming under the protection of the State. The most necessary reforms are:

1. The equalisation of illegitimate children with those born in marriage. When paternity is proved, the illegitimate child should have rights of inheritance, but

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II.



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not to the exclusion of lawful issue, and it should be given the father's name. In every country marriage of the parents or recognition by the father of the child as his own should legitimise the child born out of wedlock.

2. The father should pay alimony until the child is 16, and the sum should vary according to the social position of the parents.

3. Illegitimate children should be placed by special statute under the protection and guardianship of the State. The responsibility for obtaining the child's maintenance should rest, not with the mother, but with the local authority, who may appoint a guardian.

4. Unmarried mothers should be placed under the guardianship of a woman probationary officer in order that they may have a fair chance of obtaining remunerative work, and that they may be prevented from sinking further in the social scale.

5. The thirty shillings maternity benefit paid to insured working mothers under the Insurance Act should be extended. Universal insurance for motherhood should be established.

6. In cases of infanticide the court should have the power to indict the father and hold him partly responsible if it can be proved that he knowingly left the mother in necessitous circumstances.

7. To safeguard the children, State homes or State foundling hospitals may be necessary, where destitute mothers can take their children and work for their support either in the institution or in the labour market outside. Such State homes should have the power of recovering the cost of maintenance of the child from both parents. The life of every child must be safeguarded by the State, not only on ethical grounds,



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but for the sake of the health and efficiency of the race.

As in France, the illegitimate child who becomes a ward of the State should be placed under the care of a foster-mother or foster-nurse, if the mother is not available, until it reaches the wage-earning age, when suitable employment should be found and supervision extended until the age of 21.

Above all, let us help the mother wherever we find her. If the man has betrayed his trust, let the State be her guardian and the guardian of her child. Let it be the business of the State to bring the responsibility of parenthood home to the unmarried father, and compel him to adopt economic and ethical relationship towards his child.



## CHAPTER VI

### WOMAN AND DIVORCE

IT is only when society reaches a certain stage of civilisation that regulated divorce can be established. In the lowest state of savagery, where the women, like the cattle, were the property of the man, the question of divorce did not arise. The "wife" might be killed if she lost her charm or her temper, and was no doubt frequently cooked as the *pièce de résistance* at the wedding feast of her successor. When society became less brutal the wife was simply "discarded." With the development of civilisation the husband's power was gradually curtailed, and the rights of the wife began to be recognised. Fidelity, however, was very rarely obligatory on the husband, although even a few hundred years ago he was legally entitled to murder his faithless spouse.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in civilised, Christian England, the principle of sex equality has yet to be legally established. Whilst it is possible for a husband to divorce his wife for one act of infidelity, an Englishwoman, as distinct from a Scotswoman, cannot free herself from the man who is openly and continuously immoral so long as he does not desert her or is not guilty of legal cruelty. This, one of the greatest legal and ethical injustices to the wives and mothers of the country, has had promise of remedy since the appearance of the Report of the Royal Commission on our Divorce Laws.



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Controversy, opposition, prejudice will seethe round the whole question before the recommendations pass into law. The sluggish resistance of the indifferent has to be overcome. The active opposition of those who have honest religious or social scruples has to be faced. But one fact is certain. Reform is called for in justice to women, in justice to the poor. The present law is unfair to one sex and one class, and the Commissioners have unanimously recognised the fact. The Report has brought the whole subject of the reform of our marriage laws into the field of practical politics. The question of extending facilities for divorce needs ventilation and discussion, and requires to be considered from every point of view without prejudice.

To maintain the high character of marriage and family life, to deepen the nation's feeling that marriage is a sacred contract, neither to be lightly made nor lightly broken, must be the endeavour of all earnest-minded, responsible, thinking men and women. At the present stage of human evolution "easy" divorce would be a danger to the community, and might conceivably lead to licence, to successive polygamy, and the disintegration of family life. At the same time marriage, like every other institution, must be adjusted to changing social conditions, to public demand, and the needs of the people. The principle that in certain circumstances marriage ought to be dissolved has been accepted by nation after nation. The natural reluctance of the great mass of people to advocate any changes which might endanger the Christian ideal of permanence in marriage, which might bring about any "loosening of the marriage tie," has retarded reforms long overdue. What has to be decided in the near future in England is how far extension of facilities for divorce should be granted by



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law—whether desertion, cruelty, incurable insanity, habitual drunkenness, and long terms of penal servitude are justifiable grounds for breaking a marriage contract.

**Sex equality in classical Greece and in Rome.**—In the olden days, from the woman's point of view, the law for certain periods and in certain respects was in advance of that which has existed in England during the last fifty years. In classical Greece and amongst the Romans husband and wife had the same right of dissolving marriage. No difference of standard existed, ignoring a man's sin and punishing a similar lapse in the woman's case. The rule of equality in England was legally maintained until 1857, when, partly, as a result of the depression of the position of the wife and mother during the preceding centuries, the different moral standards for husband and for wife were accepted by Act of Parliament. Many distinguished men, including the late Mr. Gladstone, strongly asserted the principle of equality, but an amendment was rejected by an overwhelming majority. Our legislators had not "evolved" in ethics or in intelligence so far as to recognise that the legal acceptance of a lower moral standard for men must affect for the worse the morality of the State. But we have progressed considerably in the last half-century.

The Royal Commissioners, to whose Report I have referred, were unanimous in denouncing the double standard of morality. The Majority Report says:

"Apart from abstract justice, the strongest reason for placing the sexes on an equality is that where two standards exist there is a tendency to accept the lower for both parties. The social and economic position of women has



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greatly changed in the last hundred, or even in the last fifty, years. The Married Women's Property Act, 1882, has given them a new status in regard to property; they engage freely in business and in the professions, and in municipal, education and Poor Law administration, and claim equality of treatment with men. In our opinion, it is impossible to maintain a different standard of morality in the marriage relation without creating the impression that justice is denied to women, an impression that must tend to lower the respect in which the marriage law is held by women."

Such a statement, if it is logically applied and followed up by just legislation, marks an epoch in the evolution of womanhood and motherhood. The doctrine that "accidental adultery" on the part of the husband does not justify a wife in seeking a dissolution of the marriage is insupportable on either medical or moral grounds. Two of the most distinguished medical witnesses before the Commissioners, Mr. J. Astley Bloxam, Senior Consulting Surgeon to the Lock Hospital, and Dr. Frances Ivens, Hon. Medical Officer for Diseases of Women, Liverpool Stanley Hospital, emphatically pointed out the dangers and the appalling amount of suffering which an "accidental" act of infidelity on the husband's part may entail on the innocent wife and children. The conclusion is, therefore, that "no satisfactory solution of the problem which is raised as to the personal relations between husband and wife can be found, except by placing them on an equal footing, and by declaring that, whatever grounds are permitted to a husband for obtaining a divorce from his wife, the same grounds shall be available for a wife in a suit against her husband."



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The evidence given on behalf of the Women's Co-operative Guild before the Commissioners brought to light the overwhelming demand amongst working-class women for a drastic reform of our divorce laws. The witnesses were unanimous on the question of an equal moral standard for men and women. Case after case was given of men who brought immoral women into their homes, knowing that their wives were helpless. The woman who is economically dependent upon her husband must submit to a hateful and hideous travesty of marriage. Her only remedy is to obtain a separation order. She cannot be freed from her marriage unless she can prove cruelty and can afford the costs of a suit for divorce.

**Legal separation and morality.**—There are over 250,000 persons legally separated in England and Wales—married, yet not married, husband and wife in name only. And these numbers are increasing every year. From 12,000 to 14,000 persons are separated annually, divorced in actual fact, but without the power of remarriage. Many form new unions, disregarding a law which produces the very evils it is supposed to prevent. Those who deprecate divorce in the interests of the children cannot know how hardly the present law presses upon the children. The argument that parents should remain together at all hazards in order to maintain family life is the result of superficial reasoning and restricted judgment. Where the relation between the parents breeds unhappiness and degradation in the home atmosphere, the children suffer far more than they would from a permanent separation and the forming of new relationships which might be happy and, in the highest sense, more moral. Each case must be judged on its merits. And, whenever possible, children should



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have the advantage of a home and a common upbringing by their own parents together rather than by one parent, with, or without, a new mate.

At the same time it would be to the interests of the children that the mother who has obtained a separation order from a drunken, immoral husband should be able to remarry and make a fresh start in a new home, and vice versa. Too many separated and deserted wives, prevented from marrying, unable to make an honest living for themselves and their children, drift into immorality, with all its terrible consequences. Separation provides an intermediate condition between marriage and divorce that creates a situation the evils of which can no longer be disregarded. According to the Majority Report of the Royal Commissioners, "Unless the unions formed by marriages which have already ceased in fact can be dissolved by law, lives become hopelessly miserable, illegal unions are formed, immorality results, and illegitimate children are born." Thus the virtual annulment of marriage, without freedom to remarry, does not protect the interests of morality. The scandalous state of our law in this respect is far worse than any condition of affairs arising from easy divorce in America or elsewhere. The law presses more hardly upon the woman in view of her economic dependence and the fact that she is more commonly the sufferer in unhappy marriages, and our divorce law cannot be adequately reformed without making all separations convertible, on application, into divorce after a period of one, two or three years.

Separation orders have been largely utilised by the poor because the expense of divorce is prohibitory. The weekly wage-earner cannot pay the minimum costs of an undefended divorce suit—£40 or £50. With one



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divorce court for all England and Wales, and the possibility of the costs running to several hundred pounds, only the really well-to-do have a chance of freeing themselves from a hateful marriage by divorce. The housing conditions of the poor, as the Commissioners declare, aggravate intensely the sufferings inevitable in any unhappy marriage. The proposal, therefore, to establish local divorce courts, thus very largely diminishing the cost, will give general satisfaction. Indeed, for the very poor the cost of divorce should be reduced to a minimum, and in certain instances it should be free, as in the case of an absolutely penniless wife and mother.

The establishment of such an authority as I have briefly sketched in Chapter IV., a Court of Domestic Relations, where differing husbands and wives would come for counsel and advice, where helpful suggestions could be given and some measure of protection afforded, would help in many instances to avert divorce. Charges of cruelty could be investigated, sound counsel given to both man and wife, and, when necessary, help would be forthcoming if legal proceedings for divorce were inevitable. The great aim of such a court should be to maintain marriage, to conciliate differences, to help, by "suggestion" and kindly advice, husbands and wives who may be drifting apart and who might make at least a tolerable thing out of marriage by mutual effort.

**Desertion and divorce.**—The majority of the Commissioners recommend that divorce should be obtainable on the ground of desertion after three years. Alteration of the law in this respect is certainly called for. Mrs. Tennant's statement that desertion is an even greater reason for divorce than infidelity, since it nullifies and



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defeats all the purposes of marriage, is borne out by overwhelming evidence. It imposes an unduly heavy burden on many poor wives and mothers, and creates a situation which results in immorality, making for irregular unions and the birth of illegitimate children. We have here an example of a too stringent law forcing people who are quite prepared to be good citizens into social irregularities which tend to lower the moral tone of their neighbours.

It has been suggested that divorce for desertion might bring about collusion, providing an easy means of dissolving marriage when parties have grown tired of the contract. But in Scotland, where divorce for wilful desertion has been in force since the sixteenth century, such effects have not been produced. Nor is the danger of collusion borne out by results in other countries where desertion is a ground for divorce—for example, in Germany (desertion after one year), Austria, Hungary, Bavaria, France, the Netherlands, Russia, Norway, Switzerland, and certain of our Colonies.

**Cruelty as a ground for divorce.**—If cruelty, apart from infidelity, were made a ground for divorce, as it is for separation, the change might have a deterrent effect upon the brutality of husbands. It is amongst the lower working classes, the slum population of our great cities, where wife beating and wife kicking are frequent, that this alteration of the law would be a boon to many women. The number of separation orders granted for cruelty shows that there is a real demand for a means to end the marriage contract for this offence. The definition of cruelty recommended by the Commissioners, namely, "such conduct by one married person to the other party to the marriage as makes it unsafe, having regard to the risk of life, limb or health, bodily or



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mental, for the latter to continue to live with the former," would eliminate the risk of divorce for trivial offences, whilst it would provide the possibility of dissolving marriages which, under our present law, subject a wife to daily torture and degradation. Instances of men compelling their wives to a life of prostitution to maintain the household, and the communication to wives of contagious disease, are two outstanding examples. Cruelty is recognised as a ground for divorce in many foreign countries, including Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Roumania, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Victoria, and New South Wales.

**Alcoholism and divorce.**—Many cases of cruelty are associated with drunkenness, which is the greatest cause of miserable marriages among the poor. This vice breaks up the home, renders happiness, decency and comfort impossible, and makes life a veritable hell for the children.

Under the Licensing Act a wife or husband can obtain a separation order for habitual drunkenness. But separation, in the case of alcoholism especially, has proved to be no remedy. The suggestion that any such separation order should be temporary, that the court should have the power of compelling the drunkard to submit himself or herself for treatment, gives the offending person an incentive and a chance to reform. If at the end of three years the drunkenness is proved to be incurable, and there is no reasonable prospect of a tolerable married life, the court should be entitled to grant a decree of divorce. This would offer the best chance of happiness to the innocent partner of the marriage and to the children; whilst compulsory detention of a person found to be a hopeless inebriate after three



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years should be carried out in the interests of the community. We cannot otherwise prevent the birth of undesirable children. Divorce in itself would not check the production of the unfit. But it would save many women from the brutality of drunken husbands, rescue children from the atmosphere of degraded homes, and give many men also the opportunity to free themselves from the effects of a wife's vices. In all these cases divorce would not, of course, be compulsory or automatic. It would only be granted if the suffering party applied for freedom, and after careful investigation of the case. Nor would the person who is condemned to a long term of imprisonment be necessarily divorced. It would only be in the case of life imprisonment under a commuted death sentence that divorce could be applied for, when, but for the commutation of that sentence, there would have been dissolution of the marriage tie.

**Insanity and divorce.**—The consideration of insanity as a ground for divorce raises new issues. This is the first time in England that the idea of dissolving marriage for any other reason than some fault or misconduct in husband or wife has been suggested. And considerable opposition must be expected from many quarters. Divorce for incurable insanity is advocated on humanitarian and eugenic grounds.

First, in order to free the sane partners, if they so desire it, of some forty to fifty thousand persons who would be affected by a change in the law.

Secondly, to prevent the insane, or some of them, from returning to marital relationships with the risk of propagating stocks with an hereditary taint.

This latter argument, to be logically carried out, would have to be associated with a law making it a



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penal offence for those who have been certified as insane to procreate children. It is argued that insanity brings to an end practically every phase of marriage, but the same may be said of certain other affections, although to a less degree—epilepsy, neurasthenia, paralysis, and even phthisis, where the sufferer has to be confined for long periods in a sanatorium for treatment.

The curability of many cases, also, would be debatable. The time limit of five years might include many cases of people who would be to all practical purposes cured six, eight, or ten years after incarceration and become fit to take up their life again in the world outside. It cannot be denied that the progress of such cases, and of all cases of insanity, would be affected adversely by the knowledge that even if cured they might never be able to return to home and family. Nervous breakdown may be the result of long-continued anxiety over the conduct, health, or financial prospects of the other partner. The wife who nurses her husband through a serious illness, and breaks down mentally from the strain, would have to face the possibility of divorce; and in many instances this would make all the difference to the chances of the patient's ultimate recovery. Whilst many cases of hardship exist, there is no doubt that the proposed remedy would bring evil consequences by its apparently callous disregard of the feelings of the unfortunate sufferers from mental disease.

Why should the sick in mind be penalised for disease? It is not so very long since the ignorant prejudice against "lunatics" gave way before a more enlightened attitude. The old horror of and prejudice against the insane have happily passed away with the barbarous methods of treatment meted out to them in the past. The sick



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in mind are being more and more regarded with the same sympathy and open-mindedness as the physically afflicted. Any proposal to set insanity apart from all other diseases in this way should not be allowed to become law until expert medical opinion is practically unanimous. There are arguments for and against. But divergence of opinion is so manifest amongst psychologists and those who are directly concerned with the care and treatment of the insane, as well as among the rank and file of the profession, that delay is surely advisable.

Medical approval, however, will undoubtedly be given to the proposals adopted in both the Majority and Minority Reports, that antecedent recurrent insanity, epilepsy, and contagious disease, if concealed, should render a marriage null and void. Such a recommendation is one result of the growing sense of responsibility to future generations, and it should help to form public opinion on the whole subject of heredity, and our duty to our descendants.

**Easy divorce and the status of women.**—A study of the divorce laws of different countries impels us to the conclusion that England lags behind the other civilised nations in respect of its marriage and divorce laws. The lack of equality is the greatest blot upon the English law; in practically every other country there are equal rights for husband and wife. Mutual aversion is recognised by many of the leading European nations as a ground for divorce—Germany, Austria, Belgium, Sweden. In most countries, including Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, a separation order can be converted into divorce after a certain time has elapsed.

England has not yet begun to discuss divorce by



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mutual consent, and a conservative attitude to this change is doubtless advisable.

As to the question of free divorce, the dissolution of marriage on the plea of one partner, it must be pointed out that easy divorce does not necessarily imply progress. Indeed, it prevails amongst many savage people at the present time. Amongst the Esquimaux, for example, a man has the right of divorcing his wife at will. In Central Africa a woman can leave her husband if his successor is prepared to pay the purchase money which her first partner had paid to her parents. Even in China and Japan divorce is a very easy matter—for the man. According to the Code of Manu, a wife in India suffers severely under the law of easy divorce. "A sterile wife ought to be replaced in the eighth year; the wife whose children are all dead in the tenth year; the wife who only bears daughters in the eleventh; the wife who speaks with bitterness instantly."

The effect of easy divorce in encouraging profligacy and immorality was probably a factor in the decline of the Roman Empire. The writings of Seneca provide instances of men with a score of wives in succession; of women who counted their years according to the number of their husbands.

The modern claim for easy divorce may thus with some justice be considered a retrogression. The advocates of the "new morality," who maintain that a man or woman who has ceased to love—love being the basis of marriage—should have the legal and moral right to dissolve that marriage, ignore the mutability of human nature. A woman may be temporarily "attracted" to another man whilst retaining affection for the father of her children. The fact that her marriage cannot be dis-



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solved at will affects her attitude and her conduct at the time, and afterwards she will realise that what she considered an upheaval of her emotional nature, an irresistible love, was but a phase she has outlived. If she had formed a new relationship, a new home, left her children and her husband, might not the experience have been repeated? Sometimes, too, a man after middle life will suddenly develop a passion for a younger woman and yet retain his best and deepest affection for the wife of his own age, who may have lost her sex charm, perhaps, in frequent child-bearing.

Free divorce might very easily degenerate into free indulgence which reckes nothing of the suffering of the discarded wife or the deserted husband. No human being has the right to grasp "happiness" at the expense of anguish on the part of another who has committed no sin against love save failure to retain it in its completeness. The advocates of free love—and a large number of them are women—fail to recognise that it is the women who in the vast majority of cases would suffer. First, because woman's sex life is shorter, and her power to charm, unless in exceptional cases, wanes first. Secondly, because a woman's love is less physical, more psychical than man's, and always contains some quality of maternalism which the waning of passion cannot uproot. Thirdly, because, physiologically, marriage means more to her. The man and woman who have belonged to each other in marriage exert a psychophysical influence the one upon the other, which is more marked in the case of the woman. Indeed, with her there is a marked physiological internal secretory effect, and various authorities assert that a woman may produce children in a second marriage with the racial characteristics of the first husband when he has been of a different



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race from herself and the man who is now the father of her children.

Thus the instinct of civilised peoples for lifelong monogamous marriage has a physiological as well as a moral basis. That this union has been found best in the interests of the family is the strongest argument for reforming the present institution of marriage in place of abolishing it for what would very easily lapse into sex anarchism. Family life is *the* great social force, because of its power of stimulating unselfish effort, useful work, self-sacrifice and protection. If the relationship between mother and children, father and children, is to be maintained, the claim of the advocates of free love is impracticable. It cannot be that the mothers should have entire rights over the child. Paternal love is often as deep and fervent as a mother's love can possibly be. A father's influence is as necessary in the interests of family life as the mother's. In the case of boys, at any rate, nothing can make up for the lack of it. For this reason alone all change in marriage and divorce laws must be based upon recognition of the sanctity of home life and the welfare of the children. Biologically we exist for the sake of the new lives we may produce. Socially every parent should be prepared to sacrifice personal happiness in the interests of a child.

We cannot expect ideal marriages so long as men and women are in temperament and character so far removed from perfection, but hopelessly unhappy marriages are fortunately the exception. Most men and women are tolerably content in their mutual interests and everyday life together, and fortunately so. The danger of precipitate divorce is a real one, and must be guarded against. "We human beings lack either the



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cup or the wine." And it is the failure to realise that we are not here for personal happiness and self-gratification, but to do our share of the world's work, our part in the completion of the great Plan of the Universe, that is responsible for much of the suffering and unhappiness of to-day.



## CHAPTER VII

### HEALTH AND MATERNITY

THE tax which reproduction exacts from womankind can never even approximately be estimated. The life of the healthiest woman in the most hygienic environment is in jeopardy when child-bearing. The risk to life, the dangers of after ill-health, are increased a thousand-fold in the case of poor and unprotected mothers. A serious want of comprehension of the necessity of proper provision for mothers during their time of need is almost universal. Many women are paying the penalty of careless midwifery and neglect in the past. But the medical profession is beginning to recognise that the better care of expectant mothers would help to prevent disease and reduce infant mortality. Politicians also, in the maternity insurance schemes which are being initiated in different countries, are providing some measure of State help for mothers. But a clear realisation of the State's duty to the mothers would see the beginning of a campaign which would have far-reaching effects upon the health and efficiency of future generations. Civilised woman requires care, when performing her function of maternity, in a measure that was perhaps unnecessary in primitive times. Apart from the fact that our imperfect civilisation imposes heavy economic burdens upon motherhood, modern woman is less fit physiologically to go through the ordeal of bearing children unhelped.

Child-bearing was probably a normal, physiological phenomenon amongst primitive women. As with the



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lower animals, the savage mother's ordeal was attended with discomfort rather than actual pain and risk of life. Within an hour or two of childbirth, the primitive mother resumed her work, her strenuous housewifely vocations, the performance of which was essential to the well-being, the very existence, of her family. There must always have been mortality amongst mothers, but the types that proved unfit for physical motherhood were summarily weeded out. They died in childbirth, and the propagation of the type was thus very simply prevented by Nature, the great eugenist. With the progress of civilisation most authorities are agreed that maternity became less and less physiological, and that the difficulty and danger of child-bearing increased. Various reasons have been assigned for this, and opinion is still divided on the question. Whether it is that the modern baby's head is larger, that the modern woman tends more to the narrow-hipped type, or that civilised women in general lead a less "natural," more sedentary and more luxurious life, it is difficult to say. These factors may operate singly or collectively. The fact remains that more and more women require surgical aid if they are to become mothers. Civilised women would die in large numbers without skilled treatment, and even within one generation, according to hospital statistics, the numbers requiring operative aid have enormously increased.

On the other hand, the mortality from puerperal fever has been reduced. This disease is "blood poisoning" following upon childbirth, due to infection by septic germs which are generally conveyed to the patients by those in attendance. Fifty years ago the death-rate from puerperal fever was appallingly high, in some hospitals 60, 70, 80, even 90 mothers succumbing out of every thousand. The story of the discovery of the cause of



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the disease by a young doctor in Vienna in 1847, and the subsequent rapid reduction of the death-rate by the use of antiseptics and hygienic precautions, is one of the romances of medicine. In two years the mortality in the hospital under his charge fell from 92 per thousand to  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per thousand cases.

**Mortality of childbirth.**—The hygienic care of motherhood is still, however, a very pressing question. Many lives are needlessly sacrificed in every country by the accidents and infections of childbirth. The precise mortality of mothers cannot be estimated by any Registrar-General's report because of the difficulty of obtaining accurate information. Many deaths from tuberculosis are the result of underfeeding and lack of care of women at childbirth. According to Dr. Haig Ferguson, for the ten years 1897-1906 puerperal fever and the accidents of pregnancy and childbirth caused the death of 1 mother to every 288 births in England and Wales. Puerperal fever alone caused the death of 1 mother to every 609 births in 1909, and the rate fell to 1 to every 727 births in 1910 owing to the better supply of trained midwives. In Germany, of the 10,000 annual deaths of mothers, 7,000 are caused by preventable infectious disease. Over 3,000 deaths are assigned to pregnancy and childbirth in the last Registrar-General's annual report for England and Wales. Seventy-five per cent. of these women's deaths could be prevented. Apart from humanitarian considerations, the lives of the mothers should be better protected because of their value to the nation, for the women are at the most productive period of life, and they are the potential mothers of new citizens.

It must not be forgotten that the number of deaths gives no indication of the rate of disease and the



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mortality following childbirth, the preventable loss of health which many women suffer as the result of parturition. The Midwives Act aimed at reducing the death-rate from puerperal fever by supplying women with some training in maternity work in place of the ignorant and surgically unclean women who formerly presided over childbirth. The danger of the Act is that an increasing number of people may employ a midwife instead of a medical practitioner, when the aim should be that every mother, rich or poor, should have the right to procure the attendance of a doctor at the time of childbirth, even if a midwife undertakes the care of the case subsequently. No midwife can possibly decide beforehand if a case will or will not be normal. A qualified medical man or woman should see every case at least once in pregnancy, and should be in attendance on the mother when her child is born.

Secondly, the better care of expectant mothers during the later months must engage the attention of all who would ensure that children be born into the world with sufficient vitality to resist the vicissitudes of early life. The hygiene of pregnancy is essential for the preservation of the unborn child. If children are to be healthy, we must have a healthy motherhood. We must extend to the mothers commonsense care. During the whole course of intra-uterine life the child is subjected to the mother's influences. From the very first the nutrition of the embryo is affected by her mental and physical health. The fertilised ovum, from the moment of conception, depends for nourishment and growth upon the maternal blood and lymph. Through the placenta, an organ partly derived from the mother and partly from the child, the unborn infant breathes and is nourished. Further, it is protected from the poisons circulating in



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the blood of the mother by the filtering function of the placenta. Unfortunately there are certain substances, such as alcohol, lead, and the syphilis virus, against which it is powerless, although a very great deal can be done by medical treatment of the expectant mother who has disease to ensure the safety of the child.

**Maternal antenatal influences.**—Direct maternal influence upon the unborn child must, then, be taken into consideration. Dr. Albert Wilson<sup>1</sup> states that malnutrition, worry, over-fatigue of the mother are potent factors in producing criminals and degenerates. "Delicacy at the time of conception often spells ruin to the future life." The mother who is drunken, vicious, unhappy, whose blood is poisoned with alcohol, who is starved, overworked and overstrained, reacts upon the physical and mental well-being of her child. There is a physical prenatal influence because of the inter-communication between the blood of the mother and that of the child from the earliest months.

There is also a psychical prenatal influence, of which we know very little perhaps, but which none the less exists. The new personality must be affected by the thoughts, the emotions, the mental habits of the mother for better or worse. Motherhood is more than a physiological phenomenon. It has its psychical aspects also.

Widespread interest has been aroused of late years on the subject of heredity. Through the writings of Weissmann in Germany and Francis Galton in England the theory that acquired characteristics are not transmissible has gradually permeated the reading public. Most people know that the athlete does not transmit his biceps, nor does the son of the woman mathematician

<sup>1</sup> "Education, Personality, and Crime."



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benefit hereditarily by the mental achievements of his mother. Acquired characteristics, whether physical or mental, have no influence upon the germ plasm, upon the race.

The continuity of the germ plasm is eternal, in that these cells pass on from generation to generation the characters of the stock, unaffected by any properties acquired by the individual. This does not mean that the germ cells in the bodies of the parents cannot be adversely affected by disease, that they are not capable of modification, or of being influenced by physical and chemical agents. There is ample evidence to prove the contrary. Data have been collected demonstrating the effect upon offspring of "racial poisons," the term being used to denote the influence of parental disease and of parental poisoning upon the child. The sins of the parents *are* visited upon the children. The injuries inflicted upon the mother jeopardise her children and the race. The child born of sound, healthy parents has a fairer start, a better chance of survival. The embryo is the product of the conjugation of two cells, and the tendency to disease or alcoholism can be transmitted by both paternal and maternal cells. Death of the embryo and abortion may be due to disease or alcoholism of the father, even when the mother is healthy. But diseased motherhood has an even more disastrous effect upon the vitality of the child.

**Racial poisons: alcohol.**—A mass of evidence has been collected to prove that maternal alcoholism leads to sterility, abortion, the birth of dead children, and a high infant mortality. Professor Karl Pearson's compilation of statistics, which went to show that the children of alcoholics in Edinburgh were if anything superior in capacity to those of total abstainers, were later



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demolished by Sir Victor Horsley and other authorities. It is, of course, difficult to estimate the relative importance of the direct and indirect effect of alcoholism upon parenthood, and especially on motherhood. The child of an alcoholic mother is at a disadvantage in the home, and suffers from neglect and under-feeding, apart altogether from its handicap at birth. It can, however, be proved that alcohol is a direct poison to the unborn child. Various experiments have been carried out to demonstrate the toxic effect of alcohol on living tissues in different animals, and it was found that the development of the offspring of dogs and guinea-pigs was adversely influenced by supplying the mother with alcohol during pregnancy and when she was nursing her offspring. Alcohol is a poison to germ cells. It interferes with the development of the child in the womb; whilst it is the cause of a large number of the infant deaths tabulated under "immaturity" and "prematurity." Dr. Sullivan investigated the history of a number of mothers who were chronic drunkards in a Liverpool prison, and he found that 55.2 per cent. of the children died under 2 years or were stillborn; whilst the mortality of the offspring of non-alcoholic mothers was 23.9 per cent. According to Sullivan, "As regards the vitality of offspring, the influence of maternal drunkenness is so predominant a force that the paternal factor is almost negligible."

In opposition to this view, however, Stockard recently demonstrated that alcohol has a toxic effect upon the germ plasm through both parents. He kept a number of guinea-pigs in a state of chronic alcoholism by means of alcohol fumes, and studied the results of various matings of these animals. Of 24 matings of alcoholised males with normal females, 14 matings were negative,



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5 produced stillborn litters, 5 gave living litters, in all 12 young. Seven of these died in convulsions soon after birth, and 5 survived, which when two months old were half the normal size. Thus, through paternal alcoholism, 24 matings produced the same number of surviving young as might have been expected from one mating of two healthy parents.

The effect of maternal alcoholism places the offspring at an even greater disadvantage in that the embryo, nourished in the body of the mother, is liable to slow intoxication for nine months, causing malnutrition and impaired development. The effect of maternal alcoholism upon the life and health of the child is illustrated by the fact that an inebriate woman, with a past history of miscarriages and stillborn children, is frequently enabled to have a living, healthy child if she has been sentenced early in pregnancy and the baby is born in prison. Thus we have the anomaly of a prison baby starting life with a better chance than a child of the same parent born in the home.

The causes of drunkenness constitute too complicated a problem to be considered here, but the relationship of alcoholism to motherhood calls for investigation, and would no doubt be duly considered in any commission of inquiry into the general subject.

The burden of maternity under present conditions is a source of terrible hardship to millions of women. Malnutrition, physical exhaustion, nerve strain and anxiety through the long months of expectancy predispose to alcoholism. It is easy to criticise the working mother, but what can we expect of women forced to go out from the home to labour before their bodies have recovered from the ordeal of childbirth, when they are mentally and physically exhausted with maternity. With aching



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head and limbs, with their energy spent in child-bearing, they have to do a man's work, and the more conscientious and maternal the woman, the more likelihood of exhaustion and the danger of "taking to drink." Maternal exhaustion is a predisposing factor in the drink problem, and who dare criticise the nerve-racked mothers who drink as a remedy for physical and mental exhaustion or to assuage worry and the frets of life? To sustain the triple burden of child-bearing, housekeeping and wage-earning is what no civilised community should demand of its women. Many succumb to the temptation to drink after childbirth who, under different conditions, would be happy, efficient mothers of healthy offspring. The better protection of motherhood will help to do away with maternal alcoholism, and thus, in association with the control of the hopeless inebriate, safeguard the interests of the race.

**Dangerous trades.**—In considering the effect of lead poisoning as a racial poison, the evil, although less widespread than alcoholism, requires recognition in the interests of maternity. The protection of pregnant women from the effects of dangerous trades should be one of the first laws of a humanitarian society. That mothers must in many instances work beyond their strength, that they must be exposed to health risks from poverty and strain, is unavoidable, perhaps, at this stage of civilisation, but deliberate chronic poisoning is another question. We have no right to permit expectant mothers to work at occupations in which they are day by day absorbing cumulative poison, or to allow the appalling child mortality amongst these mothers to continue, because we know the cause and could prevent it. All over Europe we have mothers and expectant mothers working in dangerous trades. We have mothers sub-



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jected to disease in tobacco factories, forced to inhale the dust of cotton factories, exposed to damp in woollen factories, breathing poisonous fumes in various trades, and thus running the risk of abortion and miscarriage. We have in England alone several thousand mothers and potential mothers risking their lives and the lives of unborn children in the Potteries. Whilst as a result of hygienic precautions deaths from plumbism are diminishing in England, there is a heavy mortality of mothers from lead poisoning in many countries in Europe. The tragedy of lead poisoning has to be seen to be realised. The heroism and self-sacrifice displayed by working mothers who face loss of health and premature death unflinchingly, whose only fear is that the first symptom of the dread disease will be recognised and that they will lose their work, are magnificent. The fact that such waste of splendid motherhood is permitted by the State illustrates the need of a commission of inquiry and a national scheme of mother protection.

There is abundant proof that maternal lead poisoning ensures a high infant mortality. Constantine Paul collected statistics of 141 pregnancies among lead workers which gave 91 abortions, dead births and premature labours, and 35 infants who died in the first year of life. One woman had had three normal, healthy children before entering the lead factory. Then, after being attacked by lead poisoning, her history gave 8 abortions, 1 stillborn child, and 1 child who died at the age of five months. "Lead," says Sir Thomas Oliver, "destroys the reproductive powers of both men and women, but its special influence upon women during pregnancy is the cause of a great destruction of human life."

A commission recently appointed in France to inquire



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into the diminishing birth-rate and high infant mortality is giving special consideration to the racial effect of plumbism. From statistics, it appears that every succeeding generation of those afflicted with lead poisoning are liable to miscarriages, premature birth, and stillbirths. One series of statistics showed 609 miscarriages out of 1,000 pregnancies. Another inquiry returned 32 per cent. of pregnant women workers in lead factories who gave birth to a child at full time, and of these children only 27 per cent., a little more than one-fourth, survived the first year of life.

All through the months preceding birth lead is circulating in the mother's blood, poisoning the tissues of the developing child. Even when death does not result, many nervous diseases, including convulsions and idiocy, can be traced to parental lead poisoning. Thus lead is a true racial poison, and it is of paramount importance that we protect our mothers and potential mothers if the preservation of life is to be ensured.

**Tuberculosis and syphilis.**—The campaign against tuberculosis will directly and indirectly make for the better protection of mother and child life. Tuberculosis is a racial poison which exacts its toll from motherhood. But of all racial poisons, syphilis has the most far-reaching effects upon maternal and child life.

“La syphilis,” says Dr. Fournier, a great French authority on this subject, “est essentiellement meurtrière pour le jeune âge; elle fait de véritables hécatombes d'enfants; elle les tue avant la naissance, au moment de la naissance, après la naissance dans les premières semaines ou pendant les premières années.” This picture of the destruction of infant life before and after birth is only surpassed by the facts themselves—the poisoning



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of maternity, the undermining of national health and efficiency, the mental suffering and physical pain entailed. According to Fournier, of 90 women infected by their husbands who became pregnant during the following year, 50 aborted or had stillborn infants, 38 gave birth to children who died in infancy, and only 2 gave birth to children who survived. When the father transmits the disease, the infant mortality is 28 per cent. It reaches the figure of 60 per cent. if the mother is infected, and if the disease exists in both parents, 68.5 per cent., whilst in the last case the infection of the offspring reaches the appalling figure of 92 per cent. We know that syphilis is the cause of a large number of infant deaths, whilst probably half the fatal terminations of pregnancy, the deaths of children still unborn, are due to this disease. A conspiracy of silence surrounds the whole question. There is hardly a medical man in the country who will tell a wife the real cause of her childlessness, who will truthfully respond to the mother's demand for information as to the cause of her own bad health or the reason of the "constitutional" delicacy of her offspring. There is urgent need for a fuller realisation of the havoc wrought by contagious disease upon the individual, the family and the race. Not until the public understand the ill-health, misery and ruin they inflict, not until men and women together demand proper teaching and wise preventive measures, shall we be within sight of any real standard of racial efficiency and world progress. The appalling frequency of contagious disease, its widespread effect in the causation of ill-health and premature death, have only been properly recognised by the medical profession in the last decade. The time has arrived for sincere, simple plain speaking on the subject in order to safeguard the health and



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happiness of the new generation and the welfare of generations yet unborn.

Apart from syphilis, there is the question of gonorrhœal infection in its relationship to mother and child. Noeggerath declares that 50 per cent. of sterile women owe their childlessness to this disease. Morrow, of New York, states that 70 per cent. of all the women at the hospital in that city for treatment of venereal disease are respectable married women infected by their husbands, and according to Price, of Philadelphia, out of 1,000 abdominal operations on women, 95 per cent., or 950 cases, were the result of gonorrhœal infection. This estimate is, in all probability, too high.

A very large percentage of blindness is due to venereal disease,<sup>1</sup> by infection of the child from the mother, who is in the majority of cases ignorant of her own danger and of the risks of infection to her children. Blindness of the new-born child is due to acute infection of the eyes by a germ at birth. Careful hygienic treatment with special antiseptics will save the eyes of the child. But in spite of the laws against untrained midwives which are in force in certain countries, many of the poorest mothers evade the law and are attended by a neighbour as ignorant as themselves. Every doctor has come across cases amongst the poor of healthy babies blinded by this infection. Women must be told the truth. Plain speaking on the subject is necessary to bring about the awakening of mothers, who will then demand drastic reform. Maternal knowledge would help to strike at the causes of vice and disease, and make for social purity and national welfare. At a school for mothers I asked the mother of one blind baby if the doctor had

<sup>1</sup> Between 10 and 20 per cent. of all cases of infantile blindness are due to gonorrhœa. "The Social Evil in America," by Wilson. 1905.



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told her how she had contracted the disease. She replied: "He said it was due to not having enough to eat when I was carrying my baby." How long will it be justifiable to tell such lies to mothers? How long shall they be permitted to be the innocent agents of passing on the effects of disease to their children? Why should they be kept in ignorance of the fact that 80 per cent. of the inflammatory diseases from which they suffer are consequent upon the "sowing of wild oats" by their husbands? It is the mothers who pay in the nursing home and the operating-room. And the mothers should know, in order that they may be able to safeguard their own sons from the consequences of youthful "indiscretion." Contagious disease is preventable, and the disease which poisons the very fount of life must be prevented. There is only one really effective method of prevention—right living. And right living depends upon right knowledge and training, and the creation of an awakened public opinion to set in force the great agencies of reform.

**Hygienic motherhood.**—The hygienic care of motherhood is of recent origin. Gynæcology—the study of the diseases peculiar to women—and obstetrics—the art and practice of midwifery—have developed almost into a new science during the last generation. The discovery that puerperal fever was an infection due to a specific germ, and the invention of various instruments for promoting a more expeditious and safer delivery of the child, materially reduced the mortality of mothers. Then the movement for providing the poor with efficiently trained midwives culminated in a Midwives Bill. The next step must be the provision of further hospital accommodation for mothers, and the better care of women in pregnancy and at childbirth.

Apart from workhouse infirmaries, the accommoda-



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tion for mothers in London, for example, comprises approximately 300 beds. There is no adequate accommodation for expectant mothers at the present time, however much special medical care is necessary for the safety of mother and child. "The board of guardians refuses in practice," says Mrs. Sidney Webb, "to take any cognisance of expectant mothers, however dire may be their own want, unless their husbands are destitute and choose to make application for relief." "In Scotland it is absolutely illegal for the Poor Law authorities to give any assistance, or even to admit to the poor-house, the wife of any able-bodied man living with her, however destitute he or she may be and however grave her condition—even to the point of her own starvation and the death of the baby." "Fifteen thousand women are admitted to the workhouses in the pains of labour in one year." And it has been estimated that the mortality of workhouse infants is ten times as great as that of babies of a similar class outside.

The medical profession has for some years recognised that workhouses are unsuitable in every way for the treatment of maternity cases. One or two hospitals have already opened wards for the reception of expectant mothers. A ward was opened at St. Thomas's Hospital in 1910 for this purpose. The late Dr. Cullingworth had for many years advocated the addition of such a ward to the hospital from the teaching point of view. Middlesex and St. Bartholomew's have also maternity wards, but they can only cope with a small number of cases. A new Mothers' Hospital is being erected at Woolwich under the joint auspices of the Home for Mothers and Babies and the British Lying-in Hospital. It will include 20 maternity beds and 6 beds for expectant mothers. None of these schemes is State



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supported, and, for lack of funds and accommodation, they can only touch the fringe of a great need. There must be thousands of mothers in London whose needs have to be disregarded. In every great city we have mothers giving birth to children in habitations unfit for human beings. Difficult surgical operations have to be performed in surroundings which make death from sepsis a very real probability. Whilst puerperal fever has almost been abolished from hospital practice, it is largely responsible for the death-rate amongst mothers in the home and for the serious diseases consequent upon child-bearing. The vast majority of mothers have very little done for them to ease the physical suffering of child-bearing. Doctors rarely administer chloroform to the poor, and I have heard it said by physicians who would never dream of refusing this boon to their prosperous patients that a woman is "better without it."

In theory and according to the law a husband can refuse to allow his wife to have an anæsthetic—a relic of the quite recent barbarous age when a doctor consulted the husband as to whether he wished the life of the child or of the mother to be saved.

The physical exhaustion of motherhood is a common cause of infant mortality, because the birth of children in quick succession is a drain upon maternal vitality, especially when frequent child-bearing is associated with insufficient food and unhealthy environment. One comes across slum mothers who have had six children before they are 24 years of age; nine children in eleven years; eleven or twelve when they are a year or two over 30.

Lady Bell, in her book "At the Works," touches upon the frequency of stillborn children in the case of poor women, and quotes the case of a woman she knew who had had ten babies born dead, in addition to four live



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children. "The women among the well-to-do hardly ever have this terrible experience of having one stillborn child after another. To be going to bring a child into the world; to be constantly ill before its birth, as must be the case if it dies during this time; to have either the awful suspicion that the hope is over, or else to go on to the end; to go through all the necessary agony, to bear a dead child, to have the shock of realising what has happened; then in a few months begin over again facing the terrible possibility, which in course of time comes to pass, and live through the whole dread story once more. . . . A woman amongst the well-to-do who should have had seventeen children and lost twelve would be one marked out as she went about the world for the wonder and compassion of her fellows; but such a destiny is accepted as possible by the working people, and is cruelly frequent among them. And we must also remember that at probably no stage of these unrelatable experiences has the working woman such possible alleviations as would be the case if she were well-to-do. She has during all these months of past and future misery to do all her housework, to do everything for herself, enduring pain when it comes as best she may, and mostly dependent for outside help and support on the friendly offices, happily so often ready, of the neighbours."

In the matter of the care of motherhood, what a contrast between the rich and the poor! The well-to-do mother is surrounded with every care and consideration. The poor mother in her unhygienic room faces a hundred times the risk from infection compared with the prosperous mother. She may or may not have sufficient food. The strange thing is that she is generally able to nurse the child herself. She cannot rest. First, because the home conditions, the over-crowding which is so general



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in these cases, make rest and quiet impossible. Then she must be "up and about" as quickly as possible to try and put things straight. To the poor mother a municipal maternity hospital would mean a few weeks of peace in a harried, strenuous, over-worked life. It would give the babies also a far better chance of survival.

**Hospitals for mothers.**—In every town there should be at least one municipal lying-in institution, sufficiently large to accommodate all necessitous mothers who cannot be attended by a medical man in surroundings of surgical cleanliness. Certain wards should be free, in others the patients could make a contribution towards the expenses out of the maternity allowance under the Insurance Act. A large number of well-to-do working and artisan class mothers would be able, indeed, to pay a fair amount. In time mothers of all classes might take advantage of the aseptic environment of a mothers' hospital rather than risk surgical treatment under an anæsthetic in their own homes.

A few years ago Dr. Ballantyne made an earnest plea for pre-maternity hospitals or homes in the *British Medical Journal*. He urged that certain wards in hospitals should be reserved for the admission of women who had previously borne children under abnormal conditions, or who required special rest and care before childbirth. This would entail very little extra expense—practically nothing except the board of the patient a few weeks previous to the time her child was born—and it would ensure the saving of a number of maternal and child lives. Many fatal cases in maternity hospitals are the result of patients not being admitted until they are *in extremis*, too late for treatment to avail. Thus are needlessly sacrificed lives which, by a little organisa-



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tion and readjustment, could be saved to the nation. Here and there individual efforts are being made for the better hygienic care of mothers, but most of the homes for mothers are places where the combined charitable-reformatory idea prevails, although incidentally they help a great deal in the prevention of disease and death.

The Lauriston Place Home for Maternity Rescue Work, Edinburgh, provides for young expectant unmarried mothers. It has already accomplished a great deal in preventing abnormal labours and the diseases of pregnancy. The Home accommodates about seventy girls per annum. Some of these mothers are no more than 13, 14, or 15 years of age, and it need not be said that the greatest operative skill is often necessary to save life in a motherhood so premature.

At Liverpool, Bristol, Manchester, etc., similar Homes are doing good work in this direction. But medical prevention is the essential idea of the work at the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital, where a pre-maternity ward was opened in 1901 at the request of Dr. Ballantyne. This single ward can deal with 120 cases of expectant mothers in a year, and it saves many mother and child lives which would otherwise be lost. What would it not mean in health and safety to mothers if a similar ward were opened in every general hospital in the kingdom!

The Salvation Army's new Mothers' Hospital was founded because Mrs. Bramwell Booth so keenly felt the desire of many respectable married women for quiet and skilful service at a reasonable cost. The Home provides for 50 mothers in the first instance, but the ultimate aim is the erection of a sufficient number of bungalows to accommodate 100 patients at a time. One



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bungalow will be reserved for unmarried mothers, and one for Jewish mothers who require special arrangements. Her Royal Highness Princess Louise has taken a kindly personal interest in this scheme.

**What France has done.**—Years before anything was done in England, the protection of the mother and her child before birth was initiated in France. Dr. Pinard was one of the first to point out that the children born of labouring mothers who rested during the last three months of pregnancy were healthier, heavier, and larger than the children of mothers who worked right up to the time of confinement. His investigations proved that tendency to premature births was diminished by rest, and that the women suffered less from diseases consequent upon childbirth. The pioneer in the protection of expectant mothers, however, was Madame Béquet de Vienne, who founded in Paris thirty-five years ago the institution called L'Allaitement Maternel. The society believes that the child can best be saved and reared as a healthy citizen by giving the mother the means of nursing it, and by supporting her morally and materially through her time of trial. In 1892 this association founded the first refuge in France to receive *enceinte* women, and the city of Paris responded so eagerly to the idea that a new refuge was later opened, the two houses having up to the present time received over 13,000 expectant mothers. When these mothers come to the home they are depressed in physical and mental health, exhausted, wearied with the battle of life. In a few weeks, after rest, nourishing diet, and light occupation, they are almost metamorphosed. A few years ago a home was opened where convalescent women could be received on leaving maternity hospitals, so that in Paris a complete cycle of maternal protection—care of the ex-



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pectant mothers, care of the women in childbirth, and after-care in convalescence—has now been organised. And there is every indication that this much-needed sphere of social activity will develop. The association has branches in several departments of France, and in Germany and Austria a movement has begun for providing hospitals for the reception of necessitous working mothers during the last few weeks of pregnancy.

The better hygienic care of motherhood must include the principle of "pregnancy insurance," an extension of the present maternity insurance, so as to provide relief for necessitous women from arduous toil during the few weeks preceding childbirth. The baneful effects of married women's labour near the time of expected childbirth will be dealt with in the chapter on Infant Mortality. Apart from the need of the mother, the hygienic care of pregnant women would help to preserve infant life and to counteract the declining birth-rate.<sup>1</sup> Further, it would be impossible to say how many child lives would be saved yearly if we could ensure four to six weeks' rest, care, and medical treatment before birth to the mothers of the country. No expectant mother should have to work for wages during a period of six weeks before her child is born, and every mother should have rest and freedom from work for eight weeks afterwards, while if possible she should nurse the child for six months. That must surely be the basis of any effective campaign against physical degeneration in any country.

<sup>1</sup> Medical supervision of expectant mothers would also provide clinical material for the investigation of antenatal conditions. The effect of diet on sex has yet to be determined. The study of motherhood in its various aspects—the best age for motherhood, the best environment, the effects of physical and mental work—provide an interesting field of inquiry which is practically unexplored.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SWEATED MOTHER IN THE HOME

THE protection of motherhood, if adequately carried out, will compel an investigation of poverty, a study of the causes of destitution, and, above all, the application of such preventive measures as the abolition of *sweated* work in the home. The reorganisation of home industries to provide mothers with a profitable and pleasurable means of adding to the family income is a reform well worth the expenditure of energy and effort on the part of the educated and influential women of the nation.

**Women and social service.**—One of the most hopeful signs at the present time is the deepening interest of the average woman in social problems. When, twenty years ago, the Report of the House of Lords Committee on Sweating was issued, a veritable crusade of leisured ladies to the slums took place. That, although followed by a natural reaction, was the beginning of a widespread movement amongst better-class women for social service work. Nowadays it is probable that one woman in four of the educated classes takes some sort of interest in the welfare of the poor. Many hundreds of women spend time, energy, and money in a sincere effort to help the poor. But hundreds more are urgently needed at the present time.

Every individual woman who will go and see for herself the conditions of the sweated mother, and will enlist the co-operation of her friends, is helping to form public opinion, to bring legislative reform nearer. Study



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the lot of the mothers in the slums, who are the sweated home workers, the most helpless, hopeless, miserable class in the whole community. Go into the slums of any big industrial city—London, Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham—and visit, house by house, the people who live in the poorest parts of the town. If you know nothing of slum life it will be a revelation to you. You will find sweated mothers and children by the score. Statistics of home workers have never been secured because they belong to a shifting population which flits from house to house every few months. There are hundreds of thousands of mothers making 3s., 4s., 5s. a week, working ten and twelve hours a day, carding, box-making, hairpin packing, flower-making.

Not long ago I visited a house where a family eight in number were subsisting upon the wages of the mother and three girls, who earned 14s. 6d. a week between them at hairpin boxing. The husband and two sons were out of work, and had been so for weeks past. They were all "casual" labourers—a class just one remove from the unemployables and the submerged. A great deal of sweated women's work in the home is the direct result of unemployment amongst men. The casual workers, the sweated, and the submerged all belong to one class, which hovers continually on the poverty line. If the husband gets on an average only three or four days' work a week, the wife has to take up "home work" to supplement his meagre earnings.

Let us go into Slumland and visit some of the sweated workers in their so-called homes. Many of them are children of 10, 12, and 14 years. Elsie S—— is a little girl of 11, a small, thin morsel of humanity with an elfin dexterity of fingers. She can "packet hairpins" as quickly as a grown woman, and works seven hours a



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day out of school hours. The father works from six to six as a day labourer for 16s. a week. The mother and Elsie make 3s. 6d. a week. There are two younger children who help also, but they get more quickly tired, and sometimes drop off to sleep in the middle of the work. It is these little children, almost babies, one is most sorry for, working in stuffy kitchens, cheated of their playtime, their birthright of health and happiness.

The mother is the slipshod type of woman. Of course, she is not the best sort of housewife. She lets things slide, and has not much time for tidying up, scrubbing the house, and washing the children. Her house is ill-kept, dirty, and always in a muddle. This is part of what people call "the general conditions of slum life." The woman does not know how to cook or sew, and has far less "instinct" for caring for her baby than a cat has for its kitten. Married as a factory girl, she had no chance to learn the rudiments of housewifery. She had a baby every year on insufficient food, and did casual home work at the time if she could get it. Her vitality has been sapped to the foundation. She is a poor bit of a woman physically and mentally, and it is no wonder that she has lost four out of seven babies in infancy.

**Ignorant mothers.**—The sweated-labour problem touches closely upon the infant mortality question. In almost every case the women have "buried" three, four, even five babies out of eight or nine. The children die from neglect, or because the mother has to scamp her baby management to get on with her "work." They need not die if we could help and teach their mothers even a little about looking after a baby, and if they had the vitality to suckle them or the money to buy them milk. The great need in all branches of social reform work is the



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better education of the women. If we could teach the working man's wife simple cleanliness, housewifery and child management, and at the same time abolish *sweated* home labour, many slum problems, from consumption to infant mortality, would automatically solve themselves. The question of poverty necessarily enters into many cases of sweated women's work.

In one house we visited, the father was a casual labourer, handicapped by asthma, making about 15s. a week. The mother, with the help of four children, earned 4s. 6d. a week at carding hooks and eyes. If this case were reported, and the children compelled to give up work, real hardship would be occasioned. When the legitimate bread-winner is sick or out of work, the mother and children must work or starve. I know a girl of 15 whose "work" is the only thing that keeps the household from starvation. I know mothers who are compelled to keep their children from school to help to earn the bread without which the family would starve. There are 300,000 school children who work out of school hours for wages.

There are countless instances of sweated mother and child labour arising from the greed and drunkenness of the father. There are parasitic men living upon the earnings of their wives and children. "Everybody works but father" is a real grim truth in many slum homes. There are scores upon scores of men who spend more money in the public-house than the children can earn by six or eight hours' work a day in addition to school. A vicar of a London parish stated a few months ago that no less than 60 per cent. of the families in his district were entirely dependent on the earnings of the women. These women toil all day to make a subsistence wage for the family. They go on working for husband



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and family, when by all the laws of Nature and fair play they should not be asked even to support themselves. They must suffer hours of torture and pain when they are nearing the ordeal of childbirth, which means, not a respite of some weeks, as it should, but a few days in bed and then to work again, whatever pain and lassitude the effort may entail, because if they do not work the children cannot eat—the father of the family is unemployable.

**Unstandardised women's work.**—The slum mother has many sources of income apart from regular factory labour—scrubbing, charing, laundry, and “home work,” washing up in restaurants, mending, machining; and at the same time she has to do the house work, the washing for man and children, the hundred and odd jobs that must be done in any household. What must be the physical and nervous strain upon her vitality? The sweated home industries are a prolific source of physical ill-health among the mothers in this class. Lack of air and outdoor exercise, constant stooping, and long hours of drudgery in artificial light sap their health and energy in a few months. The mothers and children have to work all day and far into the night for a pittance which is not sufficient to feed them properly. They live mainly upon bread and tea, with occasional scraps of cheap meat or fried fish. In too many cases the one miserable room serves for kitchen, workroom and bedroom, whilst hasty meals are snatched from time to time when exhaustion compels them to eat. The poverty of the sweated workers is such that the very poorest, most insanitary dwellings are all they can afford as “homes.” In Birmingham the hideous sweating system flourishes in the poorest tenements, the dirtiest yards, the back-to-back houses now universally condemned. The homes of



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the workers vary very much even in the same court. In one house I visited, two women, three young girls of 12 to 15 years, and four younger children were hook-and-eye carding. It was the dinner hour. The one window was closed, and a large frying-pan gave out an overpowering odour of meat scraps and onions. The school children were working and eating at the same time. A newspaper was spread on the table, on which a loaf of bread was placed, and the children used a broken fork to fish out the frizzling offal from the pan. That table was never clean, never spread, never properly scrubbed from week to week. The children looked uncared for. One little girl of 7 had tuberculous glands in her neck, and her elder sister was suffering from consumption of the lungs. Every member of that household—the mother, aunt, brothers and sisters—ran the risk of infection. That is how the great White Plague spreads and flourishes in England. How one longed to clear away the work, open the window, have the house scrubbed, the torn, dirty paper on the wall replaced by whitewash, the innutritious food supplemented by good milk, bread and butter and eggs! These children worked till nearly midnight. The husband of the one woman drank half his earnings. The other man had deserted his wife and family some months before.

**How the babies help.**—The price of sweated women's labour is so low that even the very young children are utilised as assistants. As one woman told me, "We must work terrible hard to get 3s. a week out of it, and we can get a bit more if the children help after school. For myself, I likes the children to have their schooling, but if they are to get their bit of bread they must help with the buttons at night." Indeed, money must be made somehow, and even if the children's toil brings in



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a few coppers—well, as the women say so often, “there are many mouths to fill and little to fill them with.” Even the babies help. The child of 3 or 4 years can put the hooks into the eyes stitched on the card. The child of 5 can fit covers on pasteboard boxes, and the girl of 6 can paste, whilst at 8, 10 and 12 years the child-workers can make artificial flowers almost as quickly as their mother. I have seen a baby of 2½ years hooking eyes, so unchildlike at thirty months that he had not the curiosity to look up from his work as we talked with the mother. Gravely and industriously, this baby toiler put hook after hook in its place on the card, saving a few minutes every hour to the mother who earns 3s. a week at the most monotonous, weary, treadmill type of “woman’s work” that exists. There are twelve hooks and eyes on each card, and the worker is paid 10d. for every gross of cards. First, she sews the hooks on to the cards, and the child links each hook with an eye; then the eyes are stitched in place. In winter, when the joints are stiff with cold and chilblains, the great difficulty is to work fast enough to make 5d. a day. The husband earns 18s. a week as a labourer, and the woman acknowledges that she could make it “do” if he gave up his beer. The house is clean, but the woman and child are both anæmic for lack of fresh air and outdoor exercise.

At the back of this house a very different type of housewife does button-carding. The house opens from the yard, a filthy place with half a dozen water-closets opposite the house door, lines of grubby washing slung from one corner to the other, the ground littered with dirty papers, orange peel, old boots, cabbage stocks, refuse of all sorts. Several of the houses have broken windows, which add to the disreputable appearance of the place, and as we enter the court the people scuttle



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to their doors like rabbits. Inside the house there is a dreadful odour of foul air and stale beer. Heaps of clothing lie untidily on chairs and sofa, half the table is reserved for a scrappy meal of bread, tinned meat, and beer. At the other end a woman and three children are stitching buttons. "The children give me a bit of help at dinner time," is the invariable excuse if they suspect that the visitor is an "inspector"; but the children in most cases work all the evening, generally up to ten or eleven o'clock at night. This woman is 44, and has had thirteen children, nine of whom are dead, as a row of cards on the wall above the battered horse-hair sofa testifies.

One of the most serious effects of home work is the neglect of house and children and the high child mortality with which it is invariably associated. The children are dirty and verminous, ill-fed and neglected, as well as overworked. Until preventable dirt becomes a punishable offence, these slum quarters will continue to operate as centres for the dissemination of disease to other parts of the town. The filth of the house I have just described baffles description. Underneath a heap of rags on the couch there was a baby nearly blind with ophthalmia contracted at birth. One of the children at the table was only 6, but she was working steadily, anxiously, as if she felt the responsibility resting on her own thin shoulders. I thought when I had seen the half-timer in the factories that life could show no more pathetic picture; but the saddest, the most distressing phases of human life are assuredly connected with "home industries."

It may seem absurd to talk of children of 4 years "working," but the term is not an exaggeration. Its accuracy can be verified by anyone who will take the



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trouble to go with an inspector of home industries, a doctor, nurse, or health visitor into the home workers' districts.

Among the occupations I have found sweated mothers engaged in in the slums are hook-and-eye carding, hair-pin packing, brush making, box making, button carding, finishing tailor and dressmaking work. Button carding is better paid than hook-and-eye carding, at which the worker can only make, with unremitting toil, 3s. 6d. or 4s. a week. The usual payment of a good worker has been estimated at 1¼d. or 1½d. per hour. Such figures speak for themselves. Those who find fault with the "shiftless poor" should try to see something of the work of these women who rear a family on perhaps 15s. a week, the total earnings of many homes. It is only fair to say that there are many good mothers, plucky mothers, respectable mothers in the slums, who bring their children up decently amidst their vile surroundings. It takes intelligence and thrift to make two ends meet on the poverty line. The efforts of many slum mothers to make the most of what very little they have are as admirable as they are pathetic.

It is not easy to get facts and figures out of the workers. Their great fear is that if they say anything their work will be taken from them, when they will have absolutely nothing to live on. They do not even realise that their rate of pay is scandalously low. They go on the principle that 3s. 6d. a week is "better than nothing."

The homes of the workers, as I have said, differ exceedingly, the contrasts depending not so much upon degrees of poverty as upon the character of the inmates. Some of the courts are indescribably filthy, littered with rubbish, broken flower pots, jam jars, ashes and paper,



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and inside the houses chaos and dirt reign. In one house where paper boxes were being made, a slatternly woman was feeding a baby with pap from a dirty bowl. The child's mouth was inflamed and covered with ulcers, and it was no wonder that it "cried all day long." The paper was peeling off the wall; the floor was disgustingly filthy. A child was having its hair combed by an elder sister, while the rest of the family were making paper boxes destined to hold sweets or dainty gifts for many a clean, well-furnished, and orderly home. There were seven members of the family, and even the young children were working. It is not hard to make boxes once you have learned the trick. The pasteboard is already cut in shape and indented for folding. One deft turn of a child's hand folds the end. They are pasted and folded alternately. Think how many turns these child-hands have to make every day! It is bad enough in summer, when the heat is stifling and the odour of paste mingles with the smell of foul air and improperly washed humanity. But "in winter the chilblains are that bad we can scarcely get through." That simply means longer hours, because a certain amount of work *must* be done to pay for even the meagre diet which keeps life in their poor bodies. The hours worked by many of the women and children are incredible. Little girls who look about 9 years old but insist that they are 14—and thus exempt from school attendance—will drudge in slavery from eight in the morning until eleven or twelve at night, with only the briefest intervals for food. I know one boy of 13 who works all day at box-making and sells papers in the evening. His hours of labour are fourteen every day.

**Remedies.**—At the back of the whole hideous system is the prevalent craze for cheapness. The people who



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get an article at an absurdly cheap price do not realise that somewhere sweating must exist to produce it. The public, of course, pay in the end. The hospitals for consumptives, the workhouses for unemployables, the homes for the feeble-minded and degenerates cost millions. How much of this money might be saved if we could deal with the *causes* of disease and destitution!

State action depends upon public opinion, and public opinion is the sum of individual opinion. We as a community must demand a fair rate of wages for adult workers, protection of motherhood, and the total abolition of sweating by the establishment of a minimum wage. We must compel housing reform, and provide hygienic conditions so as to abolish the devastation caused by infectious diseases. But people have, first of all, to be made to care enough. The Anti-Sweating League is doing splendid work for the amelioration of home workers, its aims being to secure a minimum wage in every trade. Since the passing of the Trades Board Act, 1909, the League has directed its activities towards organising the workers in tailoring, box making, chain and lace making.

The need of the reform of the Poor Law is proved by the countless instances of deserted wives and widows with young families engaged in home industries, who must have regular help if they are to rear their children respectably. Adequate relief for necessitous mothers must be provided in the interests of the whole community. It would pay in the end to give mothers a better chance and so prevent whole families from sinking to the level of the submerged classes. It would pay also to regulate the conditions and the wages of home work, if only by safeguarding the health of the public. I have seen little girls in advanced consumption stitching



## The Sweated Mother in the Home

and machining children's pinafores. Hairpin packets, button cards and paper boxes may all carry the germs of infectious disease from the sweated den to the home of the purchaser. Paste is an excellent culture medium for bacteria, and the boxes for sweets and flowers and innumerable articles of apparel are manufactured in rooms where sweated women and children work and eat and sleep.

We know now that many social problems hitherto deemed insoluble can be remedied by getting at the root causes and dealing with them. True charity consists not so much in giving to Distress Committees and unemployment funds, as in helping the people to help themselves, in educating them in temperance and hygiene, and in providing them with a chance to rise above their environment. Prevention is easier, and, in the end, infinitely cheaper than cure. That is what the people must see. It is a "platitude" that the State must be induced to act upon.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE FACTORY MOTHER

THE effect of industrial life upon child-bearing women is one of the most urgent questions of the age. The subject is a difficult one, in that, whilst factory labour takes women from the home and brings over-fatigue and ill-health upon expectant and nursing mothers, the work is well paid and well regulated compared with such unorganised labour as charring or washing. But work in the factories is at best in a transitional stage, and concerted effort is required to make such work healthier and more humane, and to uplift the home environment of the operatives.

Personal knowledge of the conditions of life of the factory workers in any industrial centre in the country would bring home to the least observant the terrible existence which so many human beings lead in England to-day. It is only necessary to study the lives of the operatives at first hand, to go into their slums, to follow these people from the factory to the home, to see the terrible waste of life and health, the extravagance, the thriftlessness and immorality of the people, in order to realise the crying need for legislation, and for combined municipal and individual effort.

It is not poverty which lies at the root of the misery and squalor that abound in factory districts; it is not lack of money which is responsible for the starved children, the deaths of infants, the stunted physique and mental and moral degradation of the



## The Factory Mother

people, so much as ignorance, indifference, inherited slovenliness and improvidence. The men and women who have money to spend in drink, music-halls and picture palaces, who cannot do without their trips and outings, their annual holidays to Blackpool, the Isle of Man, or the Continent—these are the parents of neglected, half-starved children who have to be succoured by the State, of infants who die like flies from preventable diseases. The average operative, in Lancashire at least, is well paid. When times are good, and especially when there are two or three wage-earners in the family, there is no scarcity of money. There are families receiving £4, £5 or £6 weekly living in a perpetual state of debt and improvidence. The standard of living in such households would horrify the middle-class housewife of a thrifty and careful habit of mind. Salmon, lamb and green peas, with new potatoes at 4d. per lb., provide a luxurious Sunday dinner for the same family who live on a diet of bread, tea, and tinned food from Tuesday to Saturday. There is no method, no care exercised in laying out the household wage, in the vast majority of cases. Until the weekly wage is spent, self-denial in the matter of food and drink is undreamed of. These people buy the most expensive meat and butter if the money is there; they have tobacco and alcohol in plenty, without apparently a passing thought for the debts behind them or the hunger that awaits them towards the end of the week, when their money is all spent. A great deal of money is spent on cheap finery and amusements. Factory girls whose craving for pleasure has to be satisfied by nightly music-halls and visits to picture palaces, make poor wives, without the most elementary knowledge of cooking, household management, or the care of children.



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**A factory marriage.**—Under the half-time system girls may enter the mills at 12 years of age. At 16 they may obtain 22s. a week in the card-room, and they often marry at 16 or 17 on the strength of a joint income. What preparation have they had for matrimony? What do they know of cooking, of making a nourishing, palatable meal at the minimum cost? Absolutely nothing. The average housewife prefers a diet of tinned foods, fried fish, bread and cheese, strong tea or beer, and any home cooking is done with the frying-pan, which produces indigestible messes of potato chips, bacon, fried bread, and scraps from the offal shops. The young wife has not much inclination for "domestic drudgery." She has probably married on the credit system—that is, has bought £30 or £40 worth of cheap upholstery and veneered wood in the shape of bedroom and sitting-room suites, which have to be paid for at twice their real value in weekly instalments. As a rule, she continues her work at the factory until the first baby arrives. During the early married months, when both man and wife are earning, wages are ample; but the money is foolishly spent, is wasted on amusements, invested in luxuries. A regular stream of men call at the door daily, persuasively anxious to sell anything, from a piano or a phonograph to an elaborate shawl, on the hire system. So debt is thoughtlessly accumulated, and after the confinement it is almost necessary for the young mother to return to the factory at the end of the one month's absence demanded by the State.

Statistics prove the high infant mortality in factory districts. But they tell nothing of the injury to the children who survive the first few months of maternal neglect, who grow up to be stunted men and women, degenerates who go to fill our prisons and workhouses,



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and to swell the ranks of the unfit and defective, for the first year of life goes far to make or mar the physical and mental constitution for life. So long as child-bearing women are permitted to stand for long hours in the factory right up to the time of childbirth, to leave their infants at four weeks to return to their work, just so long will the infant mortality rate remain at its present figure and the degeneration of the operative class continue.

**Factory labour and infant mortality.**—State regulation of married women's labour is a subject full of controversy. Its advocates are accused of interfering with the freedom of the individual to work. State interference, it is said, will lead to greater social evils, to a falling birth-rate, or a loosening of the marriage tie. But what is the good of a comparatively high birth-rate if nearly two hundred out of every thousand of the infants perish when only a few months old? It is an accepted fact that in proportion as married women take part in factory work the infant mortality increases. It must be acknowledged that compulsory measures to keep women in the home would prove a hardship in certain cases; but the few must always suffer to benefit the majority, and, as a rule, married women's employment in factories is not the result of real poverty. Even when poverty is the plea, the wage of the wife is rarely an actual money gain. Deduct 5s. which she has to pay for the care of her children, 2s. for the household washing she has not time to do, and deduct also what the husband spends on extra luxuries for himself, and the net gain is insignificant. At the same time, there is the loss to the home of the housekeeper and mother when the married women work in the factories. Where industrial life presses hard upon child-bearing women, there is a danger



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to the family. There is danger to the child and to the mother, besides a demoralising effect upon the husband, upon whom ought to rest the responsibility of wage-earning. When the mother leaves her home and her children for the factory, what is the result? The children are entrusted to elderly women unfit for any other occupation, or to girl nurses of 8 to 12 years. When one considers the risks that attend the first few months of the infant's life in these circumstances, the wonder is, not that the infant mortality is high, but that so many babies survive at all. Between 5 and 6 a.m. the baby is taken to the nurse-woman as the mother goes to the factory. Sometimes she cannot awaken the people by knocking, and she has to leave the baby, insufficiently protected from cold or rain or snow, in its cot on the neighbour's doorstep, where it may have to remain for a couple of hours in the damp or cold. It is exposed to even greater risks by reason of the unsuitable diet. The ordinary food of such infants during the first year of life consists of pieces of bread floating in water sweetened with sugar, and sometimes coloured with a little milk. This pap, or "pobs," is varied by a bit of bacon, salt herring, pickle, fried fish, or tinned salmon. When the child cries from the pain of inevitable dyspepsia, it is "doctored" by sleeping powders and cordials. These contain various preparations of opium, gin, or peppermint to relieve flatulence and colic. Sometimes there is death from an overdose of the narcotic; invariably there is wasting from malnutrition owing to the twofold influence of improper feeding and constant drugging. A great many of these children die; it is quite common for a mother to lose three or four children out of six, or nine out of twelve, in early life.



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The medical men, the midwives, the health visitors, all testify to the terrible abuse, in factory towns, of dangerous drugs, the sale of which ought to be forbidden unless the purchaser can produce a medical prescription.

Most of the "nurses" are not intentionally neglectful of the children in their charge; generally they are anxious to do their best; but in the main, however kind, they are deplorably ignorant, dirty, and often drunken as well. As for the child "nurses," they are absolutely unfit for the responsibility thrust upon them.

**Deterioration of husbands.**—It is generally acknowledged that married women's labour makes idle, drunken husbands. When the woman of the house spends twelve hours out of the twenty-four at the factory, the inevitable result must be discomfort and chaos in the domestic sphere. The teapot steams on the hob all day long, and bread and tea take the place of good stew and potatoes and pudding. A great many of the people suffer from chronic dyspepsia, and whisky and gin in many instances are taken as palliatives of the resulting pain and flatulence. So the drink habit may be established. Statistics have been collected demonstrating that idleness and drunkenness are more prevalent amongst the husbands of factory workers than among the men whose wives remain at home to attend to the house, the cooking, and the welfare of the children. Thousands of loafers in Great Britain are parasites existing upon the factory labour of their wives and daughters. The pathetic drudgery of the women who try to cope with the housework after they return home, exhausted by their day's work in the factory, is another argument for the protective legislation of married women's labour.

If proof of the evils of the system is called for,



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it can be obtained easily enough by visiting the homes in any factory town. Go especially to the poorer districts, to the slum sections of the town, where dingy rows of houses guard either side of the narrow streets, which serve as playgrounds for pale-faced children and drying-greens for the family washing. Go into some of the "back-to-back" houses, with a cellar habitation in the basement, where husband and wife and two or three children live huddled together. In these furnished cellars, rented at 4s. 6d. a week, the furniture consists of a wooden bench, table and chairs, and a grimy bed which partly hides the uneven brick floor.

Here is a house where husband and wife are both wage-earners, the husband making 27s., the wife 25s. a week in the factory. There are three children living; four died in infancy. Both husband and wife drink. The wife has always worked at the factory, and "would rather go out to work than be worrit all day by children." Life is a perpetual scramble in these homes, a series of ups and downs, of alternating periods of plenty and semi-starvation. Many women in such households systematically pawn all they can on Mondays, and spend what they get on drink, redeeming as much as possible at the end of the week. Monday is reckoned as the women's day for drinking. The children of such parents are ruined in health and morals at an early age. They play in the gutter, and learn all the evils the streets can teach them; thousands starve, not because of poverty, but from the improvidence and intemperance of the parents. Whilst everything should be done to help the deserving poor, drastic measures ought to be adopted to punish improvident and drunken parents. These poor children never know the meaning of a decent meal. They depend upon the pennyworth of fish and potato chips



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from the corner shop, or the hazard of the cupboard, for their dinner. They never taste a cup of pure sweet milk, but at an early age acquire a liking for stewed tea or gin and water. They are stunted in their physical development to such an extent that no medical inspection and treatment at the school age can counteract the evil influences of early life. Even the children of well-to-do operatives, with whom money is always plentiful, frequently suffer from improper feeding. In their case the diet is ample, and the children fare more luxuriously than the boys and girls in a middle-class household. But the food is unsuitable; children cannot thrive on a liberal allowance of ginger-beer and tarts, buns and "tasty" dishes. They are pallid, undersized, rickety, and anæmic as the direct result of over-feeding with unsuitable food.

The unhealthy conditions of the poorer districts of these industrial towns are terrible. Many of the houses are not fit for habitation, the drains are primitive, sometimes the windows are not made to open, and indescribable filth prevails in the houses and the courts and alleys outside. Most of the people suffer from anæmia, dyspepsia and emaciation. Among the children, rickets in some degree is apparent, due to the unsuitable food, the lack of light and air in the homes, and the dirt. When the parents are clean and thrifty, and when the mother has some knowledge of cooking, the children fare better. The better-class, respectable Lancashire operatives who live in the modern cottages or small villas are on a different level, especially with regard to the care and welfare of their children.

In visiting all sorts and conditions of operatives' homes, I found even in the poorest parts that there were great differences in the physical and moral conditions of



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the people. In one house of two rooms a mother and father and four children live; the father earns 24s. per week, and the mother has not worked in the factory since the first child was born, but occasionally earns a little by washing. The house is clean and comfortable, the children healthy and well kept. Neither of the parents drinks, which accounts largely for the well-being of the home.

A few doors away is a family of eight children, all of them healthy, all nursed by the mother in infancy. The husband has never allowed his wife to go to the factory, although, with a wage of 25s., the struggle against poverty must have entailed self-sacrifice on the part of both parents.

Contrast this with another household in the same street where the total earnings are over 50s. per week. Of ten children, the first died at three months, the second is alive and earning 3s. 6d. a week as a half-timer. The third, fourth, and fifth died in infancy, the sixth and seventh are alive and neglected, the eighth and ninth died within the last year. Both parents work in the factory, both are intemperate, the house is dirty, and the children miserably ill-fed and rickety.

Even apart from drunkenness, the so-called poverty might be reduced 50 per cent. if all the money spent on unnecessary luxuries were properly utilised. Football, music-halls and cinematographs and gambling, dispose of a disproportionate amount of the worker's wage. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are squandered every year at holiday time by operatives who leave home with all they can draw from the holiday funds with the intention of spending every penny before they get back. The money is paid into holiday clubs week by week, or deducted from the wages, to be drawn at the begin-



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ning of the holiday season. It is typical of the improvidence and lack of foresight of the Lancashire operatives that a family will cheerfully spend £40 or £50 on their summer holiday, whilst owing a large doctor's bill, even when scarcity of work and poverty are almost certain to come later in the year.

**Teaching the mothers.**—Enough has been said to show the crying need that exists for a comprehensive scheme of social education, to teach the people, to raise the standard of the worker, to foster ideals of motherhood and home life. The health visitors and the educated midwives are doing good work, and the keen desire displayed by the women to acquire knowledge of hygiene, child management, and cookery indicates strongly that money spent by the municipal authorities on these lines is well spent. In every district a school for mothers should be organised. It would prove a centre for the dissemination of knowledge which would help to diminish the infant mortality rate in industrial England and stem the tide of degeneration.

Legislative limitation of factory mothers' labour will have to come. At present, apart from the insurance benefit, the only measure in force is that which prohibits a woman from returning to work until one month after the birth of her child. That safeguards the mother's health to a slight extent only, the child's even less. The hundreds and thousands of women who are attending our hospitals and dispensaries as a result of strain and overwork at childbirth illustrate the need for an investigation and reform of our present system.

It is only by prohibiting married women's labour for six weeks before and six months after childbirth that the health of the mother and the well-being of the child can be assured. But if women are to be made to stay



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in the home, it must not be as unpaid workers. The working man should be compelled to give a definite proportion of his wages to his wife for household expenditure. Legislation should aim at abolishing married women's labour in the factory or away from home unless they can produce evidence that the husband is incapable of earning and that the children are properly cared for by nurses, duly licensed after examination by the proper authorities.



## CHAPTER X

### THE WORLD'S CROP OF HUMAN BABIES

TO get enough healthy babies born every year and to give them their birthright—good nurture—is the great problem of the twentieth century; and it is very much the concern of the nation's mothers. It is, consequently, a somewhat curious fact that amidst all the discussion on the birth-rate and infant mortality problem so conspicuous in our time, little has been said by women themselves on a subject that so closely affects them. Statesmen, eugenicists, and biologists emphasise the supreme importance to the State of a steady supply of healthy children. Medical men unite with the clergy in disapproving comment on intentional restriction of the family; and the decline of the Empire, for lack of soldiers and sailors, and of emigrants to found new stocks beyond the seas, has been widely prophesied. The mothers of the race have received their share, and more than their share, of blame. But so far they have taken small part in the controversy. Their point of view has almost been ignored; and yet the decline of the birth-rate is primarily a mother's question. It is intimately associated with the economic, social, and intellectual development of women, with woman's entry into industrialism, and with the causes which are operating in all classes of society to force mothers and potential mothers from the home into the labour market.

**The declining birth-rate.**—Amidst all the statistics of infant mortality and of sterile marriages, there is one



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fact that stands out in clear relief—the mother is the source of life, and the solution of the problem lies mainly with her. The birth-rate has declined steadily during the last two generations, the very period when the social and intellectual evolution of woman has been most rapid, when the economic problem of woman's work and wages has been most acute. In 1876 the birth-rate in England was at its maximum. Since that date it has declined 28 per cent., and there are those who affirm that we shall see in England, as in France, a "pathological birth-rate"; which means that the birth-rate will fall below the death-rate, and we shall have first a stationary, and then a diminishing population.

The decline is not confined to Great Britain. It is apparent in every country of the civilised world. Great Britain stands intermediate between those nations with a high birth-rate, such as Russia and Bulgaria, and those with an extremely low birth-rate, as France and Belgium. The general decline in the birth-rate has been slight in certain Roman Catholic countries, notably in Ireland and Spain, and large in France and Italy, largest of all in Hungary. In Germany the fall of the birth-rate started ten years later than in England, but the decline is now steady. Between 1881 and 1885 the birth-rate was 37, whilst ten years afterwards it had fallen to 34.3. In Prussia it had fallen in 1895 to 31.8.

In spite of the fact that for many years young healthy stocks of men and women at the most reproductive period of life have been emigrating to the Dominions, we have the same phenomenon of birth decline in British Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In the United States the diminishing size of the family has attracted the serious attention of statesmen, medical men and sociologists for some years past. The difficulty of obtaining reliable



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figures, owing to the fact that birth registration is not compulsory in every State, makes it impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy the extent of the decline. But according to a bulletin of the Census Bureau prepared by Wilcox, of Cornell University, the proportion of children to the number of women of a child-bearing age has steadily diminished in the last fifty years. In 1860 there were 634 children under 5 years to every 1,000 women between 15 and 50 years of age. Forty years later the proportion had fallen to 474. The analysis of the census in Massachusetts shows that the average number of children per family among the American born is 2.7, and 4.5 among the foreign born.

**“Corrected” birth-rates.**—When the “crude” birth-rates are “corrected” in respect of the population at child-bearing age, some differences are found. For example, whilst Ireland has a low crude birth-rate, it has a much higher corrected birth-rate than that of England, taking into consideration the smaller proportion of child-bearing women, owing probably to the influence of emigration. Increase of population is dependent upon excess of births over deaths. A low birth-rate, if it is associated with a low death-rate, provides a more desirable increase of population than a high birth-rate associated with a high death-rate. The effect of the declining birth-rate in the different countries must be studied in association with the death-rate. Owing to the evolution of hygiene, the death-rate has steadily declined in all civilised nations, although the mortality of infants and young children still remains lamentably high in every country in the world. Indeed, the declining birth-rate would be a far less serious factor if the infant mortality problem were systematically attacked by the nations. If we saved the babies born, if we helped the mothers to bear living in



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place of stillborn children by protecting and assisting maternity, we should not only obtain the necessary numbers, we should raise the health and efficiency standard of the new generation.

The eugenic aspect of the declining birth-rate has aroused serious misgivings among certain sociologists. According to available statistics, it appears that the birth decline is most apparent in the better classes of society. The educated and the well-to-do have small families; the poor have many children; the unfit are the most prolific of all. Professor Karl Pearson has stated that in this country 25 per cent. of the married population produce 50 per cent. of the next generation. In half a century, the relationship between undesirable social conditions and the high birth-rate has doubled in intensity; and the total children born to the successful class of society is only half of what its value was 50 years ago. The State is not only being deprived of babies, but, of those who are born, an increasing number are defective in physical, mental, or moral quality. That this defectiveness is "inherent" we have yet to prove. Let us give those who form the lowest stratum of society a fair chance—decent food, decent homes—before we dare say that their babies will not become as efficient citizens as those of any other class. The last word has yet to be said about the babies.

**The economic factor.**—We must also consider whether the declining birth-rate is the terrible calamity that some consider it to be. Perhaps it is not more babies that the country requires, but better babies. Have we any right to ask mothers to produce more children until we can ensure them a fair prospect of being able to rear them? Under present conditions there are thousands of unwanted children born into the world. One-fifth of them



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never see their first birthday. What statistics give any real idea of all that lies behind infant mortality? Desecrated, unwilling motherhood, unwelcome, starved, diseased babies born in homes unfit for beasts. The birth-rate problem and the infant mortality problem are, as I have suggested, closely related. The same causes operate in both cases—poverty, ignorant and inefficient motherhood, combined with failure on the part of States and legislatures to recognise that mother welfare and child welfare must be considered and maintained. The determining factor in the declining birth-rate is economic.

True family and racial economy ought to be based upon the assumption that "life is wealth," that well-stocked nurseries are ultimately as economical to parents as a prolific population is beneficial to the race. But the converse is actually the case. The struggle for existence is acute in all classes except among the very wealthy and the supremely unfit. The rising generation of parents cannot support the burden of large families. Among the labouring classes a family of more than three or four children means a constant struggle, insufficient nourishment for the children, semi-starvation for the mother.

In the commercial and professional classes, competition is so keen that the men who are trying to keep their foot even upon the rung of the ladder they have gained contemplate with anxiety the possibility of feeding, clothing and educating more than one or two children.

The scale of payment of young professional men, as medical assistants, curates, Government servants, and officers in the Army or Navy, is insufficient to support a wife and any considerable family, according to the standards of living demanded by this social group.



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Posts are offered to men "without encumbrances," or "unmarried men only," in this class as in the artisan section of the community. Voluntary limitation of the family is the result of social competition and high standards of comfort.

Apart from the individual or personal aspect of the problem, the economic factor has a wider application. The State, it is said, requires a higher birth-rate if we are to maintain our national prestige, but industrial and economic conditions point the other way. One-tenth part of our population constitutes a great submerged class, where misery, wretchedness and disease prevail. Above this poverty line we have a definite percentage of skilled workers periodically out of employment, drifting downwards to become unemployable in their turn. Unless the State can provide fair opportunities for citizens and workers, it is arguable whether it is not a suicidal policy to demand a higher birth-rate and the production of more children to add to industrial congestion and to the economic difficulties of the next generation.

Under present conditions, the average wage of the working man is £1 per week—according to Mr. Sidney Webb it is 25s. ; and such a sum cannot supply the barest necessities and decencies—in cities, at any rate—for more than two or three children besides the parents. Yet twelve million people in this country are subsisting on a family wage of less than £1 a week. Semi-starvation must be the portion of many respectable families of more than four or five children. The addition of a mother's wage is therefore frequently necessary. But that wage-earning on the part of married women—under our present industrial system, at least—tends to a diminishing birth-rate is recognised. In towns in which women are engaged in factory work, the birth-rate is



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abnormally low. In mining districts, where few women labour outside the home, the birth-rate remains high. Fertility is highest in rural counties, and lowest in large cities where women are more numerous engaged in work outside the home.

The infant death-rate also is highest in industrial districts where employment of women in textile industries is prevalent; and when a low birth-rate and high infant mortality rate are associated the outlook is serious. Dr. Hugh Jones, as a result of a recent investigation (1912) into the industrial employment of married women, concludes that the rate of birth decline and infant mortality is higher as the proportion of employed married women rises; and the mortality of women from puerperal fever and childbirth is higher in the textile than in the non-textile and colliery districts, where the mothers remain in the home, being 6.74 against 5.12 respectively.

It is a physiological fact that the average healthy married woman who has no economic demands upon her time and energy can bear and rear seven or eight children, and yet have a full two years' rest between births, which modern gynæcologists are beginning to regard as necessary to the well-being of the mother and the best development of the children. It has been estimated, I believe by the late Dr. Matthews Duncan, that in Great Britain the number of unfruitful marriages is one in ten. Further, the average number of children is not seven or eight, but 4.6 in the fit classes. Therefore nine out of ten marriages amongst the fit are rather more than half as fruitful as they should be, and there is a loss of from 300 to 400 children for every 100 marriages that take place.

The subject of contagious disease is considered in



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Chapter VII., but its relationship to sterile marriages must be touched upon. The spread of hygienic knowledge and the prevention of vice and contagious disease are important factors in combating not only the high infant death-rate, as pointed out in that chapter, but also the declining birth-rate. "Race suicide" and racial degeneration are problems closely linked with the social evil, which ought, in the interests of national health and morality, to be carefully and wisely considered by statesmen and stateswomen, sociologists, and medical men and women.

The better care of women in pregnancy and at childbirth would tend to avert the disease and consequent childlessness that are frequently the after-effects of parturition, as well as to reduce the mortality of child-bearing women.

**Higher education, feminine emancipation and competition of women's work.**—A third group of alleged causes includes certain factors which provide opportunity for copybook platitudes concerning the declining birth-rate, but these have, in reality, little appreciable influence upon the problem. Increasing luxury in the present generation, the influence of higher education and athletics amongst women, the postponement of marriage, as a result of feminine emancipation and independence, may all be included in this category. Let us consider these alleged causes.

It must be remembered that the tendency to limitation of the family is not confined to any country, or to any one class. It has extended through the great middle classes of Western Europe to the more thrifty and provident amongst the working classes; and in most instances the motive is not selfishness so much as a desire to conform to the standard of living of others in the same



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class. One of the latest authoritative utterances on birth decline was made by Sir Shirley Murphy at the Congress of the Royal Sanitary Institute in August, 1912. He asserts that the decline of the birth-rate has been most evident not among the idle and luxurious classes, as is universally believed, but among the poor; and he maintains that nature has largely determined this decline. His views support the opinion of those who hold that a diminishing birth-rate is a phenomenon associated with developing civilisation.

According to Mr. Havelock Ellis, a strong supporter of this view, evolution reveals a constantly diminishing reproductive activity and a constantly increasing expenditure of care on the offspring thus diminished in number. "When in human families, especially under civilised conditions, we see large families, we are in the presence of a reversion to the tendencies that prevail among lower organisms." Näcke goes so far as to say that large families are a symptom of degeneration. They are usually found in the pathological and abnormal classes, among the feeble-minded, the criminal, and the alcoholic.

But whilst a large number of children at *one* birth may be considered a "reversion," the most civilised and intellectually developed couple would under normal conditions, if physiologically healthy, have ten or twelve children in the course of their married life. Healthy stocks would produce large families if artificial restriction from the pressure of economic conditions were removed, and thus the declining birth-rate is an evil if the best stocks curtail the number of their offspring, and the irresponsible observe no restriction. The encouragement of larger families in the case of the higher types of men and women will become a subject for practical con-



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sideration in the near future.<sup>1</sup> The alarmist is deploring the fact that marriage and motherhood are appealing less and less to the most intellectual women of the country. There are no statistics to warrant the assertion that increased educational opportunities for women have had any effect upon the birth-rate by unfitting girls for motherhood. Certain writers—mostly men with “little knowledge,” apparently, of women individually or as a class—go so far as to say that if women devote three or five years of their youth to preparation for university examinations, their emotional nature suffers, their natural sex instincts are atrophied, and they become “unfit” biologically for the exercise of sex functions. Should this be so, the inference is that educated women are less desirous of being married and less fitted physiologically for motherhood. That is not borne out by facts, as the proportion of women graduates who are wives and mothers compares favourably with that of other women of the same social class. The man who generalises about women’s sex emotions or the lack of them is very likely to fall into error and to make ridiculous statements. From the medical point of view it would seem that the physical and mental development of women will make for a healthier and more intelligent motherhood and for racial regeneration.

The postponement of marriage is quoted as a contributory cause of the birth decline. No good purpose is served by discussion as to whether this arises from the emancipation of woman or from the selfishness of man.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ewart declares that in those classes and in those nations where the birth-rate is increasing, males are relatively increasing; and where a decline is evident, the female element is becoming predominant, which is, of course, undesirable, a preponderance of females leading to various social and economic evils in a community.



## The World's Crop of Human Babies

The marriage-rate has fallen slightly in England of late years. The decline has been more marked in our Colonies, notably in Australia; whilst there has been a natural rise in the marriage-rate in Ireland, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. But the decline in the marriage-rate has not been on a sufficiently large scale to account for more than a small proportion of the falling birth-rate, although there are indications that it may become of more importance in the future. Any such influence should be counteracted. It is eugenically undesirable that the age of marriage should be postponed until the thirtieth year, or later. Children of mothers who marry late in life are inferior to the offspring of women whose first child is born when they are 24 or 25.

**Back to the economic question.**—Postponement of marriage is the natural effect of a system which permits the competition of sweated women with men in the labour market. The men's wages suffer. Either they do not marry, or the mother of their children must work outside the home if the family income is to meet the demands upon it. A vicious circle is established, and the only remedy is one that will organise women's work so as to prevent sweated competition and permit women at the child-bearing age to remain in the home and undertake the rearing of the children, which they alone can do. It has become a platitude to say that the most valuable work women can do, from the economic as much as the moral point of view, is to rear healthy, worthy citizens for the State. Amidst all the controversy and bitterness which have unfortunately become associated with the "woman movement," both sides are convinced as to this truth. But we have not yet begun to act upon our convictions. The removal of child-bearing women from the labour market would lessen unemployment and raise



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the wages of men, for whose work there would be more demand. Any such drastic step must carry with it common-sense protection of the women who are pressed out of the labour market. The better protection of motherhood would not only influence the infant death-rate, but would encourage a higher birth-rate. The woman who is compelled to work in factory or workshop, at charing or washing, cannot regard with equanimity the advent of another child, with the certainty that her wage-earning will be stopped for a time. Many infant lives are sacrificed to the mother's fear of losing "work." The tragedy lies in the fact that her real work has to be left undone. Medical men and women know how prevalent artificial abortion has become of late years. There is evidence that this evil is spreading. Drugs for the purpose are widely advertised, and knowledge by which an unwanted child can be "got rid of" spreads from one woman to another. What a terrible indictment of our social conditions it is that this perversion of the mother instinct should exist, and be increasing. Many of these medicines contain dangerous drugs, such as lead, which not only cause the death of the unwanted child, but leave the woman who takes them permanently enfeebled, both physically and mentally. Dr. Ransom, of Nottingham, has spoken of the dangerous after-poisoning effect of diachylon (a form of lead used for this purpose); and Dr. Hall, of Sheffield, states that "several hundred women" have taken diachylon in his district alone in the last ten years. The sale of abortifacient and preventive drugs should be limited by every possible means.

All measures directed towards the prevention of abortion (20 to 25 per cent. of pregnancies terminate in this way, according to Guillemont), and the prevention



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of stillbirths provide a practical remedy for birth decline. Professor Karl Pearson puts the total number of antenatal deaths for the nine months preceding birth as 605 for every 1,000 born alive.

It has been urged that moral influence should be utilised to check the further decline of the birth-rate, on the lines of encouraging parental and racial responsibility, by widespread teaching of the dangers attending artificial restriction of families. The realisation that larger families were ceasing to be an economic handicap would have a healthy, stimulating effect upon the birth-rate, whilst the better care of mother and infant lives would enormously benefit national health and prosperity in the generations to come.

**State assistance of parenthood.**—The birth decline could be counteracted also by State encouragement of larger families. The thin end of the wedge was introduced with the allowance off the income-tax for each child under 16 where the income is not more than £500. But this is not sufficient. In the middle classes a man with five or six children to bring up should be free from income-tax up to £500 at least, and State bonuses for parents, for every child after the second, would help to promote the fertility of marriage.

Several of the leading European countries have appointed commissions to investigate the cause of the decrease in population and to suggest remedies. In Germany a chorus of feminine indignation greeted the proposal of such "remedies" as the suppression of the woman movement and women's labour, with a strict censorship of public meetings. The root of the matter, as the German Protection of Motherhood Society pointed out, remains untouched. Until good motherhood is encouraged, assisted, protected, the birth-rate will con-



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tinue to decline, and the babies continue to die. The very first step must be to relieve the economic pressure on the mother before and after her baby's birth.

France also is discussing practical plans for encouraging larger families and for assisting mothers. A National Eugenics Commission was appointed in November, 1912, to study all the questions which bear upon the depopulation of France, and to suggest remedies. It will inquire into the marriage laws, infant mortality, assistance of parenthood, protection of motherhood, health, temperance, social hygiene. M. Klotz, the Minister of Finance, at the opening of the Conference stated that in 1908 there were nearly 3,000,000 unmarried men and women over 30 years of age in France, 1,804,710 married couples with no children, 2,661,978 families with one child, 2,966,171 families with two children. In all France there were only 2,328,780 families with more than three children.

The French Chamber of Deputies has had under consideration a proposal to provide every mother of four children with a life annuity, the necessary funds to be supplied by taxing bachelors, childless couples, and families containing only one child. There are babies who pay the rent in an eastern suburb of Paris. In certain new blocks of flats for working families the tenant can claim the remission of one quarter's rent after the birth of a child. The flats have collective wash-houses, a library, and a dispensary where medical advice and treatment are provided for the children. An eminent French physiologist, Professor Richet, has suggested that the State should give £20 for the second child, and £40 for each further addition to the family, estimating that this would nearly double the number of births at a cost of £12,000,000 for the first year. He proposed that the



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money should be raised by loan, and by taxing estate inherited by collateral relatives to the amount of 50 per cent., or more; that inherited by an only child to the amount of 25 per cent.

Such suggestions as those mentioned are always met by a chorus of disapproval. Why should the "unfit" be encouraged to reproduce their physical and mental defects? But the poor are not necessarily unfit; they are not even generally unfit. The mentally defective comprise a small fraction of the community, and their better control is already under parliamentary consideration. State help would be given not only to the poor, but to the middle and lower middle classes, to necessitous members of the upper classes, to all parents indeed who deserved help. Foster mothers and foster nurses would take care of the children of undesirable and irresponsible parents. State assistance might also take the form of loans to parents, free education for all classes, with free secondary schools and the opportunity for suitable candidates to enter the universities. Educational opportunities would be equal for both boys and girls, and education for motherhood—mothercraft—and for fatherhood—fathercraft—should be compulsory in every school.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE WASTE OF MOTHER ENERGY

THE value of infant life is increased when it is brought home to statesmen and sociologists that the supply of babies is falling steadily, and that there is every indication, from a study of the world's birth-rate, that the decline will continue. Thus, for the last dozen years the nations of Western Europe have been giving serious consideration to the question of reducing what is called the "infant mortality rate"—a phrase used to signify the number of babies who die before the first anniversary of their birthday—but not, so far, with very marked results. Success has attended the efforts of public health authorities throughout the civilised world to reduce the general death-rate, but every nation suffers from a high death-rate amongst its young children, representing a waste of mother energy, an economic loss, and a serious factor in racial degeneration, if we remember that the conditions causing a high infantile mortality adversely affect the children who survive.

Early notification of childbirth, the provision of trained midwives, the institution of Health Visitors, of Schools for Mothers, of Milk Depots, have certainly proved to be of practical service in staying the preventable loss of child life in England. But still the babies die in appalling numbers. In Germany one-fifth, in Austria and Hungary one-fourth of the children born die before their first birthday; but the figures reach their highest in such a country as Chili, where one-third of



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the babies born die before they have lived one year. Norway and Sweden have the best records in Europe, the rate being 72 per 1,000 births, and, according to Westergaard, 70 per 1,000 is to be considered a possible minimum. Ireland is low—95 per 1,000; also Denmark—98 per 1,000 for 1909. Finland and Switzerland, the Netherlands, England and Wales, may be said to have medium infant death-rates. France and Belgium are a little higher; Italy, Spain and Prussia higher still; whilst Austria and Hungary, high as they are, yet compare favourably with Russia, where the movement for the protection of child and mother life can hardly be said to have begun. Our Colonies have reason to congratulate themselves on their low infant mortality rate, which in New Zealand stands at 68 and in Australia 75, compared with 105 for England and Wales and 157 for Prussia. Life in the Colonies is freer from such features of imperfect civilisation as overcrowding, dirt and squalor. Colonial babies also are more generally nursed by their mothers, who are not engaged to anything like the same extent in industrial occupations as are the women of the great towns of Europe.

Of one million babies born in England and Wales annually, 120,000 die in the first year of life, and between 50,000 and 60,000 more before the age of 5. And this destruction of child life is preventable. At least three-fourths of the children who die could be saved by an international scheme of mother protection. The waste of maternal energy which infant mortality involves is not sufficiently recognised. There is no registration of stillbirths in England, but the number of children born dead is estimated at 60,000 to 70,000 every year. Every child has a right to live for more than one year. Every mother also has a right to demand



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that the reward of her labour, her vitality, her burden will be such care and assistance as will save from death the children she bears, and save from degeneration those who are "lucky" enough to survive.

Infant mortality is the outcome of a combination of adverse social factors which are closely inter-related. It is intimately associated with poverty and overcrowding. The child death-rate is higher in one-roomed homes and in the back-to-back houses of slum districts. Mr. Rowntree, in his investigation of the mortality of infants in different social classes in the city of York, found that in the poorest working-class areas the rate was 247 deaths per 1,000, compared with 173 in the highest working-class, and 94 amongst people who were sufficiently well-to-do to keep a servant. An even greater contrast was provided by the figures collected in Birmingham in 1911, where the mortality of babies born in St. Mary's Ward, Birmingham, was 331 per 1,000, compared with 65 at Bournville Garden Village. It was 197 in East Ward, Deptford, compared with 68 at West Ward (the well-to-do district). According to Dr. Playfair, 18 per cent. of the children of well-to-do classes die before the age of 5 years, compared with 55 per cent. of the children of the working classes. Dr. Noel Paton declares that the underfeeding of poor mothers explains both their easier labours and the high infant mortality rate of this class. "The infant starts life at a low level, and readily succumbs to the hardships to which it is very often subjected." Such factors as alcoholism, married women's labour and maternal neglect may operate singly or in unison. But fundamentally, after all the various alleged causes are considered, we must come to the conclusion that the problem is inseparably associated with inefficient, unhelped, uncared-for mother-



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hood. The babies die because the mothers are "unfit"—physically unfit in a very large number of cases; mentally and morally unfit also. The supply of natural nourishment which the mammalian young must have if they are to survive is not available. The mothers have not the physical vitality to bear and suckle healthy children, handicapped as they are by over-work, devitalised by poverty, hunger and disease. Half the infant deaths are caused by ill-health or malnutrition in the mother. In all classes a large percentage of child deaths is due to mother ignorance, to the fact that the State does not regard as essential the practical training of future mothers in the one subject of vital importance to women—child management. The mothers of the country do not know their business of child rearing, and no campaign against infant mortality can have any hope of success which does not recognise the need for obtaining a healthier and a more efficient motherhood.

**Mother health and child vitality.**—According to Sir George Newman, M.D., one of the greatest authorities on this subject, nearly half the deaths of infants occur during the first three months of life, and the causes of death in these cases are prematurity and immaturity—that is, children are born prematurely or are endowed with insufficient vital energy to survive. To these deaths we must add the number of children who are stillborn. As I have already stated, one out of every four children dies before birth from abortion, miscarriage or still-birth, and these figures do not include the whole of the loss of life from abortion in the very early months of pregnancy.

How far can this waste of babies' lives be attributed to prenatal conditions, to the physical and the mental condition of the mothers before birth? Sir George Newman



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made an inquiry into the circumstances of mothers in the case of 357 dead infants of the poor, and found that about half the mothers of infants dead from immaturity suffered from marked ill-health and poor physique. As many as 175 of the women (48 per cent.) were unable to suckle their infants from "want of milk," whilst nearly a fourth of them had undergone exceptionally hard work during pregnancy.

The general idea that 90 per cent. of children are born healthy, in spite of ill-health and malnutrition of the mothers, is not supported by facts. In an article in the *Lancet*, Dr. Ashby, of Manchester, says: "We constantly see fully developed infants a day or two old brought by midwives or neighbours, exceedingly badly nourished, blue, and feeble, who are clearly ill fitted to withstand the conditions of external existence. There must be numbers of such born to perish within a few weeks of their birth. They are the children of poor mothers who have lived lives of hard wear-and-tear during pregnancy and felt the pinch of poverty."

Investigation by Dr. Sinclair, of Glasgow, into the condition of infants in a district having a high infant mortality rate showed that 78 per cent. of "obviously ill-nourished children" were breast-fed. Of the mothers, 39 per cent. were definitely underfed, 39 per cent. were addicted to alcohol, and 41 per cent. were working away from home during pregnancy.

Maternal malnutrition exerts an injurious effect (1) by diminishing the child's chances of survival and predisposing it to immaturity; (2) by affecting the quality and quantity of the mother's milk. Starved mothers are deficient in suckling power, and their children are consequently ill-nourished.

**Breast-feeding.**—At the same time, the breast-fed baby



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has a better chance than the child reared on artificial food. According to Dr. Hope, of Liverpool, the death-rate from summer diarrhoea amongst children under three months is fifteen times greater when they are wholly or partially fed on artificial foods than when they are nursed by the mother. When strikes or the closure of mills compel mothers to stop at home and nurse their children, the infant death-rate declines, in spite of hardship and poverty. The low infant mortalities during the siege of Paris and during the American War are sometimes quoted as historical illustrations of the biological value of mother's milk for babies.

In those countries where breast feeding is the rule, such as Norway and Sweden, the death-rate of babies is low; whilst in Austria and Russia, where artificial feeding prevails, two, three, even four, times as many infants die in the first year, simply because the child nursed by the mother is safeguarded from the risks of infected milk, dirty milk, and milk or other food which is "unnatural," whether it comes from a cow or a factory. Thus we must come to the conclusion that the great means of reducing infant mortality in any country is to encourage, nay, insist upon, natural feeding amongst all classes of mothers. Nurses and doctors should do everything possible to induce patients to nurse their babies. No excuses should avail. In many cases, amongst well-to-do women, only a very half-hearted effort is made. The mother takes into consideration her social obligations, the discomfort and the pain of nursing; the maternity nurse prefers the "bottle baby" because it is less trouble and comes more under her jurisdiction; the doctor fails to insist upon special diet when the mother pleads that she has insufficient milk to nourish the child. The poor, half-starved mother has this difficulty to face



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in earnest, and to her help must be given—municipal help or State help, when necessary. If it is to the interests of the State to rear the babies which are born, the State must take effective measures to preserve them, and this can only be done by providing means by which the mother can remain with her child during the helpless months of infancy, suckle it, and care for it as Nature intends her to do.

Everybody recognises the difficulty and complexity of the subject. The prevailing economic conditions make it, in many cases, impossible for mothers to nurse their own babies. Those who are engaged in industrial work do so for as long as they can remain at home, but stop as soon as they have to return to work. The home mother is sometimes unable to nurse through semi-starvation. The man's wages are insufficient for the need of all. The husband, as wage earner, must have his share first. Then there are the children. What mother would withhold for herself when the children ask for food? Two million mothers in this country belong to homes where the family wage is under £1 a week. Professor Walcher, of Birmingham, has stated that his experience was that some 79 per cent. of well-nourished women were able to nurse their children, and that of those who were badly nourished only 22 per cent. were able to nurse.

The incapacity to suckle may, of course, be an indication of constitutional or hereditary defect<sup>1</sup> or to over-taxing of the maternal organism and the expenditure of

<sup>1</sup> According to Professor Bunge, of Basle, as quoted by Dr. Johnston, author of "Wastage of Child Life," in support of his statement that alcoholic heredity impaires a woman's nursing power, "if the father is a drunkard, the daughter loses her power of suckling, the disability being afterwards transmitted to the next generation."



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energy in other directions, to the detriment of the functioning power of the mammary glands. The women of nearly every nation—France, Switzerland, Germany, America, England—are becoming less fit to nurse their infants. In Berlin only 50 per cent. of the women in 1905, as against 75 per cent. ten years previously, were found to nurse their infants. The employment of married women in the labour market has increased considerably during the same period. The whole subject requires careful statistical inquiry. Little, if any, investigation has been made into the effect of different dietaries, or as to what might be done by drugs or by chemicals, or electrical stimulation of the milk glands, to increase mammary activity. Many of those who most strongly condemn married women's labour appear to believe that the solution of the problem consists in shutting the gates of the factory to the working mother, whilst disregarding such occupations as charring, washing and other ill-regulated and badly paid forms of woman's work. It is when work is physically exhausting, when, for example, it entails the lifting or carrying of heavy weights, that it is injurious to mothers. Any occupation also which compels a woman to stand for long hours until within a few days of childbirth is injurious to both mother and child. All work which takes nursing mothers from their homes during the greater part of the day, which subjects a child to the risks of haphazard artificial feeding, jeopardises the nation's children and calls for investigation and readjustment. The Factory Act of 1891 (S. 17) and the Act of 1901 (S. 61) make it illegal for an occupier of a factory or workshop *knowingly* to allow a woman to be employed therein within four weeks after she has given birth to a child. But this law is frequently evaded, partly because no



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one person—father, mother, or employer—is legally responsible. The employer can always plead ignorance, owing to the insertion of the word “knowingly.” In any case, in England, the regulation applies only to the period *after* confinement. The mother may work right up to the very day of her confinement in a factory or workshop, as hundreds of thousands do.

**Saving the babies in France.**—In this chapter we are chiefly concerned with the effect upon the child. An infant’s best chance of life and health is that it should be born of a healthy mother, capable of suckling or nursing her offspring for the first few months of its existence. Professor Budin, who initiated the world’s campaign against infant mortality, proved that if infants were fed for the first three months by the mother there was every chance in favour of their living and thriving.

The French have reached a further stage than we in social hygiene. They recognise that it is more profitable for a nation to ensure its citizens a fair start in the race of life than to bolster them up when they have become defective in after years. They realise also that this can only be accomplished by the proper care of the mothers, whose energy and vitality must be conserved for the good of the race. In France “homes” or refuges for expectant mothers were instituted as far back as 1892. Necessitous women and girls are taken into these places some time before their confinement, are given care, medical attention and nourishing food, and then they are drafted into maternity hospitals. It is found that the children born in the homes are healthy, well developed and vigorous, and that they exceed the average weight. The French were among the first to discover that the feeding of necessitous mothers and the encouragement of breast-feeding preserve the babies far more



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successfully than measures directed towards supplying infants with prepared cow's milk or other artificial foods. Mothers' dining-rooms, or *restaurants gratuits*, were first opened in Paris by Madame Coulet in 1894, and have operated as lifeboats for babies in the slum areas of the city. From these places no hungry mother is turned away.

Women nursing their children at the breast can be fed here gratis in the morning from 11 till 1, and in the evening from 5.30 to 7.

Such is the invitation. There is no elaborate system of finding out if the mothers are fit objects of charity, morally, denominationally, or financially. The one requirement is that the woman who applies is a mother. She is hungry; she asks; and to her is freely given. The meals cost 2d. to 3d. per head, and funds are provided by voluntary subscriptions and State and municipal contributions. It may be that some mothers may send a little gift of eggs or fruit or vegetables. Sometimes gifts of money come from wealthy townsmen. The restaurants are of the simplest description, consisting of a room divided by a partition into kitchen and dining-room, the same stove sufficing for cooking and warming the place. The cost, according to M. Coulet, of fitting up a restaurant is estimated at about £20. "The mortality of the infants of these mothers has been from 10 to 30 per 1,000 births, as against the average in Paris of from 170 to 180."<sup>1</sup> Besides the saving of infant lives, there is economic gain in the improved health of the babies, and of the mothers also. Similar restaurants have been started at Nice, Rouen, Lyons, Remiremont, Rome, Dundee, and elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> "Schools for Mothers," Helen Blagg.



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Many well-known men in France have publicly stated that the care and feeding of necessitous mothers is the best means of ensuring a healthy race. Quite recently Dr. Weill-Halle has founded a "maternal canteen" in one of the poorest parts of Paris. His opinion is that, whilst help has been forthcoming for the sick and diseased children, the hungry mothers have in the past been neglected, with disastrous effects. He says: "There is no better nurse than a mother. In giving good meals to the mothers we enable them to nurse their babies and to look after their children better. Let us safeguard the mothers, for that is the only way of saving the children and making them healthy and strong. We do not talk of charity. We say to these girls: 'You have a child. Let us help you and it. You owe it to France, yourself, and the child to keep it in good health, and we will help you.'"

In France also the Infant Milk Depot is seen at its best. Professor Budin founded the first in 1892 in association with his Consultation de Nourrissons, at the Charité Hospital in Paris. There the mothers receive medical care during confinement free of charge, and the children born in the hospital are kept as out-patients under supervision for the first two years. Whilst breast-feeding is in every way encouraged, sterilised milk is supplied to the children when natural feeding is found to be impossible for medical or other reasons. The Gouttes de Lait, or milk depots, are not, however, generally run in association with any hospital. Most of these places, like our Mothers' Clubs, are conducted on the voluntary system.

In 1894 the first Goutte de Lait was founded at Fécamp, Normandy. A few years later the Laiterie Maternelle was started at Brussels, and Sweden, Holland



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and Germany followed in due course. France has over 100 Milk Depots—14 in Paris alone, Germany between 50 and 60, Belgium 16, Austria 12, and these institutions are rapidly developing in other countries—Italy, Spain, Russia, Hungary, Switzerland, Portugal, etc. The Gouttes de Lait—of which, in England, the Battersea Municipal Milk Depot is an excellent example—comprise all the activities of our Schools for Mothers, including medical advice, home visiting, lectures, and even crèches for the children.

During the last ten years the Puericulture movement in France has developed in a very practical way. There are half a dozen associations for the Prevention of Infant Mortality. A number of Pouponnières, or Infant Hospitals, have been founded with the idea that the falling birth-rate can be to a large extent counteracted by the conservation of child life.

The Duchesse-douairière d'Uzès established in 1904 the Pouponnat de Nouzet in order to aid parents who wished to have their newly born babies reared in a careful and healthy environment. Nearly a hundred children are reared on modern scientific lines under the direction of a medical man, and these babies are provided through the generosity of one woman with a real start in life, protected from the vicissitudes and dangers which upbringing in their own homes would have entailed.

La Pouponnière et La Cure Marine de Dieppe was founded in 1907 to lower the high death-rate of children put out to nurse. Infants of from 3 days old are received and kept at the establishment, which provides accommodation for 120 babies until they are from 3 to 4 years of age. Such places have proved exceedingly valuable in preventing deaths of infants from infectious disease, because the children are protected from infection



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more effectually than they can be in the home, where they often contract diseases from the older children who frequent the schools. Careful feeding with sterilised milk reduces to the minimum the risk of mortality from digestive derangements.

The Society for the Protection of Infancy in France is now working in association with La Pouponnière Lyonnaise, which was originally established with the idea of assisting poor widows by providing them with accommodation for their children and giving them two or three other little children to rear. The Pouponnière is now utilised for the education of young girls of 14 or 15 in all that concerns the care and management of young babies. The main idea here, as in similar establishments in France, is the preservation of child lives.

**The work in Belgium, England, America and Germany.**—Belgium is also well ahead with schemes for the welfare of the child. La Ligue Nationale Belge pour l'Enfance du Première Age was founded by Dr. Lust in 1904, to combat infant mortality. It has nearly twenty Consultations de Nourrissons affiliated to the League in the Brussels Federation alone. The League pays special attention to the encouragement of breast-feeding. The Prince Charles Dispensary at Brussels has a dentistry clinic for mothers, a most desirable addition to any institution for mother and child welfare. Free dentistry for necessitous mothers is almost as essential as free food, if the nourishment provided is to be properly utilised. The credit of the initiation of the International Congress of the Gouttes de Lait is due to the Brussels League, which formed an International Union for the Protection of Infancy. Various congresses have been held in Berlin, Budapest and elsewhere, under the auspices of this Union.

Sweden, Spain, Hungary, Switzerland, Denmark



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and Norway have each a society for the protection of infancy and the prevention of infant mortality. Many of the Continental Leagues for infant protection are supported by Government funds, but Great Britain has not so far recognised the State's duty to the child in this respect. England has a vast National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, with which is affiliated the Association of Infant Consultations and Schools for Mothers and the Association for the Welfare of Infancy.

In America the Children's Bureau, founded in 1909, is a splendid scheme for co-ordinating various societies which are concerned with the problems of infant mortality and child welfare. It is practically a Government department for the children of the State. A Federal Children's Bureau has been instituted to investigate and report upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of child life, and Miss Julia Lathrop has been appointed Chief of the Bureau. The diminishing birth-rate, and infant mortality, are to receive special consideration. In America Mr. Nathan Strauss established the first Milk Depot in New York in 1893, for supplying pasteurised milk to children under 5 years of age, and he considers this pure milk supply has been the most important element in the reduction of the death-rate amongst children in that city. The great value of a pure milk supply is that children past the age of infancy are protected from infected, dirty milk, and guarded against such diseases as tuberculosis. The lives of bottle babies, of all babies from 1 to 5 years of age, will be better safeguarded with the municipalisation of the milk supply and the provision of clean and cheap milk for the very poor.

In Germany there are several societies for the pre-



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vention of infant mortality, and there is a model institution at Munich—the Säuglingsheim—with a restaurant, a school for mothers, a maternity hospital, and a milk depot.

A Municipal Maternity Fund has been established in Berlin to supply pure milk for infants at a nominal cost. Free instruction in nursing and child management is provided by a large staff of doctors, nurses and health visitors. Three hospitals for children have been built, and large numbers of mothers bring their children to the Municipal Depot every week for examination by the State doctors. Thus the campaign against infant mortality in Germany is vigorously carried on. German women are closely associated with the work. The German Empress is the chief patron of the Deutsche Vereinigung für Säuglingsschutz, perhaps the largest institution of its kind in the world, as, besides a Maternity Hospital, it has special laboratories for research work and a splendid library of statistics. The Kaiserin Augusta Victoria-Haus is philanthropic as well as scientific. It is an institution to which needy mothers can be taken three or four months before the child is born, and kept, if necessary, for three or four months afterwards; and during that time they are trained in child management, housewifery, and personal hygiene. The scientific value of the scheme lies in the fact that the physicians and scientists associated with the institution have the opportunity of studying the hygiene and pathology of pregnancy and all matters connected with the hygienic care, the feeding, and the diseases of infancy. It has a training school for nurses and an out-patient department, and controls its own milk supply through milk plant on the premises.

**Schools for mothers.**—The most practical plan is to



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have milk depots run in association with schools for mothers. These institutions, although of recent development, are being established in town after town in all the great countries of Europe. The central idea is to provide instruction for mothers of the working classes in the care of infants, to get into touch, through health visitors or voluntary workers, with the mothers, and induce them to come, week by week, to the club, where the babies are weighed and the mothers receive simple lectures in hygiene, cookery, health, and baby management. Associated with these schools for mothers is a varied group of activities, including a provident maternity fund, consultations, dinners for nursing mothers, and evening classes for fathers. The aim of the classes is to stimulate the interest of fathers in the health and welfare of their wives and babies. Informal lectures are given by the doctors. The men are allowed to smoke. Coffee is provided, and the interest which is taken in the discussions is an indication that fathers realise their responsibilities and desire, in many instances, to do what they can to further the interests of the home.

The first English school for mothers was started at St. Pancras, London, by Dr. Sykes, in 1907. "The aim and object of the school," says Lady Meyer, "has been first to encourage the natural feeding of infants as against any system which should make bottle-feeding more easy or more desirable." A great deal has been done to reduce infant mortality during the summer months by this means, and experience has proved that "the encouragement of the natural feeding of infants is the thing most worth working for." This touches the very core of the infant mortality problem, and if schools for mothers concentrate on encouraging



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breast-feeding, and help to make mothers more fit to nurse, they will exert a very far-reaching influence for good.

Most of the large towns in England, Scotland, Ireland (under the auspices of the Women's National Health Association), France, Germany, etc., have similar schools, which are generally voluntary associations, although in certain instances (Glasgow, Birmingham, Sheffield, etc.) they are under the municipality. Ultimately these schools may all be brought under the direction of the municipalities and the supervision of the Medical Officers of Health. Municipalisation of schools for mothers is certainly desirable. The work ought to be extended. The attendance of the mothers is only one indication of the fact that the schools are appreciated by those for whom they are intended. Kensington has nearly 600 mothers in attendance; St. Pancras and Stepney, 300; 200 babies are brought every week to the Sheffield school; whilst Leeds has between 400 and 500 mothers. The members are drawn from the poorer classes, not the very poorest, unfortunately, although the superintendents and health visitors associated with the clubs try to get into touch with all the mothers in the district through the Medical Officer of Health. One of the most useful phases of the work is connected with the visiting of the mothers. This is undertaken by the officials of the school. Alderman Broadbent, of Huddersfield, whose successful campaign for baby saving has demonstrated once and for all the fact that the present infant death-rate is wasteful and preventable, has organised an almost ideal plan of visiting. The town is divided into nine districts, each under a lady superintendent and a staff of assistants. These voluntary workers are directed by two women doctors appointed by



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the corporation. Every newly born child is visited by a doctor, and once a week a list of all cases in each district is sent to the lady superintendent, who distributes them among her helpers.

The tendency to consolidate all the forces which are being brought to bear on the preservation of child life is a very hopeful sign of the times. The union of the Association of Schools for Mothers and kindred associations with the Women's League of Service and the National League for Physical Welfare provides a means of centralising effort on behalf of the child.

An inquiry into the work done during three months by the various societies engaged in mothercraft and infant care showed that about 10,000 infants and 570 expectant mothers are under the care of such societies. During this time 154 women were provided with one meal a day. According to the estimate made by the Women's League of Service, at least 1,027,000 mothers require to have provided for them one nourishing meal daily, if they are to be fit to nurse their infants and if the coming race is to have any chance of full development. The work of this society is following the French system of caring for the infant in the antenatal period as well as during the first nine months of life. The aim is to provide adequate nourishment for the children by nourishing the mothers. Thus dining-rooms at Hammer-smith, Croydon, Whitechapel are organised by the society to provide expectant mothers with a good dinner daily for 2d., or, if necessary, free. These centres are also educational, and visiting on the school for mothers principle is systematically carried out in the homes of the mothers. No statistical evidence of the increased vitality of the mothers can, of course, be supplied, but the improvement in health is very apparent, and the effect



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upon infant mortality and infant welfare of nourishing the mother was demonstrated in an interesting way. It was found that the average increase in weight per week of babies whose mothers attended the dinners was 3 to 5 oz., while the average increase in weight per week of a group of babies of the same class whose mothers were not given dinner was 2 to 4 oz.

The fear that such assistance of motherhood would exert a pauperising influence is not borne out by facts. The mothers display pathetic anxiety to pay part, at least, of the cost, and the very poorest bring their occasional pennies, and seem to recognise it as a point of honour that they should pay when they can. The women helped are mostly wives of casual labourers and of men engaged in precarious employment, who are often out of work through no fault of their own. Poverty is not vice, but in many cases a symptom of disease of the social organism.

**Baby crèches.**—Although the crèche or day nursery is to some extent utilised for teaching purposes, the main object of these places is the reception of children whose mothers have to go out by the day to work. Most of the principal towns in France have crèches under the supervision of the administrative authority. In Paris there are 65 crèches, and in the district of the Département du Nord there are 48, 38 of these latter being at Lille. Each nursery has accommodation for about 20 to 30 children, whose mothers pay a small sum of 1d. or 2d. a day, and the children are carefully supervised, and receive medical attention when necessary.

In Germany, also, at Elberfeld, Munich, Berlin, Cologne, Leipsic, Hamburg, Bremen, Kiel, etc., day nurseries have proved a great success. The consensus of opinion is that these nurseries are of the greatest



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service to the working-class population, offering as they do a refuge to children whose mothers are compelled to work away from home.

There are some 80 crèches in England. The National Association of Day Nurseries is doing good work in providing crèches for poor mothers who are obliged to work if the home is to be kept together. Whilst recognising that any social system which compels mothers of infants and young children to work away from the home must ultimately be readjusted, until a fair alternative is offered to the mothers the crèche system meets an urgent need. Many people are feeling deeply the fact that the establishment of crèches is bolstering up an old wrong, and some refuse their help to any scheme for founding a day nursery in their district. But under present conditions the crèche helps to mitigate the evils that arise when children are left with unsuitable caretakers, or even locked up in the house alone, whilst the mother goes to work. The National Association aims at making these institutions of educational help to the mothers by utilising them for teaching hygiene and infant care. As the chairman, Lady Helmsley, emphasises, the day nurseries are at present necessary institutions in industrial centres, where hundreds of children die from neglect and improper care, whilst others grow up stunted and defective in mind or body. This society is very careful to investigate cases before the children are admitted. The London County Council crèches are free, but as a rule the mothers are expected to pay 2d. to 4d. per day for each child. It is found that the average cost of the nurseries per child per week is about 3s. 3d. It has been suggested that such crèches should be established in villages near large towns where women are employed in factories and mills. In Roubaix the crèche system has



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worked exceedingly well. This is also the case at Wellington, and, until some definite reorganisation of our industrial system is obtained, the crèche is a valuable factor in infant life protection. But the need must be abolished. The child is separated from its mother, who is doing "work" which is of far less economic value to the State than child rearing. The time will surely come when it will be made possible for the mother to stay at home, give her time and attention, her energy and care to rearing her babies.

No permanent good can be achieved by any scheme which does not aim at teaching the mother and bringing the mother and child into closer association. Behind and above all measures for infant preservation, it must be recognised that the best way to protect the babies is to help the mothers in the homes. The babies' clubs, schools for mothers, and milk depots do not reach the babies most needing assistance, the children of the very poor, the apathetic, the ignorant. We must carry the teaching into every home, we must help the mother to *nurse her own baby in the home*—that is the final solution of the problem.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE WORLD'S WORK FOR MOTHER PROTECTION

TWENTY years ago societies for the protection of mother and child life were small, isolated and feeble in all but their potential power for good. To-day the movement for mother protection is international. The women of Europe and America are organising themselves and pressing for reform. In America one society after another has been formed in the campaign for mothers' pensions. The National Council of Women of the United States is urging the adoption of co-guardianship laws and maternity insurance. The National Congress of American Mothers is forming branches in Europe, China, and Japan. Germany has a rapidly growing Union for Mother Protection, which is spreading to adjacent countries. Austria and Sweden have similar societies, whilst in France, Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland the welfare of the mother is beginning to receive serious consideration. England and her Colonies are well ahead with legislation for the protection of the child, and the next step must inevitably be the care of motherhood, as the source of life.

**Work in the States.**—The United States association is concentrating on the education of parents in child nurture as the fundamental requisite for the promotion of child welfare. It has been an active factor in the establishment of the juvenile court and probation system, and is now seeking to place probation work on an educational basis with State supervision.



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The President of the National Congress of Mothers, Mrs. Frederic Schoff, is one of the best-known workers for the prevention of child delinquency in America. She was one of the first promoters of juvenile courts, and is president of the Philadelphia Court and Probation Association. She is working to bring about the study of child psychology and the investigation of the causes of crime. Her power of organisation, her comprehension of the physico-psychical needs of the child, her recognition of the power of intelligent, awakened motherhood have done much to promote the successful development of the American Congress of Mothers.

The better training of parenthood is one of the aims of this society. The training of young people in the care of children, full instruction in hygiene, the closer association of parent and teacher, are regarded by American mothers as essential to the protection of childhood. That the children of the world should be surrounded by loving, wise care in the impressionable years of life is an ideal which intelligent mothers are now demanding.

The work which is being done for the blind, the feeble-minded and the deaf is the result of this mother spirit which is permeating the whole woman movement at the present time. Such women as Miss Mary Garrett, who has done so much for the deaf child, and Miss Helen Keller, the blind and deaf American genius whose social service is many-sided, are working with the mother heart to bring joy and happiness into the lives of children who, but for these earnest workers, would be compelled to live in a soundless, cheerless, dismal world of their own. Miss Keller has recently been appointed Advisor to the City's Board of Public Welfare in the city of Schenectady, New York State. United, concerted work for little children is the most productive work which



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women can undertake. "To carry the mother love and mother thought into all that concerns or touches childhood in home, school, Church, State, or legislation"; to induce men and women to co-operate in the work for purer, truer homes in the belief that to accomplish the best results men and women must work together—this purpose of the National Congress of Mothers and the parent-teacher associations strikes the note of harmony in its suggestion of unity between man and woman on behalf of the child.

The various efforts of the National Congress of Mothers to reduce infant mortality are directed towards teaching infant hygiene to the mothers, the organisation of babies' health contests and child welfare exhibits, and the provision of pure milk. The parent-teacher associations bring the mothers of all school children to the school and enable the Congress, by clear instruction as to the sacredness of sex functions, to show mothers how to perform their duty of teaching their boys and girls concerning sex and marriage. Thus the establishment of parent-teacher associations in every school is systematically proceeding. Parents are urged to study every phase of child hygiene. Diagrams and study courses are given and speakers are provided. Ignorance of the psychology of the child makes for neglect and degeneration.

The United States Commissioner of Education has recently formed a Parents' Educational Division in the department which has been put under the charge of Mrs. Frederic Schoff. This gives the National Congress of Mothers Government recognition, and is one of the most helpful things that have been done for the movement in the States. National in its scope, the Congress of Mothers works in co-operation with Government depart-



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ments and Boards of Health, but its best work is done in the homes of the people, amongst the mothers themselves. At the present time a widespread movement is on foot to provide pensions for mothers who would otherwise be unable to keep their families together. The mothers demand statesmanlike legislation to do away with the terrible conditions associated with widowhood. Several counties in the States of California and Illinois are making the experiment; so also is Missouri. In Massachusetts an agitation is being carried on to do away with the penalising of widowhood. The State of Oregon has passed a Mothers' Pension Bill almost unanimously, owing to the action of the Mothers' Congress. The removal of fatherless children to institutions not only breaks up the home for the women and the children, but separates those who by all the laws of nature and love should remain together. If the widowed mother becomes a wage-earner who has to go out daily into the labour market, home and children must necessarily suffer. The children are without the supervision of the mother, and are apt to drift into delinquency and vice. Home industries, both in America and in Europe, are so unorganised, so sweated, that they offer no solution of the problem, but only succeed in converting the children into sweated victims of their mother's poverty. Every nation will sooner or later be compelled to recognise that, in the interests of the children and in the interests of citizenship, the mother of fatherless children should receive a State allowance to enable her to bring up her family in her home. It has been proved to be actually cheaper for the State to help the mother than to support the children in institutions.

The Congress believes in constructive legislation for assisting meritorious parents, and the fact that in many



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States Bills are in preparation for granting mothers' pensions suggests that the demand of American women for the better protection of mothers is having very practical results. In certain States the Governments, at the request of the Mothers' Congress, are appointing Child Welfare Commissions to study and report upon the condition of children.

The demand for a Commission to investigate the needs of mothers in Massachusetts is an indication that the movement for child welfare in the States is penetrating to the source of child life, and is in line with the movement in Germany, where women are concentrating rather on the mother, believing that it is only through better motherhood that the children of the future can be adequately protected.

**Mother protection in Germany.**—Dr. Helene Stöcker, of Berlin, who is head of this movement in Germany, considers that because it is to the public interest to have as many sound children born and brought up under healthy conditions as possible, it is the business of the State to care for the necessitous mother and child; that no children, whatever their parentage, should be neglected, and that statesmen must be compelled to pass laws for the better protection of the mother. The objects of the Bund für Mutterschutz and allied associations include (1) the improvement of the position of women as mothers, legally, economically, and socially; (2) the protection of unmarried mothers and their children from economic and moral dangers and the removal of the more serious prejudices against them. The association is very practical in its proposals with regard to maternity insurance. The law at present confers six weeks' maternity benefit on women employed in factories. But the Mutterschutz will not be content until mothers can receive full



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wages during twelve weeks, free medical attendance, and an allowance for six months after childbirth. This includes a compulsory six weeks' rest before childbirth. The cost of this scheme is estimated at thirteen million pounds, but the State would only be asked to pay between one and two millions, the rest being collected out of premiums, which, it is calculated, would amount to 2 per cent. per annum, on the wages of the workers concerned.

The association is doing splendid work in organising homes for mothers and expectant mothers in the Empire. A large number of well-known men are members—famous lawyers, authorities on sexual hygiene, doctors, and statesmen. Also some of the most prominent women of Germany, including Marie Stritt, the sociologist, Lily Brawn, Minna Cauer, and Marie Lischnewska, the author and founder of the Union for the Trade and Industrial Training of Women. Within the last two years an International Federation for the Protection of Mothers and for sexual reform has been established, in which Austria, Sweden, and Holland are represented.

German women are well to the front with practical ideas for improving motherhood and for uplifting women's work in the home. Last year a great Women's Exhibition was held in Berlin. This year one has been held in Amsterdam. Such Women's Exhibitions illustrate the varied interests of modern women and the development of domesticity. Household science and mothercraft had an honoured place in both exhibitions, and the various inventions and labour-saving contrivances, as well as the exhibits showing what women are doing in hygiene, literature, music, and science, indicated the universality of the woman movement and the wonderful progress made during the last century.



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**France, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Russia.**—In France a strong effort is being made to improve the legal and economic position of the mother, who still labours under many of the disadvantages placed upon her by the Napoleonic code. A Bill has passed the Senate giving one month's rest to the working mother after the birth of a child, and a compensating indemnity to be settled by the Minister of Finance. The woman will not be allowed to do any work apart from the discharge of simple domestic duties, and she will be under the supervision of a medical inspector. The activities of some of the societies for protecting mother and child have been touched upon in the chapter on the Waste of Mother Energy.

France was one of the first nations to provide assistance for nursing mothers. La Société de Charité Maternelle and La Pouponnière comprise a group of workers whose efforts on behalf of nursing mothers have produced results which illustrate the truth that by the culture of motherhood the infant mortality problem can best be solved.

La Mutualité Maternelle, Paris, was founded by M. Poussineau in 1892 to ensure to mothers sustenance during their confinement and for some weeks afterwards. Each mother receives 12 francs a week from the day following her confinement, on condition that she abstains from all work during a period of four weeks. Payment may be extended for a week or two longer, and an extra 10 francs are given to those mothers who nurse their babies; 2,647 mothers were relieved in 1909, and the mortality was 38 per 1,000 births. Eighty-nine per cent. of the babies were breast-fed. Funds are partly contributed by subsidies from public authorities, partly by members' subscriptions.



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Belgium has followed the lead of France, and one of the first pieces of work in the interests of mother and child in Europe was initiated in Ghent by Dr. Mille, who established a system of education for mothers and a two years' training as nurses and as potential mothers for young girls from 14 to 16 years of age.

The improvement of the status of all mothers, married and unmarried, is one of the chief aims of the Dutch Society for the Mutual Protection of Women. To promote the idea of one standard of morality for men and women, and mutual responsibility of father and mother for the children, and to obtain equal rights in marriage, form a very important programme in view of the condition of the marriage laws in the Netherlands, which, like those of France, are based on the Napoleonic code. The society has also a scheme for the protection of the unmarried mother. It is agitating for a law to give illegitimate children the same status as those born in marriage. It is prepared to provide guardianship for the children of unmarried mothers up to the age of 3 years, whilst very practical help is given to unmarried mothers before and after the birth of a child. Homes for mothers have been started at The Hague and in Amsterdam, and the society was a potent factor in the repeal of the law prohibiting search for paternity. In Holland, as elsewhere, the young mother has the greatest difficulty in obtaining alimony.

The position of the widow is also being considered, but a project recently brought forward in the Dutch Chamber that necessitous widows should be placed on the State pension roll was thrown out by a large majority.

The better protection of mothers in the industrial world is under consideration in the Netherlands. An



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important inquiry into the work of mothers in factories elicited the information that such work increased the infant mortality rate and that the women themselves deteriorated in physique and general health. The present law forbids a mother to work in a factory for four weeks after delivery—there is a similar law in Belgium, Austria, Denmark, and Sweden—but she receives no compensation, and the need of an adequate maternity insurance scheme is recognised by all workers in the interests of motherhood in the Netherlands. Agitation to this end is being conducted in many countries. In Italy the new Maternity Insurance Law, 1911, provides that all women engaged in industrial work must belong to a maternity insurance fund, which is contributed to by employers and employees. The workers pay 1 franc per annum up to the age of 20 and 2 francs over that age. The fund is supplemented by bequests and State subsidies. The mother with her child is provided for during at least one month after birth; she is entitled to 40 francs. Factory owners are compelled to provide a room in which mothers can attend to their babies and nurse them. Indeed, many of the large modern factories are now supplied with a day nursery, with a nurse in charge. Progressive women in Italy are occupying themselves with the question of mother protection, and a great deal is already done in the way of public assistance of necessitous mothers.

In Spain there is a special provision that every nursing mother must be allowed time from her working day for nursing her infant, and factory mothers are forbidden to work for three weeks after childbirth.

Maternity insurance is established in Russia.

**Austria, Sweden, Finland and Switzerland.**—The Austrian Society for the Protection of Motherhood is agitating for maternity insurance, and has for its ultimate aim the



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State endowment of motherhood. One of the most efficiently managed maternity societies on the Continent is the Still-und-Milch Kasse of Vienna, originated by Dr. Wiess. Contributions are paid by expectant mothers, but benefits are not conferred proportionally to the amounts paid. Help is given according to the recommendation of the doctor, and is continued for at least six months after childbirth. All necessitous cases are helped, care, of course, being taken that the money is spent wisely and not appropriated for any other purpose than the welfare of mother and child. The society is subsidised by public funds and supported by general subscriptions. Those associated with this work speak of the high moral value of mutual benefit societies, and say that, instead of the help tending to pauperise the mothers, the whole system encourages a spirit of thrift, and even altruism, the better-off and healthier mothers desiring that extra help should be given to the needy and destitute.

In Sweden a scheme of maternity insurance has been mapped out by a special Commission appointed to investigate the need for maternity grants. At present a very small measure of insurance is in operation, but a national scheme is anticipated in the near future. A proposal to enforce Maternity Insurance on every woman between 15 and 51 met with so much opposition that it could not be put before the Parliament.

Several societies have been formed in Sweden for the protection of mothers, married and unmarried. No woman has done more to bring the claims of the mother into prominence than Ellen Key. "The mother," as she says, "is the most precious possession of the nation, so precious that society advances its own highest well-being when it protects the function of the mother," and she



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urges that the service of the mother must receive the same honour and recognition from the State as are now given to military service.

Maternity insurance has not yet been established in Finland, but a proposal has been brought before the Diet to ask for the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the needs of motherhood, and the best method of instituting some form of mother protection. The Government has sent the suggestion made by a State Committee, to include maternity insurance in the proposed scheme for working men, to the various women's societies and organisations for discussion, and it is anticipated that some measure of insurance of mothers will be passed very shortly.

Since the year 1877 women have been forbidden in Switzerland to be employed in industrial establishments for two weeks preceding and six weeks following childbirth. This law, as in England, in no way met the case, as no provision was made for the needs of the mother and family during the weeks when she was deprived of her wages. Certain establishments, by organising an insurance fund, granted a small sum, equivalent to about £1 of our money, to their women workers after childbirth, but there was no adequate assistance from the State. The new insurance law, however, provides that mothers shall receive during six weeks a money benefit, in addition to gratuitous treatment and medicines. Every mother who suckles her baby for four weeks longer will be given an additional sum of 20 francs. This law, voted by Parliament in June, 1911, had to undergo the ordeal of the referendum. It was accepted by a good majority in February, 1912, and comes into force on the 1st of January, 1914.

The movement for mother protection is making steady



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progress in Switzerland. Efforts are being made by towns and by Canton-councils to supply gratuitous help to any woman who claims it in childbirth, and maternity hospitals provide for a fairly large number of women in the different cantons. In most cities there are milk depots, providing sterilised milk at a very cheap price, and offering gratuitous medical consultations to mothers, as well as education in child management. There is a large association for the protection of mothers and children, which does not ignore the claims of the unmarried mother, and various institutions or "homes" where these girls can be received with their babies for a time are being organised.

**Mother protection in the Dominions.**—The uplifting of motherhood is becoming a Government question all over the British Empire. There is no maternity insurance in Canada, one reason being that, until recently, it was exceptional for married women to be employed outside the home. But conditions are rapidly changing, and Canadian women are asking that special consideration should be given to the needs of mothers by the legislature. The National Council of Women of Canada, for example, has petitioned the Ontario Legislature to provide mothers' pensions for poor women who have to leave the home to work for the children, or who have to remove their young children from school to augment the family wage. The same society has also asked that mothers and fathers should be legally regarded as co-guardians of the children, whether legitimate or born out of marriage.

In Australia and New Zealand there is a great awakening to all that touches the care of mothers and the preservation of infant life. Australia has initiated a form of maternity endowment which will come before



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our own legislature when a more enlightened public opinion demands better legislation for the mother.

In New Zealand State-endowed maternity hospitals are being erected. Under a Widows' Pensions Act, widows whose incomes are inadequate to the needs of the family are entitled to a yearly payment of from £12 to £30, according to the number of their children. Apart from the Federal baby bonus, which gives necessitous mothers a maternity grant of £5 per child, the new scheme of mother protection aims at providing free medical attendance and skilled nursing, the cost to the Government being estimated at £60,000 annually. The £5 grant is given alike to married and unmarried mothers. Unfortunately, the money is generally paid to the father, as the person registering the birth, and thus there is danger that some of it, at any rate, will not be spent on those for whom it is intended—the mother and child.

**The British Isles.**—In the United Kingdom insured women and the wives of insured men receive a maternity benefit of 30s. at childbirth. The principle of assisting parents is also recognised by the relief from income-tax given to persons with incomes not exceeding £500, at the rate of £10 free of tax for each child under 16. The cost of this income-tax reduction is estimated at between five and six millions per annum. To promote the better legal, social, and economic protection of motherhood in England a league has recently been formed, and a movement for the federation of all such leagues in the world at large has begun. The newly formed National League for the Protection of Motherhood will work in co-operation with the American National Congress of Mothers, with the German Bund für Mutterschutz, and with similar societies in Austria, Sweden, Finland,



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Holland, and elsewhere. The aim of all these societies, working singly or in unison, is to bring pressure to bear on the different legislatures to pass laws for the welfare of mothers. The British National League is only in its initial stage, but its aims are comprehensive and practical. It will concentrate on obtaining the extension of maternity insurance and pensions for necessitous widows and wives, to counteract the evil of mothers working outside the home to the neglect of their children. It will advocate municipalisation or State aid of schools for mothers, and similar societies. It will aim at reform of laws at present unfair to the mother, and demand co-guardianship laws, so that both parents may have equal rights. The better protection of the unmarried mother and the illegitimate child will be one of the chief purposes of the league, which will form an important link in the chain of national and international effort for social evolution.



## CHAPTER XIII

### WOMEN PRISONERS

THIS is the century of Social Hygiene. The time is at hand when we shall direct attention to the causes of social ills, as, in the last century, medical men concentrated effort on the prevention of epidemic disease. We shall therefore consider the relationship between various social evils, such as crime and neglected motherhood. The subject of penology is very much to the front just now, but an exhaustive study of the causes of crime has yet to be made. The association of juvenile delinquency and bad motherhood is perhaps beginning to be recognised. The criminal—man, woman, or child—is the product of bad home conditions, parental inefficiency, neglected training. And the criminal breeds the criminal. Our penal system manufactures criminals who may become the parents of antisocial men and women in the next generation. Our women prisoners are the founders of criminal stocks, because our methods where they are concerned often fail to reform. The introduction of Juvenile Courts, of the Borstal system for juvenile offenders, with improved industrial instruction of men and boy prisoners, and the proposal for the permanent detention of the irreclaimable criminal, initiate more hopeful methods of penology in Britain. But so far very little has been done for the women. Delinquent women punished when they should be helped; degraded mothers serving sentence after sentence for drunkenness, giving



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birth to children foredoomed to crime; young women—potential mothers—allowed to drift downwards when they leave prison, instead of being reclaimed, constitute a problem with which the students of motherhood are very seriously concerned. These women come under the jurisdiction of the State. The State has the opportunity to reclaim them, but does it succeed? To judge from prison statistics, it does not. Of the 35,000 women serving sentences of imprisonment at the present time, over 26,000, or three-fourths, have been previously convicted. Five thousand have been convicted more than twenty times. Women serve fifty, one hundred, two hundred sentences in prison who, with different methods, might have been reformed in the beginning. Convicted of petty theft or drunkenness in the first instance, imprisoned again and again for brief periods, which give them no real chance of regeneration, they leave prison with the certain knowledge that they will return again. They learn nothing in prison except the degradation of punishment, the hopelessness of trying to rise to better things. They leave our prisons—the young girl thief, the unmarried mother, the drunken woman, the semi-imbecile—a long, miserable line of broken women who have not one chance in a thousand of becoming whole again. They spend their lives alternating between a hopeless soul-destroying existence in a prison cell and a still more horrible freedom outside. The Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies can do nothing for them. They have not the funds; they have not the power to lift these poor creatures from the slough of despair. Who will employ them? What work could they do? Does prison teach them useful trades? Does it convert them into good housewives? Does it make them more efficient mothers? The idea is ridiculous; the ordinary Britisher's



## Women Prisoners

conception of prison is a place for punishment and remorse, not for education and reform.

And yet in the United States, since the introduction of the reformatory system, women criminals have been metamorphosed into trained workers, useful domestic servants, good wives and mothers. They are taught in prison; they are provided with work and practically assisted when they leave prison; and the result is the reform of a large percentage of them.

**Defects of the present system.**—Imprisonment in this country does not cure crime; it fails to induce honest repentance, to bring about reform of the criminal. Our system fails because it serves to kill self-respect and self-control, to dehumanise the women. The work provided for women prisoners is not sufficient in amount, nor is it of the quality which calls forth effort and interest on the part of the prisoner. It is not educative. It will not help a woman to earn her living honestly on her discharge. Further, the health of women prisoners receives inadequate consideration. The appointment a few years ago of a woman medical inspector of prisons was a step in the right direction. But it is only a step. A qualified medical woman ought to be attached to every woman's prison in the country, to attend daily at the prison hospital, and to visit any prisoner alone in the cells who may desire to see her. The appointment of a woman specialist in women's diseases, who could undertake any necessary operative work, who would supervise the health of the prisoners and take a sympathetic interest in their lives, who would improve the hygienic conditions which call for alteration in every prison in the country, is urgently required. Physical and moral health are closely allied. Without any relaxation of prison discipline, without diminishing necessary punish-



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ment for wrong-doing, everything possible should be done to improve the physical condition of women prisoners.

Another much-needed reform is the appointment of trained nurses to prison hospitals. A nurse is in charge of the hospital department at Holloway and at Aylesbury, but in other prisons the patients are attended by wardresses, trained only in the sense that they have received a certain amount of instruction in the care of the sick. If the head wardresses were replaced by trained nurses there would very soon be drastic changes in the hygienic conditions of our prisons. A nurse-wardress could exercise discipline and supervision of the prisoners' health as well. She would be invaluable in dealing with the feeble-minded prisoners. She would be the proper person to attend to the borderland cases, the prisoners of whom it is impossible to say whether they are sane or insane, responsible or irresponsible. The introduction of trained nurses into prisons would bring about an alleviation of some of the petty tyrannies and unhealthy regulations prisoners are now subjected to.

Casual visitors see very little to criticise in prison methods. They are told that if the food is monotonous, it is nourishing, and probably better than the women are accustomed to. I have various testimonies of women who have been in English prisons; I have heard the views of educated and uneducated women, of women doctors, artists, sick nurses, business girls and working women of all classes, of mothers and domesticated women generally, who know by sad experience the hard lot of our English women prisoners. They say that the penal system fails because life in prison destroys physical and mental energy. Dressed in shapeless, uncomfortable, unnecessarily hideous garments, fed like beasts, and



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treated as if they were not human, continually suspected, degraded by frequent searchings and constant spying, deprived of sufficient fresh air and exercise, forced to spend long hours alone, without occupation for the mind or hands, how can the prisoners possibly find salvation?

**The daily routine.**—Consider what life is in a woman's prison in this country, in Holloway, for example, with its daily average of about 700 women prisoners. How are they occupied during the long days and weeks and months they have to remain in prison? In the early morning they are awakened by the clanging of bells—the signal to rise and dress and await the arrival of the wardress. At 6 o'clock she enters the cell with a bucket of water and a scrubbing brush. Each prisoner has to clean her cell, wash and polish her tin dishes, roll up her bedding, scrub her bed and shelves and floor. For cleaning purposes there are two rag-like pieces of serge and a piece of white calico. These, with a piece of soap two inches square, are provided for washing the tin basin and pint measure and the tin sanitary utensil of the prisoner. The stone floors remain damp for many hours daily, as there is no proper ventilation of the cells. There is a window high up in the outer wall, with small opaque panes. It is barred outside, and cannot be opened, so that not a breath of fresh air can enter the cells on the hottest day in summer.

After the cleaning of the cell, breakfast is served. This meal consists of 6 oz. of bread and a pint of oatmeal gruel. Chapel is at 8.30, and afterwards the prisoners take up their special work for the day. Some clean and scrub the corridors, some pick and shred the fibre-like stuffing of the bedding, others work in the laundry. A large number are engaged in making prison



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clothes and mending. A few make bead blinds. Some help in the kitchen. One or two of the second division prisoners are employed in the garden. Not one of these occupations, as they are organised at present, is of the least use for educative purposes.

Between 11 and 12 o'clock dinner appears—porridge or suet pudding, or potatoes and bread, served in each case cold or half cold. No knife or fork is provided. Many of the prisoners tear their food with teeth and fingers, like animals. In the third division the meals have to be eaten with a wooden spoon. The food itself is inadequate to maintain the health of the prisoners. There are three meals, breakfast, dinner, and 5 o'clock supper, at which meal 6 oz. of bread and a pint of gruel is again the fare provided.

The sanitary arrangements also are defective, and there is not sufficient lavatory accommodation, even under the best management. With regard to cleanliness, one bath per week is the rule. No hot water is allowed for any purpose, only small quantities of cold water, and one small towel is supposed to last a week. No nightgown is provided, so that the prisoners have to sleep in the same clothes they wear by day. These details could easily be remedied without in any way undermining the necessary discipline of the prison system and without incurring a very heavy expense.

But perhaps the worst feature of prison life is the deadly monotony, the long hours of solitary confinement, and the lack of proper physical exercise in the fresh air. Prisoners are shut in their cells at 5 o'clock in the afternoon till 6.30 next morning. Think for one moment of what this means, of the long, desolate hours the women are left in solitude. Most of them suffer from insomnia; they lie through the long hours thinking, thinking—who



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can tell what thoughts these poor hopeless souls must have?

Once a day they have about forty minutes' exercise in the yard. The prisoners march slowly round in single file, two or three yards apart, under the eye of the wardress in charge. With dull, listless steps they drag their feet wearily round and round the space. Some of the older women never raise their eyes from the ground; they are not allowed to speak. Forty minutes in the fresh air once daily—could anyone imagine for one moment that such physical measures will tend to moral regeneration? A healthy mind in a healthy body! Is the combination possible after a few weeks of prison routine? Many of these women are weak-minded; some are borderland cases, epileptics, degenerates of all sorts, but not perhaps sufficiently marked in type to be isolated from the other prisoners. The same treatment for all, for the hardened criminal, the morally insane, the responsible mother of a family, the prostitute, the young-girl first offender, the dipsomaniac. After a few weeks of prison existence a hunted expression, a look of stealthy watchfulness is typical of the faces. They become cunning and wary; they lose something of humanity, because they are treated as less than human. The aim is punishment, and the result is a hopeless failure from the point of view of reform.

**Prison reform in the United States.**—Contrast our methods of dealing with women prisoners with those in force in the States, where reform of a large percentage of the offenders is claimed by the authorities. The development of the reformatory or Elmira system is the most notable achievement of American penology of late years. The new spirit aims not at the infliction of punishment, but at conversion of the prisoners into in-



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dustrious and law-abiding citizens. With regard to women, Indiana has the credit of establishing the first women's prison on the reformatory principle. A most important feature of this institution is the separation of the younger prisoners under 21 into what is called the industrial school, away from the more mature criminals. The school is built upon the cottage plan. In each cottage is a family of thirty girls, and they are taught every kind of work that girls would be taught in a well-conducted home and on a farm. There is a school where the teaching is similar to that in the public schools, and domestic industries are carefully taught in a number of different departments. The girls learn to cut and fit dresses, to make their own clothes, to cook, to wash and iron. They are taught crochet, hem-stitching, lace-making; military drill and calisthenics are utilised for their physical development, and the discipline is on the lines of government by moral influence, coupled with a system of rewards. The idea is to cultivate self-respect, self-control, and self-government rather than a habit of submission to arbitrary external power. The attempt is made to fit a girl to become a useful citizen in the world by laying a good foundation of school education and a training in domestic and industrial pursuits. At the women's prison plenty of interesting work has been found the best means of improving the women prisoners who are drawn from a class with a low grade of mentality and morals. They are taught to read and write, to sew and wash and cook. Habits of industry and cleanliness are fostered, and everything possible is done to put courage, hope and strength into them. As they are committed on the "indeterminate" or indefinite sentence, they have an incentive to reform. They work on probation for freedom under guidance,



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and when they have proved themselves fit by good conduct and work for a life of freedom they are liberated "on parole" by the Board of Managers. Employment is then found for them. They have to report regularly, their report has to be countersigned by their employer, and they are periodically visited by an agent of the State. This method has been found invaluable in helping the prisoners to readjust themselves to outside life. A certain number of discharged prisoners are placed in domestic service.

Perhaps the most modern methods of dealing with women prisoners are seen at the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford. There the cottage system is also in force. The patients are carefully graded after psychological investigation conducted by a woman doctor. One cottage is set aside as a nursery. Any woman committed to the institution who is the mother of a nursing child under one year of age has her child with her in the institution until it is two years of age. If the mother cannot be released on parole at the end of that time the child is placed out in a family until the mother is discharged. The mother whose child is born in prison has charge of it until it is two years of age. Every mother with her child has a separate room in the cottage, and if the babies are old enough to be left, the mothers go to school or to industrial training in the institution, the babies being placed in the care of nursing mothers or deputies chosen from the inmates. The women are committed on the indeterminate sentence. They work for their freedom, and in the case of unmarried mothers every attempt is made to place mother and child together in a private family in the country where the mother can work as a domestic servant, for which work she has been trained in the institution. There



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are usually some thirty babies with their mothers in the New York Reformatory. There is a small maternity hospital with a woman physician and a trained nurse, and it says much for the success of the system that, in spite of the unhygienic mode of life of the mothers previously, babies born in prison compare very favourably in weight and vitality with the average child outside.

The nursery exerts a salutary influence upon the inmates, and its humanising effect upon the mothers themselves is very marked. Several States permit delinquent mothers to bring their young babies into the reformatory with them. Miss Jessie Hodder, of the Reformatory for Women in Massachusetts, tells me that many of the women who come with their babies are women who, through discouragement, have taken to drink. Others are feeble-minded (defective delinquents), but the new law in this State will in future provide for the segregation of this hopeless class.

An admirable feature of the Reformatory for Women is the farm. The healthy outdoor life, the trenching and digging, planting and weeding, the making of waste places into profitable garden plots, tend to the physical, mental and moral uplifting of the mothers and girls.

Many of the suggestions for reorganising industries, teaching domestic science, farming and allied work in America have been made by women who have been appointed as directors, superintendents, or managers of prison committees.

Women's prisons in the United States are governed by women directors. There is a woman on the Board of Prison Commissioners in the State of New York, and two women are on the Board of Prison Commissioners in the State of Massachusetts. It has been found that these women commissioners are valuable not only in



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prisons for women, but also in all that concerns hygiene and domestic economy in prisons for men. Mr. Rockefeller is placing in charge of women the new psychological laboratory for the study of female delinquency. Delinquent girls and women will be sent to this place and subjected to various tests by the staff, and after careful investigation into their economic and environmental, physical and mental antecedents, a definite course of reform treatment will be prescribed.

The chief women's prisons have a woman superintendent, and a woman medical officer and trained nurses are being introduced into the prison hospitals. Enough has been said to show that American prison methods are far superior to ours; the results, especially with reference to juvenile women offenders, are found to be successful in proportion to the development of the reformatory system in the different States. It is claimed that as many as 88 per cent. of first offenders are entirely reformed and converted into honest and industrious citizens.

**Women prisoners in Japan.**—The trend of legislation in Japan, as in America, is to put women prisoners on the same level as men, and it is noteworthy that the proportion of frequently convicted women prisoners, compared with men, is much lower than with us. I was struck by the sympathetic interest of the Japanese officials and warders in the prisoners' work. The prisons appeared more like schools than penal institutions, and both men and women evinced a keen interest in their special work, striving to excel and to gain the decorative and monetary awards given for good conduct. They are taught handicrafts and given tuition in deportment, and lessons and lectures in morality. Everything is done to instil a desire for reform. Association is permitted after the first brief period of punishment is over. The cells, which are



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exquisitely clean apartments, like ordinary Japanese rooms, are really dormitories, as the prisoners work a good deal out of doors in covered sheds. In the new penal settlements in Japan arrangements are made to supply discharged prisoners, both men and women, with remunerative work. The State undertakes this work, which is left to Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies and charitable agencies of various degrees of efficiency in England.

**In Europe.**—European prisons are almost entirely managed and controlled by men. But a woman has been appointed director of the head prison of the department of Aigle, in the Canton of Vaud (Switzerland). This prison is not specially reserved for women. In Berlin the women's prison has recently been placed under a staff of women officials. The Governor, who is also a woman, is reorganising prison industries and introducing women teachers to instruct the inmates in work that will be useful and remunerative to them when they leave.

**Where reform is needed.**—The first lesson to be derived from a study of prison methods in this country and in other lands is the pressing need for the reorganisation of our prison industries. If our women prisoners are to have a fair chance of reforming, they must be provided with interesting, remunerative labour of a type that will be to their advantage when they leave prison. At the present time prison industries for women are disgracefully organised, and the officials, however anxious they are to make the prisoners' work interesting, are handicapped all round. The regulation needlework consists mainly in making up prison clothes, which are shapeless and badly fitting, and are consequently useless for the purpose of teaching dressmaking or tailor work. The women who spend their days fashioning these hideous,



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clumsy garments are learning nothing of value; they can earn in Aylesbury, the women's convict prison, from 2s. to 4s. a month; in Holloway, women who have been in prison for six weeks are sometimes presented with a few coppers on the expiration of their sentence. Let prison clothes be made in prison by all means, but let them be of decent cut and finish, so that the making may serve as a means of education, and the wearing of properly fitting clothes add to the prisoners' self-respect.

By properly organising prison labour, by letting men and women work at their own trades under conditions approximating as closely as possible to those outside, prisons could be made almost self-supporting. Some American prisons are a source of State revenue. Let the tailoress, the dressmaker, the machinist, the maker of toys or boxes or cigarettes, be employed at her own trade when in prison, and let her be paid a money wage after deducting the cost of her board and lodging, and it will lead to the mutual advantage of the prisoner and the State. Many of the girls sent to our prisons for petty offences could be converted into good domestic servants if they were taught cookery and housewifery on the lines of the instruction carried on in our domestic science schools. Cooking in prison kitchens as at present organised is on too large a scale to be of the slightest benefit for teaching purposes. Everything is cooked in huge boilers; the homely saucepan has no place in a prison kitchen. What an opportunity prison offers to teach married women and girls something of cookery, housewifery, and child management! If women were converted into good mothers and housewives, good servants, and capable trained workers, it would tend to the diminution of crime in the future, and would also



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have an influence on the questions of physical degeneration and infant mortality. It would make for the uplifting of motherhood, for the welfare of children.

The second lesson we might learn from America and Japan is one of sympathy and understanding in the personal treatment of the prisoners. With us the welfare of the women prisoners has so far been a very secondary consideration. The administration of women's prisons by women is a certainty of the future. Meantime the election of women doctors and nurses and, last but not least, of a woman on the Board of Prison Commissioners, is urgently called for. This would inevitably bring about improvement of the sanitary and hygienic conditions already commented upon. Proper attention would then be paid to women's health; ample exercise and physical drill would become a compulsory part of prison routine. The food, and the serving of it, would also be improved. A common dining-room, where the prisoners would be provided with proper dishes and table cutlery, would improve both their manners and their morals. The absurdity of refusing a knife and fork for fear of suicide becomes apparent when one learns that prisoners are permitted to have scissors when alone in their cells for needlework purposes. Associated labour, which has been adopted in the last few years, has exercised an influence for good on the conduct and industry of the prisoners.

The State organisation of Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies is essential. As parent to the ex-prisoner who has borne her punishment, and should therefore have another chance, the State is a failure. Numbers of girls are turned out of prison every week without a home, without a chance of making a living. What is to become of them? Think of the terrible case of the girl mother,



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whose child has been born in prison ; think of the young girls who have got into touch with bad companions and have had to serve a term of imprisonment for drunkenness or theft. Think of the vast army of women and girls who go back to the streets on leaving prison because they have no chance of obtaining honest work.

**Home life and the criminal.**—The co-operation of men and women in all that concerns penology is essential. The extension of the probationary system, the education in the psychology of childhood of those who have to do with juvenile delinquency, the construction of a scheme of crime prevention, will be the aims of penologists in the future. The Penal Reform League, under Captain St. John, is doing splendid work in bringing before the public the need of reform in our present methods. The next step must be an investigation into the causes which lead to crime. Crime is preventable. We must get rid of the idea that a "criminal class," with hereditary antisocial tendencies, is an inevitable part of every community. We spend millions of pounds in bringing to justice and punishing the criminal, when thousands expended upon the uplifting of motherhood would go some way to do away with crime altogether.

An investigation was recently carried out in the United States into the lives of one thousand so-called criminals by Mrs. Frederic Schoff, President of the Philadelphia Juvenile Court and Probation Association. It was explained to the prisoners that the aim of the investigation was to protect the youth of the country and prevent them from adopting criminal lives. Over sixty questions, relating to the parentage, home conditions, early interests, school life, and associates of the prisoner as a child, were drawn up. They dealt also with the character and the time of the commission of the



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first offence, and the prisoner's opinion as to the reason of his own downfall was specially requested. The replies indicated to a remarkable degree that bad home conditions were largely responsible for the beginning of a career of crime. More than one-third of the prisoners had drunken parents; half of them lost one or both parents before the age of 16; unpleasant homes and maternal neglect were registered by more than a third. Such an investigation might be carried out in our juvenile courts, and, if properly utilised, would prove an immense power in checking the tendency to juvenile delinquency. In every case the child's parents should be examined in court, and parental neglect severely reprimanded. The magistrate in a children's court ought to be a woman. The new Bill for the establishment of juvenile courts in France provides that they shall be presided over by both men and women magistrates. So far the juvenile courts in England have not fulfilled the expectations of those most eager for their foundation. The children of the poor are still arrested for trivial offences which would not be considered "criminal" in a higher social stratum. Our magistrates and judges are lamentably ignorant of child psychology. Women in juvenile courts would understand the need of extending the probationary system so as to deal more effectually with the parents of delinquent children, of helping to organise a scheme for uplifting motherhood and increasing parental responsibility. The delinquent child is the product of bad parentage, more especially of inefficient, neglectful, or degraded motherhood. Even when hereditary taint exists, we cannot say how much the evil is accentuated by bad environment, by the lack of good physical and mental "nurture." The criminal is often the victim of circumstances over which he has no control. Our system



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of social control and penology, with its regulations and penalties, has evolved as the result of our social conscience and the desire for social continuity. The social instinct even now suggests that the energy which, misdirected, results in crime might be directed into channels for the service of humanity. Hundreds of boys and girls now permitted to drift into crime are splendid citizens lost to the State. Thousands of men and women branded as criminals, eating their hearts out behind prison bars, might be self-respecting, useful workers in the world. Let us go to the source of crime and purify the home life of the people. By enforcing paternal responsibility, by teaching, disciplining, and protecting mothers, the children can best be served, the interests of the community best be safeguarded.



## CHAPTER XIV

### MOTHERHOOD AND EUGENICS

DURING the past ten years the development of eugenics has helped to form public opinion on race regeneration. By improving the homes, the environment of the people, by assisting necessitous motherhood, we can prevent a vast amount of physical and moral defect. At the same time we have to cope with degenerate parenthood. The hopeless drunkard, the feeble-minded mother, the men and women who are morally and mentally degenerate, if they are permitted to reproduce their types, poison the race and counteract the best efforts of social reformers.

It must, of course, be acknowledged that the care of the weaker members of the community is the duty of any moral people. At the same time, if such care is so misdirected as to interfere with racial efficiency, it is an evil as far-reaching in its consequences as the apparently relentless cruelty of nature left unrestrained.

At present the preservation of degenerates is achieved at the expense of national health, first, because the morally and mentally defective have been left, without restraint, to mingle freely with the healthy and the law-abiding. The reluctance to "interfere with the liberty of the subject" is responsible for the failure of our prison system, for the existence of that class of unmoral men and women who spend their lives passing in and out of prison, sinking year by year in the scale to a level far



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below the more self-respecting brutes. It is a cause of the presence in our midst of chronic inebriate mothers, of unemployable tramps and vagrants, to whom unrestricted parentage is permitted, and who leave behind them physical and moral disease wherever they go. Our prisons, reformatories, workhouses and homes are filled with thousands of men and women whose "liberty" is the fundamental factor in the causation of three-fourths of the poverty, crime, and disease which are such a burden to the country.

There is at present no prohibition against marriage of degenerates, no effort whatever is made to check the propagation of the unfit. The first principle of practical eugenics, according to Dr. Karl Pearson, is that it is five to ten times as advantageous to improve the condition of the race through parentage as through change of environment. Legislation has so far been directed mainly towards improving the environment of the people, and the propagation of the unfit has been left entirely unchecked. For years there has been a steady diminution in the size of families of the healthy skilled workers and educated classes. According to Whetham, if the present relative birth-rate is maintained in these sections of society, every 1,000 members of the educated and skilled worker classes will be represented by 687 descendants in three generations, and every 1,000 of the unfit and feeble-minded will be represented by 3,600. Thus will the unfit outnumber the healthy by five to one, unless effective steps are taken to check racial deterioration.

**The feeble-minded.**—With regard to feeble-mindedness, heredity and environment are both concerned in its causation. Destitution, alcoholism, and the constitutional diseases considered in Chapter VII. are predisposing



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causes in the production of mental defectiveness. But the hereditary taint is the predominant factor, and the feeble-minded are to be found in all sections of the community. It is not possible to cure feeble-mindedness in one generation; but its prevention in the future is largely in our power if we apply measures systematically. Responsibility to our descendants is just as much to be considered as duty to the feeble-minded in this present generation. To preserve the unfit to the extent of permitting their further multiplication is a physiological crime against posterity. The neglect of the State to adopt preventive measures with regard to this matter in the past is partly responsible for the accumulation of pauperism and crime which constitutes so difficult a problem of social reform.

Two million persons in the United Kingdom receive Poor Law relief every year; not one-tenth of these are healthy, able-bodied men and women, fit to earn their living. A certain proportion are physically and mentally defective, and yet are entirely unrestrained in the propagation of children, who, in their turn, will transmit heritable defects to their descendants. Nearly twenty million pounds are spent annually on Poor Law relief, and the cure of destitution is a problem which is apparently no nearer solution. Destitution is closely related to lack of physical and mental stamina. Mental defect is a potent factor in the production both of destitution and of race degeneration.

The care and control of the mentally defective constitute a problem in every civilised country at the present time. England and Wales has nearly 160,000 uncertified persons of weak mind. The Mental Deficiency Bill, 1913, provides for the care and control of a certain proportion of these by removing into institutions individuals



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whose deficiency has already proved to be a source of danger to the community or to themselves. Public opinion is forming on the need for similar legislation in the United States, where there are said to be a quarter of a million feeble-minded persons, and in many European countries.

**Institutional treatment of the feeble-minded.**—The practical difficulty of defining feeble-mindedness has recently been made apparent in England, where considerable opposition to the definition proposed by the framers of the Mental Deficiency Bill was manifested.

Professor Binet, of Paris, has formulated a system of measuring intelligence which is being used in several institutes for delinquents in America. The Binet test demonstrates the mental age of people as distinct from their physical age—the actual number of their years. In many cases where weak-mindedness is hardly apparent apart from the frequent display of delinquency, the Binet test proves the mental age to be 6 or 7 years, when the actual age is 18 or 20. The institutional treatment of the feeble-minded will make it possible to devise methods of investigating this difficult and very important subject.

In the Training School at Vineland, New Jersey, experiments are being made in feeding various groups of defective children with glandular extracts with the idea of supplying something that is lacking in the body necessary for growth and development, and this is being attended with very hopeful results. The close association of feeble-mindedness with inherited physical diseases makes especially valuable the work done in this institution in medical research, and in the routine testing of the children by the Wassermann test for syphilis and the tuberculin test for tuberculosis. Whilst recent studies have suggested that from 60 to 80 per cent. of the cases



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of feeble-mindedness are hereditary, the various causes of the condition still require to be investigated.

Dr. Goddard, Director of the Research Laboratory for feeble-minded girls and boys at Vineland, has collected a mass of evidence on the heredity of feeble-mindedness. The record of one stock, the Kallikak family, gives a natural experiment in heredity. "A young man of good family becomes through two different women the ancestor of two lines of descendants, the one characterised by thoroughly good, respectable, normal citizenship, with almost no exceptions; the other being equally characterised by mental defect in every generation. We find on the good side of the family prominent people in all walks of life, and nearly all of the 496 descendants owners of land or proprietors. On the bad side we find paupers, criminals, prostitutes, drunkards, and examples of all forms of social pests with which modern society is burdened. In considering the question of care, segregation through colonisation seems in the present state of our knowledge to be the ideal and perfectly satisfactory method."<sup>1</sup>

One fact in the history of this family of special interest to students of motherhood is that the mother of the degenerate stock had been deserted by the father, who had "paid no further attention to the girl nor her child." How much suffering, sin and waste might have been prevented if that girl mother had been cherished and assisted to bring up her child by its father!

The feeble-minded question cannot be considered by itself. It is intimately bound up with all other social questions, with prison reform, alcoholism, prostitution, poverty, neglected motherhood, and constitutional

<sup>1</sup> "The Kallikak Family. A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-mindedness," by H. H. Goddard, Ph.D.



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diseases. If man is to attain a full measure of efficiency, an organised and systematic struggle against disease, physical and mental, must be made by combined State and municipal effort.

Every disease, it may almost be said, is preventable. By improving hygienic and sanitary conditions, by compulsory vaccination and the use of anti-toxins, the propagation of infectious disease has been checked. By isolating infectious cases the spread of epidemics has been satisfactorily controlled. The public has become reconciled to the necessary "interference with the liberty of the subject" which these measures have entailed. The principles can be applied also to the prevention of mental disease, including alcoholism, and moral disease of every type.

A great deal of controversy has already been aroused on the subject. We have the extreme faction who demand such drastic measures as compulsory sterilisation or the lethal chamber in dealing with the mentally defective. We have the moderate section who would be content with the colonisation of defectives. Lastly, we have at the other extreme those who would give absolute "liberty" to the unfit, and thus allow them every facility for propagation.

With regard to this last measure—that way lies social suicide. The second is only effective if the scheme is to include the segregation of degenerates of all classes and types irrespective of social or financial position. Any comprehensive scheme would have to include legislation for the prevention of feeble-mindedness by a crusade against the causes of increased degeneration, as well as compulsory detention of all feeble-minded persons not under suitable control, and the sterilisation of those who, suitably provided for, preferred this



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sterilisation with personal liberty to confinement in an industrial colony.

Public opinion is not yet ripe for such vigorous measures as the one last named. There is a general feeling that our present knowledge of the whole subject of feeble-mindedness is far too incomplete to justify drastic legislation. Moderate people favour the principles of the Mental Deficiency Bill, but consider that further investigation into the laws of heredity, Mendelism, and the possibilities of treating mental defect is desirable before wide-reaching legislation should be advocated. There is, however, every indication that medical and public opinion is ripe for the passing into law of a moderate measure to control defectives and degenerates, including chronic inebriates.

**Alcoholism and feeble-mindedness.**—The need of the extension of the inebriate reformatory system is being generally recognised. Dr. Branthwaite says that 62 per cent. of inebriates committed under the Inebriates Acts are mentally defective, and that these “are practically hopeless from a reformation standpoint.” “They continue to propagate drunkenness, and thereby nullify the good results of temperance energy. Their children, born of defective parents, and adversely educated by their surroundings, grow up without the chance of a decent life, and constitute the reserve from which the strength of our present army of habituals is maintained.”

Dr. Wigglesworth found at the Rainhill County Asylum that “one-sixth of all the cases had a history of alcoholic intemperance in the parents.”

The mentally defective, the criminal, the prostitute, are very frequently of alcoholic heredity. One authority after another has emphasised the crying need of preventing the propagation of the chronic inebriate. Dr. Arch-



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dall Reid says: "If by any means we save the inebriates of this generation, but permit them to have offspring, future generations must deal with an increased number of inebriates. . . . The experience of many centuries has rendered it sufficiently plain that while there is drink there will be drunkards till the race be purged of them. We have, therefore, no real choice between temperance reform by the abolition of drink, and temperance reform by the elimination of the drunkard. . . . Which is the worse: that miserable drunkards shall bear wretched children to a fate of starvation and neglect and early death, or of subsequent drunkenness and crime, or that, by our deliberate act, the procreation of children shall be forbidden them? . . . Let us, then, by all means seek to save the individual drunkard; with all our power let us endeavour to make and keep him sober; but let us strive also to eradicate the type; for, as I have said, if we do it not quickly and with mercy, Nature will do it slowly and with infinite cruelty."

Statistical evidence has been collected to prove the terrible harvest reaped from the parental intemperance taint. Protests against the methods of administering the Inebriates Act, demands for more efficient control of this class of hopeless, helpless men and women, have met with very little response. The alcoholic mother is still permitted to have one degenerate child after another, to contribute to casual vice, to add to the number of dirty, slovenly, miserable homes, without any attempt either at reformation on the indeterminate sentence plan, or at permanent detention. The birth of defective babies must be checked. The question of the poisonous effect of alcohol upon the race in the case of expectant mothers and nursing mothers will have to be seriously considered in the near future. The chronic alcoholic is a



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public danger, a public expense, and a public nuisance. It is the chronic drunkards who form the bulk of frequently convicted short sentence prisoners, on whom our expensive prison system has not the slightest deterrent effect. Many of these are curable, of course, but in the case of others no power on earth will help them to withstand the temptation to drink if it is within their reach.

The colony system is the only hope for both ; and the fear of permanent control would be a deterrent in many cases. Under the indeterminate sentence plan the curable cases would have the opportunity of regaining their liberty under surveillance if they proved themselves fit for a life of freedom ; any lapse into bad habits being met by compulsory return to the colony for another period of treatment. The hopeless cases would regain some measure of self-respect and happiness by work on the farm colony, where also they would be saved from the crime and misery which are the inevitable consequences of chronic alcoholism under our present system.

**Vagrancy.**—The Salvation Army's proposals for dealing with vagrancy, which have been approved by the Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy,<sup>1</sup> would dispose of the tramp problem, and at the same time help to control the dissemination of infectious and contagious disease. The scheme includes the establishment of labour colonies for vagrants and the amendment of vagrancy laws so as to give magistrates the power to commit vagrants, coming before them under certain conditions, to industrial settlements, but only for periods of not more than three years.

In dealing with the defective, it is necessary to consider what is best (1) for the present community, (2) for

<sup>1</sup> "The Great Idea," by Arnold White.



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the future of the race, (3) for the defectives themselves. Society must be protected from the feeble-minded; the evolution of the race is of more importance than the liberty of the subject. Compulsory detention would provide for the welfare of these poor creatures, because it would enable them to contribute towards their own support, it would supply them with healthy physical work and manual training, it would bring them under discipline and control, and prevent them from becoming drunkards, criminals and prostitutes, and the parents of degenerates in the future.

The moral danger to the community from feeble-minded girls cannot be overlooked. Illegitimacy and prostitution are by-products of feeble-mindedness. Weak-minded girls drift easily into immorality, and give birth to children with the hereditary feeble-minded taint. Such girls are constantly passing in and out of workhouses, producing one defective child after another, incapable of supporting either themselves or their offspring. It has been estimated that nearly one-fifth of the women who pass through rescue homes in this country are definitely weak-minded, and the same proportion has been quoted in America. The removal of these girls from the general population to a farm colony where they would be enabled to lead a healthy and partly self-supporting life would be a great gain to the community in the present, and would help in preventing crime and immorality in future generations.

The control of feeble-minded youths is an even greater necessity; for whereas a mentally and morally defective girl may add one child per annum to the population, no estimate can be made of the social danger from weak-minded adolescent youths of all classes.

**Fitness for marriage.**—Lastly, a relatively clean bill of



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health, both mental and physical, should be required of every man and woman before marriage is permitted. "People must be made to realise that human reproduction is not an individual concern, but an affair of the race," declares Dr. Johann Scharffenberg, and this idea is permeating different nations. In America, New Zealand, Germany, and other European countries, a new marriage law has been proposed to compel medical examination before marriage to discover whether either of the contracting parties is suffering from disqualifying diseases. It seems probable that the new bio-chemical methods of research will enable the existence of disease to be recognised without physical examination, which in many ways is objectionable, and in some cases misleading also.

Healthy parentage can be promoted by selection in marriage. Every medical man and woman can speak from personal experience in hospital or private practice of the evils resulting from the unrestrained marriage of diseased, deformed, and mentally defective persons. There is no law at present to prevent the marriage of a person suffering from disease which will probably ruin the health and possibly cause the death of the healthy partner in the transaction. The defective dwarf is permitted, without hindrance, to bring more unfortunates into the world; the dipsomaniac, the weak-minded girl, and worse still the weak-minded youth, are at liberty to reproduce degenerates to any extent. This must cease to be. Public interest in this question, however, must be aroused before we can hope for the inauguration of a systematic crusade against disease on these lines. Legislation in the interests of public health is, I again insist, essential to the maintenance of national efficiency. Delay is dangerous. The nation is being jeopardised from within. No measures of self-protection are so important as the



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suppression of preventable diseases, the establishment of healthy parenthood, the preservation of national health.

It is the recognition of this danger that has largely stimulated popular interest in eugenics. The ideas of the eugenists are permeating different strata of society, stirring new thoughts, and engendering an interest among all classes of the people in social life and welfare. To hand on the torch of life clearer and less dimmed, to make each new generation better and nobler than the last, is to the eugenist almost a religion. It is natural that women should be interested in a movement which is thus concerned with the betterment of motherhood, the disappearance of disease and defect, the preservation of child life.

The discouragement of unworthy parentage, or "negative eugenics," is not the only principle accepted by the eugenists, although in this direction much that is extreme and undesirable in the present stage of evolution has been advocated by enthusiasts. The positive side of eugenics, however, deals with a subject of universal interest to all students of motherhood. The encouragement of healthy, efficient, responsible parenthood has been in the past practically disregarded in social reform. According to Sir Francis Galton, the founder of eugenics, it is even more important to improve the race by increasing the productivity of the best stocks than by suppressing the activity of the worst. To produce fine children in greater numbers we must first of all have some basis of knowledge to go on as to what makes men great or small, honourable or unworthy, healthy or degenerate. According to the teachings of eugenics, every human being is the product of two conditions—nature and nurture. Nature, or heredity, is the endowment each of us receives at birth from our forbears. From



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the beginning of time right through the ages we have existed, the life torch has been handed from parent to child, each generation contributing its qualities, of which we are the product. A man is the sum of his ancestors.

But what we are depends also upon our nurture, our environment and training. And that is where motherhood comes to be especially closely associated with modern eugenics. Good breeding depends upon men and women equally, upon the wise choice of mates who are to hand on to their children the qualities they possess. But nurture is largely the woman's sphere. The home is the heart of life, the cradle of the race, the unit of the State, and it is upon the mothers of the race that the character of future generations will to a large extent depend. Without the right sort of nurture—compulsory hygiene, physical and moral training, character building—eugenics is seriously handicapped. The eugenicist is fundamentally concerned with woman as mother. Whilst admitting with individualists that woman is first of all a human being and then a woman, we cannot ignore the fact that if woman fails as mother the development of the race is hindered. Thus the question of motherhood and eugenics must include the consideration of the education of girls for motherhood. We must not only provide that the "best" women, irrespectively of social position, shall be the mothers of the new generation, that they shall be enabled to marry young and assisted, if necessary, to rear children for the State, but we must ensure that they have the sort of training and education which will fit them for the nurture work they have to do. That is an aspect of eugenics which will have a very potent influence upon motherhood, upon the preservation of infant life, and the proper development of the children.



## CHAPTER XV

### MOTHERHOOD AND THE SOCIAL EVIL

THAT a book on the subject of motherhood should touch upon the social evil may appear at first sight inexplicable. The mother and the prostitute! How diverse the types! How far apart in the estimation of men and States! The mother, the type of all that is holiest and most revered. The outcast of society, the lowest and most despised of her sex. Only a few years ago no respectable woman dared mention the name of prostitute. Indeed, there was probably something in the idea which used to prevail that no one was harder upon a woman who had fallen than one of her own sex. A line of demarcation was drawn between good women and bad, and the possibility of a common sisterhood between them, or of the former class devising any scheme for the uplifting of the latter, was hardly dreamed of. The ostracism and opposition meted out to Josephine Butler would be impossible to-day. Many people are considering this question, and organised, united, national and international measures for the prevention of the social evil will be one of the great reforms of the next fifty years. As to the relation of this question to motherhood—are not prostitutes mothers lost to the race, sacrificed in the flower of their youth to an eroticism whose end is death? And is not innocent motherhood poisoned at its source by diseases which are the product of vice? Birth is the great purpose of love and life, and love is the expression of the sexual needs of the individual and



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the species. Love is creative. Vice is the abuse of an instinct noble in itself, and its product is not new life, but disaster and death. The long silence, the mystery enclosing this, the saddest of all problems, is being dispersed, and it is right that women, that mothers, should know the truth, and that all men and women who desire the good of the individual, the family, and the State should in unison demand reform.

**Not a necessary evil.**—Is the social evil preventable? This is the bedrock question which must be faced, and the fact that the answer to-day is different from what it would have been twenty years ago is an augury of hope. Prostitution has existed since primitive times, and has been tolerated in all countries. But it is opposed to national welfare and racial safety, and it must therefore go in the process of race development. Morality is a product of human evolution, of mental development and spiritual growth. In the evolution of humanity evil tendencies are only gradually eliminated. But even in one generation some progress may be apparent. Multitudes of men and women will be found to-day to refute the hideous lie to which the late Mr. Lecky gave such eloquent expression, and which was acclaimed as truth and wisdom not so many years ago. He declares the fallen woman, "herself the supreme type of vice," to be "ultimately the most efficient guardian of virtue. But for her the unchallenged purity of countless homes would be polluted, and not a few who in the pride of their untempted chastity think of her with an indignant shudder, would have known the agony of remorse and despair. . . . She remains, while creeds and civilisations rise and fall, the eternal priestess of humanity, blasted for the sins of the people."

The inference that prostitution is essential for the



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safeguarding of the home is false, equally dishonouring to men and to women. So far from safeguarding motherhood and the home, it is a standing menace to the health and happiness of the race. Every doctor knows that from this source are brought into the home diseases which poison the life-stream at its source. It is the mother, and the child also, who are "blasted for the sins of the people." We see children with congenital diseases in our hospitals and dispensaries every day. We see the blind in the street. We discuss the control of the feeble-minded, and shut our eyes to the causes of mental defect. But we women, and all healthy-minded men, say that prostitution is not necessary, and that the day has come when this sacrifice of womanhood must stop. The physical and moral consequences of the system are too serious. We say that the social evil causes the infection of 60 per cent. of young men with venereal disease, which is the most fertile source of insanity and feeble-mindedness, which kills the unborn babe and helps to fill our hospitals with suffering humanity. We demand that a constructive scheme of prevention shall be devised to cut the core of this social abscess from the body politic. Men have tried to check prostitution, we know, and they have failed. They have failed because their efforts have been directed towards the mere regulation of an accepted "necessity." They have tried punishing the harlot by cruel penalties, by torture and by death. They have in more recent times tried the State regulation of vice, a device that must fail because it is ethically wrong, practically useless, and patently unscientific; because it is unjust to one set of offenders—the women—who are removed from the community, while their partners in sin are not interfered with; and unfair to the other, by suggesting a false



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sense of security, which is a temptation to vicious indulgence. Such "remedies" are playing with reform, in that, at the most, they are only palliative, whereas the time is ripe for sustained *preventive* treatment by a campaign against the causes of the social evil.

It is said that legislation will never enforce morality. But it can help to reduce opportunities and consequent temptations to immorality. What is the truth? In spite of the economic influences dragging women downwards, the sweating and underpayment, the dependence of most women for sustenance on their sex functions; in spite of the natural human desire for the material advantages provided by one of the best-paid trades for women, for a time at least, it would be impossible to keep up the supply of victims without a veritable press-gang system. The recent legislation on the White Slave Traffic has brought the whole subject before the public, and forced even the indifferent to realise that a horrible traffic is carried on in flesh and blood; that thousands of girls of every nation are sucked into the abyss every year against their will. And—here again the mothers come into the question—many of those enslaved are girl children, children of 12 or 13, children of 9 or 10 in Ceylon, Singapore and Japan. Surely here we reach the very depths of the abyss, and trench upon the greatest agony motherhood can know. "The darkest depths of the White Slave Traffic," as Mrs. Bramwell Booth has written, "is the woe of the children. During the past year no fewer than 300 children in this country alone have been placed in our care." And that is the record of only one society.

**Causes.**—Where do they come from, our Sisters of Despair, who go to their death, sinking downwards step by step, month after month, downwards to a hell on



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earth which no experience in the hereafter could surpass? From farmhouse and vicarage, from country cottage and slum, from every class and every nation, the melancholy procession passes endlessly across the world. Some won by false promises never to be fulfilled, lured by love or lured by gold; some tricked, forced, physically compelled, held against their will until, broken in spirit, they succumb; some worsted in the battle of life after a long, brave struggle against impossible odds. Many, perhaps the majority, are the victims of our economic system, the over-worked and under-fed, more sinned against than any of us realise who have not known hunger nor had to face the risk of starvation for a beloved child. A certain proportion are widows and deserted wives. An investigation some years ago in Edinburgh produced evidence of sixty families whose only source of income was the mother's shame. I have heard it said that a really pure-minded woman would choose death in preference to a life of sin, whatever economic straits she had to face. It might be so if she had only herself to consider, but everyone who has worked amongst this class knows how many there are with someone dependent upon them, someone whom these poor souls love unselfishly and tenderly.

The problem is a complex one. It is one that cannot be entirely solved by restrictive legislation. It is not a question of harrying the prostitute, of punishing the procurer, or even of segregating the mentally defective. The causes are manifold—drink, poverty, ignorance, self-indulgence, feeble-mindedness, parental irresponsibility. Moreover, the control of the feeble-minded will mean that a large number of mentally defective women of the lowest class will be put under restraint. Bonhoeffer, a German investigator, found that among 190



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fallen women in prison 102 were hereditary degenerates, and nearly one-quarter were definitely feeble-minded. Evidence given before the Chicago Vice Commission emphasises the close association between this evil and feeble-mindedness. But all fallen women are not victims. A certain number belong to the category of those who deliberately choose this mode of life and whose reclamation is a practical impossibility. These women are not mentally defective, except that they lack the moral sense and deliberately barter their sex for purposes of gain or in wantonness. In devising any scheme of reform this must be recognised. Every mother will agree that some measure of restraint and restriction should be devised against the delinquent woman, to safeguard boys from temptations which under present social conditions are continuously and blatantly presented to them. The causes of the social evil are so manifest and so many and varied that the problem has to be attacked from all sides—economic, social, educational.

**How men and women together can help.**—In no question is the co-operation of men and women more essential than in devising constructive legislation which will get at the root of this evil and safeguard the generation that is coming after us. But legislation is useless unless people, and especially parents, are awake to the necessity for every individual to contribute some measure of influence and effort to lift this pall of sin and disease from mankind. Only a new wholesome attitude towards sexual hygiene will bring about reform. Social reformers, parents, clergy, employers, must be alive to the need of influencing young people on the lines of promoting a higher moral tone in their relationship with each other and their regard for sex questions. It is for fathers and mothers together to instil the sense of moral responsibility



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into the young generation, to reckon with the erotic curiosity which may have disastrous effects if inculcation of self-control is absent. Mothers, equally with fathers, should be alive to the danger of "quack" literature, leaflets and pamphlets which, whilst not legally coming into the category of the obscene, are yet full of dangerous suggestions, clothed in insincere "moral" language, which tend to alarm boys regarding innocent physiological functions and to stimulate sex perversions.

Whatever medical teaching may have been in the past, physiologists of the newer school consider that sexual abstinence until maturity in both sexes is a gain to the organism. Men have handed down from generation to generation the teaching that sexual lapses are harmless, necessary, even beneficial. The best modern medical teaching is entirely opposed to this idea. It has been condemned by Sir Andrew Clark, Sir William Gull, Sir James Paget, and by the unanimous vote of a large number of eminent medical men of various nations assembled in conference at Brussels in 1902. Sir James Paget emphatically declared, in a lecture to medical students, that "chastity does not harm body or mind, its discipline is excellent, marriage can safely be waited for." Professors Thomson and Geddes also testify that among those "best entitled to authoritative judgment there is practical unanimity that health is when man controls his sexual impulses, and danger when sex controls the man."<sup>1</sup>

The instinct of physical love implanted in human beings for the continuance of human life must be safeguarded from pollution. An awakened motherhood, by right instruction of boys and girls, will see to it that

<sup>1</sup> "Problems of Sex," by Prof. J. A. Thomson and Prof. Patrick Geddes. (National Council of Public Morals.)



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the reproductive power is not dissipated in vice, but conserved for the service of love. This will entail greater discipline and control of the young than exists at present. The youthfulness of fallen women is one of the most pathetic features of the social evil. The Archbishop of Westminster declared some time ago that 66 per cent. of the girls in the Church Rescue Homes have fallen before reaching the age of 18.<sup>1</sup> We do not safeguard sufficiently our young people of either sex. Young boys, ignorant or indifferent to the consequences of sin, drift into habits of immorality for lack of guidance and control. The age of consent for girls is, in England, nominally 16. The schoolgirl of 12 and the boy of 14 are permitted by our laws to marry. Surely such facts indicate the need for legislation. "It may be said in general," writes Ploss, "that the age of girls at marriage is lower, the lower the stage of civilisation is in the community to which they belong." And the same thing is true of "the age of consent." By raising the age of marriage and protection to 18 years and bringing the probation system, in association with juvenile courts, to bear upon girls and boys under that age who are known to be drifting into an immoral life, many adolescents would be saved from ruin. In the interests of young citizens, and of national and racial efficiency, the community should have the power of removing persistent moral delinquents to training schools of the type of the George Junior Republic, where educative and reformatory influences would be brought to bear upon them. This would partake of the nature of constructive methods, which is surely more desirable than the vindictive spirit which characterises legislation in respect of the moral

<sup>1</sup>"The Age of Marriage and Protection," by the Rev. James Marchant.



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question and which was especially expressed in the flogging clause introduced into the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Society must be protected from the procurer. But if he is let loose after his physical chastisement has been administered, he is as dangerous to society, directly and indirectly, as before. Such offenders, in common with all others who err against the social and penal code, should be treated on modern reformatory methods on the lines of restraint and discipline, training and supervision.

**What is the remedy?**—There is no one remedy, no single measure which will in itself cure the social evil. Everything that makes for the better training and education of boys and girls, for inculcating higher standards of parental responsibility for the moral as well as the physical needs of the child—all these are factors in reform. We must reckon with the natural desire of the boy and girl for amusement and recreation. Whilst excess of pleasure and excitement is not desirable, young people must have an outlet for natural energy as well as interesting occupation to satisfy the restlessness and desire for change associated with adolescence. Properly supervised clubs for girls and boys should be established in every town. In seeking to protect girls, let us not forget the needs also of the boy. If we are to cure the social evil, we must begin with the boy. Here again we have this question associated with the mother as the educator and nurturer of the child. Let the ideal of a chaste fatherhood be held before the new generation of boys. The ideal is harder for the boy than for the girl, but yet not impossible, and this must be recognised by the mother in training her sons and her daughters.

But let us deal also with drink in all classes, with bad housing, overcrowding, lack of brightness and



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recreation in the lives of the poor, for these all contribute to the social evil. Nor must it be forgotten that our economic system places obstacles in the way of young people, in the late twenties and early thirties, marrying and founding families, and so helps to maintain this evil. It is evident, further, to any thoughtful person that no real solution of the social problem is possible without a sustained effort to bring about the economic freedom of women, such a reconstruction of the social order as will provide every woman, as well as every man, with a decent living wage. Reorganisation of labour to furnish every woman with a living wage would help to strike at the roots of this problem by preventing thousands of girls in every country from sinking downwards in the scale—underpaid shop girls, sweated chorus girls, home workers and outworkers of all sorts and conditions. In Germany the earnings of women are only 50 to 60 per cent. of the earnings of men, in France 60, in the United States 60, in Austria 65, in England 55, according to Mlle. de Pisargevsky in "Note sur le Rapport des Salaries des deux Sexes." Miss Maud Royden, Miss Macarthur, Miss Clementina Black, and others have stated that the average wage of the woman worker in England is 7s. per week. Mr. Sidney Webb more recently estimated the average wage of women at 10s. 6d. Hundreds of thousands of girls are struggling to maintain themselves on a weekly wage of 10s. and 11s.—young girls, attractive girls, facing temptation every day of their lives and resisting it with a splendid constancy.

The movement for supplying municipal lodging-houses and shelters for women is a means of prevention. And such schemes as those proposed by the National Association for Women's Lodging Houses, by the Duchess of Marlborough, Mrs. Higgs, and Mrs. Archi-



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bald MacKirdy should be State supported. It is in the interests of the municipalities themselves to provide shelter and protection for homeless girls. Mrs. Sidney Webb has pointed out that in Scotland an able-bodied, healthy, unmarried woman, unencumbered by children, however destitute, helpless, friendless she may be, cannot legally be given poor relief. And yet we pray, "Lead us not into temptation"!

A hopeful sign is the great international movement against tolerated vice. The National Vigilance Association and the National Council of Public Morals are working to bring uniformity into the legislation of modern nations. There is a great rise in moral feeling in every nation, a determination to throw off the servitude of immorality and vice. International congresses have been held, and America has organised more than one national commission. Lord Willoughby de Broke recently recommended a Royal Commission on Prostitution in this country. That it would help to form public opinion cannot be denied, but already sufficient facts and statistics are available to warrant immediate measures in the direction of raising the age of consent and regulating work and wages for women, of housing reform, of control of the feeble-minded, of the protection of the unmarried mother and the better education and control of both sexes during adolescence.

The reconstruction of the home, the safeguarding of the family—these are inextricably mingled with the question of sexual reform, which will be brought about partly by constructive legislation, partly by education and voluntary action, partly by modification of our marriage and divorce laws. Our social system is based upon an artificial sexual selection, the choice of the female by the male, with or without marriage. Natural sexual



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selection is the choice of the male by the female, and this makes for evolution and racial progress. Everything which raises the status of woman, which frees her economically and sexually, will serve to further the moral progress of the race, which depends so largely upon natural sexual selection. Indeed, improvement of human character, racial development, can only be brought about by selection through marriage. Our social system must somehow be reconstructed to render women free to choose or reject, unhampered by economic restrictions, and trained to choose wisely for the sake of themselves, their children and posterity.

To give a brief epitome of the argument of this chapter, it is the duty of a nation to safeguard its mothers and to protect girlhood. Prostitution is a source of danger to girlhood, of injury to mother and child life. Its elimination would be to a large extent practicable by constructive reform.

The social evil includes two separate problems, the white slave traffic or commercialised vice, a trade by which young girls are tricked or forced into an immoral life for profit to individuals or syndicates. This traffic can be stamped out by international legislation to make the trade difficult and dangerous for those engaged in it, and by effort directed towards the protection of girls.

But the social evil arises also from such causes as poverty (which accounts for 50 per cent. of the cases), alcoholism and feeble-mindedness amongst women, and alcoholism, ignorance, self-indulgence and unrestrained sensuality in men. Co-operation of men and women, concerted effort on the part of individuals, municipalities and States directed against the causes of prostitution would have a far-reaching influence upon the physical



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and moral health of the race. In every municipality a woman probationary officer should be appointed for special duty to enforce existing laws in respect of the social evil and to protect the interests of friendless or necessitous women and girls.

Reform can only be accomplished by legislation which will improve the economic and social status of woman as girl and wife, by restraint of feeble-minded and vicious persons, and by the proper education of boys and girls in sex hygiene, in morality and in religion.



## CHAPTER XVI

### TRAINING FOR MOTHERHOOD

NO writer on the subject of motherhood can afford to omit some mention of preparation for maternity. If the mothers of the future are to satisfy eugenic ideals, if, as child bearers and child nurturers, they are to be more fit, more efficient than the mothers of the past, they must be provided with a training that will ensure higher standards of maternity. Education for motherhood—and incidentally, it may be said, education for fatherhood—is one of the most vital problems of modern times.

Fifty years ago Herbert Spencer said: "But though some care is taken to fit youth of both sexes for society and citizenship, no care whatever is taken to fit them for the position of parents. . . . It appears to be thought that for the bringing up of children no preparation is needed. . . . Of all functions which the adult has to fulfil, this is the most difficult. Is it that each may be trusted by self-instruction to fit himself or herself for the office of parent? The complexity of the subject renders it the one of all others in which self-instruction is least likely to succeed." The accusation is equally merited to-day. And because knowledge of child nurture is more required by women than by men, who have not the management of children in their hands, our education system must be better adapted to meet the special needs of girls.

The principle of higher education for girls and



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women has been conceded. Although preference is still usually given to boys, modern parents are becoming more and more alive to the economic necessity of providing girls with the best education they can afford. Practically the same curriculum is provided for girls as for boys in schools of similar standing, and in this fact there are advantages and disadvantages. It is right that girls should have equal opportunities with boys to study on the lines which appeal to them as individuals. But just as each boy has to specialise according to the path of life he chooses, and because the vast majority of girls become mothers in after life, every girl should be required to specialise for a definite time in those subjects which will fit her better for maternity.

At the same time, I have no sympathy with those writers who maintain that higher education should be reserved for those girls or women who approximate more to "maleness," and who are lacking in what are conventionally considered womanly qualities, in feminineness.

In the first place, it is quite impossible for any person to say that because a girl has either an independent mind, good muscles, or a strong physique, she is in any degree less fitted for motherhood. Such a type might be the mother of splendid sons, even although she may be considered unfeminine by men because she has no appetite for light flirtations and is not engrossed in the subject of clothes. Many men base their ideal of femininity on the musical-comedy type.

In the second place, every girl should have the fullest possible opportunities for mental development. A woman, other things being equal, will be a better mother for the self-discipline which a university course neces-



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sitates, and for the knowledge of literature or philosophy, science or medicine, she has gained. That girls may undergo some risk from mental strain cannot be denied, but the same thing is true in degree of boys, and yet no one suggests that boys should avoid the risk to health and constitution to which a few years' study may expose them.

In the third place, if commonsense care is exercised by students to conserve their health and energy, if the danger of excessive physical exercise carried to the point of muscular fatigue, and excessive mental concentration involving nervous fatigue, is realised, no student of ordinary ability will be one whit the worse in health for a college course. Much, indeed, can be said in favour of the healthy interests and discipline which higher education provides in adolescence for girls whose lives would otherwise be devoid of effort and occupation during years when laziness and self-indulgence have their special danger.

But before a university course is entered upon, during the years of later school life, every girl should be required to specialise in home economics. Higher education can only be attained by the inclusion of a training for motherhood in all that motherhood involves, in its psychical as well as its practical aspects. Such training means much more than technical instruction in cookery, housewifery, and child management. It must include the inculcation of high standards, founded upon moral teaching and religion. It means the wise presentation of the highest ideals of eugenics in respect of parenthood and racial responsibility.

It may be urged that maternity is not the privilege of all women, and that professional training means that a girl must concentrate on a variety of subjects for



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many months. But because the majority of girls will become mothers, because it is impossible to know the future of any one girl, knowledge of maternal science is essential without exception. Whatever work a girl takes up in after life, whether as inspector of factories, hospital nurse, teacher, or doctor, even if actual physical motherhood is not her portion, a knowledge of the care and culture of child life is indispensable.

**Where education fails.**—The chief lack in our educational system is that it fails to instruct girls in those subjects which are the most essential for useful living. "To prepare us for complete living is the function education has to discharge," said Herbert Spencer. And complete living, so far as most women are concerned, is inseparable from the wise performance of the duties of wifedom and motherhood.

In the long years we devote to education, what proportion of time is given to sustained and comprehensive teaching on the meaning, the duties, the responsibilities of maternity? We have no department for teaching right motherhood in our whole system of education. The idea a few years ago would have been considered indecent. To direct the thoughts of "pure young girls" into such channels would have been deemed shocking, indelicate, dangerous. All the time we tacitly educated girls for sex attraction. We taught them useless accomplishments, and, whilst ignoring motherhood, we drilled into them the idea that marriage was the concern of all nice-minded girls, and that a girl must be careful to refrain from doing or saying what would jeopardise her chances in the marriage market. But the meaning of marriage, the consequences of marriages—we left them to find out haphazard as chance or the devil contrived. One thing we made sure of. They would be entirely ignorant of



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maternal science when they held their first child in their arms. Many young wives to-day lose their very chance of motherhood from lack of education in health matters. How many childless women would give ten years of their lives to undo the mistakes of the first few months of married life, the careless disregard of health which brought death to the new life and lasting ill-health to themselves.

**Sex hygiene.**—Definite teaching in hygiene and physiology would give the new generation of mothers knowledge which would go a long way to preserve their own health and ensure the welfare of their children. Education for parenthood must necessarily include direct teaching in sex hygiene. Such instruction, if included in the school curriculum, would have to be very carefully given, either by teachers who possessed the right sort of knowledge themselves, or, better still, by men and women doctors respectively to boys and girls. But it must be given, because ignorance or perverted knowledge is a fundamental factor in the causation of vice. Sex is everywhere, and sex ought not to be, indeed it cannot be, ignored.

“Whatever is worth being is worth knowing,” said Bacon, and what is worth knowing is worth teaching by right methods.

At the Nebraska State Medical Association, in May, 1911, Dr. Henry advocated that every State “should have one or two competent physicians whose duty it shall be to teach these things to the children in all public schools of the State from the time they are 8 years of age. The boys and girls should be given instruction separately by means of charts, pictures, flowers, plants, and then closing with the organs of man. These lectures should be given every year to all the boys and girls separately,



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having those from 8 to 10 together at one time, those from 10 to 12, and those from 12 to 16." This idea has already been practically carried out in certain schools in Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Hungary, by law, and in Germany there is a strong movement for promoting definite teaching of the young in physiology and sex hygiene. Much depends on the character of the teaching. Mere instruction in physiology is not enough, but "instructed innocence," as Margaret Stephens so aptly says in "Woman and Marriage," is far preferable to the old method of permitting children to discover, generally in undesirable ways, the meaning of sex and parenthood. Knowledge must be so imparted that it will appeal to the child's reverent imagination. We must create in the child respect for love and sexual selection, instil the idea that just as "love" is the source of all beauty in life, so this same sex instinct perverted, misused, misdirected, is the source of sorrow and suffering, disease and death.

The sex troubles of modern life are largely the result of our false attitude towards sex truths. Whilst ignorance is dangerous, perverted and irreverent knowledge is fatal.

"The quality of the nation," says Mr. John Russell in the *Eugenics Review*, "will never be what it might be till irreverent dishonour gives way to reverent honour. I should wish boys and girls to come to school with elementary sex knowledge and unashamed—the knowledge that as life and all that it means is a joint gift from their parents, so some day it may be their privilege to confer it upon their children. And I should wish them to be unashamed of this knowledge and of any respectful reference to it as of the knowledge that food feeds them and that sleep restores. I should show



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children incidentally in their Nature lessons how the law of fatherhood and motherhood is the law of everything we call life, and I should introduce them in the case of plants and animals to the principle and some of the results of selective parenthood."

On these lines many educationists, both men and women, are thinking to-day. Such views were freely expressed at the recent Teachers' Eugenics Conference. Opinion on this subject is not by any means unanimous; many people believing that sex instruction should be not the task of the teacher but of the parent, the mother. In this respect motherhood has failed lamentably. How many mothers tell even their daughters the meaning of sex? How many give any warning of the potential dangers which the most sheltered girl may have to face in the world? The fallacy that to keep a girl innocent it is necessary to leave her ignorant, uninstructed concerning the most important question which faces girlhood, is responsible for a great deal of unhappiness and not a few tragedies.

But it is folly to blame the women who have never been educated for motherhood, who have not the language nor the requisite knowledge to explain the great mysteries of life and birth. Our educational system fosters a silly prudery, a false and dangerous modesty, a sense of shame concerning all questions relating to maternity. When girls are educated for motherhood the mother will be able to face these questions simply and bravely. She will not lie to her children and dishonour her motherhood by silly sentimentalities about stars and rose bushes. Whilst she should answer questions, the subject ought not, of course, to be dilated upon, nor should unasked information be supplied. It will be the task of the teacher later to impart definite knowledge, to



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teach elementary physiology, the principles of eugenics, the care and right conduct of the sexual life. The whole school training should indirectly prepare for motherhood by a sound physical, mental and moral education. Everything that contributes to physical health, mind training and character cultivation of girl or boy is education for parenthood. Every girl before leaving school should be warned of the risks and dangers she has to face in life, and told of the existence of the white slave traffic and the social evil, and she should be supplied with such information as will enable her to exercise commonsense care of her health during the monthly regimen. Ignorance of the risks from exposure to chill or excessive physical fatigue is responsible for much suffering and ill-health amongst girls to-day; and childlessness in maturity may be the penalty of ignorance or carelessness in early youth.

**Parental instinct an insufficient guide.**—The number of child deaths for which the lack of mother education is responsible can never even approximately be estimated. The old idea that maternal instinct would teach the mother, like the cat, to care for her young is difficult to eradicate. If an unmarried woman suggests that bacon rind at ten months is an article of diet which has its disadvantages, the slum mother immediately wants to know what "a bit lassie can learn her aboot babies, as have buried six." In all classes there is a widespread fallacy that the mere fact of physical motherhood confers instinctively special knowledge in physiology, hygiene, dietetics. The maternal instinct, unless it is associated with knowledge, does not help the babies of the human species. The human mother needs education which the brute mother can dispense with, because man lives a "civilised" life, and has left behind for all time his



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primitive, natural life in the open air. The maternal instinct tells the mother cat to give milk and warmth to her offspring. The human mother gives poisonous mixtures to her infant in place of Nature's food. She feeds its lungs with poisoned air in over-heated, stuffy rooms, whilst its nervous and physical vitality is undermined by the noises and distractions of over-civilised life. Teach, train and direct instinct in women if you will, but supplement it with knowledge that is essential for child rearing in our social organisation.

**Domestic economy.**—We do not send our boys out into the world without a trade or profession. We do not expect girls who have to enter professional life to succeed without careful training. They have to pass examinations and obtain a diploma in all the higher occupations for women. But when we come to the profession of motherhood, the work which will help to make or mar the race, which is, of all work in the world, the most far-reaching, girls are expected to manage somehow without one year's or even one month's real training. Who can estimate the resulting national loss? The loss of child life through the mother's ignorance probably averages one per family in every country—millions every year. The loss to the race must include an enormous percentage of physically stunted, defective children of men and women morally warped for lack of good training in early life. Anyone who knows the lives of the working classes will vouch for the waste of public money which our present system of education involves. If we are to raise the proletariat we must begin by educating the working man's wife. We have her in our hands during her whole youth time, and we teach her practically nothing of home economics—the most important subject in any woman's education. Particularly is it essential



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that the poor should be taught that ill-health is the natural consequence of living on tinned foods, strong tea, and alcoholic liquors. The value of a regular lesson—even a theoretical lesson with the aid of a blackboard—on how to make a nourishing soup, an inexpensive stew, a suitable pudding for children, can hardly be over-estimated.

Nor is the system that obtains in our high schools and higher-education schools better. With the exception of a few schools which give a course of training in cookery and housewifery, domestic subjects are almost entirely neglected. Hygiene, elementary physiology, sick nursing and first aid—these essential subjects from the point of view of real education are kept out of the curriculum, which is already too “crowded” with literature, languages, algebra and euclid. The girl who is allowed to leave school ignorant of book-keeping and household expenditure, with no knowledge of food values or how to spend a shilling to supply a dinner for three, four, or five people, with perverted ideas of the meaning of sex and parenthood, is worse than badly educated, even if she has taken firsts in mathematics and can speak French fluently with a vile English accent. In many high-class boarding schools parents pay enormous fees and the girls are systematically underfed. This trenches upon the protection of motherhood, because malnutrition and brain pressure during development diminish a girl's potential energy for motherhood in the future. The educational curriculum in most schools would be improved by introducing shorter lessons and more manual training. The girls sit too long at books. In an investigation carried out by a woman doctor in America, 90 per cent. of the girls examined on passing out of the school were found to have curvatures of the spine, anæmia, or other



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health defect. The introduction of home and house crafts into the school curriculum would provide relief from the routine lessons, and all the time the girls would be acquiring knowledge of inestimable value to themselves and to the race.

Our mothers in the making must also be taught infant hygiene if we are to prevent the sacrifice of child life for which ignorant motherhood is largely responsible. A knowledge of child hygiene should be regarded as an essential part of a girl's education, whatever her station in life, whether daughter of peer or peasant, whether destined for business, professional, or purely social life. A beginning has already been made. The baby is making its way into the schools.

**The practical study of children.**—Miss Elizabeth Hughes, a member of the Glamorgan Education Committee, has instituted an interesting scheme with a school at Penarth, South Wales. She has a class of forty children between the ages of 12 and 14. They are divided into two sections of twenty each, and each child spends half the school hours of each day of the school year learning practical homecraft. The last five weeks of the course are devoted entirely to the care of children. Lessons are given by a woman doctor or a school nurse in the hygiene of the child. Each pupil brings a small child to the school nursery, either a small brother or sister, or a neighbour's child. She has charge of the child for a week, and at the end of the time she has to write an account of it—how she would propose to "manage" it, what are its special idiosyncrasies. Thus the principles of child psychology are gradually acquired and the little nurse-mother's intelligence is brought to bear on the problem. During the first part of the nursery training, children of about 3 years of age are studied,



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and the little nurse-mothers have to teach them to play ; they have to take charge of them and keep them as much as possible out of doors. During the second week of the time children of 2 years of age are utilised ; then still younger children ; whilst in the last part of the training a number of children of different ages are studied in order to give the students an idea of general child management in the home. The whole training is essentially practical. The teacher gives instruction as to the sort of food which should be given according to the age of the child. She shows the students how to bath their little charges. She instructs them about sleep, rest, play, and teaches the principle that a child will be "good" if it is well disciplined, properly fed, healthy, and therefore happy.

An interesting result of this scheme is that the mothers of the girls have been won over to enthusiasm. They come to the class to see something of the teaching. They arrange that their little girls will do the same work on Saturdays that they have been learning during the week, and willingly send their younger children to act as babies in the nursery.

Infant management is also taught at a private school at Scarborough. A special house is set apart for the teaching of homecraft. Babies are always in residence, and the young students are taught by a Queen Charlotte nurse everything concerning the care, management and welfare of infants. Because this sort of teaching touches the human note and provides knowledge which is intensely interesting to every natural girl, it will be remembered and acted upon years afterwards, when historical dates and irregular verbs have faded from the student's memory.

In the elementary schools it has been suggested that



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some practical teaching in child management be given in association with the domestic subjects already taught. It has been proposed to utilise crèches and day nurseries for practical teaching purposes, and that various girls should be selected from the upper standards to spend certain hours each day at one of the nurseries during a period of two or three months.

In the high schools and colleges also something is being done. Certain schools have classes in hygiene. Some include cookery and first aid. At the North London Collegiate School, at the Ladies' College, Cheltenham, at the Alexandra College, Dublin, and other schools of this type, a year's training in household economics is provided for senior girls. But in every school a recognised domestic course should be compulsory, followed by an examination. The Institute of Hygiene proposes to give to girls leaving school collegiate certificates in cookery, hygiene, physiology, eugenics, nursing, first aid, and child management. The idea is sound. Let such training of girls be universal in the elementary, secondary, and higher-education schools.

**Training the child.**—Education for motherhood is a State question of far-reaching social and economic importance. The day will come when education will be studied with regard to its social, economic, and psychological advantages. Children must be trained in citizenship, and provided with a moral education which will foster high ideals and make for the cultivation of character. Our present methods tend to the development of petty individualism. The child must be taught the meaning of social obligations. The individual has obligations to other individuals. A State has obligations to other States. Any education which does not cultivate international sympathy and a regard for international



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morality retards the evolution of humanity. The need of the hour is the training of mothers and the training of teachers in the larger lessons of life, so that the new generation of men and women may have a sane and strong sense of human responsibility and a better understanding of the unity of the whole human race.

**Education for parents.**—The association known as the Parents' National Educational Union aims at helping parents of all classes to understand the best principles of education in all its aspects, especially those which concern the formation of habits and character. It is a movement which will help to bring about the co-operation of parents and teachers, a very real need at the present stage of education. The harmonising of home and school training must somehow be achieved. The Parent-Teachers' Union in the United States, organised by the National Congress of Mothers, is working to this end. The Parents' Union in England, by its publications, its propaganda work, is providing a real inspiration for thousands of mothers who have to teach their children in the home, either alone or with the help of a governess. Respect for the personality of the child is a quite modern view of education. That the child's personality must not be encroached upon, whether by fear or love, suggestion or influence, or undue play upon any one natural desire, is one of the first principles of the educational philosophy of the Parents' Union. Therefore education must be an atmosphere, an environment, in which the child must live freely under proper conditions. "Education is the science of relations," and the child's natural relation with things and thoughts can be fostered, cultivated, and directed by the parents' presentation of knowledge, both intellectual and spiritual. Every parent member is



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pledged to a religious basis of work, and no separation is allowed to grow up between the intellectual and spiritual life of the children, who are taught that the Divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits and is their continual Helper in all the interests, duties, and joys of life.<sup>1</sup> The moral training of the child, the inculcation of "self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control," is indispensable in education for parenthood. Boys and girls must be trained to a common standard of honour, morality, chastity. It has been said that women should be pure and men brave. It is equally important that men should be pure and women brave.

The growing tendency to the association of girls and boys, young men and women, in the schools and universities is exerting a salutary influence in modern social life. Free, healthy companionship between the two sexes is made possible. Young men have the opportunity of making friends with girls of the best type, instead of, as in the past, being restricted in their acquaintance with the other sex to girls of an inferior moral and mental type. And nothing is better for a boy than friendship with a clean-souled, quick-witted girl comrade whose gift of friendship will exert an inestimable influence for good by satisfying his nature through the most dangerous years of his life and counteracting any tendency to morbid desires and sex perversion. And girls, in their frank relationship with boys, are learning something of the best sporting spirit in their mutual games and recreations. They enjoy an opportunity for friendships which would have been designated

<sup>1</sup> Mothers who desire further information should apply to the Hon. Mrs. Franklin, Hon. Organising Secretary, 50 Porchester Terrace, London, W.



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dangerous a generation ago. And so young men and girls are exerting a fine humanising influence upon each other.

**Girl Guides and Camp-Fire Girls.**—Many of the best educational movements on behalf of girls are divorced from the school; that is, they are initiated by voluntary effort on the lines of forming "groups" or organisations which are an attempt to meet the new social needs of girls in this generation. The Boy Scout movement has in England a parallel organisation for girls, similar to yet dissimilar from the scheme for boys. The idea is to provide a practical training and definite interests for girls in their hours of recreation. The President of the Girl Guide movement, Miss Baden-Powell, and its promoters have grasped the essential truth that by training, educating and uplifting the mothers of the future, women can best help the cause of social reform. There is only one thing more important to a nation than the training of boys, and that is the wise education, character building, and health training of girls. The great need of the State is for better hygiene, housewifery and health in the home. The Guide movement trains the girls in a wide range of subjects, which include cookery, swimming, botany, first aid, observation, sick nursing, trekking. Its aim is to make girls healthier, happier, more efficient, and that is a very essential preparation for motherhood.

This movement is in line with a similar one in America, with which it ought to co-operate—the Camp-Fire Girls, a remarkable association brought into being by Dr. Luther Gulick, whose aim is to help girls to get ready for the new world which woman is finding herself in—for the readjustment of her work which is coming all over the world. He believes woman's work must be



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standardised and remunerated if it is to assume dignity and importance. So the Camp-Fire Girls' Association is to make for status by training girls to perform efficiently and with interest and joy the home duties which are so apt to degenerate into drudgery. The "Camp-Fire Girls" are so called because the "fire" is, and always has been, the centre of the home, because the "camp" represents human solidarity, or the coming together of a group, and because "camp fire" suggests the romantic outdoor element which makes such an appeal to every healthy girl. The founders of this association believe that we ought to bring romance into the business of living, that if we instil zest, freshness and keen interest into our domestic duties, everyday life will have a new meaning.

There are three orders of the Camp-Fire Girls—the Wood Gatherers, the Fire Makers, and the Torch Bearers. When a girl joins she becomes a Wood Gatherer. She promises to seek beauty, to give service, to pursue knowledge, to be trustworthy, to hold on to health, to love her work, to be happy. She receives a badge—a ring bearing the design of seven faggots, symbolising the seven points of the law.

The candidate for the rank of Fire Maker must pass various tests or examinations in health-craft, home-craft, Nature law, camp-craft, handicraft, business and patriotism. The activities of these seven groups represent the different phases of woman's work. Their study makes for status in that work, for pride and joy in life. The "Fire Maker's Desire" indicates the ethical ideals of the American Camp-Fire Girls: "As fuel is brought to the fire, so I purpose to bring my strength, my ambition, my heart's desire, my joy and my sorrow to the fire of humankind; for I will tend, as my fathers



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have tended, and my fathers' fathers since time began, the love of man for man, and the love of man for God."

Here again is the idea of the social consciousness, the sense of unity and service which is the essence of all true education. If the aim of education be efficiency and altruism, the best ends of individuals and of the community are served.



## CHAPTER XVII

### MOTHERHOOD AND THE WOMAN MOVEMENT

THE beginnings of feminism are lost in antiquity. Feminists must have existed in all times and amongst all nations. When primitive man clubbed primitive woman into domestic submission, she was inarticulate because physically cowed. Physical force ruled the world when intellectuality and character were only latent in the human species, and woman's elevation in status may be taken as a very fair indication of the progress of civilisation in general.

It is reasonable to suppose that man's attitude towards woman, his physical inferior for many centuries, if not in the very earliest times, would gradually alter with the development of his higher nature. We see evidences all through history that a certain number of men were always ready to concede the encroachments of women upon the rights which, through the ages, had been considered the prerogative of the male. If all men had opposed the emancipation of women, it is doubtful if there would be any woman movement in the present day. If men as a sex had been united in their determination to retain for themselves educational, legal and civic advantages, there would have been no woman question perhaps, but civilisation would not have reached its present stage. It is a fact—and modern feminists cannot wish to ignore it—that it is to a very large extent through the efforts of men in social betterment that the rights of women have so far been recognised.



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Opposition to feminine emancipation has been rooted in prejudice, fear of change; and opposition has come from women almost as freely as from men, originating in the idea that women and men have each their different and separated "spheres," between which a sharp line of demarcation can be drawn. The separation of their spheres of labour and activity was supposed to be due to the "natural" differences in function of the two sexes, although the lessons of biology and history provide us with a different explanation.

Men and women are fundamentally alike, whilst essentially different. They are alike in the broad human sense; their essential differences are rooted in their sexual characteristics. What men find attractive in women, and women in men, are these different traits which may be expressed in the much abused yet expressive words, "womanliness" and "manliness." It is the effeminate man—when it is not the prejudiced and jealous male—who dislikes woman and fears her emancipation. It is the abnormal woman whose conception of the movement after freedom is one of antagonism to the "stronger sex." What adds to the difficulty of modern life is that these abnormal types of men and women exist in sufficient numbers to affect popular opinion and to obscure the issue. A vast amount of energy is wasted in futile argument as to the relative superiority of men and women. We have insufficient data to make any decision possible. Even if woman is "undeveloped man" or man "rudimentary female," no good purpose is served by insisting upon the fact. Both statements, after all, are true. Each sex contains undeveloped organs and functions which are more fully developed in the other. Each has mental and psychical qualities which the other possesses in less degree. Neither is superior to the



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other. Ability, power, character, like genius, are sexless. The lesson of biology is that, when sex exists, the two sexes are mutually dependent. Nietzsche expresses something of this idea when he says, "The perfect woman is a higher and rarer type of humanity than the perfect man, but, at the same time, her influence can only be rightly exercised with the support and co-operation of man." Sociologically, sex antagonism is destructive. Morally, it is opposed to altruism, to the spirit of sympathy and desire to promote the good of others which is the basis of social consciousness behind all the social progress of to-day.

We are all, men and women, human beings with work to do in the world, and we must do it to the best of our ability with the faculties we have inherited and the power we may have acquired. Education gives power and discovers opportunity to do better work, and so women as well as men must be given the advantage of education.

The movement for the higher education of women started in the middle of the nineteenth century. About 1850 several colleges for girls were founded in London and elsewhere—Bedford College, Queen's College, and, somewhat later, Cheltenham College. Colleges were established at Oxford and Cambridge to provide a university training for women, and before the close of the nineteenth century every British university except Oxford and Cambridge granted degrees in art, science and medicine to women students. Almost at the same time American women's colleges were founded—Mount Holyoke in 1836, Vassar in 1867, Radcliffe in 1879—and women's right to professional education was freely conceded.

Even in England women can study and pass examina-



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tions in theology and in law, although they may not practise as solicitors or barristers; whilst in America there are over 2,000 women lawyers, perhaps 4,000 women clergy, and nearly 10,000 women graduates in medicine. Popular opposition to the entrance of women to the higher professions is gradually dying out. The fact that the female sex is numerically in excess provides a very practical reason why girls should be educated to fit them to earn a living in the labour market. Marriage and motherhood, formerly almost the only "career" available to women outside the cloister, can claim but a proportion of the women. We have in civilised countries hundreds of thousands more women than men. In England and Germany the women are a million in excess. Taking the figures for all Europe, there are approximately 1,024 women to every 1,000 men. And this in spite of the fact that more boys are born than girls. With the better protection of women at childbirth the number of males born alive might be considerably increased. In England, for example, 140 boys are stillborn for every 100 girls. This is partly due to the fact that boys have larger heads; but with proper care, with the provision of medical attendance for every necessitous mother at childbirth, many of these lives would be saved. In spite of this higher mortality of boys at birth, there is an excess of males born alive, the figures being 104 boys in England to every 100 girls; in France, 106; in Russia, 107; in Philadelphia, 110. We have a further loss of boy life after birth. More boy babies succumb in the first year than girls; it may be because the vitality of the female is greater, owing to her more important reproductive function and her greater biological value as a potential mother. It is certain that the better care of maternity would reduce



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the infant mortality rate, and the proportion of boys would therefore increase.

So long as women outnumber men it is impossible that all women should be provided for by marriage. Women, also, should not be forced to accept marriage for economic reasons. Some women do not wish to marry, though perhaps this is an evidence of defect, physical or psychical. Weiniger's idea that "woman only respects woman when she is married" is accepted as a truism by most men, so also is the fallacy of supposing that the state of the unmarried woman is explained by lack of opportunity. There are just as many types of women as of men. There are women to whose natural frigidity marriage and motherhood make no appeal. They prefer a life of independent work, and they have the right to lives of their own choosing without criticism regarding their lack of womanliness or motherliness, just as men have in corresponding circumstances. One result of the woman movement is that the unsatisfied old maid of a bygone age, whose end was sometimes insanity with sex delusions, is replaced by a working woman who has gained that mental equilibrium which is best conferred by satisfying work.

**Sex rivalry and sex war.**—The entry of women into the labour market has advantages and disadvantages. In spite of the admonitions of great men and kings, "Cooking, Children and Church" can no longer be regarded as the bounds of woman's sphere—at least, until the activities associated with these are entirely reorganised. If, for example, women were allowed a free hand in all that concerns childhood—in its hygienic, its educational, its medical, its legislative, and its psychological factors, it would involve the concession to



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her of every one of her rights, including that of direct influence upon all legislation affecting the home.

Reorganisation and readjustment of the home activities of women, combined with regulation of woman's work outside the home, is essential if the present competition of men and women in the labour market is not to have disastrous results.

Every serious student of economics deplores the increasing competition between the sexes. Controversy rages round the whole subject. There is the type of person who considers that a woman should refuse to accept a lower wage than would be paid to a man for the same quality and quantity of work, oblivious of the fact that a hungry woman must work if she is to eat, and that even badly paid work is difficult to obtain. Then there is the extreme suffragist opinion which regards the vote as the cure for all the ills of the labour market. The bitterness of men, faced with unemployment when the employer substitutes cheap female labour for the higher wages of men, is vented upon those who are only helpless victims of our social order. We see brothers displaced by sisters, young men's wages undercut by the girls who should be their wives rearing children in the home. We see husbands ousted by their own wives. An employer in a midland town recently dismissed fifty men in one morning, telling them they could go home and send their wives to do the same work, if they liked, at a wage which would work out at a gain of 7s. per head per week to the employer. We have the undercutting of women workers by the pocket-money girls. We have employers offering wages to their shop assistants which are absolutely inadequate unless they are supplemented by the wages of sin. The whole system of the sweated labour of women is an ever grow-



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ing social danger, a menace to morality, to marriage and parenthood, and to the race. To push women out of the labour market is no solution of the problem. To encourage the full competition of sweated women workers with men will lead to far-reaching evils, social, economic, hygienic.

It is not by feminine invasion of every field of man's labour that emancipation will be won, but by elevating the work and the duties which have always belonged to women, and by bringing about the co-operation of men and women in work for the child. We cannot draw a sharp line of demarcation between man's work and woman's. Certain occupations call for the faculties which are peculiarly masculine; in the organisation and conduct of war—which a higher civilisation will find means to abolish—in finance, in all that pertains to the life of the sea, in every sphere where physical force and sustained nervous energy are essential, man must reign supreme. Other work calls for the characteristics which are more especially womanly, which woman, as the mother, the creator of the home and the rearer of children for thousands of years, has gradually acquired. Such work must embrace all that concerns the life of the family and the child, whilst in the sphere of public affairs women's special service and special faculties will find a scope in promoting the domestic welfare of the community, the betterment of home conditions, housing reform, and in dealing with all the great social questions which especially affect women and children. The stream of energy which is at present being poured into the movement for the enfranchisement of women must be directed, when the battle is won, to schemes for bringing science into home life, for minimising domestic drudgery, for making home work interesting, satisfying and re-



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munerative. and so a greater reform than any yet achieved—the winning of motherhood back to the home—will be rendered possible. The reorganisation of the homes of the country, the better standardisation of woman's work, will entail some measure of reorganisation in the State, but the protection and uplifting of motherhood must be the supreme end of modern reformers. To raise the status of women and of women's labour would indirectly make for the improvement of man's work and wages and the betterment of the whole social organisation. The realisation of this fact has strengthened the demand of women for civic and political rights, which is not being urged because of any certainty that the vote will be the panacea for all the evils of industrial competition to which women are being subjected. It will, however, bring about the removal of many economic and legal disabilities of women by providing those who are at present inarticulate politically with a means of expressing their needs, whilst it will also help to abolish the underselling of men in the labour market.

In every country in the world we have millions of women in the labour market, workers, citizens in exactly the same sense as men are, who have every logical right to enfranchisement if they demand the vote. In America three millions, in England five and a half millions, in France between seven and eight millions, in Germany ten millions of women are working under conditions which cry out for alteration, and these women are being denied direct political representation and the power it confers of controlling legislation.

**The rights of the housewife.**—We also have the demand from an ever-increasing number of women in the home, of mothers who believe that the evolution of mankind



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will be delayed until the maternal half of the race is legally and politically free and permitted direct influence in framing laws which have to do with the building up of family and national life. The mothers of the race have special faculties and can give special service to the State in all that concerns the domestic welfare of the community and the betterment of home conditions, in legislation for the protection of children, and in the organisation of women's labour. In this period of transition there is danger that the special aptitudes of women are being misdirected, for a time necessarily so, because of the need of concentration. But the whole movement is meant to make for the uplifting of domesticity. Already there are signs that women are beginning to specialise in those particular occupations which, in spite of the cant associated with the phrase, remain our true vocation—in home making, child rearing, in the protection, preservation, and training of new life.

The vote is not an end in itself. It is indeed a beginning of a new era for women, when they will not cease to serve, but when their maternal qualities will be exercised in the social service of humanity. Woman has shown in her business and professional capacity a steady advance. If she has made no great discovery, no startling success, she has nevertheless progressed, and woman as a social factor, an intellectual entity, is still very young, almost a "child in the go-cart." She still, much more than man, is handicapped as a worker by social and family demands upon her energy. The woman worker—the artist, the writer, the doctor, the scientist—with tiny hands pulling at her skirts, sweet voices calling her from "work," is gloriously, deliciously retarded in her intellectual flight compared with man. We mothers



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can never accomplish the "best" work of the world from man's point of view, because the mere fact of physical motherhood saps energy and often health; because, psychically, the highest, best, deepest forces of a mother's personality are expended in the domestic sphere, and so the power of "work," of mere intellectual achievement, is necessarily diminished. Some may find consolation in the fact, if they happen to be ambitious, that few men in any one generation produce work that is really great. Given equal opportunities, in spite of the inferior physical attributes of women, there is very little difference one way or the other between the abilities of the average man and the average woman. Many women, I know, refuse to acknowledge even the physical inferiority of women, and I admit that in vitality woman is at least man's equal. Her greater resistance to disease, her greater longevity may be quoted in support of this view; but in muscular, in physical force her inferiority must be acknowledged, and, if for no other reason than this, displays of violence in support of women's claim to the vote are a mistake.

**Militancy and the franchise.**—In the exercise of force women can never compete with men, and they place themselves at once at a disadvantage by adopting militancy in retaliation for what they consider the trickery and shuffling with which their claims have been met. Further, in my opinion—and I express it with all humility, admiring the courage and realising the suffering of many of the women who have adopted violent tactics—there is no ethical justification for a violence which has already been productive of tragedy, and which, if continued, must have disastrous consequences. Victory achieved by such methods is defeat, a step back-



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ward in the great woman's movement. And the bitterness, the sex antagonism, the spirit of rancour or revenge which militancy stimulates, is the worst feature of the movement. But those who are alienated by militancy should consider that in every great struggle for reform there have been extravagances and extremists. The struggle in this case has been so prolonged that the wonder is that it is only a small minority of women, a few hundreds out of millions of women (taking into account the members of suffrage societies alone in all countries), who have given way to bitterness and despair. The woman's tide of civilisation may be retarded for a time by the opponents or even by the advocates of "votes for women," but ultimate victory is assured, because the emancipation of women, as of men, is on the lines of evolution.

The vote is only a symbol. Political enfranchisement may mean very little. But at least it will widen the interests and enlarge the activities and the opportunities of women to give better service to the community.

The present unrest and dissatisfaction of women are often deplored as anti-social. Their claim is deemed selfish, individualistic, and it is suggested that the very nature of woman is changing for the worse, in that hardness, self-assertiveness, a hideous independence, are more and more apparent, alienating the chivalrous and protective instincts of man. Women are changing. The fact cannot be denied. They are demanding economic independence as daughters and as wives. They are restless under any suggestion of submission. They are becoming self-dependent in place of being merely receptive, but it has yet to be proved that woman is changing in nature or losing in any degree the best qualities of womanliness.



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Through woman and her maternalness love was born in the home ; and, so long as human nature remains as it is, woman's best gifts to the family and the nation must be the outcome of her genius for devotion, love, and service.

But the whole woman movement is an expression of the wider outlook, the developing altruism of modern woman. The home consciousness is still there, but there is a new consciousness which is now expressing itself in every civilised land, the woman movement being only one phase of it. A new moral energy, a new seriousness is being evinced by both men and women in connection with all social questions. The united work for the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in England was her expression of this spirit. The intense interest in prison reform in America, the international Conferences on infant mortality, the peace Congresses, and the Conferences on sociology, eugenics, medicine and science which are being held in the capitals of the world, all indicate the development of international relationships and international sympathy. A great unifying influence is at work, and women are playing their part. Never before has the world seen anything like so concerted a demand for justice to individuals and nations, so splendid an expression of the divine love and sympathy which lies latent in all humanity.

This century also has brought to women the glorious gift of working together for a common purpose and for the common good. In every country the great mass of women above the mediocre level of intelligence are banded together in mutual effort and mutual service. They are faced with the resistance which prejudice and conservatism arouse against all reforms. Reactionary societies have naturally been formed—leagues for oppos-



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ing woman's entry into municipal work in America, for opposing woman suffrage in England. In the Netherlands there is even opposition to women winning the right to possess their own property. That in England women should join a league, formed and largely financed by men, for preventing their own sex from obtaining the rights of full citizenship is a paradox that almost makes one believe in the alleged lack in women of the sense of humour. But, after all, the promoters of these societies help the woman's cause, because they reach many of the indifferent and make them think about the question. Once a woman begins to regard herself as one who should, or should not, have rights as a human being, instead of being somebody's wife or mother or sweetheart, she is an emancipationist in embryo. Whether we are suffragists or suffragettes, anti-suffragists or merely indifferent, we cannot fail to see that the movement, spreading in all parts of the globe, has aroused in women a new power of "team work," has given them wider social interests, and a clearer realisation that they have duties to humanity apart from their home and family interests.

The world's attitude to the question of woman suffrage is changing. The ridicule and contempt meted out to the pioneers are things of the past. People may be indignant with the suffragettes. They may hate and oppose them. They may consider them criminal. But they have ceased to think them funny. Woman suffrage is no longer the joke of the comic papers, in England at least. It is a vital issue, a living reality. It is, in a word, practical politics.

**The women's claim.**—The battle-cry of the woman movement is, for the moment, Political Equality. But behind and above is the claim for individual liberty



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and for a true democracy. Women are striving for economic, legal, and sexual independence. They are no longer to be dependent upon their sex functions for a means of livelihood. They are making demands upon man for higher standards of morality, for greater humanness as well as for political integrity. Politics, it has often been said, are so corrupt and defiled, so dirty a "game," that it is in the best interests of women that they should be debarred from entering political life. And the woman's reply is that the time has arrived when politics must cease to be a party game at all, and politicians shall truly represent the people and work for the uplifting of the State. The sooner women are granted political enfranchisement, the better on the whole for social advancement and social welfare. Apart from the use they would make of the vote, women, as Ellen Key, Charlotte Gilman, and other writers have emphasised, would introduce into political life a fresh current of ideas and ideals. Their entrance into politics may not be productive of unmixed good—no reform ever is—but in every sphere, home, municipality, and State, men and women together can accomplish more than either men or women working alone. In local government women's services are recognised and valued. The possession of civic rights increases woman's sense of responsibility for her town. Political rights will still further widen her horizon. The home sphere is the average woman's greatest and most important sphere, just as it is the average man's. But public-spirited mothers and fathers are needed in every country in the world to uplift and improve the homes which in the aggregate comprise the State. The winning of the Parliamentary vote is recognised by all thoughtful women as only one phase of the movement. As father rule succeeded mother rule because



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it became at a certain stage of evolution more advantageous to mankind, so now we have reached an epoch when father rule united to mother rule, with equal status and responsibilities, will best promote the good of the family and the State.

At the same time, we must recognise that men and women have physiologically and psychologically different functions, that while the demand for equal rights in the family and in society is based upon natural law, we are on different ground when it is maintained that the free industrial competition of married women in the labour market has not serious disadvantages. It may be that we have no right to compel the mother of young children to remain in the home, but we can somehow provide that she is not forced for economic reasons to leave her babies and undertake work that is injurious to her as a mother and to her child. If women, with the wider powers which they will soon possess, do not so reconstruct and reorganise the home and the conditions of work and recreation generally that the mother and child are kept together, the whole movement will have essentially failed.

**After the vote has been won.**—In one sense, certainly, the vote is the "thin edge of the wedge." The fears of anti-suffragists that women will not be satisfied with the vote, that their demand for political representation includes also the claim to be more adequately associated with the affairs of the State, are not groundless. The prospect of the election of women to Parliament is one that very few people in England to-day view without misgiving. At the same time, the feeling is growing that women will demand, and must ultimately be allowed, some measure of political power, a more direct share in making the laws of the country, in framing legislation



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as it affects the welfare of women and children, of the home and family life. To this end a mixed Parliament is not essential, nor even desirable. Nor would a Women's Parliament elected by unenfranchised women, as has been proposed in the Press, meet the case. A Women's Parliamentary Committee, however, could be elected on the following system: In every constituency, besides the male party candidates, two women could stand for election. The same two names could be put up in eight, ten or twelve constituencies in order to limit the number of elected women to sixty. Every male elector and every woman elector would have two votes—one for a man, the other for a woman candidate. The elected women, tried workers in education, local government, science, economics, medicine, public work generally, would form a committee fitted to deal with the framing and amending of Bills in the interests of women and children. They would be salaried, like the men legislators, would have their own committee room or chamber, either in the House of Commons or in a separate building. They would consider every Bill which concerned the home, the child, the woman, the family. They would have the power of delaying legislation and of directly influencing legislation through conference, for example, with a Committee of the House of Commons. They would concern themselves with investigation work, and with the organisation of Child Welfare Bureaux, Health and Hygiene Bureaux, and Bureaux for the distribution and control of women's work, for the consideration of their wages and special interests. The milk supply, the purity and cleanliness of food, housing reform, trades schools, the organisation of domestic service, State education for motherhood, the care of neglected children, juvenile delinquency, prostitution,



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infant mortality—these are some of the questions which require women's consideration and co-operation.

In particular, there is the whole problem of motherhood, associated as it is with race improvement. How is motherhood to be better protected? How are the women of the future to be made healthier and more efficient mothers? In this of all subjects the woman's view must have free and full expression by voice and vote.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE MOTHERS OF THE FUTURE

IN concluding this book I must express my realisation of the fact that there is no one remedy, no single solution, of the various social ills we have briefly considered. I have tried to put before the reader the different aspects and the various economic and legal disabilities of motherhood in the hope of rousing both men and women to a sense of the need for some constructive scheme of reform. We have seen how, for lack of mother protection, 50,000 infants are needlessly sacrificed every year; how mothers are working for inadequate wages, to the moral and physical detriment of their children; how families are being broken up which should be kept together; how sickness and premature death of mothers are a direct consequence of neglect; how youthful criminals are produced, and how under present conditions national power is jeopardised. The vote is not in itself a remedy. The endowment of motherhood is not a remedy. Neither is the removal of artificial barriers restricting women from entering men's spheres of activity. But everything which tends to raise the status of women—above all to secure the adequate protection of woman as mother—is in the best interests of the community, of men and women to-day, and of the generation to come. We must all agree that by assisting and uplifting motherhood, we can *help* to prevent social evils. Our aim must be to give all women an improved economic and industrial status, with the idea not of increasing the competition of men and



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women in the labour market, but of directing the current of women's labour into somewhat different channels, and above all of making it unnecessary that expectant and nursing mothers should toil for a money wage. We ask for the legal and political emancipation of women, believing that the true emancipation of woman is the emancipation of mankind. We women know that "emancipation" will not ensure that men and women will be "equal." The differences between them are too great. Sexual dimorphism, absent in the lowest forms of life, becomes more and more marked as we ascend the life scale. The higher the species, the more difference between male and female; the more apparent do the secondary sexual characteristics become. So the conclusion is, not that men and women can do the same things in the same way, as certain feminists aver. It is the differences between the two sexes that provide the most valuable evolutionary factors. Whilst recognising this biological principle, we yet demand equality of opportunity, and believe that with greater knowledge it will be possible to differentiate between the work that men are able to do better than women and that which women are able to do better than men. Woman has made the home. Man has founded the State. The State is coming more into relationship with home life, and women are asking for a more direct and more intimate share of legislation in order that they may have opportunity and power in those departments of the State that have to do with their own sphere. They must be more closely associated with administrative work for public health and hygiene, and for education. They must directly cooperate with men in obtaining reforms which will strengthen the home and the family.

**A Government Home Department.**—A Home Department



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of the Government would deal with the classification and regulation of all matters relating to home life, the housing and diet of the people, the care of infancy and maternity. Such a department might be largely controlled by women if it were formed on the lines of the Women's Parliamentary Committee advocated in the previous chapter. The Home Department would include a Mothers' Bureau under a central authority, with a committee of capable women, in touch with district nurses, midwives, municipal authorities, charitable associations, and with all the agencies for counteracting infant mortality, such as schools for mothers and baby crèches. We hear a good deal about the "superfluous women" in England and elsewhere. Could not the energies of these women be turned to account, as foster mothers, foster nurses, in a State scheme for protecting the children and assisting necessitous mothers? The National League for Mother Protection would provide a nucleus of considerable value in the event of such a development of domestic legislation. It would organise the rank and file of motherhood, and by means of county associations and district branches provide a means by which every necessitous mother could be reached and helped. By means of annual conferences, and by federation of the leagues of different nations, the movement would become international, worldwide.

**The reorganisation of home industries.**—Another section of the Government Home Department would deal with the reorganisation of home industries. If mothers could be provided with home work under fair conditions and were decently paid for it, those who had little children would not be tempted to work outside the home to augment the father's income. In certain districts it has been proved that arts and crafts can be revived to the



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advantage of the worker, and the further co-operation of influential women to promote this end is much to be desired. A great stimulus has been given to Irish industries since Lady Aberdeen promoted the depot system for disposing of lace and embroidery, which in old days the women had so little opportunity of selling at a fair price. Lady Paget has suggested that the Crystal Palace might be turned to account in a scheme for stimulating home industries, by being utilised as a large central store or exhibition where work could be disposed of, on the lines of the Kunst-Gewerbe-Museums in Germany. Workers in different industries could send samples of their work for exhibition, and arrangements could be made directly between the producer and customer. Such work as lace-making, pottery, carving, metal work, tapestry, embroidery, would provide pleasurable and profitable work for women in the home in place of the present sweated industries.

**State hospitals for mothers.**—The Home Department would also have to do with the organisation and control of State or municipal hospitals for mothers, so that every mother who desired it might be provided with special surgical care in an aseptic environment, with the opportunity for rest, special diet and treatment. The care of expectant mothers is a social duty, and in the interest of the nation provision must be made that every mother may be adequately nursed and medically attended, and every child have an opportunity of coming into the world under fair conditions. It may be that it will be found easier to provide, under some modification of the present system, for the care of mothers at childbirth in their own homes, but whether they are removed to hospitals or attended in the home, it is necessary to arrange for someone to look after the home when the mother is unable



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to do so. Dr. Henriette Furth has suggested that in Germany efficient women should be provided by the State to look after the mother and infant and the home generally, apart from the midwife. These women might be called "house-nurses," and they would spend a few hours with different cases every day, the midwives' duties being purely medical, whilst the house-nurse would have some knowledge of cooking, child management and home hygiene.

**Insurance for mothers.**—The Home Department of the Government would also frame some scheme by which mothers would be permitted to stay at home and nurse their infants for a period of six months, thus providing a practical solution of the infant mortality problem. All the laws of Nature demand that mother and child should be kept together during these months of the child's absolute dependence, and to this end special securities should be created. Under our present industrial system it is economically impossible for many thousands of women to fulfil this natural duty, whilst from the physiological standpoint a very large number of mothers, through sheer semi-starvation, are unfit to nurse. We have seen how mortality and disease have resulted to both mother and child from past neglect, and we are forced to the conviction that adequate motherhood insurance must be devised. This should include "pregnancy insurance," on the line of supplying at least four weeks' immunity from strain and stress to all mothers before birth, whether they are wage earning or giving of their vitality in home service without recompense. The care of nursing mothers is especially necessary in the interests of national health and efficiency. To supply every baby with healthy mother's milk would make for physical regeneration. The French system of paying premiums to nursing mothers



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is sound, in so far as it helps a mother to buy food for herself during the long months after birth, and makes her more physically fit to nurse. It is not a case of bribing women to become mothers, but of giving some measure of protection to the woman once the child is born. Such premiums would add very considerably to the cost of motherhood insurance, but a special fund might be provided which would be contributed by the State, by the municipalities and county councils, by small contributions from the insured, by private donations.

**Pensions for mothers.**—In America the question of pensions for mothers has become practical politics, as we have seen. A Widows' Pensions Bill would, in my opinion, meet with very little opposition in England, and it would be a step in the right direction. During the year ended September 30th, 1907, Poor Law relief was given to nearly 70,000 widows with children. From the Census of Paupers it appears that 34,832 widows were in receipt of indoor relief on March 31st, 1906. We already recognise that the widow and the fatherless child have some claim upon the State, and it has been proved that it is cheaper for the State to pension the mother and permit her to keep her home together than to remove her children to institutions. Further, the institution child is deprived of mother love and training, and nothing can make up for the lack of these. If a mother's poverty compels her to neglect her child, the poverty should be removed, not the child. And because no woman can be both father and mother to the family, the widow should be freed from wage-earning outside the home, and be given adequate State aid in rearing her children. She is not an object of charity. Her pension is a payment for civic service, not a form of outdoor relief. She should be helped to keep her home together, even if she is required



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to earn what she can at home by sewing, teaching, or (when once they are organised) in home industries.

The pension for widowed mothers might later be extended to women with invalid husbands, deserted wives, and mothers whose husbands are in prison, and the claims of the unmarried mother would also have to be considered. The argument that by extending such benefits to the mothers of illegitimate children we are putting a premium on vice is sociologically and economically unsound.

**Parental responsibility.**—The fear of undermining parental responsibility must not be allowed to prevent us from grappling with these questions on practical lines. The care of children is first the duty of those who brought them into the world, and during the years of the woman's child-bearing, at least, wage-earning should devolve upon the father. Women are doing their share of social work as child-bearers and child-rearers during the years when their maternal functions are in operation. Therefore they should be protected economically, hygienically, physiologically. Society must somehow requite motherhood, either through the fathers, or as it may ultimately be arranged, by direct endowment of motherhood, as a social service to the community. It is necessary that the fathers should not be allowed to avoid their economic responsibilities; and thus there are advantages in a scheme of direct taxation, so as to provide fewer loopholes for evasion of responsibility. From each individual, each member of the State, a certain amount of work and of money ought to be demanded for the maintenance of order, health and happiness in that State.

The parasitic father is not so insurmountable an obstacle to the protection of motherhood as many people believe. The average father is honestly desirous of doing



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his best for those dependent upon him. Responsible fatherhood, tenderness, and care of offspring are commoner than neglect and indifference. And as the cost of such assistance of motherhood would be defrayed out of taxation, men of all classes would be, directly or indirectly, called upon to pay a share. The cost could not even approximately be estimated without careful investigation, but if adequate mother insurance cost the country many millions per annum, the expenditure would prove an economy in the end, owing to the lessened disease, destitution and crime. Such a measure, associated with restraint upon diseased and defective parentage, would in two or three generations do more for efficiency, health, and moral hygiene than any bolstering-up process applied to human beings after they have sunk into destitution and disease, and acquired the alcoholic habit, which so often originates in malnutrition of mind and body.

The provision of State pensions for mothers, by removing many married women from the labour market, would improve industrial conditions for men. The danger of abuse would be met by systematic inspection in districts, mapped out according to the Elberfeld plan, but with paid women inspectors, who might also engage in the education of the mothers. Neglectful mothers, mothers who evaded the rules, would be summarily dealt with, but the need for reprimanding and punishing irresponsible mothers would, I think, rarely arise. Many mothers (and fathers) would not desire or require assistance. Some would not deserve it; but the children ought not to be made to suffer in any case, and the State of the future will devise some way of compelling the shirkers—in every class—to contribute some measure of useful work to the community, and not, as



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now, refuse to help necessitous motherhood and childhood from fear of making things too easy for the idle and vicious.

**The status of mothers.**—Apart from the economic question, the uplifting of motherhood must carry with it legal and political emancipation. Women ask for unsubjugated motherhood; they ask that the mother should have equal place in the State with the father. The situation may be difficult, but men must have the courage to face the women's demands for justice, and to discover how their claims can be met without infringing their own rights. Whatever makes for the equal status of women is in the interests both of family and of national life. "The feeling which makes husband and wife true companions can grow up only in societies where the altruistic sentiment is so strong in the man as to make him recognise woman as his equal."<sup>1</sup> We need not be afraid that by making women independent they will less readily choose marriage or hesitate to give themselves to home-making and child-rearing. Rather, greater freedom will ensure that women will use their full powers, as Mrs. Havelock Ellis once expressed it, in following out a new and deeper conception of motherhood.

The longing of every normal woman to find happiness in sex union and to exercise her functions physically and psychically in marriage and motherhood is an ineradicable instinct which cannot be altered by any external circumstances of education or environment whatsoever. The mothers of the future will better fulfil their function because they have been trained in youth to independence and self-support, because they have been given also a special training in those subjects which make a woman more efficient as housewife and mother. The best mother

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck's "History of Human Marriage."



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is she who, with trained hands and a trained mind, chooses freely to marry the man she loves, abandons herself to her natural instincts of love and service, and produces and rears children conceived in love, fit workers for the good of mankind. The mother of the future will be imbued with the racial consciousness that the father of her children must be of a certain standard of physical and mental fitness; that she herself must conserve her health and vitality for the sake of the new life. The intelligent, efficient mother will understand the psychology and physiology of childhood in a way that is impossible to the average woman to-day, however earnestly she may strive to respond to the child's mental, physical, and moral needs. The best nurture of childhood demands the best types of women, and in addition it is necessary that these women should be specially trained for mother work; their instincts of love and service guided into wise channels of expression, so that mother love may not be self-indulgence but self-restraint. A woman's life is complete in proportion as she fulfils the mission of woman, in leading, training, and preserving the new life in her charge.

Thus the tendency in some quarters to advocate institutional or co-operative care of the child, in line with co-operative housewifery and communal life, is against nature, biology, the lessons of evolution. Mrs. Perkins Gilman has made perhaps the best exposition of what may be called the "amaternal theory" which certain modern and advanced feminists have advocated.<sup>1</sup> By the present form of family life woman, she says, is over-sexed, and she advocates the work of the wife outside the home, the rearing and education of children, not by their own mothers, but by those specially fitted for the

<sup>1</sup> "Woman and Economics."



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task. But who is to ensure that the women who undertake the management of the children are specially fit psychologically, that they have the tenderness, love, and understanding which the average mother possesses through the psychical fact of her motherhood? An efficient mother is worth all the "nurses" in the world. The home, imperfect as it may be, is as a general rule the best atmosphere for the child, because the trinity of father, mother and child is the highest of human relationships. The closer the association, the greater is the love and bond between mother and child, and anything which tends to sever that relationship is retrogressive and socially dangerous, ethically undesirable. Collective rearing of children would have all the evils we are beginning to discern in the present public-school system. The child's greatest need is love, and it cannot have too much of it—love as distinct from foolish indulgence or the self-indulgence which is expressed in excessive caresses. Our highest conception of the home is that of father, mother and children in close association during the years of dependence of the offspring. Whatever undermines the home hinders the evolution of the race, and all our energies must be directed towards strengthening, bettering, and uplifting home life.

But, like marriage, the home, whilst being maintained, is capable of immense improvement. Within the next twenty years we shall, no doubt, see a marked reorganisation of domestic service and family life. The present system cannot survive much longer. It entails too much unnecessary, futile labour. It is unhygienic and expensive. It maintains amongst the well-to-do class a servile class whose labour is unregulated and whose time is in no sense their own. Among the less well off it is a constant strain upon the physical and



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mental energies of women. It subjects mothers to an endless round of household drudgery, an incessant struggle against dust and dirt. Domesticity must be reformed, and it is for educated women to devise some means by which domestic work may be standardised and generalised so as to reduce expenditure and give the maximum results in comfort and family welfare with the minimum of labour. In this sphere modern women have an opportunity for the exercise of all their talents. We must introduce science into home life, abolish the broom and the duster, the dish-cloth and the kitchen towel, free ourselves from the burden of household dust and grease, apply the inventions of the age to the service of the housewife, to reduce her excessive hours of labour and provide a means of making housewifery in all its branches a more attractive business to those whom we call servants, so that the supply of efficient workers may be increased and the long hours on duty diminished. Thus we may solve the problem both from the housewife's and the servant's point of view. Possibly house service under these conditions may attract women of the so-called better classes.

The suggestion of King's College to provide a scientific training in domestic subjects, to give diplomas of a university standard to graduates in the home arts, has aroused a good deal of just criticism from the academic standpoint, but at least it indicates that the educational uplifting of the home vocation and domestic arts has begun. If the woman movement develops on these lines it will become one of the greatest forces in social evolution.

Not that domesticity is woman's only sphere. With Olive Schreiner, we say that we women take all labour for our province, but if we are wise we shall specialise



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in the departments in which we are likely to excel. "The domestic life is not the whole life of a woman, any more than it is meant to be the whole life of a man."<sup>1</sup> But it must be the main sphere of interest and usefulness for the vast majority of women, as long as the welfare of children is, as it ought to be, the main consideration of the community.

**The interdependence of the sexes.**—There has been some tendency on the part of modern feminists to support what may be called the principle of sex individualism. I do not wish to preach this gospel. I ask for political rights and educational opportunities for every woman mainly that she may more fitly serve the interests of the child and home life. It is because I believe that the full and free emancipation of women would strengthen and maintain family life that I have written this book, recognising the danger that insistence upon our claim may for the time being stir up sex antagonism and even sex war. We women must see beyond the crude political aspects of our cause. The bitterness and strife will pass away. Man cannot achieve the best, the highest, without woman, nor woman without man.

"The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink  
Together, dwarfed or god-like, bond or free:

. . . . .  
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow?"

In emphasising the claims of women as mothers, I do not wish to ignore the rights of men as fathers. Nor do I forget that responsible, devoted, intelligent fatherhood is as vital to the welfare of a nation and a race

<sup>1</sup>"Civic Apathy," by the Rev. John Hunter, D.D.



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as healthy, efficient, and protected motherhood. I have emphasised the woman's point of view rather with the conviction that men cannot hurt women without hurting infinitely more themselves, that they cannot assist and uplift mothers without elevating the human race, men and women, and most of all the children.

If woman has suffered from the subjection in which she has been so long kept, she has also gained. She has, in her unselfishness and her power of service, acquired through long ages, a heritage of inestimable value. "He for God only, she for God in him." False as this sentiment is, and typical of the age which produced it, until the end of time it will yet remain true that sacrifice of self, whether for husband or child, is the crown of woman's destiny. The eternal law of womanhood is suffering for the sake of the race, and there is no basis for the fear that concession of the just claims of women to sexual, economic and legal emancipation will bring about the disintegration of the home, of marriage, of the family.

The true relationship of the sexes is one of interdependence, of mutual protection. Woman no longer needs the protection of man's physical strength in the social order we have achieved, and in these days the chivalrous man is he who willingly concedes to woman her rights as a human being, her civic, social and political status and independence. It may be that it will take more than one century to undo the mistakes of the past. But this we can foresee—a freed womankind, a protected motherhood, will bring a new era of civilisation, almost a new race of men and women. And far off we dimly descry woman in her true sphere, happy and efficient in the home, giving her public service as maternal stateswoman, concerned with social motherhood, protected and



## The Mothers of the Future

protecting. There will be no question of the superiority of one sex over the other, because the world will have attained a state of equality of opportunity and of responsibility for both. Already a new sympathy and friendship between man and woman has come into existence, glorifying passion and bringing a measure of divine unselfishness into human relations. We are only beginning to understand what love is, but this we know—that love, "creation's final law," must be the inspiration of our cause and our work, as it is the culmination of our lives.



THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth and expansion. From a small collection of colonies on the eastern coast, it grew into a vast nation that stretched across the continent. The early years were marked by struggle and conflict, as the colonies fought for their independence from Britain. The American Revolution was a turning point in the nation's history, leading to the birth of a new republic. The years following the revolution were a time of rapid growth and development. The United States expanded its territory westward, and its economy flourished. The nation's population grew, and its influence on the world increased. The American dream of a better life for all became a reality for many. The United States emerged as a major power in the world, and its values and ideals were spread across the globe. The history of the United States is a testament to the power of the human spirit and the pursuit of a better future.

The United States has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. It is a melting pot of different peoples and traditions, each contributing to the nation's unique identity. The American dream is a central theme in the nation's history, representing the pursuit of a better life for all. The United States has a long and proud history of freedom and democracy, and these values continue to shape the nation's character. The American people are known for their resilience and determination, and these qualities have helped the nation overcome many challenges. The United States is a land of opportunity, where anyone can achieve their dreams. The history of the United States is a story of hope and progress, and it continues to inspire people around the world.

The United States is a nation of many faces, and its history is a reflection of this diversity. The American people have a deep sense of pride in their country, and they are committed to the values of freedom, justice, and equality. The United States has a long and proud history of leadership in the world, and it continues to play a vital role in global affairs. The American dream is a powerful force that has inspired generations of Americans, and it remains a central part of the nation's identity. The United States is a land of endless possibilities, and its future is bright. The history of the United States is a story of a nation that has overcome adversity and emerged as a global superpower. The American people are a testament to the power of the human spirit, and their story is one of hope and progress.



## APPENDIX I

### LAWS OF PARENTAGE AND INHERITANCE, ETC., IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES\*

#### ENGLAND

The father is the legal parent and guardian of the child, and has the power of deciding education, religion, profession. The father can elect a guardian to act after his death, who can over-rule the wishes of the mother. Wife and children can be deprived of inheritance by will or deed.

#### SCOTLAND

The father is legal guardian and parent. The wife and children have a claim on a man's estate after death, of which they cannot be deprived by will or deed.

#### IRELAND

The father has absolute rights of guardianship. The Court will enforce the bringing up of the child in the religion of the deceased father, even against the wishes of the mother.

#### CHANNEL ISLANDS

The father is the legal parent and guardian. A widow can claim

one-half of her deceased husband's estate if she has no child; one-third if there are children.

#### FRANCE

The father has all parental rights.

#### SWITZERLAND

Father and mother have equal rights of guardianship over children.

#### GERMANY

The father is legal parent and guardian, as in England. The rights of inheritance are equal between husband and wife.

#### AUSTRIA

The law is similar to that of Germany.

#### HUNGARY

The father is legal parent and guardian. He has the power to take an infant from its mother and give it to another person to nurse against the will of the mother.

\* These facts were partly supplied by the courtesy of women in different countries, and partly derived from "Women's Position in the Laws of the Nations," published by the International Council of Women.



# Appendix I

## ITALY

The wife has equal rights of parentage, but in fact she submits to the husband and obeys him.

## RUSSIA

The mother has equal rights of guardianship, but the father is administrator of any fortune of children who are minors.

## NORWAY

The father and mother have equal parental rights and equal status in the home. According to the new marriage service, the wife is not asked to give any vow of obedience, or accept any position of subordination.

## SWEDEN

The father is legal parent and guardian. The husband is also the guardian of the wife, and administers her property, except her earned income. She receives one-half of the joint property, and cannot be deprived of it by will.

## DENMARK

The mother has equal parental rights with the father. The wife and children have a claim upon the estate, of which they cannot be deprived. A deserted wife can get the State to advance money for her support and that of her children, which money the State subsequently recovers from the man.

## THE NETHERLANDS

The father is legal parent and guardian. Married women are under the authority of their husbands, who have control of their money.

## AUSTRALIA

The law of parentage is very similar to the law in England. In Tasmania the laws of inheritance are equal for husband and wife. In Victoria the Widows and Young Children's Maintenance Act deprived men of their right to leave wife and children unprovided for at death.

## NEW ZEALAND

The husband is the legal parent and guardian of children. The position of the wife and mother has been strengthened and safeguarded in New Zealand by the passage of various Bills during the last fifteen or twenty years. A man cannot give his property by will or deed leaving his wife and family unprovided for. He is compelled by law to make suitable provision, according to the size of the estate, for his wife and children. The machinery of the law for obtaining maintenance from a deserting husband and father is more effective than in England, and there are reciprocal arrangements with other countries in regard to the operation of maintenance orders.

## CANADA

The father is the legal guardian of all children born in marriage.



# Appendix I

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In ten States of America—Kansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Nebraska, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island—and also in Columbia, the mother and father have equal rights of guardianship over the children. In all other States and territories the father is preferred as guardian to the mother—the mother, however,

having the next claim. In most States the widow has the right to one-third of her husband's real estate during her lifetime, and the absolute right to one-third of his personal estate. The husband cannot deprive his wife of this inheritance by will or otherwise. In all States the wife is recognised by the Statute Law as a separate legal entity.

## APPENDIX II

### THE UNMARRIED MOTHER AND HER CHILD UNDER THE LAW IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

#### ENGLAND

The mother is the legal parent. The child is not legitimised on marriage of parents. The child has no rights of inheritance from either parent. The father is liable for alimony up to 5s. per week.

#### SCOTLAND

The mother is the legal parent. The father is liable for alimony up to 5s. per week. The mother has the custody of the child up to the age of 7 in the case of boys, and 10 in the case of girls. If she claims alimony after that time, the father can take the custody of the child. The illegitimate child has no right to inherit from either parent. The marriage of parents subsequently legitimises the child.

#### IRELAND

The mother is the legal parent. She cannot obtain an affiliation order herself from a magistrate; she must go into the workhouse and allow the guardians to sue for her. Cases must be taken into the County Court, which sits every three or four months, and as the process of summoning a man is lengthy and expensive, the father of the child rarely pays any share of its maintenance.

#### FRANCE

The mother is the legal parent. In 1904 a law was passed making it obligatory upon the State to rear and educate all babies found destitute and abandoned. Receiving hospitals are provided for infants, who are admitted without



## Appendix II

inquiry or formality. Infanticide has practically been abolished, and the unmarried mother is herself a charge upon the State, as the law prescribes that help shall be offered to all necessitous mothers. In 1913 a new law was passed giving the child a right to its father's name and nationality, and to half the property which would have descended by law to a legitimate child. The law is retrospective, but proceedings must be taken by the mother or by some legally appointed guardian.

### SWITZERLAND

The child has all the rights of the legitimate child if paternity is recognised, unless the father was married. If the mother of an illegitimate child fails to find the father the child himself or his guardian can take proceedings.

### GERMANY

The mother is the legal parent. The father is compelled to provide alimony, which includes training for the child to fit it to earn a livelihood. The child is put under the care of an official guardian, whose duty it is to enforce the law, and who does everything possible to legitimise the child by encouraging the marriage of its parents.

### HUNGARY

The mother is the legal parent. Every illegitimate child has a legal right to be cared for by the State.

Accommodation is found for the unmarried mother and her child, or the child can be boarded with a family if the mother has to earn her living. She is encouraged to keep in touch with the child, and she can at any time support the child herself, if she is able to do so, without reimbursing the State for its past maintenance.

### ITALY

Inquiry into paternity is forbidden, and the guardianship of either parent is only permitted after parenthood is acknowledged. Various societies are concentrating on the reform of the law. Petitions have been presented by the National Council of Italian Women and by the Women's Rights Society on behalf of the unmarried mother and her child.

### RUSSIA

The mother is the legal parent. A law has recently been passed by the Russian Duma by which a man is made responsible for all expenses concerned with the birth of his illegitimate child. He must keep the mother until she is fit to earn her living after the child is born, and he is liable for the support of the child up to the age of 16. The child is legitimised in the event of the parents marrying.

### NORWAY

The mother is the legal parent. The child has the right of in-



## Appendix II

heriting from its mother and its mother's relatives, as in the case of legitimate children, and if he is legitimised—that is, publicly acknowledged by the father—he becomes entitled to one-half the inheritance of a legitimate child. The legitimised child has the right to bear his father's name, and the Norwegian Parliament is conferring this right upon all legitimised children. The father is bound to contribute towards the maintenance of the mother during her confinement. And if the mother performs any act of violence against the child he may be punished if her position has been known to him or she has been in want and he has refused to help her. In Norway a man who refuses to marry a woman seduced under the promise of marriage is liable to imprisonment.

### SWEDEN

The mother is the legal parent. The father is legally responsible for part maintenance of the child up to 15 years of age. The child has no right of inheritance from the father, and no right to his name. If the child is to inherit from the mother or from the mother's relatives the woman must acknowledge her maternity in the parish register.

### DENMARK

Mothers have sole parental rights, and the father supports the child

until 18 years of age, and supports the mother for one month before and one month after the birth of the child. The local authority pays a sum sufficient for this purpose to the mother. It rests with the authority to get the money from the father. Otherwise the money comes out of the poor-rates. The child has no right of inheritance from the father.

### THE NETHERLANDS

The mother is the legal parent. She has the utmost difficulty in establishing any claim to alimony. The child has no rights of inheritance.

### VICTORIA

The mother is the legal parent. In 1890 the Prematernity Act gave prospective unmarried mothers the power of suing the father for maintenance and confinement expenses. The mother, however, is compelled to maintain the child until the age of 16. Illegitimate children are legitimised on the marriage of their parents.

### NEW SOUTH WALES

The mother is the legal parent. The father is not responsible for maintenance at common law, but by statute he can be called upon to support the mother before and after birth. Children are legitimised on the marriage of the parents if they acknowledge the child.



## Appendix II

### QUEENSLAND

The mother is the legal parent. Marriage of the parents legitimises the children, provided that at the birth of the child no legal impediment existed to the marriage. The father is liable for maintenance or part maintenance of the illegitimate child.

### NEW ZEALAND

The mother is the legal parent. The child is registered in the name of the father when paternity is proved.

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the United States the law as it affects the illegitimate child varies in different States, creating anomalies and injustices even more marked than in European countries. For example, whereas at common law the unmarried mother has the exclusive right to the custody of the child, in Texas the father has an equal right with the mother after the age of 7 years, and in Illinois a father may assert his claim to its custody. If a child is legitimised by acknowledgment of the father he can in certain States claim the

custody of the child even *against* the unwilling mother. The unmarried father may or may not be responsible for the support of his illegitimate child. In California, Missouri, Hawaii, Oregon, and Texas, for instance, the father is not liable. In Indiana, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, Wyoming, and seven other States the law is more just, as the jury may assess any damages it sees fit for the child's support.<sup>1</sup> In certain States a child is legitimised on the marriage of its parents. In others, legitimisation can only take place by act of legislature; whilst some States require only acknowledgment or recognition by the parents. Whilst in certain States the disabilities of the child under the law are greater than with us in England, in others—for example, Indiana—the child may inherit from its father even if it has not been recognised by him. Most States possess statutes which enact that an illegitimate child shall inherit from and through its mother, and she from it.

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Gernert in *Vigilance*, December, 1912.



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