

## **An introduction to sex education.**

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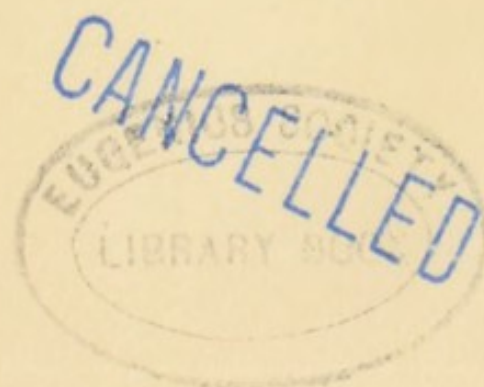






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AN INTRODUCTION  
TO SEX EDUCATION

WINSTON A. RICHMOND, M.D.







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# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

*by*

WINIFRED V. RICHMOND, Ph.D.

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# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
PREFACE TO ENGLISH EDITION	13
CHAPTER I	
GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	19
Introductory — Reproduction without sex — The beginnings of sex — Parthenogenesis and hermaphroditism — Fertilization — Development of the young — Secondary sexual characteristics — Sex association among animals	
CHAPTER II	
THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN	43
Reproductive system of the male — Of the female — The mechanism of fertilization — The menstrual cycle — Composition and development of the cell — Laws of inheritance — The determination of sex — Intersexuality or bisexuality — Twinning and multiple births — Sex development after birth — Sexual maturity	
CHAPTER III	
SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY	85
Theories of social origins — Primitive attitudes toward sex — Superstitions — The couvade — Children in primitive society — Puberty initiations — Sex activities in childhood and adolescence — Marriage and family organization — The subjection of women; marriage by capture, purchase, etc. — Virginity and chastity — Infidelity and adultery — Other sexual aberrations	
CHAPTER IV	
THE HISTORICAL PERIOD	119
Marriage and the position of women — In the classical world — Sex and marriage under Christianity — The position of women in the Middle Ages — Sex and the family in America — Prostitution — Homosexuality	



# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER V

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX	151
Beginnings in infancy — Stages of psycho-sexual development — The auto-erotic stage — Later stages — Auto-erotic, narcissistic, and homosexual personalities — The heterosexual goal — Maturity — The period of the climacteric	

## CHAPTER VI

PROBLEMS OF SEX	185
Superstitions, fears and phobias — The problem of auto-erot- ism — Homosexuality as a personal problem — The perversions of sex — Prostitution — Courtship activities and marriage — The love experience — Age of marriage — Birth control — Incompat- ibility in marriage — Frigidity and impotence — Sterility — Ven- ereal disease	

## CHAPTER VII

SEX AND SOCIETY	235
Marriage as a social problem — Divorce — Birth control — The eugenic programme — Prostitution as a social problem — Ven- ereal disease — Homosexuality as a social problem	

## CHAPTER VIII

SEX AND EDUCATION	263
Faulty attitudes to sex — Necessity of imparting knowledge of biology of sex before puberty — Sex teaching as a practical problem — movement for inclusion of graduated biological teaching in the curriculum of every type of school — Prepara- tion for marriage — Marriage clinics	

INDEX	273
-------	-----

# ILLUSTRATIONS

DIVISION IN AMOEBA	23
SPERM CELLS OF ANIMALS AND PRIMITIVE PLANTS	26
MALE AND FEMALE IN THE PLANT WORLD	31
COURTSHIP ACTIVITIES IN SPIDERS	37
UNDIFFERENTIATED STAGES OF THE EXTERNAL GENITALIA IN MAN	44
DIFFERENTIATION OF SEX IN MAN	45
DEVELOPMENT AND DIFFERENTIATION OF THE INTERNAL REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS IN MAN	46
REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM OF THE HUMAN MALE	48
REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM OF THE HUMAN FEMALE	51
HUMAN OVUM	55
STRUCTURE OF THE CHROMOSOMES IN THE NUCLEUS	60
ARRANGEMENT OF THE GENES IN A PAIR OF CHROMOSOMES	61
MENDELIAN INHERITANCE OF A SINGLE FACTOR — 1:2:1 ratio	64
MENDELIAN INHERITANCE OF A SINGLE FACTOR — 3:1 ratio	64
INHERITANCE OF A SINGLE FACTOR	65
INHERITANCE OF A MULTIPLE FACTOR	67
DIAGRAM OF CELL DIVISION	72
THE DETERMINATION OF SEX	74
A HOMUNCULUS	84





## INTRODUCTION

In the last few years it has often been said that man's conquest of external nature had reached a point where it behoved him to pause and take stock of himself. Human nature has been the last aspect of nature in the large to attract man's attention. He could explore the heavens and the earth, dissect the 'things that are in the things that are in a leaf', while remaining largely ignorant of his own nature, and guiding his behaviour by 'instinct' or by inherited rules of conduct whose wisdom was taken for granted. But the advance of science in the last seventy-five years has brought man face to face with himself. He has discovered his own body and how intricately his health and happiness are bound up with its normal functioning; and he is learning — all too slowly — to link up many of his most vexing problems with the needs and demands of his own nature, and the mistaken ways in which he has attempted to fulfil them. To set forth something of what man has learned about his sexual nature and the problems that grow out of it is the aim of this book. The story is by no means finished, but we have enough of it to enable us to understand a good deal about human behaviour and personality that was hitherto obscure. Physiology and psychology have explained many things that seemed inexplicable only a brief moment ago; while an acquaintance with sexual beliefs and customs among primitive people and the history of sexual institutions throws light upon much in contemporary society, and should save us from the smug provincialism that counts those things wrong to which we are unaccustomed. A wealth of material is now at hand to



## INTRODUCTION

help us to a better understanding of ourselves and of the sexual problems of our society.

The book had its inception in the lectures in sex hygiene which I have been giving over a period of ten years to nurses in the Training Schools of St. Elizabeths and affiliated hospitals. Beginning with two or three lectures based largely upon questions handed in by the students, the course has lengthened and developed as we saw the need for a comprehensive treatment of the subject which would place it in proper biological and historical perspective. In addition, experience with college classes in mental hygiene, and with groups of adults in courses in child study and adolescence, has convinced me not only of the eagerness of the average person to learn something more of the subject of sex in general, but of how difficult it is — or has been — to find authoritative sources of information. Only just now are we beginning to have a body of dignified and scientific literature to which the inquirer can be directed with the assurance that it is authoritative information and not just somebody's opinion.

In putting the material into book form, I have had in mind its presentation in a manner that would make it available not only for classroom use but to the general reader who wants a summary of our present knowledge upon the biology, the history, and the psychology of sex. The selected readings at the close of each chapter will carry the student farther in the various topics treated, necessarily briefly, in the text, while the bibliographies, though designed primarily for the instructor, will put the general reader in touch with reliable sources of further information. Every book has been carefully selected.

My thanks are due to the Appleton-Century Company



## INTRODUCTION

for permission to quote from Abraham Flexner's *Prostitution in Europe*, to the American Academy of Political and Social Science for permission to quote from various articles in the symposium on the 'Modern American Family', appearing in the *Annals* in March 1932, and to the Anthropological Press for permission to use the description of a puberty ceremony in Victoria, in Paolo Mantegazza's *Anthropological Studies in the Sexual Relations of Mankind*. I have made a number of references to Jennings' *Biological Foundations of Human Nature*, to Marañón's *Evolution of Sex*, to Briffault's *The Mothers*, and to Margaret Mead's studies of childhood and adolescence among primitives; various brief quotations from other authors, properly credited, will be found in the text. Furthermore, in the making of such a book as this, one owes many debts, more than can be enumerated, to Havelock Ellis, Freud, and Jung, T. H. Morgan and the Davenports, the anthropologists and ethnologists from Frazer to Malinowski, the historians from Herodotus to Mary Beard, and a host of others who have contributed, directly or indirectly, to the author's knowledge; most of all to G. Stanley Hall, the pioneer in sex education and the study of adolescence, and to whom, as teacher, counsellor, and friend, I here pay tribute.

But there are many others, whose names are unknown to fame, who have helped in the making of this book — the students, not only in the Hospital, but in my classes in George Washington University and the University of California, whose co-operation in personality studies has helped me to an appreciation of the sex problems of normal individuals; and, last but not least, the boys and girls and men and women who, as patients, have told me their stories

## INTRODUCTION

and thus enabled me to understand something more of how difficult it is for human beings to reach a degree of personality integration that assures a happy and wholesome sex life: to all these I here express my gratitude.

W. V. R.

*Washington, D.C.*

*August, 1934*



## PREFACE

### TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

DR. WINIFRED V. RICHMOND's book *An Introduction to Sex Education* has made for itself a name in America and it was felt that it would be equally well received in this country. Although many English books on the subject of sex are available, there is none that covers exactly the same ground and provides so clear a summary of our present knowledge upon the biology, the history, and the psychology of sex.

All that I have done as Editor, has been to make those alterations in the text that were necessary to render the book acceptable to English readers. The biological and anthropological sections of the work remain as they were, but the chapters dealing with the history of sex, its problems, its repercussions on society, and with the all-important subject of sex education have been altered, so that the reader may be given a European or English viewpoint rather than one that was essentially American. Although in their broad outline, the problems that surround sex remain the same, their details vary in different countries. This was particularly noticeable in the chapters dealing with sex and society and sex and education. For this reason it was thought necessary to substitute English for American illustrations and to deal with the English aspects of such subjects as divorce laws, sterilization of the unfit, birth control and sex education, rather than the American.

My thanks are due to several people who have lent most valuable assistance in the preparation of this English



## PREFACE

edition. First must I thank the author, who has gone very carefully through the additions, and in several instances re-written them so that they might not appear as patches but should be woven into the texture of the book. Second, I must acknowledge my indebtedness to various officials of the British Social Hygiene Council who have not only read the book, and given me useful criticisms, but have also provided me with the material for the additions that have been made. More especially do I wish to thank Mr. Percy Lee who has a wide knowledge of educational problems and has been responsible for the paragraphs on sex teaching as a practical problem in the concluding chapter of the book.

KENNETH WALKER

*London, 1935*

To

WILLIAM A. WHITE, M.D.,

*whose broad sympathy and clarity of  
vision are an inspiration to those  
privileged to work with him*



AN INTRODUCTION  
TO SEX EDUCATION





## CHAPTER I

# GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

So many millions of years ago that the mind of man cannot conceive it, the first stirrings of life began upon this planet. In just what form it first manifested itself, where it originated, or whence it came, we have no means of knowing. We can infer that in the waters that covered the face of the earth there appeared one day in a favourable spot a tiny speck of something that had not been there before; perhaps many, many times such tiny specks appeared and disappeared before any of them succeeded in holding their own and life on earth could be said to have been successfully launched. But these first stirrings of life, whenever and wherever they were, must be the beginnings of our story. Through all the aeons since that time life has gone on, creating for itself a numberless variety of forms, from the tiny creatures that the microscope reveals in a drop of water, and whose life-span may be only a few hours, up to the giant redwoods of California, that were waving their feathery branches in sunlight and starlight while Rome was still the mistress of the world. Even the life that is within man, who likes to think of himself as the lord of creation, is of a piece with all life, and there is definite evidence that in many ways we are kin, not only to the lower animals, but also to the plants as well.

In the beginning there was the problem of how life was to be perpetuated. The forms that it created might go on and on, growing and growing, but they must reach a limit



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

some day and there could be room in the earth for only a few giants. Among the higher forms some have developed an enormous individual span of life. The redwoods and the giant cypress seem to have gone farther along the road of continued growth than any forms now living, but even they have not solved the problem of perpetual life and have not depended upon it alone. Doubtless many other species tried it, both plant and animal; but it was not successful. There were too many difficulties in the way — difficulties concerned with the taking in of food and oxygen and with the elimination of waste products. Then, too, the earth as environment was continually changing; continents rose and sank, seas advanced and retreated, the crust of the earth cooled, ice floes pushed toward the equator or shrank back again toward the poles. Individual immortality might be possible in a stable environment, but with a changing climate and food supply it was not possible, even if the other difficulties in the way could be solved; life must find some other means of perpetuating itself.

The path that was finally chosen was what we know as reproduction. The old fables of spontaneous generation and special creation are no longer of interest. Every school child to-day knows that all life comes from preceding life; individual forms arise, have their day and die, but before death occurs they have passed on the torch of life, and their race survives. To be sure, even the race, the species, succumbs at times, as the environmental changes become too great for it to cope with; the record of the rocks shows us many extinct forms, and there must have been many more. But life itself has never been in any danger of extinction; it has pushed on and on, under a veritable compulsion to perpetuate itself. The instrument of life's



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

task, the means by which this compulsion is realized, we know in the higher orders of animals and in man as the phenomena of sex. But sex was not the original answer to the problems involved in reproduction; unthinkable as a world without sex seems to us, such a world must have existed for many millions of years. Life perpetuated itself, plants grew and multiplied, animal forms appeared and reproduced themselves in a wholly sexless fashion, without any differentiation into male and female organisms, or any necessity for the union of male and female elements for the production of a new individual. How much of the story has been lost we can never know, but enough of it is left, in the plants and animals still surviving as well as in the fossil remains in the stratified rocks, to enable us to trace the evolution of reproduction, in plants at least, from its simplest and probably its most primitive forms on to the beginnings of sex and thence to the complicated processes of sexual reproduction that developed at different points in the evolutionary series. But we must remember that though we can arrange living matter in an orderly sequence from the simplest one-celled organisms up to man, we do not know that evolution has proceeded in any such orderly manner, and different methods of reproduction probably originated contemporaneously, just as many different methods still exist side by side to-day. However, once reproduction by the union of parts of two entirely separate organisms (which is the essence of sexual reproduction wherever it is found) had been developed, it took precedence of all other methods among animals, of which only the most primitive forms reproduce to-day by any other method. But among plants, even some of the higher ones, we can still find primitive methods of reproduction.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

## REPRODUCTION WITHOUT SEX

Everyone is familiar with *asexual* reproduction in plants. The strawberry sends out runners, which creep along the ground and at frequent intervals take root, producing new plants; roses are propagated by slips and cuttings, and potatoes are cut into pieces and planted to produce a potato crop — though woe to the amateur who fails to include an 'eye'! In the bacteria, the causative organisms of most diseases, reproduction is always asexual, and is merely the splitting of one bacterium, which is only a single cell, into two. In countless other plants and in some of the bacteria, asexual reproduction takes place by means of *spores*, which are capsules containing cells or minute organisms, which, when they are released from the capsule, are capable of growing into new plants. Robbins and Pearson (11) state that asexual reproduction probably is responsible for more *individuals* than is sexual reproduction, the latter being developed comparatively late in plants.

In animals asexual reproduction takes place among many of the more primitive forms. The one-celled animals are known as *protozoa*. Of these the amoeba is the classic example. It is a bit of protoplasm or living matter, similar in its composition to all living cells, whether plant or animal. Under the microscope it appears as a dot of transparent material surrounding the nucleus, a denser region, which seems to be the seat of the forces that are responsible for cell growth and development. As in the simplest forms of bacteria, reproduction in the amoeba takes place by the division of the cell into two equal parts. When the amoeba has reached a certain stage of growth, instead of going on



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

enlarging indefinitely, the nucleus divides, half of it moving to one side of the cell and half to the other; the cell then begins to constrict in the middle until finally it breaks apart, and where there was one cell, now there are two, each containing a nucleus and all the constituent parts of the original cell. What initiates this process, how the amoeba 'knows'

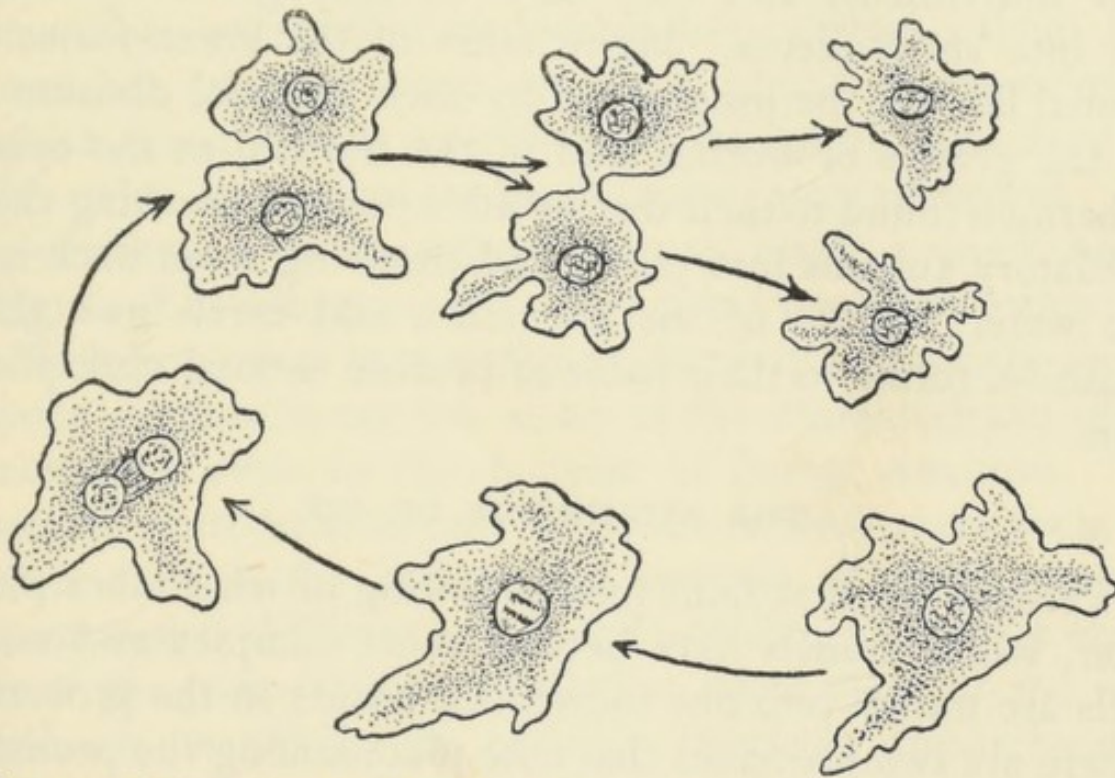


FIG. 1 - Division in Amoeba. Amoeba reproduces itself by binary fission, or equal division of the cell into two daughter cells. The arrows indicate the sequence. First the nucleus divides, and then the cytoplasm.

when it has grown large enough to begin to divide, is one of the unsolved mysteries with which life abounds. This reproduction by division, or *fission*, is not the only method among protozoa; but it is the prototype of all reproduction, even in man. Although stated thus it may sound simple enough, it is in reality a very complicated process.

Another form of asexual reproduction is found in many animal groups which are more highly organized than the



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

protozoa. A number of primitive forms reproduce by a process known as *budding*, which is essentially like the asexual reproductive processes found in plants. A part, or perhaps several parts, of the organism becomes constricted off into buds which finally drop off and begin life on their own. Sponges frequently reproduce by the budding off of new individuals, and they may be propagated by being cut into small pieces. Many other of the lower forms of animal life may be propagated by such artificial division in all the groups of worms, and in the starfish, as the oyster fishermen found to their dismay after years of breaking these predatory animals into pieces and throwing them back into the water. Many of the anemones and corals owe their beautiful forms to their habit of profuse asexual multiplication.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF SEX

Perhaps the first faint foreshadowing of what takes place later, when animals have become more complex and many cells are united into one individual, occurs in the protozoa. There are two processes that take place among the protozoa which indicate the beginnings of sex. Sometimes these single-celled animals appear to become exhausted and incapable of further division, and they are then observed to *conjugate* — that is, two individuals come together and exchange nuclear matter and other substances, and then separating, are again capable of reproduction by fission as before. Although this process would appear to be unnecessary in a perfect environment, in a state of nature it is normally found. The other protozoan process which foreshadows sex is found in the malarial parasite and related forms. In these animals certain individuals remain large and



rounded, while others become small and motile. The smaller individual (*microgamete*) burrows into and fuses with the larger, and division by spore formation follows, thus giving the appearance of a permanent conjugation.

In the multi-cellular animals (those with many cells forming one individual) the cells have become specialized. Some of them are concerned with nutrition; others with sensation, protection, or locomotion; certain others have been set apart to carry on the function of reproduction which was formerly exercised by the entire organism. At this point, then, what we know as sex enters the world. This specialization enabled organisms to reach a much higher degree of development than they could have done otherwise.

It is important to note that in the very beginnings among lowly organisms sex has some of the characteristics that it maintains even in the highest of living creatures. The special reproductive cells differ in several ways from the other cells in the body. The material of which they are composed is different and is self-sufficient; it carries within itself the potentialities of all that takes place in the other cells; it maintains its peculiar character throughout its existence. Again, these special reproductive cells are *dimorphic* — that is, they are either male or female, and neither of them in itself is usually capable of reproducing; if a new organism is to be produced, it is necessary for the male and female cells to unite. A whole series of problems is here set up, and Nature has seemed to delight in trying out an infinite variety of solutions.

The most primitive sex-cells or *gametes* among plants are practically indistinguishable in appearance, yet they are sex-cells beyond a doubt, since alone they perish but united they grow into a new individual. From this beginning the



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

gametes increase in complexity, and male and female cells diverge greatly, though each keeps certain characteristics wherever we find it, either in plants or animals. The female cell or egg is comparatively large, well stored with food,

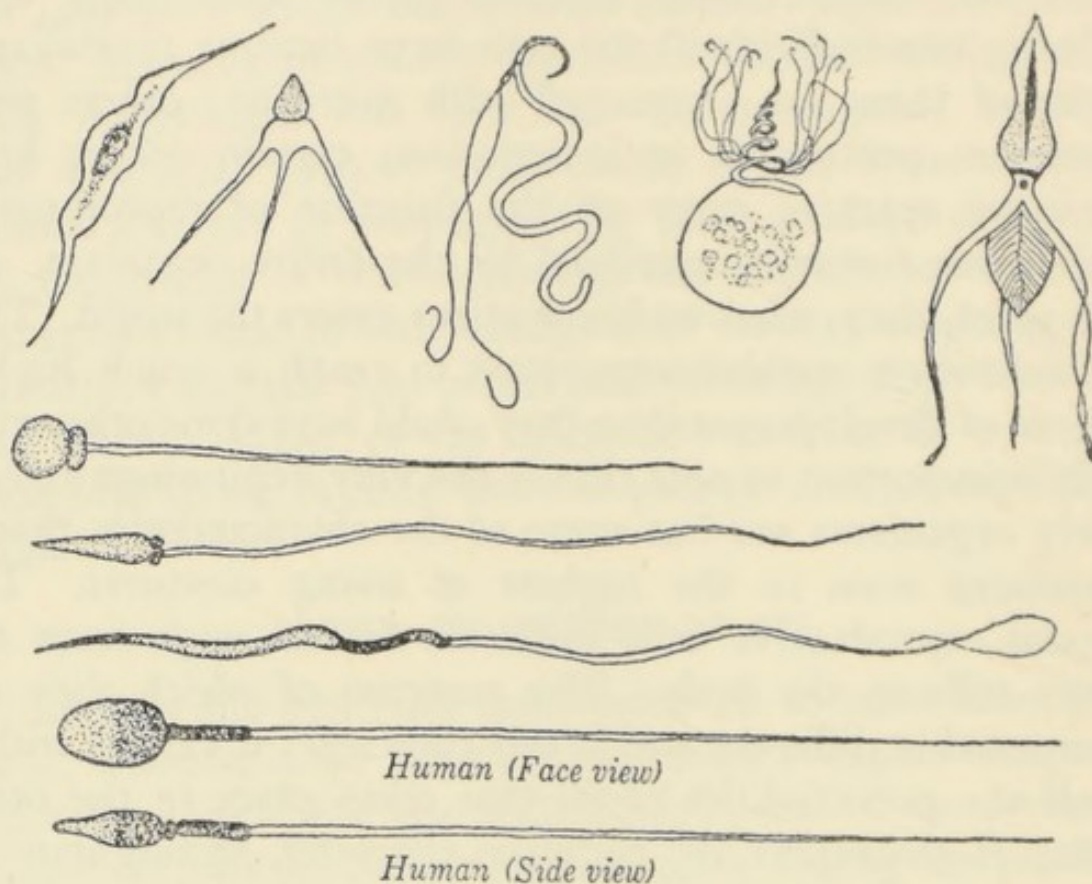


FIG. 2 - Sperm Cells of Animals and Primitive Plants. Spermatozoa differ greatly in form, although they are always minute and active. The higher plants have developed non-motile pollen as the equivalent of the sperm cell. (*Retzius, Grobben, Strasburger and fixed material.*)

and passive; the male cell or spermatozoon is small, with very little food supply, and active. Eggs of different species differ greatly in size. The human egg is a tiny dot, just visible to the naked eye; the egg of the ostrich is enormous. Spermatozoa (sperms for short) differ greatly in form, though they are always minute and active. Those organisms which produce eggs are *females*, and those which produce



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

sperms are *males*. This is the only basis for the division into two separate sexes. Among many forms, both plant and animal, there is little structural difference between the sexes, although chemical differences can usually be demonstrated. In human beings the male has a higher *metabolic rate* than the female; that is, the transformation of energy for bodily use takes place more rapidly in the male. This difference in *metabolism* extends to the sex-cells themselves. There appear to be chemical differences between the sexes in plants also. In many species, both plant and animal, there is a structural difference between the sexes as well. Just what is the significance of this *dimorphism*, or separation of the sexual elements into two distinct forms, we do not know. It is commonly said that it gives a better chance for diversification, that organisms which inherit from two parents double their chance of producing traits that have survival value. At any rate, once it appeared, sexual reproduction all but usurped the field among animals; while among plants only the more primitive continued to reproduce in a wholly asexual fashion, the higher plants developing sex organs, even though they could still reproduce asexually.

### PARTHENOGENESIS AND HERMAPHRODITISM

Nature has, however, made many experiments, and we find in certain species of both plants and animals the phenomenon known as *parthenogenesis* (the word means virgin birth) or the development of individuals from eggs alone, without the intervention of the sperm. It is very common among some of the lower plants and even occurs among some of the more highly specialized ones, such as



the daisy. In animals it occurs among numerous invertebrates, the most familiar case being that of the male bee or drone. The queen bee on her nuptial flight receives from the male who overtakes her more than a million sperms, and retains them in a pouch-like organ of her body. When the eggs are laid, the pouch opens and the sperms unite with them. But sometimes the pouch does not open, and an unfertilized egg is produced; nevertheless, this egg develops but always into a male. In other cases of parthenogenesis only females are produced. And again, to complicate the picture, we find cases of 'alternation of generations', that is, a generation of females which produce without being fertilized succeeded by a generation of males and females which reproduce sexually.

In the search for the secret of life, much experimentation has been carried on with artificial parthenogenesis. Certain kinds of eggs which normally require fertilization can sometimes be induced to develop artificially. The eggs of some frogs may be made to start development by pricking with a very fine needle; starfish eggs may be started by treating them with sea water saturated with carbon dioxide; and sea urchin eggs have been developed by the addition of certain chemicals to sea water. Various other mechanical and chemical agents have been found to start development in the eggs of certain animals, though only rarely does development proceed to the adult stage. The meaning of all this is not yet clear, but it serves to 'emphasize the fact that the eggs in themselves have power to develop'.

Even where sex is fully developed we do not always find the division into male and female organisms. Both male and female elements continue to be developed by the same organism, which is then said to be *bisexual* or *hermaphrodite*,



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

the latter term being derived from Hermaphroditos, who was the fabled son of Hermes and Aphrodite. This is the case with the great majority of flowering plants, those having both stamens and pistils in the same flower being hermaphrodites. It is also true of some animals, notably earthworms and snails. Neither plants nor animals, however, as a rule are self-fertilized. There is a group of animals, mostly body parasites, of which the tapeworm is an example, that do fertilize themselves; these creatures would have small chance at reproduction otherwise. Hermaphroditism occurs among the vertebrates, excepting fishes, only very rarely as an abnormality, and then is practically never complete. However, there is considerable evidence that bisexuality, in greater or lesser degree, extends throughout the entire series of living organisms, both plant and animal. Many plants can be changed from one sex to the other by a change of conditions under which they develop, as by changes in temperature or nutrition, and in flowering plants it is usual to find rudimentary organs of the opposite sex. In animals experiments have shown that even *sex reversal*, the changing of one sex into the other, can be brought about in various ways, by changes in the secretions of the sex glands, or by changing the environment so as to bring about changes in the metabolism of the egg. We shall see more of this bi-sexuality when we study the human being in Chapter II.

## FERTILIZATION

Once male and female elements have been segregated into different organisms, there arises the problem of how to secure their union; in some way or other egg and sperm



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

must be brought together. Plants employ myriad devices to secure this end. Since in the great majority of instances plants are stationary, it is necessary for some external agent to carry the male element to the female. The tiny fern sperm swims to the egg in a drop of water; the wind is the fertilizing agent in countless flowering plants, while in still others insects carry the pollen, the male element, to the female organ, the pistil. Elaborate arrangements of colour, form, and perfume are developed to attract the insects. When egg and sperm are developed on different plants the necessity for some such agent is obvious, but it seems to be just as necessary for hermaphroditic plants, for most of them avoid self-fertilization.

In the most primitive animal types there is no such thing as attraction between the organisms themselves; the eggs and sperms are simply shed into the water in enormous quantities, on the chance that some of them will find each other and unite. In sponges and bivalves, such as oysters and clams, the sperms are washed into the female by the water currents. In most fishes the female deposits her eggs in a favourable place in the water, and the male swims over them and discharges a milky fluid which contains the sperms. Here we have the beginnings at least of sex association and of what may be called sexual attraction, since the male is impelled to attend the female until the reproductive act is accomplished. In the cuttlefish a special arm of the male hands a 'packet' of sperms to the mantle cavity of the female, and as the eggs are laid the sperms are released to mingle with them. In frogs, toads, and some other amphibians, the male clings to the back of the female, and as the eggs leave her body he deposits the sperms directly upon them. Among earthworms, though each individual produces



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

both eggs and sperms, two individuals must come together, and each stocks a special receptacle of the other with sperms; as the eggs are released they are carried past the opening of this receptacle, whence the sperms issue and unite with them.

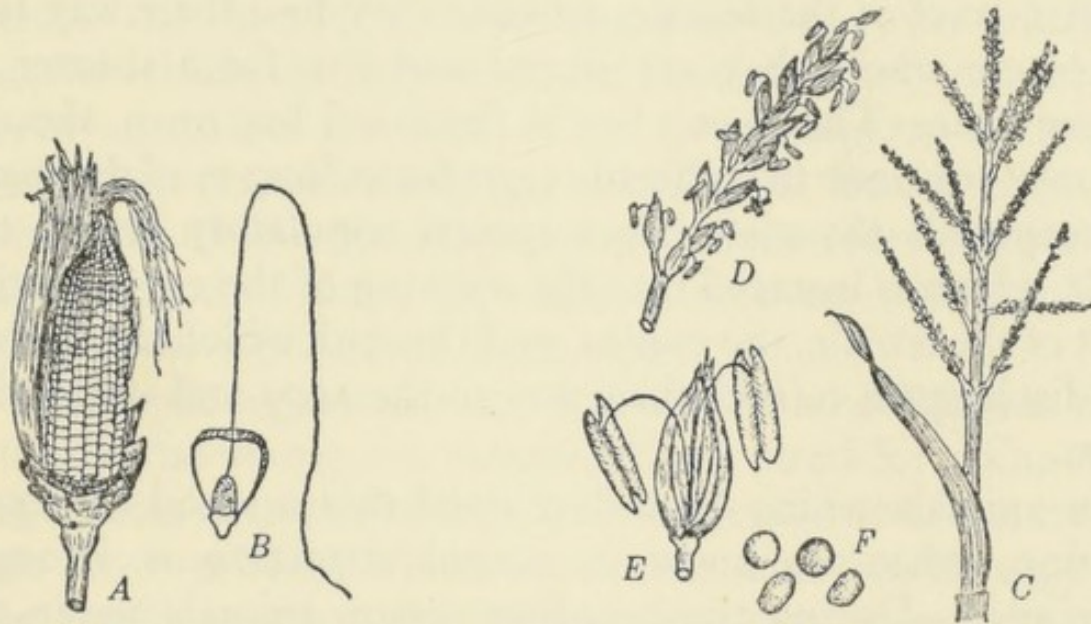


FIG. 3 - Male and Female in the Plant World. Flowers of corn (*Zea mays*), female to the left, male at the right. In plants the reproductive cells may be in the same flower, in different flowers on the same plant, or on two different plants. (A) is the female flower or 'ear'; (B) an individual ovum, or 'grain', with the hollow style, or 'silk'; (C) the 'tassel' composed of male flowers; (D) a small branch of the tassel; (E) an individual flower composed of minute 'shucks' and the pollen bearing cases; and (F) enlarged pollen grains.

But the surest method of securing fertilization is that of depositing the sperms directly within the reproductive tract of the female. This method is found in many different animal groups, and is of great advantage in insuring contact between sperms and eggs, so that many fewer eggs need be produced and the number of offspring can be greatly limited. Thus the way is open for specialization and the development of the individual.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

All mammals and the other higher vertebrates (reptiles and birds) reproduce in this manner; so do the insects, some fishes, like the tiny guppy of our parlour aquariums, and various of the lower animal groups. In insects both sexes have highly specialized copulatory organs; during the sex act, *copulation*, the male deposits the sperms in the reproductive tract of the female, whence they find their way to a receptacle where they are stored and live for a shorter or longer time. The queen bee is fertilized but once, though she may continue to lay fertile eggs for as long as eight years. In mammals the male has a special copulatory organ, the *penis*, which is inserted into the opening of the reproductive tract of the female, the *vagina*, and through which the sperms are discharged, to find their way to the eggs and unite with them.

In animals which have developed this method of reproduction, what we know as sexual attraction is strongly developed. During the breeding season animals are in the grip of a compulsion that gives them no rest and impels them to risk everything, even life itself, until the reproductive act has been accomplished. This behaviour is correlated with certain changes which take place in the reproductive organs, and which can probably be said to be its cause. In man, however, so many mental and emotional factors enter that we cannot find the cause of sex attraction in physiology alone. We will return to this matter a little farther on.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNG

In the lower forms of animal life, provision is made for the nourishment and protection of the young in numerous



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

ways. They may develop as buds upon the parent body, or within a cyst, until a certain stage is reached, when they are shed into the water to fend for themselves. Numerous other forms are parasitic upon other plants or animals, receiving from their host, often at great expense to it, food and shelter until maturity is reached. The young that develop from eggs outside the mother's body are provided with nutritive material within the egg itself. In innumerable instances the parent organisms are dead before the young are born, and there can be no such thing as parental care. But as we ascend in the scale of life, the offspring are helpless for a longer and longer period of time, culminating in man, where infancy extends over a period of many years.

The inquiring student can find hundreds of different ways in which the young are nourished and cared for. The male stickleback, a species of fish, weaves a nest out of a secretion from his own body, where the female deposits the eggs; he then fertilizes them by discharging over them the milt which contains the sperms, and the female can swim away because her part in the process of reproduction is finished; but the male guards the nest zealously until the little fishes are able to swim. The obstetrical toad gathers the eggs as they come from the female's body and winds them about his own legs, crouching thereafter in the water until they hatch. The young kangaroo is born very immature, and for several weeks is attached to the maternal teat so tightly that it cannot let go, being carried within a pouch formed by a fold of the skin of the mother's abdomen. Birds build nests within which the eggs are laid and the little birds cared for until they are old enough to fly. Pigeons feed their young for the first few days on a secretion from the crop of both the male and female birds, a milky fluid commonly



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

known as 'pigeon's milk'. The larvae of ants and bees are assiduously cared for by special attendants, 'nurses', until they are old enough to fend for themselves. Nature has seemed to delight in trying out an infinite variety of methods of reproduction and care for the young organism.

### SECONDARY SEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS

The separation of the reproductive elements into male and female and their housing in separate organisms were accompanied in many instances by the development of special characteristics associated with one or the other of the sexes. Among the great majority of animals, at least in the adult state, it is not so necessary to examine the reproductive system itself to determine the sex of the animal; there are morphological features which make it quite evident. There are differences in form and size, ornamentation and behaviour. The male deer develops his glorious spread of antlers; the male lion sports a luxuriant mane; the male peacock dazzles beholders with his gorgeous tail. In the majority of the higher animals, the male is larger and stronger than the female; it is the male who develops the most striking beauty of form and colouring, the loudest and most melodious voice; it is the male bird which delights us with his song at the breeding season, the male lion who terrorizes the jungle with his challenging roar, the male cricket whose cheerful chirp is proverbial on the hearth. In size, colour, ornamentation, music, even in odour, the male animal usually has the advantage. This is not always true, however, and especially among the insects we find many exceptions; the queen bee, for instance, is larger than any of her retinue. In certain species of spiders the female



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

is large and rapacious, and the male often sacrifices his life in fertilizing her; she may literally eat him up. One could catalogue many curious instances of differences between the sexes, such as in *Bonellia*, a marine worm, in which the female is about the size of a plum, and the male a tiny worm-like creature that lives as a parasite in the uterus of the female. Among the more lowly animal forms 'pigmy' males are common, their only function being fertilization of the female.

The origin and meaning of the secondary sexual characteristics have been the subject of much discussion. It is often assumed that they are directly correlated with the fact of sex itself. The female sex cell, the egg, is large, well stored with nutriment, and passive; the male cell, the spermatozoon, is small, active, free-swimming. On this theory the female organism is passive as regards sex and is actively sought out by the male. In order to attract her attention and perhaps to secure her favour, he develops colour, song, or ornamentation. The Darwinian theory of sexual selection, which presupposes that the females compare the different males and choose the strongest or the most beautiful, is still widely held in spite of many objections. Certainly there are many species of animals in which the males engage in elaborate displays of their charms before her; but whether the female possesses an instinct which enables her to choose the strongest or the most beautiful for her mate is certainly open to question, and the few controlled experiments that have been made upon the matter do not bear this out. Again, there are too many instances in which there is scarcely any noticeable difference between the sexes, or in which the advantage is with the female instead of the male. It has been suggested that the



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

excess of energy, which, in the female, goes into the reproduction and nourishment of the young, in the male, who has no such drain upon his metabolic reserves, goes into the elaboration of the secondary sexual characters. The general inconspicuousness of the female might well be regarded also as a protective device; it is upon her that the future of the race depends, and it is of great advantage to the female animal to be able to escape detection by her enemies.

### SEX ASSOCIATION AMONG ANIMALS

As remarked above, as soon as male and female organisms are developed, there is an obvious necessity for some form of attraction between them in order that reproduction may be accomplished. In the vast majority of species such attraction exists for one purpose only — to secure the fertilization of the female and the beginning of new individuals. The parent organisms then have no further interest in each other and go their separate ways.

So far as sex association is concerned, animals can be divided into three groups: in the first group there is an annual breeding season, in the second there are well-marked periods of sexual activity, while in the third the interest of the sexes in each other is continuous. Birds, deer, seals, and bears are animals that belong to the first group; the interest of male and female in each other is confined to a limited period. In the second are such familiar animals as cats, dogs, rats, and guinea-pigs. In these animals the female has periods of great sexual desire, but outside of these periods she is completely indifferent to the male. The male, however, is ready to perform the sex act at any



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

time. The third group comprises the *primates*, the highest order of animals, among which are classified monkeys, apes, and man. Even here the female has more or less well-marked periods of sexual desire, though she is continually attractive to the male, and will usually mate with him at any time.

Among animals we find an infinite variety of activities

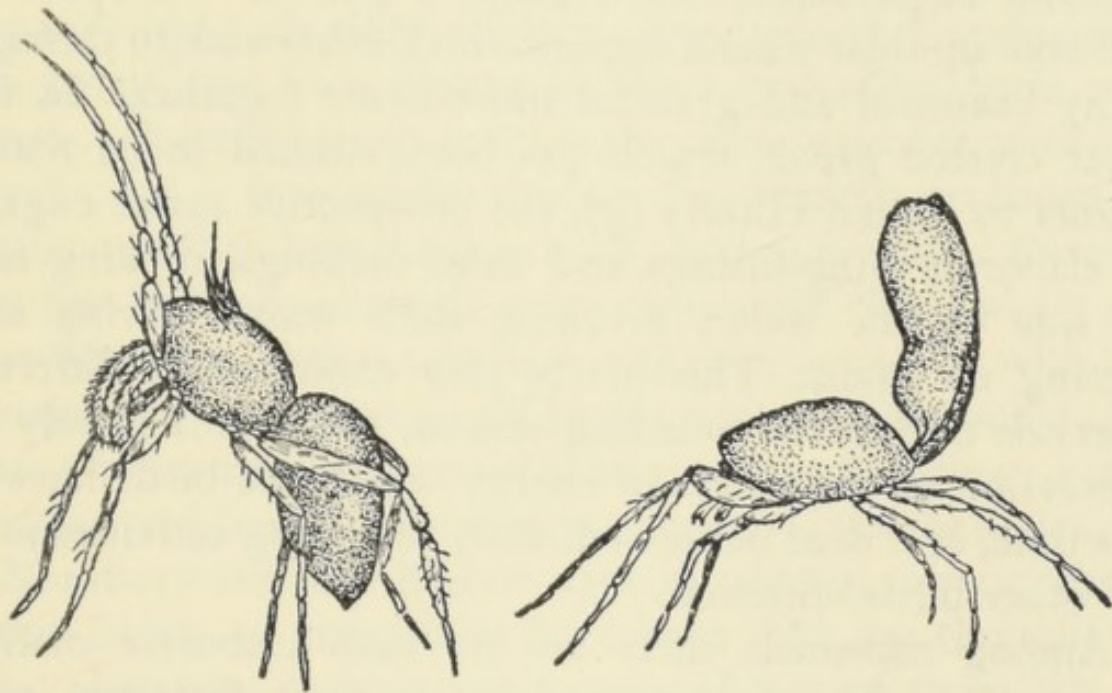


FIG. 4 – Courtship Activities in Spiders. The male spider performs all sorts of antics before the female. (After Peckham.)

leading up to the culmination in the sex act itself. The so-called 'courtship' activities of various animals form an interesting chapter in animal biology. The males in certain species of spiders perform all sorts of antics before the female — jumping, throwing themselves about, and waving their palpi in the air before her. Many insects engage in a grand nuptial flight; the queen bee soars away into the air, pursued by dozens of males, one of whom finally overtakes her; fertilization completed, the flock returns to earth



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

again, chooses an abode, and settles down. Some species of ants have wings until after this flight, when they lose them. Many male animals fight furiously for the possession of the female, the latter looking on calmly until the combat is over, when she goes off with the victor. The courtship behaviour of many birds is especially striking. The ordinary pigeon engages in elaborate struttings, wing-shakings, cooings, and mincing steps before the female; a pair of woodpeckers will take up their station opposite each other and go through many beautiful and graceful movements together. In the great crested grebe, which has been studied in its native haunts by Julian Huxley (5), the prospective mates engage in elaborate wing-liftings and head-shakings, rocking side by side on the water, preening their wings, diving and coming up again. This lovely play continues at different intervals during the breeding season, and seems merely an expression of the excess of energy which the birds have at this time, as it does not lead directly to mating activities as in the other birds observed.

Among mammals there are no such elaborate mating ceremonies. The herbivorous males fight furiously with each other during the mating season; among carnivores rivalry is much less keen and fighting less frequent. In a state of nature most animals are promiscuous in their sexual relationships; indeed, there are some authorities who claim that practically all animals are, even birds, though birds are commonly observed to pair during the breeding season, and the father bird takes as much responsibility for the protection of the nest and the feeding of the young as does the mother. The birds seem to have progressed farther towards an actual family life, sometimes almost meriting the term ideal, than have any other animal groups. Some



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

insects, such as ants and bees, have evolved an elaborate community organization with a highly specialized division of labour, but it can probably be shown that within these communities there is no regard for the individual except as he plays a part in the drama of reproduction. Even among those animals which are usually regarded as polygamous, that is, forming a group in which one male has possession of several females, the male is better regarded as promiscuous. He may jealously fight off any other male that approaches the group, but he is always on the look-out for fresh conquests. Among many species the male remains with the female for a few weeks during the rutting or breeding season and then leaves her to seek another partner. Animals that live in flocks or herds quite commonly divide along sex lines after the mating season is over; the young go with the females and the males go off by themselves. As soon as the young males approach sexual maturity they are driven out of the herd and fend for themselves, or join a band of males.

Monkeys and the higher apes in general, about whose family habits so many tales have been told, are thought by some observers to be promiscuous. Most of them live in bands or troops, though in some species solitary individual males are found. Chimpanzees are usually found in more or less large groups, and gorillas, too, are usually found in groups of several males and females with their young. The old stories of male gorillas building homes for the females and standing guard to protect them from enemies seem to have no foundation in fact. Very little is known about the breeding habits of the great apes, the gibbons, orang-outangs, chimpanzees, and gorillas. Miller, in 1928, presented a paper in which he stated that monkeys and apes live in loosely organized or sexually promiscuous groups.



But Zuckerman (12), in 1932, published the results of several years' observation upon monkeys and apes in the wild, and also of a baboon colony on 'Monkey Hill' in the London Zoo, in which his conclusions are that monkeys and apes form families, consisting of an 'overlord' and his harem, held together chiefly by the interest of the male in the females, and of the latter in their young. Since monkeys belong to the group in which there is no breeding season, theoretically at least the way is open for a continuous association of the sexes which might lead to a kind of family life.

But nearly all recent observers are agreed that, as noted above, nothing like a permanent family relationship as we know it obtains among the animals; there is no proof for the existence of the monogamous family among mammals, though it is often taken for granted. The interest of male and female in each other does not extend beyond the mating season, and in the majority of instances vanishes after the impregnation of the female. Of actual affection or interest in each other outside of the sex sphere there is very little. Although the father fish or bird may perform exhausting labour for weeks directed to the protection and feeding of the young, such behaviour is called forth by his offspring and not by their mother. Among mammals the male shows practically no interest in his offspring. The instinct of the female is almost universally to be alone when the time for her delivery comes, and she sedulously avoids all other animals, including her mate. Among many carnivores the male kills the young if he can discover them, and many female animals are not averse to eating their own offspring. However, the instinct of the female as we ascend in the evolutionary scale is more and more for the care and protection of her young until they are old enough to look out



## GENERAL BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

for themselves. The period of infancy and of consequent helplessness lengthens steadily until it culminates in the young of man. The mother must feed the infant at her breast and a little later forage for food which she brings home to it; or she must hunt food and hide from enemies with a helpless little creature clinging to her back or safely folded in a pouch of her own skin. The ferocity of the animal mother in the protection of her young is too well known to need illustration; the instinct of self-preservation, which at all other times is dominant in the animal's life, is now completely in abeyance, and the mother will sacrifice herself in the protection of her young. In very many instances this same mother will turn upon her offspring once they have reached maturity and drive them away from her, but there are certainly other species in which the young remain in more or less proximity to the mother and are on friendly terms with her. In certain animal groups the leader is an old female, and many of the herd must be her children or grandchildren. Briffault (2) believes that it is through the gate of maternity rather than of sex that what we know as 'love' in the altruistic sense enters the world.

The fact that competent observers disagree implies that we have not yet learned a great deal about the family life of animals in a state of nature. It may be that further observation will change some of the now accepted opinions, but so far as our present knowledge goes the statements above would seem to be correct.

One other point of interest remains to be noted, and that is that among all the animals excepting man, mating depends upon the consent and co-operation of the female. Though she may appear unwilling, though there may be chasings and outcries and a great show of reluctance upon her part,



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

she is eternally mistress of the situation, and both sexes behave as if they were fully aware of this fact. It is conditioned by the anatomy of the genital system of the female, which makes it practically impossible for the male to force her against her will. In the human female the anatomical position of the organs makes such forced mating possible, and this fact must have had a profound influence upon the sexual history of the human race.

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## CHAPTER II

# THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

WHEN we come to study the function of reproduction in man we find little that has not been worked out among other organisms. So far as physical structure and the actual functioning of the reproductive system are concerned, there is little to distinguish *Homo sapiens* from his sub-human cousins. But in man, sex has ceased to be the purely instinctive thing that it is among animals. Thanks to his cerebral development, man is able to invest the facts of sex with all sorts of emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and ideals; to raise barriers against the unrestricted play of the instinct; and to divert a large portion of the energy, which in his nearest animal cousins goes into sex activities, into other channels of endeavour. Nevertheless, in an attempt to understand ourselves or others as human beings, or to gain any real insight into the momentous part played by sex and reproduction in human society, we must start with the crude physical facts of reproduction. For obvious reasons direct experimentation and observation in this field are very difficult and in some respects impossible, and much of what we know about human reproduction has been learned from observation and experiment upon other mammals (notably the white rat, the guinea-pig, and certain species of monkeys) which are in many respects identical with human beings. Thanks to the researches that have been carried out over a period of years upon these animals, we know a good deal



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

about the functioning of the human reproductive system and what takes place during the development of the human embryo. In order to get our bearings in the subject a little more easily, let us review briefly the anatomy and physiology

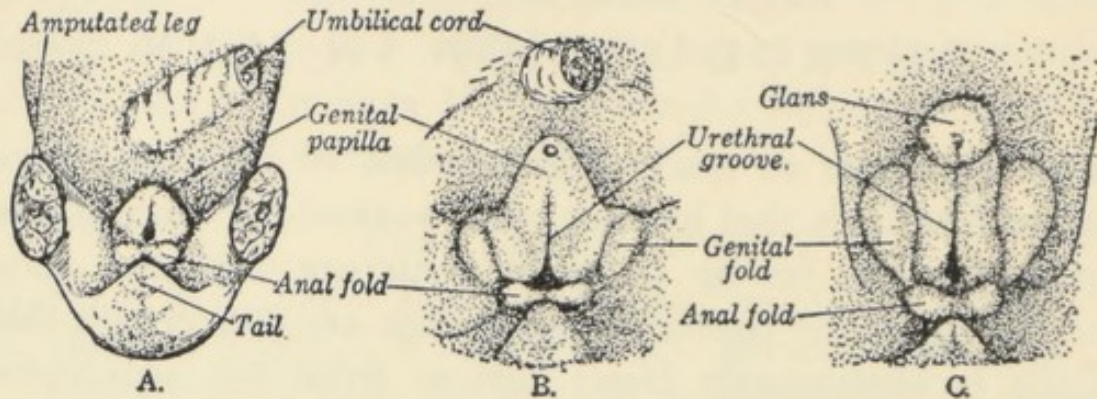


FIG. 5 - Undifferentiated Stages of the External Genitalia in Man. (From Little, adapted from Otis.)

of the human reproductive system. It will be necessary to refer constantly to the illustrations in order to understand what follows.

### REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM OF THE MALE

For the first few weeks of intra-uterine life, the human individual appears undifferentiated in regard to sex. Although the sex of the embryo<sup>1</sup> has been determined at the moment of conception, it is not until the eighth week, approximately, that it is possible to distinguish the future child as masculine or feminine. The *gonads* or sex-glands of both sexes have their origin in the same embryonic tissue, known as the *genital ridges*; in the process of development a

<sup>1</sup> The developing individual is known as an *embryo* until it reaches the point where its structure resembles a human being, at about the close of the second month; thereafter it is called a *fetus*.



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

portion of these genital ridges becomes in the one case *testicles* and in the other *ovaries*. The external organs of both sexes develop from what is at first a comparatively large swelling, appearing about the sixth week, known as the *genital tubercle*. In the male this tubercle and the surrounding fold of tissue develop into *penis*, *scrotum*, and *penile urethra* (that portion of the bladder duct which traverses the penis); but in the female these same tissues undergo a transformation into *clitoris* and *labia*. Likewise, two small tubes in the embryo, known as *Müllerian ducts*, develop into the *Fallopian tubes*, *uterus*, and *vagina* in the female, while in

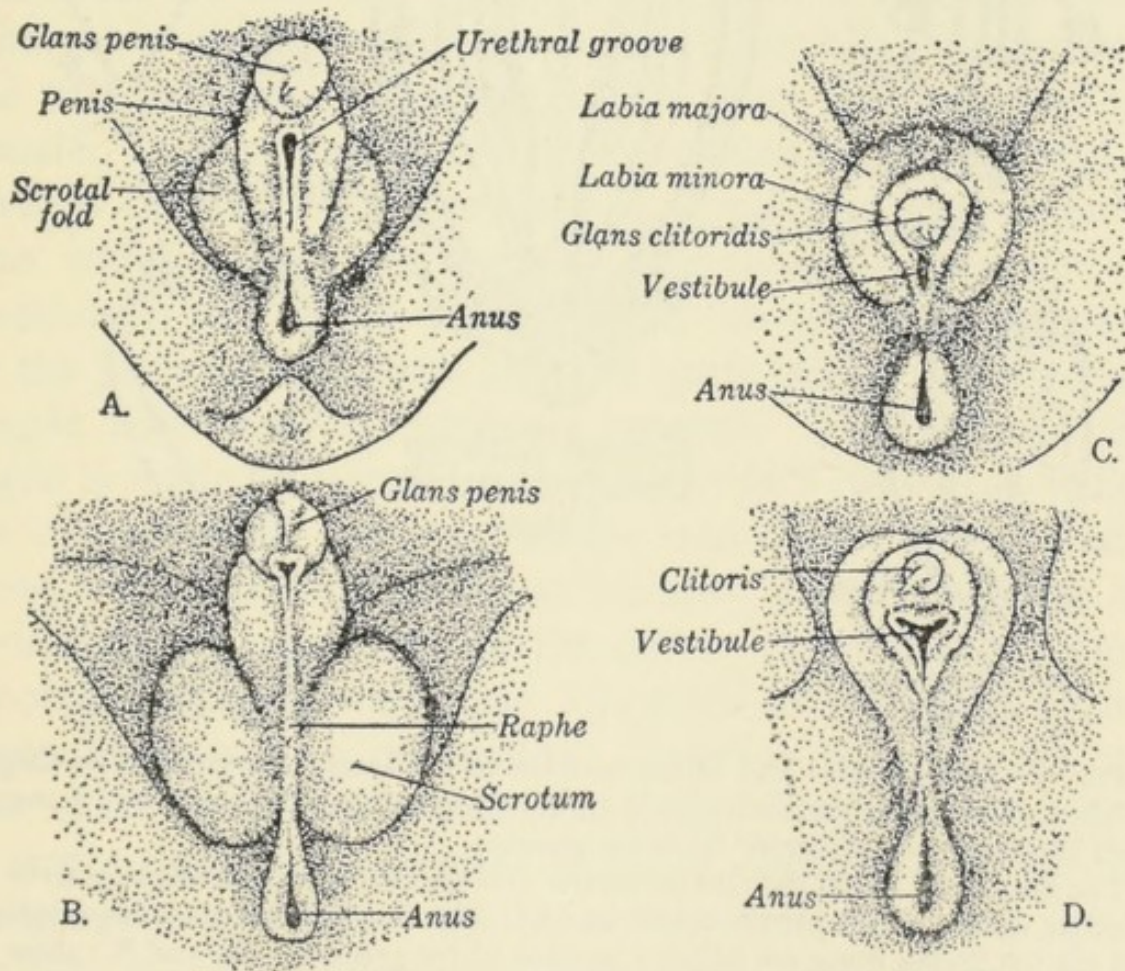


FIG. 6. — Differentiation of Sex in Man. Diagrams (A) and (B) show the development in the male; diagrams (C) and (D) are the female. Compare with the undifferentiated stages above. (From Little, adapted from Otis.)



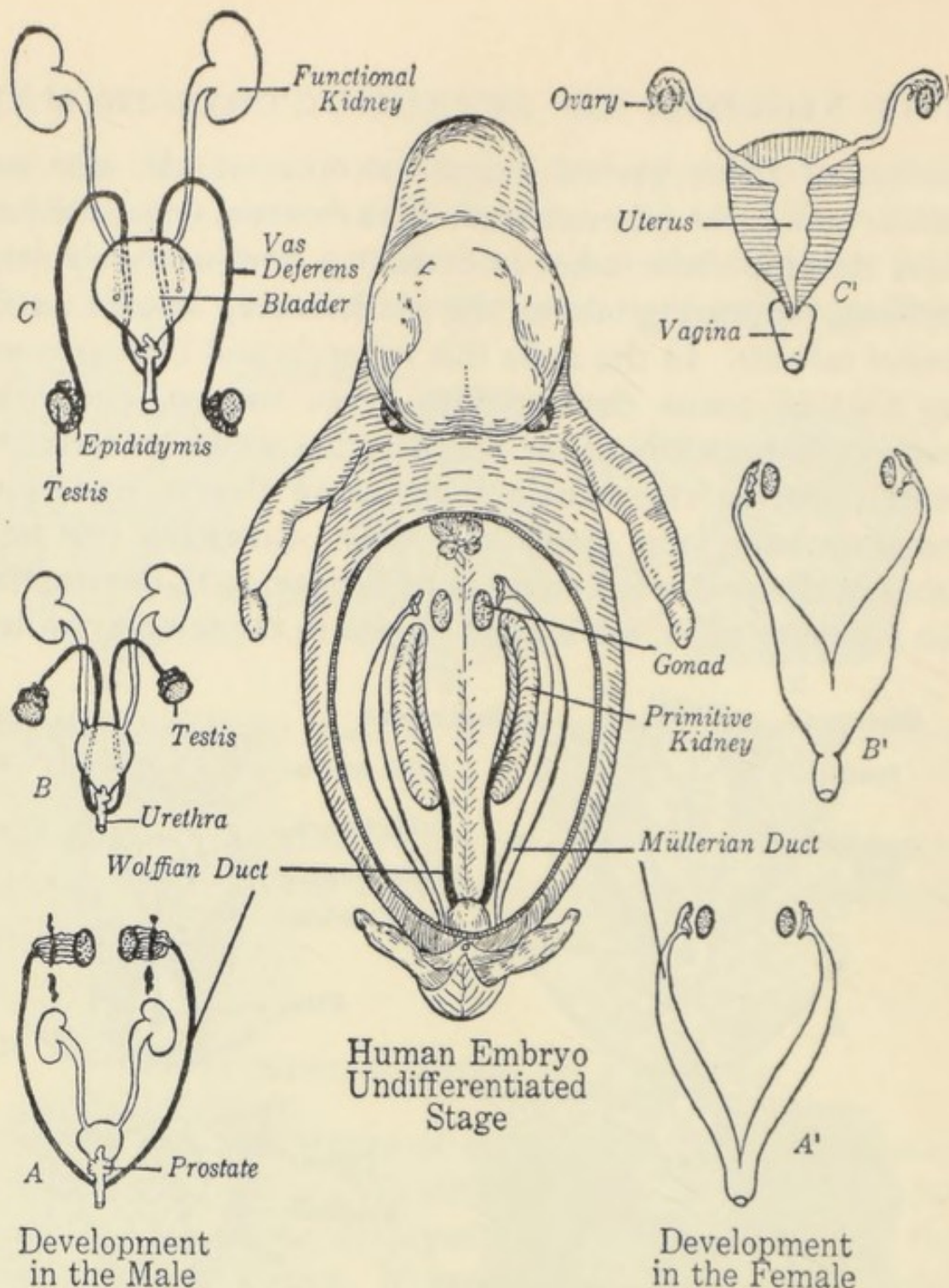


FIG. 7 - Development and Differentiation of the Internal Reproductive Organs in Man. The early, undifferentiated embryo (centre) has the body wall removed. Both Wolffian and Müllerian ducts are present.

The *male* (left) shows the vasa deferentia and the epididymis developing from the Wolffian ducts and the primitive kidney (A). The functional kidney has developed and the Müllerian ducts are left as a portion of the prostate. (B) and (C) show the descent of the testes and the definitive development of the epididymis.

The *female* (right) illustrates (A<sup>1</sup>) the beginning of the fusion of the two Müllerian ducts to form the vagina, uterus, and Fallopian tubes. In (C<sup>1</sup>) the fusion is complete, the walls of the uterus are thickened, and the vagina separated from the uterus. The urinary organs are omitted.



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

the male these same ducts fuse and are reduced to a vestigial organ, sometimes called the 'little uterus' of the male. A knowledge of these facts makes it easier to understand many of the irregularities of development which we find in the reproductive system. It is not at all surprising that complete differentiation sometimes fails to take place.

From the eighth week on the differentiation into male and female becomes more marked. At birth the reproductive system of the male consists of the *external genitalia*, the penis and scrotum, the latter containing the testicles; and the *internal*, consisting of the *vasa deferentia* with their associated structures, the *prostate gland*, and the *urethra*. The penis is the copulatory organ, especially designed for the safe conveyance of the sperm into the body of the female. It is an almost cylindrical structure whose head or *glans* is covered by a double fold of the thin and sensitive skin which covers the organ. This fold, the prepuce, or foreskin, is that which is removed in the operation practised by the Jews as a religious rite and quite commonly by other people nowadays for hygienic reasons. The body of the organ is made up largely of the two *corpora cavernosa*, which are composed of a spongy tissue into whose spaces many blood vessels open. Under stimulation there is a great inrush of blood, which so fills the tissues that the organ itself becomes enlarged, hard, and lifts itself or is *erected*, a condition necessary for copulation. Erection is not under the control of the will except as occasions for stimulation, such as erotic thoughts, pictures, physical contact, etc., can be consciously avoided. Spontaneous erections are quite common during adolescence, sometimes beginning as early as eight or nine years, and causing great anxiety to the young boy if he is not properly instructed. Erections are common



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

in male infants also, and seem to be merely a part of normal development. The scrotum is a sac of skin containing the two testes, or testicles, which are the sexual glands proper in the male. They are ovoid in shape, about one and three-quarter inches long, and an inch in width and thickness. They are completely separated from each other, so that one

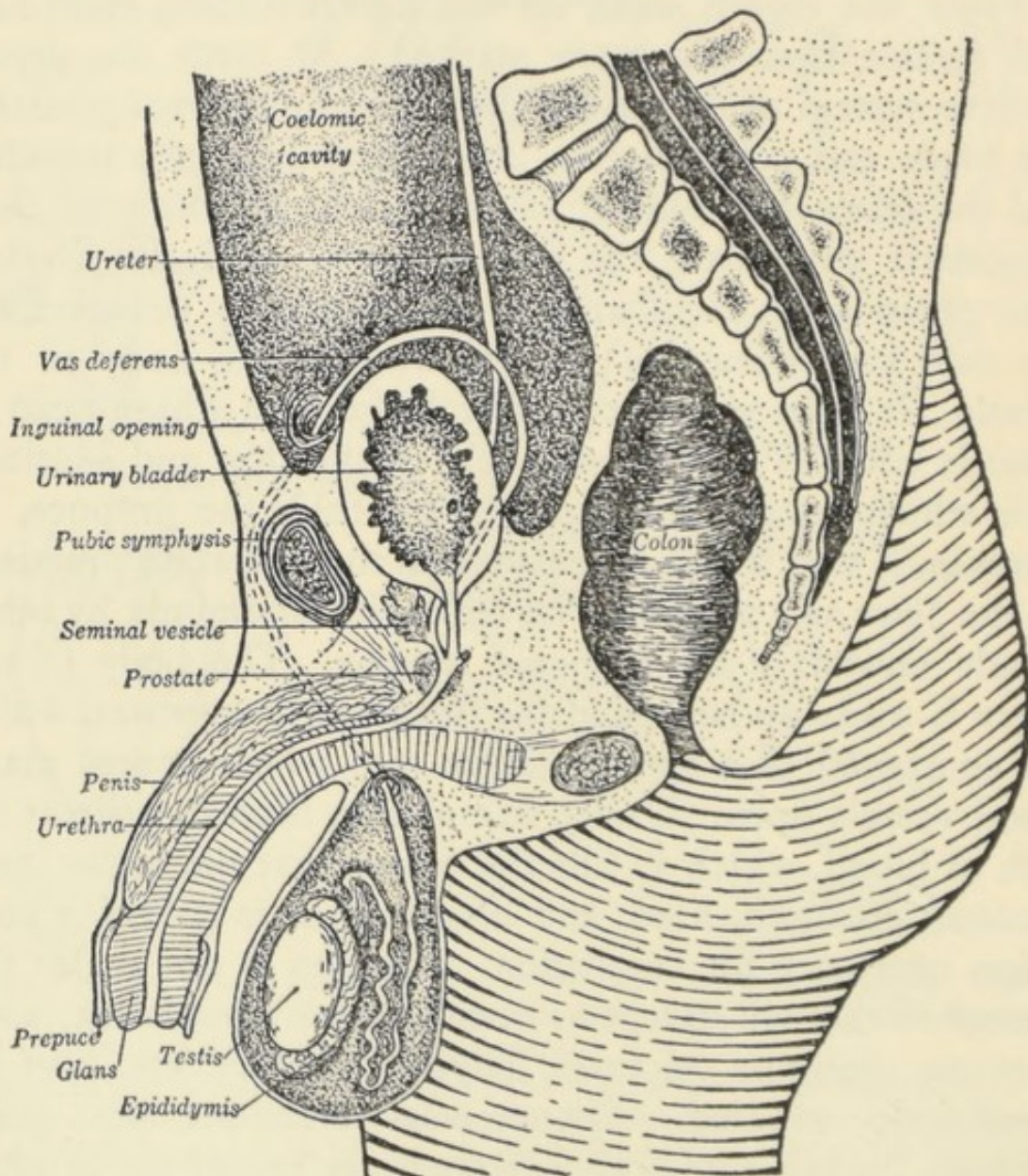


FIG. 8 - Reproductive System of the Human Male. The drawing shows a median section of the specimen. (From Little.)



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

can be removed without injurious effect. The testicle is composed of two types of tissue, the *seminiferous* and the *interstitial*. The function of the former is the manufacture of the male cells or spermatozoa; the latter is supposed to secrete a *hormone* which is responsible for the development of the male secondary sexual characteristics, although this physiological division of labour is not settled to the satisfaction of all authorities. However, that it is the testicle in which the specific male sex hormone is produced is proven beyond a doubt in a number of ways, as we shall see later.

Although normally the testicles are housed outside the body in the scrotum, they are developed in the interior of the abdomen, and late in fetal life migrate or *descend* through the inguinal canals to their places in the scrotum. In a large number of cases this descent is delayed, and a child is born with one or perhaps both of the organs still in the abdomen or in the inguinal canal, a condition known as *cryptorchidism*, from two Greek words which mean 'hidden' or 'concealed', and 'testicle'. Sometimes the condition corrects itself spontaneously, and in other cases it persists. Even when both remain undescended the boy may develop into an apparently normal man; but he is unable to procreate, as an undescended testicle contains no spermatozoa. If, however, an operation places the testicles in the scrotum where they belong, spermatozoa are produced normally. The reason for this is that the sperm-producing cells of the testicle cannot function in the temperature of the abdomen, which is several degrees higher than that of the scrotal sac.

The vas deferens is a muscular tube leading from a testicle through the inguinal canal into the body cavity, thence through the prostate gland, and emptying finally into



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

the urethra, which leads directly through the penis to the outside. It is enlarged near the bladder and communicates with the *seminal vesicle*, a small gland, which, together with the enlarged portion of the vas, may act as a storehouse for the sperms. The function of the vasa deferentia, then, is to receive the sperms, store them till needed, and then force them on their way to the outside. Attached to each testicle at the back is the *epididymis*, a long coiled tube that opens from the testicle and connects with the vas deferens. Through this tube the sperms are carried to the latter. The seminal vesicles and the prostate gland secrete a copious fluid in which the sperms float or swim about. The prostate is also a muscular organ, its contractions helping to force the seminal fluid along at the time of its discharge. The urethra is properly the duct leading from the bladder through the penis to the outside, but since the two vasa deferentia open into it, it is the final path for the sperms as well. The position of the prostate is unfortunate, as it surrounds the urethra close to the bladder, and in elderly men it is apt to degenerate and constrict the urethra, a condition causing serious trouble.

### REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM OF THE FEMALE

The main structures of the female reproductive system are the vulva, usually designated the external genitalia; the vagina, uterus, Fallopian tubes, and the ovaries, known as the internal genitalia. The breasts, or *mammary glands*, should also be included.

The vulva consists of the *labia majora*, the *labia minora*, and the *clitoris*. The labia majora, or 'outer lips' are two thick folds of skin lined with a delicate pink membrane;



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

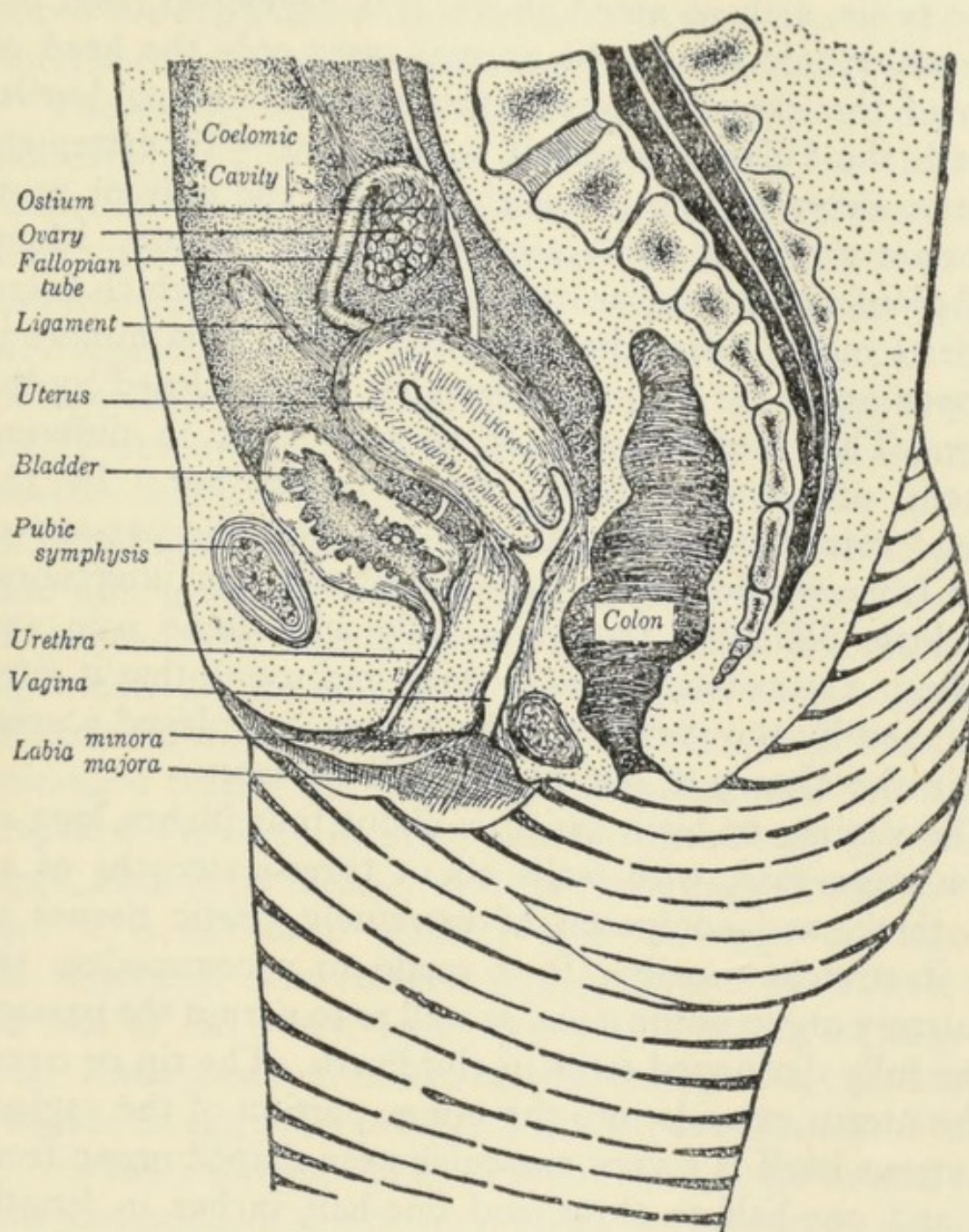


FIG. 9 - Reproductive System of the Human Female. (*From Little.*)

the labia minora, or 'inner lips', are thin folds of cutaneous tissue joined above and below and containing many blood vessels. The function of both sets of labia is probably chiefly protection of the parts within. The clitoris, situated at the upper end of the labia minora, is somewhat similar



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

to the penis, and, as noted above, it is developed from the same embryonic tissue. In normal cases only the head or glans of the clitoris projects, the rest of it being buried beneath the vulvar tissues; it is provided with extremely sensitive nerve endings, though it is not the only or most important centre of erotic sensations in the female. Many small glands in the vulvar region secrete a fluid which keeps the parts moist. Near the lower end of the labia minora is the opening of the vagina, or *introitus*, partly closed by the *hymen*. This membrane is of various types in different women, occasionally being absent altogether. In the average case it is perforated so as to allow the passage of fluids from within and is ruptured at the first intercourse with little difficulty, though usually with some pain and bleeding. Occasionally it is so thick and tough that it must be clipped by the surgeon. The hymen has played a great part in the history of sex, as we shall see later.

The vagina, or birth canal, is about four inches long in the average case, with walls about three-sixteenths of an inch thick, and composed of extremely elastic tissues so that it stretches easily. It is made to accommodate the copulatory organ of the male, as well as to permit the passage of the fully developed fetus in childbirth. The tip or *cervix* of the uterus extends into the upper portion of the vagina; the uterus itself is a very muscular pear-shaped organ from two and one-half to three and one-half inches in length, and lined with a tissue called the *endometrium*. The inner chamber, or *lumen*, of the uterus connects at each corner of the top with a Fallopian tube, which is a delicately muscular canal leading to an ovary, not entering the latter but expanding into a fringed open end which embraces the ovary and forms a funnel-shaped cavity. Through these



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

tubes the eggs move toward the uterus, while up them the sperms travel when normal intercourse has taken place.

The ovaries are the female sex glands proper, the gonads, corresponding to the testes of the male and, like the testes, composed of two kinds of tissue, one designed for the production of the egg and the other for the production of an internal secretion, or hormone, which has to do with the development of the distinctive feminine features. Much of how these functions are divided up in the ovary is not yet clear. An ovary is a flat, irregular ovoid body, somewhat smaller than the testicle and varying considerably in size in different individuals. It is fastened to the pelvic wall on one side, grasped by the fringes of the Fallopian tube at its upper end, and attached at its lower end to the uterus by a ligament. In the interior of the ovary, in what is known as the cortex, are the *Graafian follicles*, which are little sacs containing a liquid, the eggs being attached near the sides of the sacs. At birth an ovary contains thousands of immature eggs, each in its follicle; most of them degenerate, however, and it is not until puberty that the eggs undergo full development. The follicles now grow and push toward the surface of the ovary, forming a protuberance as large as a pea. Each month a follicle reaches the surface, ruptures and releases its egg; this process is known as *ovulation*. The egg enters the Fallopian tube, there to meet a sperm and begin the formation of a new individual, or to journey on to the uterus to degenerate or be cast out in the next menstrual period.

The human egg, or *ovum*, itself is a minute rounded body, barely visible to the naked eye, but still enormously larger than the sperm. Minute bits of yolk, or food supply, are scattered about in it.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

The breasts, or mammary glands, are often classified as secondary sexual characters, but, in the female at least, they are intimately connected with the fact of reproduction. The mammary glands are rudimentary in the male, though occasionally they have been known to function. Cases of *supernumerary*, or extra, glands are not uncommon in both sexes, and occasionally these supernumerary glands are functional, secreting a small amount of milk. Until puberty the breasts in both sexes are undeveloped and rudimentary in appearance, but during puberty in the female they enlarge and become rounded in contour, although they vary greatly in shape and size in different women. The *areola* is a pigmented area surrounding the *nipple*; into the latter the gland opens by many minute pores. The nipple is an *erectile* organ, capable of enlarging and erecting itself, and the breast in general plays an important part in the erotic life of woman, quite distinct from its biological function of lactation.

### THE MECHANISM OF FERTILIZATION

The whole reproductive system of the human male must be understood as a mechanism specifically designed to secure the fertilization of the ovum. After puberty the glands of the sexual apparatus, especially the prostate, become active and secrete the fluid known as *semen*, which collects in the seminal vesicles, whence it is automatically discharged by 'involuntary emissions' that normally take place during sleep. This fluid does not at first contain sperms, and the only way to determine when they actually are present or when the boy has arrived at physiological



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

puberty is by microscopic examination of the semen. The human spermatozoon is a microscopic cell, about one six-hundredth of an inch in length, endowed with a head, a middle piece, and an elongated tail with which it swims actively about. The nucleus is contained in the head, which is flattened and has a sharp front edge that aids in penetrating the egg. After the sperms begin to form, they are produced in enormous numbers — a single ejaculation of

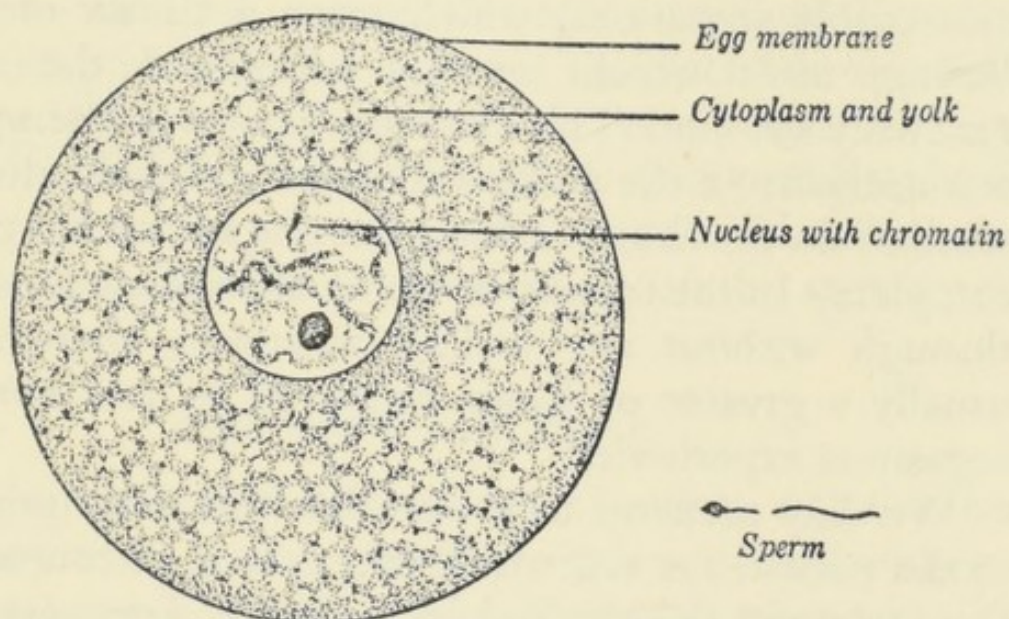


FIG. 10 — Human Ovum. The drawing is greatly enlarged, the sperm being drawn to the same scale.

seminal fluid containing from two to three hundred million sperms; Nature is taking no chances even at this level of biological development. Copulation<sup>1</sup> in man takes place exactly as it does in the other mammals, by the insertion of the organ into the female aperture, the vagina, where by rhythmical movements back and forth the seminal fluid is finally discharged, or *ejaculated*, with considerable force; the sperms thus liberated find their way into the Fallopian tubes,

<sup>1</sup> The terms 'coitus', 'sexual intercourse', 'sexual congress', and others are used to designate this process.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

where under favourable circumstances one may come in contact with an ovum and bury itself in the body of the egg. This act is known as *impregnation* if we view it from the standpoint of the male, or *conception* on the part of the female. These rhythmical movements are accompanied by highly pleasurable sensations, which mount to a climax when the ejaculation of the seminal fluid takes place. In the female also the stimulation of the genital apparatus produces pleasurable sensations, which reach a climax of conscious feeling, after which muscles relax and the sensations gradually subside. This climax is known as the *orgasm*, and is a necessity in the male as it accompanies the discharge of seminal fluid, without which the sex act on his part is not complete. In the female, however, the sex act can be carried through without any feeling whatever, though there is usually a greater or lesser degree of it, and normally the orgasm is experienced.

We may mention here also that this description applies to the normal sex act, which takes place, of course, between the male and female, and is, therefore, *heterosexual*. There are other sex activities, however, which may result in release of tensions and the production of the orgasm. The sex act may be *auto-erotic* or *homosexual*. When a person stimulates himself sexually so that pleasurable sensations result, the term employed to designate this process is *auto-erotism* (*auto-eroticism* as formerly spelled), meaning self-induced pleasure; when the self-stimulation is carried so far that the orgasm is produced, the term *masturbation* is used. When two people of the same sex stimulate each other by handling each other's genitals, or by some other form of physical contact that induces pleasurable sensations, which, if carried far enough, lead to the orgasm, we



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

speak of *homosexual* relations. The term 'homosexual' refers to those of like or the same sex. The person who habitually engages in such relations is said to be an *overt* homosexual.

The function of the female genital apparatus is in a sense a passive one, as it is designed for the reception of the male cell, and the ovum may be fertilized even though the female is entirely passive and has no sex feeling during coitus. Occasionally artificial fertilization is successful; that is, by the injection of fresh semen through a syringe into the female, conception may take place. This fact has led to all sorts of fanciful speculations as to what extent such artificial impregnation may some day be carried. It is probably true, however, that active participation in the sexual act on the part of the female favours the meeting of the sperm and egg.

### THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

Although, as noted above, the Graafian follicles are formed very early in the girl-child, it is not until puberty that they take on a different role. Regularly once a month a Graafian follicle is formed, reaches the surface of the ovary, ruptures, and releases an ovum in such a position that it usually drops into the Fallopian tube. About fifteen days are required for the development and rupture of the follicle. In the meantime changes are taking place in the endometrium, or lining of the uterus, it becoming thick and glandular. After the rupture of the follicle, a tissue known as the *corpus luteum* is formed and fills the cavity in the surface of the ovary where the rupture occurred; this corpus luteum apparently secretes a hormone which stimulates the glands of the endometrium, the whole process being designed to make the uterus ready for the fertilized ovum. On about



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

the twenty-fourth day after the beginning of this cycle, if the egg has not been fertilized, the corpus luteum degenerates, the endometrium breaks down, bleeds, and for three or more days (the period varying in different women) the uterus discharges blood mixed with the debris of the corpus luteum and the endometrium. Then the endometrium begins to regenerate, a new follicle containing an ovum begins to grow, and the whole process is repeated over and over unless and until fertilization takes place. This process is known as *menstruation*, and the time it occupies, which is around twenty-eight days, is known as the *menstrual cycle*. Menstruation, then, apparently serves no purpose in itself, but merely marks the end of the stage of preparation of the uterus for the reception and development of the embryo. Everything has been made ready, but the egg has not been fertilized, and it is necessary to get rid of the unused material and start anew.<sup>1</sup>

If, however, the egg on its way down the Fallopian tube meets a sperm and conception takes place, the changes which have begun in the endometrium go rapidly forward; the fertilized egg, now known as the *ovum*, or *zygote* (the union of two gametes), moves slowly down the tube, undergoing the first stages of development as it does so. In seven or eight days it reaches the uterus, and in several days more has settled down upon the endometrium to which it attaches itself, or *implants*, and soon the development of the embryo proper has begun. Normally, menstruation does not take place after conception; but in very many cases however, the pregnancy ceases at this point for

<sup>1</sup> Menstruation is not confined to the human female. All Old-world monkeys and apes menstruate, but those of America, which are lower in the evolutionary scale, do not.



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

one reason or another; menstruation does occur, the structures are expelled during the period, and the woman remains unaware that conception had taken place.

The fertilized human ovum is a minute object barely visible to the naked eye, yet it contains the material out of which all the tissues of the body will develop. By repeating the process of division which we find in the earliest protozoa, ultimately this single cell will produce the cells making up a new individual. For ages this process and everything concerning it was completely shrouded in mystery. It is considerably less than a hundred years since both sperm and egg in the human being were identified and understood in their true functions; before that scientists had made all sorts of guesses according to the lights of their times. Aristotle taught that the embryo was formed from the mingling of the male semen with the menstrual blood of the female; he thought the man was responsible for the soul of the child and the woman for its body. During the Middle Ages it was thought by some that the ovary of the first woman, Eve, contained the eggs of all the generations that would ever be born to the end of time, enclosed one within the other, like a nest of boxes. Others taught that the female had nothing to do with the embryo except to nourish it; the future child itself had been contained in miniature in the sperm of the father. Others considered the sperms useless, merely worms in the seminal fluid. We may smile at such ideas now, but they engaged the serious study of the best minds of the time. It was not until 1854 that the actual entrance of the sperm into the egg was observed, and not until 1875 that the mechanism of fertilization was understood. And it is only in very recent years that momentous discoveries have been made concerning the composition and



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

development of the cell. Though most of the work has of necessity been done upon the lower organisms (notably *Drosophila*, or the fruit fly, which can be followed through thousands of generations), much of what has been learned is applicable to man as well.

### COMPOSITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CELL

The animal cell, in whatever tissue of the body it is found, is a mass of jelly-like substance known as *cytoplasm*, in which

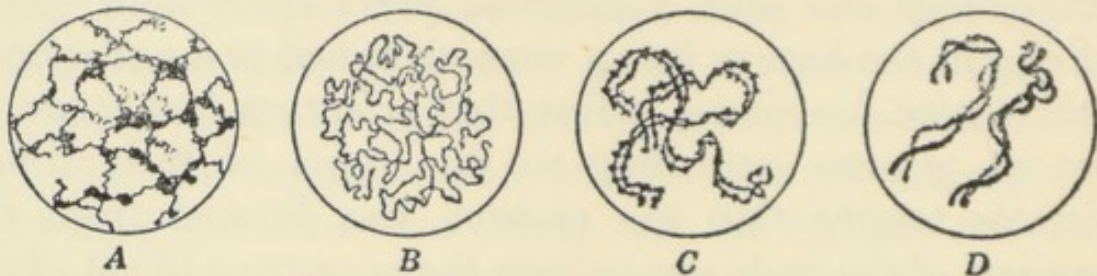


FIG. 11 - Structure of the Chromosomes in the Nucleus. (A) shows the chromatin network; in (B) the chromatin begins to collect into strands; (C) illustrates the elongated chromosomes with the minute particles (chromomeres) of which they are composed; and (D) shows their continued shortening. At the time of division of the cell the chromosomes are short, rounded bodies.

is embedded the nucleus. Though the cytoplasm is a most complex substance and plays an important role in development, it is the nucleus that has been shown to contain the forces which produce the differences in individual organisms or parts of organisms, and this is the reason for calling it the 'physical basis of heredity'. Under the microscope the nucleus is seen to contain threadlike particles of different size and shape. These particles are *chromosomes*; the chromosomes themselves, however, are composed of still more minute particles, which at certain points in the development of the cell can be seen 'arranged in consecutive linear order like beads' (Jennings (7), p. 5). These 'chromomeres' may



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

show the position of the ultimate units, the *genes*. Though the genes themselves are not visible even in the most powerful microscope, they have been conclusively shown to be distinct and separable substances, each having its particular place in the chromosome and being invariably found there. The genes are the carriers of heredity, the architects which, by their interaction with each other and with the cytoplasm, build up all the various structures of the body. Each gene is a distinctive substance with a

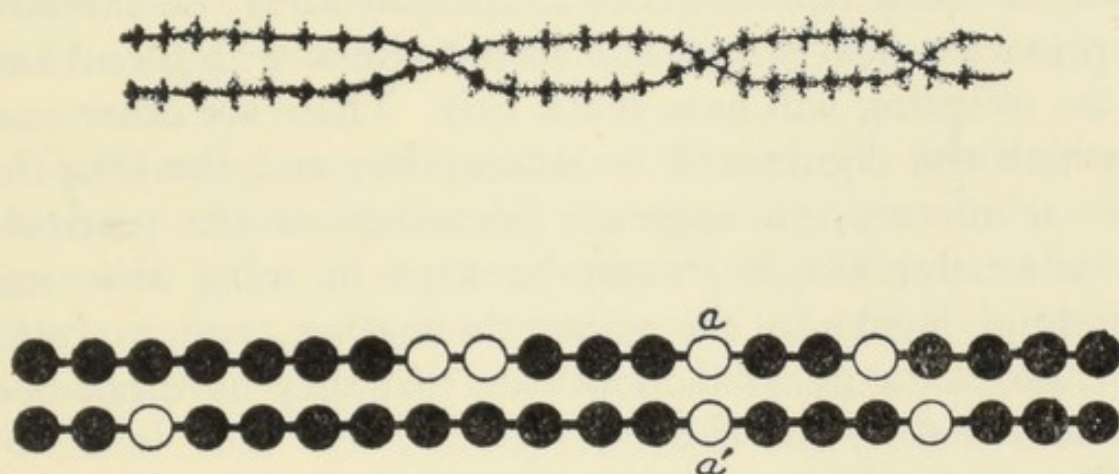


FIG. 12 - Arrangement of the Genes in a Pair of Chromosomes. At top is a small section of a chromosome as shown in (C), Fig. 11. The genes are contained in the chromomeres. Below is a more diagrammatic representation. If the chromomeres shown in white are considered as defective, recessive genes, it will be seen that only one character (*a-a'*) would appear in the offspring, although the other defects would be transmitted to future generations.

particular work to perform; and since each parent contributes to the offspring a complete set of genes, in every cell there are two sets of chromosomes, so that the genes are paired, one in each pair being from the mother and one from the father. Each pair of genes has a particular work to perform in the process of development; but although they have the same general function, they may differ in their chemical composition, and therefore have different effects upon bodily structure or function. One pair, for example,



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

may be concerned with the production of eye colour, but the gene from one parent may tend to produce a blue eye, while that from the other parent a brown one. Similarly, a pair of genes may affect the straightness or curliness of hair; while another may affect the proper or improper functioning of a gland.

In cases like the above, in which the genes of a pair are different in composition, it is usual for one to be *dominant* over the other. If an individual who is genetically 'pure' for black hair (that is, *both* genes of the pair carry the character for pigmentation) is mated to an individual with blond hair, *all* the offspring will have black hair. There are other cases in which the dominance is incomplete, and the offspring show a mixture, an apparent blending, of the particular characteristic; but it should be kept in mind that such 'blending' is not in the genes themselves, and in future generations the genes demonstrate that they have not been contaminated by the contact.

The pairing of the chromosomes, and the doubling of the genes is an insurance against defective development, for gene defects and deficiencies are probably very common and each of us must carry about with us very many such gene defects. This doubling of the genes gives us two chances instead of one for normal development — which may be the biological reason for two parents instead of one. In general, defective genes are recessive if paired with normal ones. There are exceptions, but because of the long evolutionary selection such cases are rare enough, so that we may think of the normal genes as dominant and expect the defective ones to be recessive.

We must not, however, think of a particular gene as independently producing a particular trait. All the genes



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

work together like a 'lot of chemicals in a physician's prescription' (Jennings, p. 16); and a change in the structure of one gene will usually upset the chemical balance which exists among all the genes. Not only do they interact with one another, but they work upon the cytoplasm, changing and transforming it; while it in turn reacts upon the genes, and thus new products arise until all the organs of the body are finally developed out of the changes in the cytoplasm. The ultimate cells in any part of the body retain the same *number* and *type* of chromosomes as were present in the fertilized egg, but they differ markedly in the constitution of the cytoplasm.

The developmental processes do not go forward with complete independence, and the specialization of the cell is dependent upon its environment — being influenced by the cells in contact with it and other surrounding conditions. In the earlier stages in man and many other animals, the individual cells are *generalized*, and therefore capable of developing along many different lines; each, in fact, may produce an entire organism. Later the cells become more stable, or *specialized*, and their essential character cannot be thus altered. They are limited in their potentialities; but throughout development the secretions of groups of cells affect other cells, and as development proceeds this becomes more and more marked. Such secretions, or *organizers*, originating in one group of cells, circulate to other groups and produce changes in them, altering the eventual structure profoundly.

So far we have been considering the internal environment of the cell, that which it, in a sense, produces for itself; and the effects of cells which arose with it from the same protoplasmic mass. But development is affected also by the



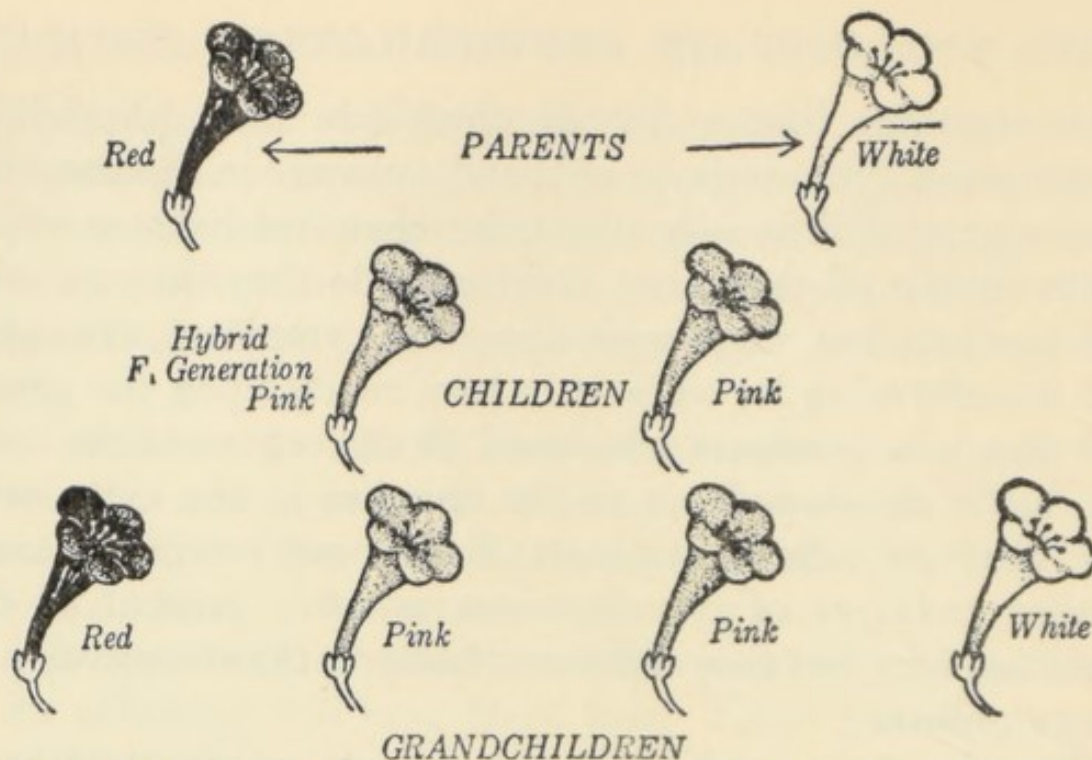


FIG. 13 – Mendelian Inheritance of a Single Factor. Incomplete dominance as illustrated by colour in the Four-o'clock (*Mirabilis jalapa*). A 'pure' red is crossed with a 'pure' white. The first generation is a hybrid (heterozygous) and pink in colour. In the second generation, after inbreeding the hybrids, the ratio is 1 : 2 : 1.

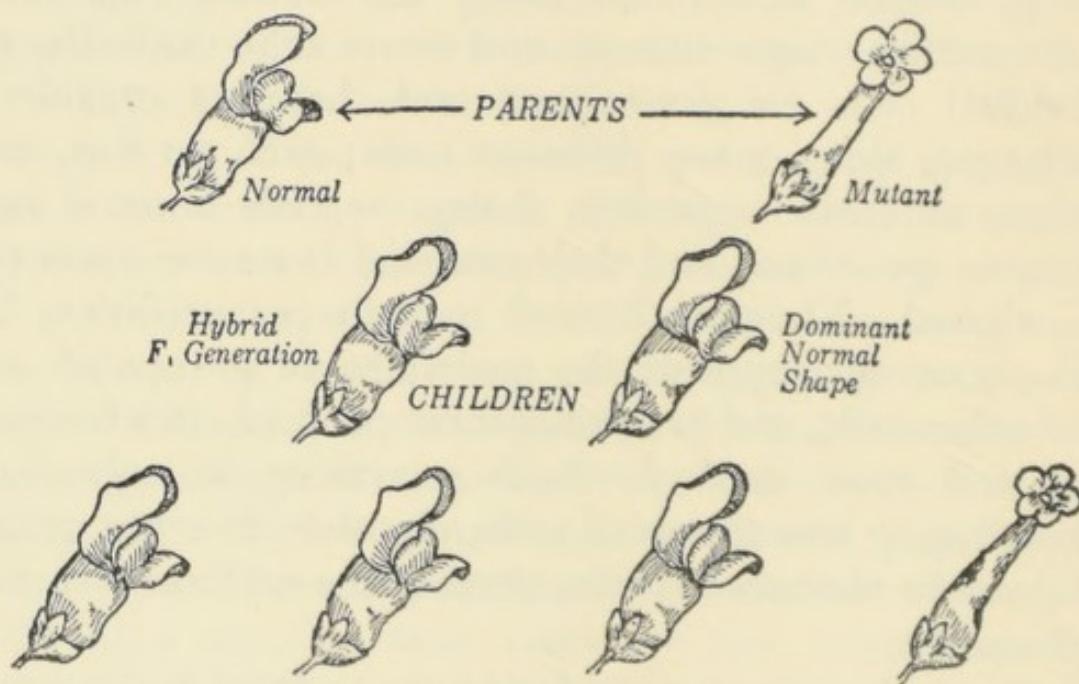


FIG. 14 – Mendelian Inheritance of a Single Factor. Dominance of a factor as illustrated by shape in the Snap-dragon (*Antirrhinum*). When a 'pure' normal is crossed with a 'pure' elongated (mutant) type, *all* the first generation appear like the normal (dominant) parent. If the hybrids are inbred, the result is 1 recessive; 2 hybrids; and 1 pure dominant. This is known as the 3 : 1 ratio, although genetically it is the same as Fig. 13.



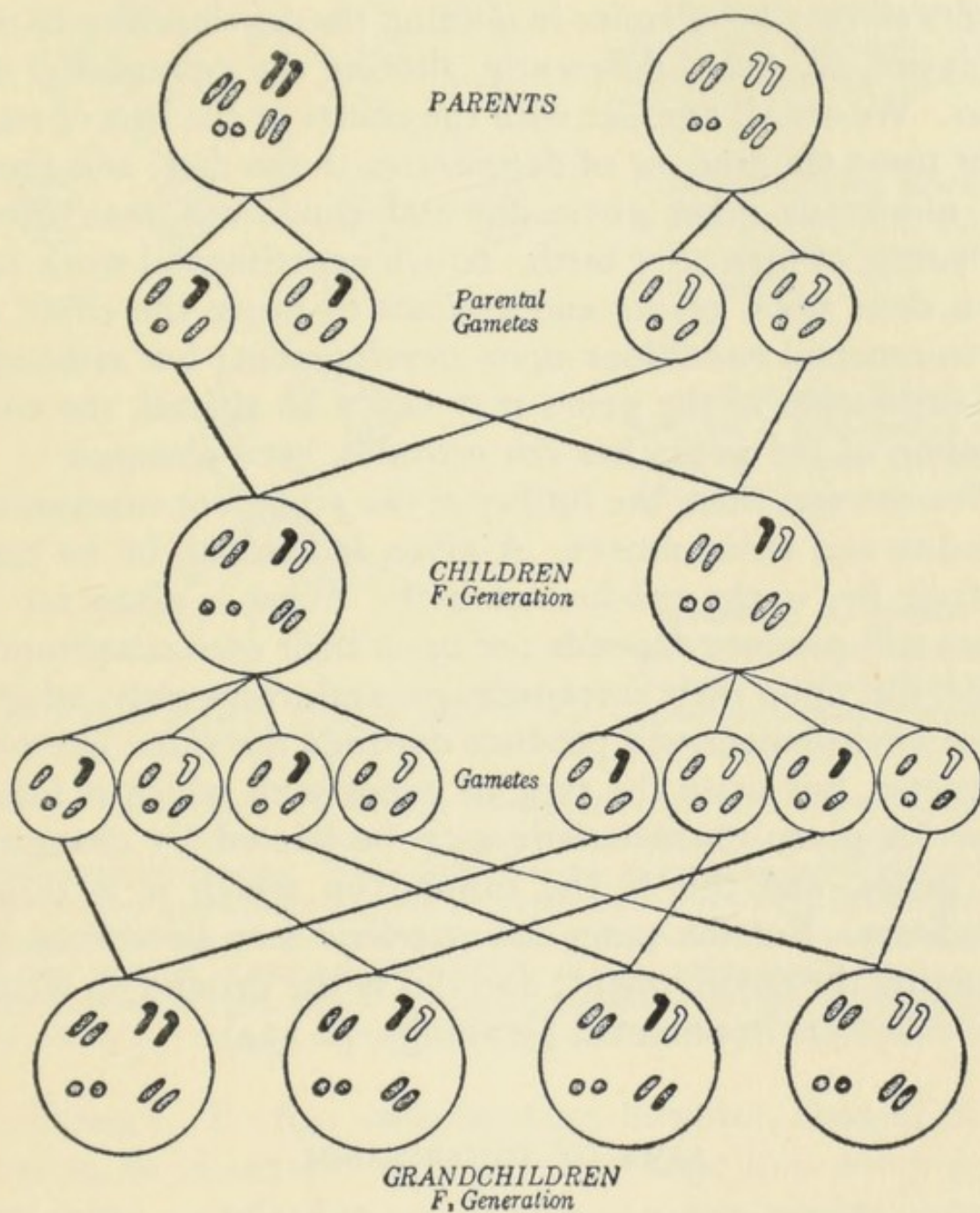


FIG. 15 - Inheritance of a Single Factor. The pairs of chromosomes not concerned with this unit character are stippled. The chromosomes carrying the dominant character are black. Those carrying the recessive gene are in outline. At the maturation of the gametes (germ cells) each pair separates. Only two types of sperms and eggs are formed, but their chance union causes the 1 : 2 : 1 ratio as shown in the second generation.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

external environment; thermal, mechanical, and chemical agents all may be effective in altering the development of the organism, or, stated differently, altering the *expression of the genes*. We are all familiar with the effects of the lack of sunlight upon children, or of deficiencies in the diet; and there are numerous other environmental conditions that affect the young of man after birth. Much experimental work has been done upon plants and animals to prove the effect of environmental conditions upon development; but although the expression of the genes may easily be altered, the constitution of the genes has not provably been changed.

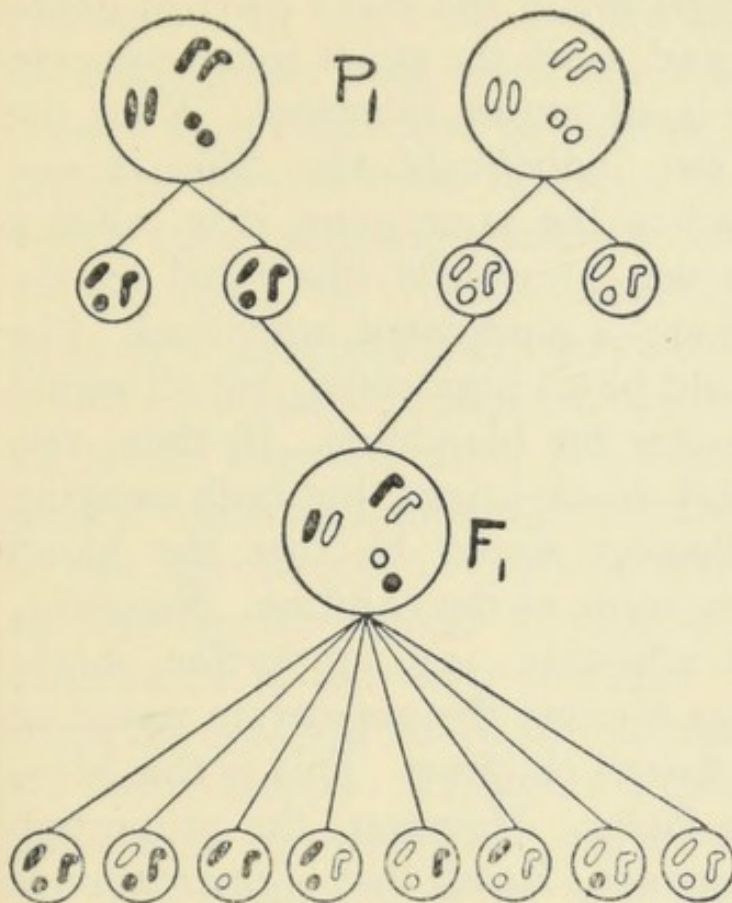
We can see, then, the futility of the argument concerning heredity and environment. A given individual, be he man or fruit fly, is the product of both. What a given set of genes will produce depends not upon their own constitution alone, but upon their surroundings; and, conversely, what a given environment will produce depends not alone upon its character, but upon the type of genes with which it interacts. 'A given characteristic may be altered by changing the genes, and this is the ground on which it is called hereditary. But the same characteristic may be altered by changing the environment; and this is the ground on which it is called environmental' (Jennings, p. 134).

### LAWS OF INHERITANCE

From the foregoing it will be seen that the laws of inheritance are not the comparatively simple affairs that some people believe them to be. In the early years of the century, when the study of genes was beginning, the belief was held that each gene invariably produced a given character; there was a gene for eye colour, a gene for tallness, a gene for



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN



Parents (P<sub>1</sub> generation) 'pure' for all three characters. Those carrying dominant genes are black.

Gametes showing separation of each pair of chromosomes, all the gametes of each parent being similar.

1st Generation Hybrid (F<sub>1</sub>) each pair of chromosomes consisting of 1 from the father, 1 from the mother.

Gametes of the Hybrid. As the chromosomes separate by random assortment, eight combinations are possible in a three factor cross.

FIG. 16 - Inheritance of a Multiple Factor. In a cross of 3 factors, the parents being 'pure', the hybrid children (F<sub>1</sub> generation) will develop 8 gamete types - both ova and spermatozoa. When these unite, the results in 64 individuals will be: 1 like the male grandparent (P<sub>1</sub>) and 1 like the female P<sub>1</sub>; 6 other individuals will be 'pure' for all three factors, although some of the pairs will be entirely maternal and some paternal; in addition, there will be 28 types which have at least one pair of chromosomes of a mixed type. If there is dominance of one character, apparently there will be only 8 types, the recessives being obscured.

intelligence. Further investigation, however, showed these ideas to be incorrect. Although a change in a given gene may cause a perfectly specific effect, it was proved conclusively that *every characteristic* depends upon the interaction of *many genes*, upon the entire chemical balance of the chromosomes; and that a change in *any gene* may cause a chemical imbalance which will affect *many* characteristics. When a 'unit character' seems to be inherited, it means that



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

the parents differ in a *single one* of the many pairs of genes affecting that character; and, since the genes themselves are inherited, this difference is, of course, inherited. When the cross is made between two individuals who differ in one character which is carried in the same gene, it is called a *single factor* cross. This was previously illustrated by the mating between a blond and a pigmented individual. The offspring in this case would be all pigmented, but all would carry the recessive character for blondness. If, then, two individuals are mated, both black-haired, but both carrying the blond gene, the chances would be that the blond character would appear in some of the children. Naturally, in a small number of offspring any proportion might appear; but in a very large number the proportion would be *one* blond to *three* black-haired children. This is the Mendelian ratio for a single factor. However, the proportion of three to one is only apparent. Recall that pigmentation is dominant and that the individual will *appear* pigmented even though he may be genetically a hybrid for the character. Therefore, on the basis of genetic composition, the ratio will be one pure black-haired, two hybrids carrying the blond character, and one pure blond. In any future cross the pure type will always breed true; but the hybrids will continue to pass on to future generations the recessive character. This is particularly important in considering the efforts to breed out of the race any defective characteristic. The normal is usually dominant, and any defective character will frequently be obscured and carried in the race before it makes its appearance.

If the two individuals who are mated differ in more than one character it is called a *multiple factor* cross. As previously stated, more than one pair of genes may affect a single



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

character. In the fruit fly, for example, more than fifty different genes may affect the colour of the eye. In the human such characters as tallness, intelligence, or pigmentation of the skin are of this type. It is apparent that if genes which affect skin pigmentation lie on four or five pairs of chromosomes, the chances of ever breeding a pure type from hybrids is mathematically very rare. The result is that such hybrids are rarely pure blond or pure pigmented, but will be all grades between these two extremes. It is similar with mental traits, and, although the race may breed toward one or two 'special abilities', it is next to impossible to reproduce an intelligence similar to that of a genius. 'Sex-linked' inheritance is in reality a single factor cross, and occurs when the genes in which the parents differ are located in the sex chromosomes. These are a pair of chromosomes which differ from the others and are the determiners of the sex of the individual, and so we have haemophilia (a tendency to bleeding) or colour blindness occurring in the *males* of a certain family. If, then, a normal female is mated to a colour-blind male, all the sons will be normal, but the females will carry the defect as a recessive character and in turn will pass the eye defect on to their sons. Females rarely inherit a sex-linked character, if it is a recessive, for the condition can only appear in the female when a hybrid female is mated to a male who has the character.

The genes are now seen to behave like a set of chemicals, handed down to us by our parents; these chemicals by interaction among themselves and with the cytoplasm produce new substances, and thus the whole, specialized body is produced. Different individuals start life with different sets of these chemicals, and they, therefore, develop differently. As each human being receives from his parents



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

forty-eight chromosomes, composed of thousands of genes, the possibilities of their combinations are infinite; and when we recall that their development is affected also by both the internal and external environment, we see the difficulty of predicting with certainty the fate of any individual before he is born.

Nevertheless, there are many characteristics of human beings that are inherited as unit characters. Two people carrying the same defective genes mate, and their offspring are defective and in turn pass the defective genes to some of their descendants. Thus we have some kinds of feeble-mindedness, polydactyly (extra fingers and toes), Huntington's chorea, and numerous other mental or physical defects of greater or lesser degree that 'run in families'. And, of course, the same type of inheritance occurs in traits that are in no sense defective, such as eye colour, stature, or special mental abilities. But for every case in which a defect is apparent, there are many more in which it is recessive. If the carrier of a defective gene mates with a person in whom the corresponding gene is normal, the offspring are normal, but they in turn carry the defective gene; and if these people mate with others carrying the same defective gene, though normal themselves, they may produce defective offspring. It is estimated that in the United States for every person who is mentally deficient there are thirty carriers of the genes responsible for this condition; if this is true, we see the hopelessness of trying to stem the tide of feeble-mindedness or insanity by a programme of segregation or sterilization. Experimental eugenics, however, give us hope of some day being able to control development so as to produce a better race of human beings. We will take this matter up in Chapter VII.



# THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

## THE DETERMINATION OF SEX

We must now note that the chromosomes are characteristic in number, size, and shape for each species of animals and plants (and for many sub-species also). The human species has forty-eight, arranged in pairs according to shape and size, one of each pair coming from the father and one from the mother. One pair of chromosomes (the sex determiners), however, differs from the others: in the female it consists of two large chromosomes, in the male of one large and one small one. For convenience the larger ones are designated X-chromosomes, while the small one is known as Y. Thus the female has two X-chromosomes, and the male has an X and a Y. The Y-chromosome is rudimentary and exerts practically no influence on development. These are the sex chromosomes proper, containing the genes or other organizers which determine the start toward maleness or femaleness, and the X-chromosome contains many other genes as well. In the process of cell division which builds up the body, each chromosome divides longitudinally into two, each resultant chromosome being physically and chemically like the other. The result is that each daughter cell, and therefore every cell of the body, has the same *number* and *type* of chromosomes that were present in the beginning; that is, it is commonly said that throughout life every cell in the male body differs from every cell in the female body by the presence of a rudimentary Y-chromosome. This process of sex determination has been thoroughly demonstrated.

Very early in the life of the embryo, when the organs are forming, the *germ* cells (the future reproductive cells) are set aside and take no part in the production of body tissues.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

These *primordial germ cells* are surrounded by, or migrate into, the developing tissues of the gonad, and increase in number by simple (mitotic) division until a great many are produced. After puberty these germ cells (ova or spermatozoa) begin reaching maturity, to form functional reproductive cells; and in this maturation process the number of chromosomes is reduced to one half the original number. After fertilization, therefore, the typical number is maintained. If this reduction in the number of chromosomes did not take place, fertilization would double their number; and generation after generation these would continue to be doubled until the mass of chromosomes would grow so large that the cells must needs perforce perish.

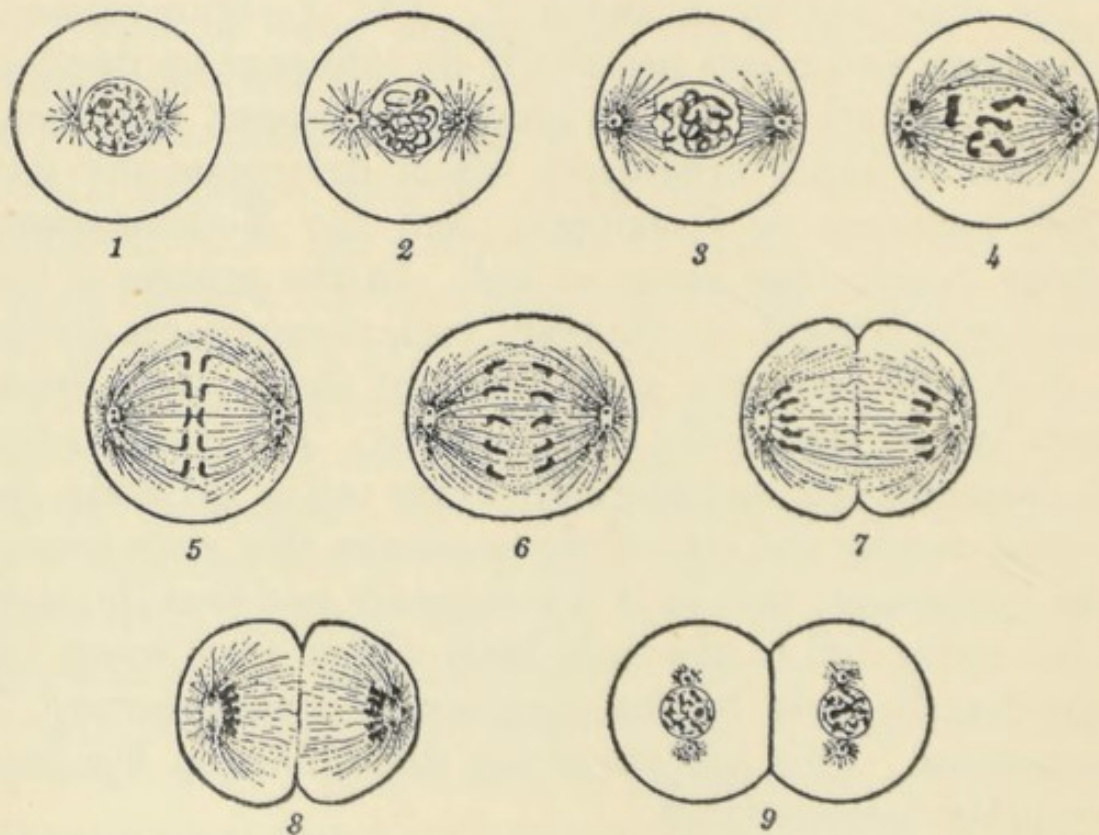


FIG. 17 - Diagram of Cell Division. The diagrams show the longitudinal division of the chromosomes, their shortening, and the pairs separating as they migrate toward the poles of the cell. When the cell membrane cuts through the cytoplasm the two new nuclei form, and division is complete.



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

During the maturing process (*maturation*) of the germ cells there are two divisions, the results being essentially the same, although there are distinct differences. In the *male* the permanent sex cells divide, one migrating away towards the cavity of the duct. This cell soon divides by normal mitotic division, each resulting cell being identical with the other. This is followed by a second, *reduction*, division. In this division the chromosomes do not divide. The pairs line up near the centre of the cell, and *whole* chromosomes migrate toward each pole of the cell, each pair separating. When the cell divides, making four spermatozoa which were derived from the first cell, each sperm contains one of each pair of the original chromosomes. As it is mere chance which way the chromosomes will migrate after their separation, there is the possibility that all the paternal chromosomes may go to one sperm cell — and naturally all the maternal would be in the other. By the mathematical laws of chance there will usually be some paternal and some maternal chromosomes in each germ cell and it will carry a combination of the genes from both sides of the family. In the *female* the ova are present at birth. Whereas billions of sperms will pass out from the male body during his life, rarely do more than four or five hundred eggs reach maturity in the human female. When the egg cells begin their maturation division, there are two such divisions similar to those in the sperm cell; but in this case the cytoplasm does not divide. The *nucleus* makes the two divisions. Following each division one half of the nuclear material migrates to the periphery of the egg and is pinched off, taking no part in the reproductive process. Therefore, only one egg results from the maturation divisions, all the cytoplasm, and the yolk material



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

which has developed, being in the egg at the time of maturation.

In both sperm and ova the sex chromosomes form a pair, and separate as do the other pairs. As a result every *mature ovum* has twenty-four chromosomes, one of which is an X-chromosome. Each *mature sperm* will contain twenty-four chromosomes, but they will differ, for one half of them will have a Y-chromosome, and one half will contain an X-

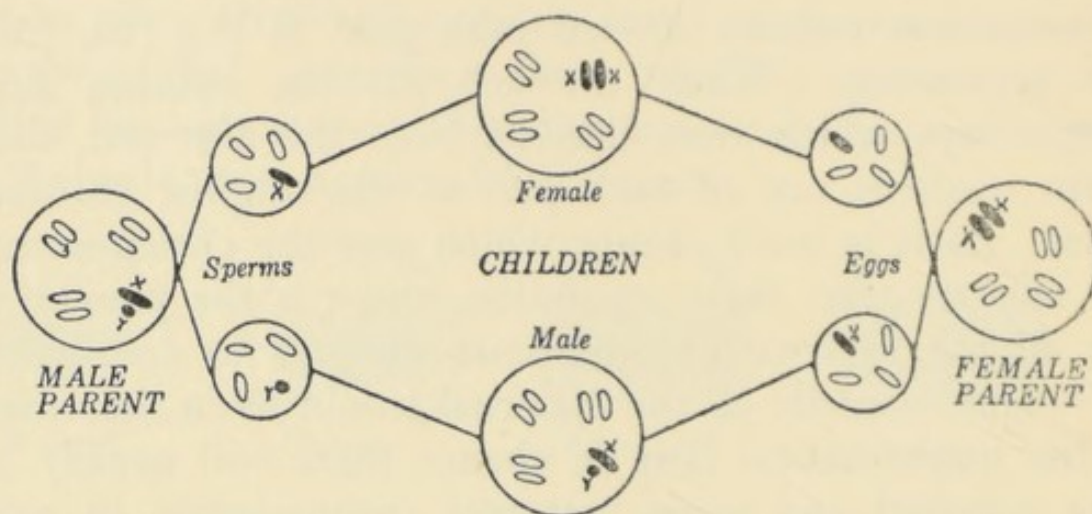


FIG. 18 - The Determination of Sex. The sex chromosomes are black. The autosomes are in outline. The eggs are all of one type, each carrying an X-chromosome. The sperms are of two kinds, one carrying a Y-chromosome, the other an X-chromosome. The chance union of the sperm and egg determines the sex of the individual.

chromosome. If now a sperm containing the X-chromosome unites with an ovum, we have a cell with the original number of chromosomes, but both sex chromosomes are the X type, and the resulting individual is a female. But if the sperm containing the Y-chromosome unites with the ovum, we have a cell containing the X-Y pair and the forty-six additional chromosomes, and the result is a male individual. These facts are well established, and the X- and Y-chromosomes can be traced through generation



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

after generation. Sex is apparently determined at the moment of fertilization by the presence of one or the other chromosomes.

But on these grounds it is hard to explain the numerous cases in which features of one sex occur in the other. In Chapter I we saw that cases of sex reversal are not uncommon in plants and that there is much evidence that some degree of bisexuality extends throughout the entire series of living organisms. From very early times man has castrated male animals, that is, removed the testicles, the animals thereby losing some of their male characteristics; thus is developed the patient ox instead of the fierce bull, and the gelding instead of the stallion, or the fat capon for our dinner tables. And also from very early times man has castrated his own kind, removing the testicles from a boy before puberty, thus producing an 'eunuch', who throughout maturity remains in a more or less juvenile condition; the facial hair does not appear, there is a feminine distribution of fat, the voice does not change, and normal sexual desire is lacking. When castration is performed after puberty, the effects are much the same though less marked. Castration was performed by the ancients for religious purposes and to provide slaves who could be trusted with the women of the household. Later it was performed in order to preserve the voices of boy sopranos; and until recently a group of religious fanatics in Russia castrated their men as a part of their religion. The experiments that have been carried out upon animals have produced similar effects; there have been a great number of such experiments in the last thirty or forty years, and all go to show that the gonad, ovary or testis, secretes a hormone which enables the bodily characteristics of one or the other sex to develop.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

A female fowl, for instance, castrated and grafted with a testicle from a cock (which can be inserted under the skin at any point of the body) may develop a comb and tail feathers and learn to crow like a cock; moreover, she behaves toward the females as the male does. If a young animal of either sex be castrated and grafted with both a testicle and an ovary, a creature of 'double sex', an intermediate, is produced. Injections of the appropriate hormone into the blood stream of castrated animals give much the same results, which would seem to be rather conclusive evidence that it is the hormone produced by the gonad that is responsible for the development of the somatic features of sex. The gonad does not work alone, however, for the rest of the *endocrine* or glandular system is implicated also, as has been abundantly proved. There is no doubt of a reciprocal relationship among the entire endocrine system, which is established very early in fetal life.

These facts have led some investigators to conclude that the gonad is originally bisexual, and later, when its secretions have been established, is differentiated into maleness or femaleness; for some reason one sex atrophies and the other develops. Thus a latent disposition toward the opposite sex is present in all of us.

There are many other authorities who hold to a 'mixed' theory — that is, that though sex is *determined* by the chromosomes at the moment of impregnation, it *develops* under the influence of the hormones. The chromosomes exert a chemical or electrical influence resulting in a balance among the genes that tends towards the development of maleness or femaleness; the hormones then take up the story, and the degree of sexual development which is reached depends upon them.



## INTERSEXUALITY OR BISEXUALITY

Whichever theory we adopt, we see here the endocrine basis for the numerous cases of sexual anomalies. Normally the sex organs and the bodily characteristics belong unmistakably to one sex or the other, though it is not until puberty that the latter become prominent. But in a good many people there are imperfections and abnormalities of the genital system, in the internal or external organs or both. We know that hermaphroditism, in the sense of the presence of both male and female organs in a single individual, is a common occurrence among plants and in many of the lower forms of animal life, but, despite the stories to the contrary, in this sense it is exceedingly rare among human beings. A few cases approximating the condition are on record. Marañon (8) differentiates the *hermaphrodite*, in whom there is almost complete bisexuality of the external genitals and also of the gonads (the latter possessing both ovarian and testicular tissue), and the *pseudohermaphrodite*, who has the appearance of one sex but possesses the gonads of the other. These latter are the people who are popularly called 'hermaphrodites', but even they are rare. In addition to these two striking conditions, there are all sorts of combinations of sexual characters. There are the 'masculine women' and 'effeminate men' with whom everyone is familiar; there are women with narrow hips, men with large breasts, bearded females and smooth-skinned males, women with a masculine distribution of pubic hair and vice versa, deep-voiced women and men with high-pitched voices; and many more examples will occur to anyone at all observant. Scarcely any person is entirely free from some feature of the opposite



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

sex. Keeping in mind the infinite number of gene combinations that are theoretically possible and the chemical influence exerted upon the individual by the endocrine glands, we arrive at a biological explanation, if not of sex itself, at least of sexual personalities. This is not all the story, as we shall see, but it is the foundation upon which everything that happens later will depend. In the light of these facts, we are not surprised that no two of us are exactly alike, and, recalling the great instability of the cells in the early stages of development and their susceptibility to their environment, we have an explanation for the strange combinations of characters that are sometimes produced. All sorts of queer creatures are developed in the laboratory by chemical, electrical, or mechanical interference with eggs or embryos, and they help us to understand the human monstrosities that are born from time to time. The wonder is that they are not more frequent.

### TWINNING AND MULTIPLE BIRTHS

Though in the great majority of cases but one egg at a time is fertilized and begins development, twin births occur fairly frequently and occasionally triplets or quadruplets are born; there are also a few well-authenticated cases of five or six children at a birth, though these rarely if ever survive. Twins are *fraternal* or *identical*; in the former case two separate eggs are fertilized by two separate sperms during the same act of intercourse and are, therefore, only the usual type of brothers and sisters; but identical or one-egg twins are believed to be produced by the very early division of an embryo into two. For some reason or other division takes



THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN  
place after fertilization and development have begun.<sup>1</sup> This occurs normally in certain animals where the process has been extensively studied. Identical twins, therefore, are always of the same sex and are remarkably alike in physical and mental make-up, although they may differ in such important particulars as bodily strength and vigour, probably depending upon something that occurred in their very early development. Occasionally it happens that the division is not complete and the twins are born attached to each other at some point or with a single body and two heads, forming the 'Siamese twins' of the circus. Various other combinations occur, and, though most of them are born dead or die soon after birth, occasionally they live to maturity.

#### SEX DEVELOPMENT AFTER BIRTH

At birth the two sexes are so much alike that an inspection of the genital system is necessary to determine if the baby is a boy or a girl, and during infancy, up to five or six, they continue much alike in general bodily features. The boy, on the average, is very slightly taller and heavier than the girl. X-ray examination of the bones, however, reveals the female to be a little in advance of the male in physical development; the male has a higher rate of metabolism; and, as we have seen, the difference in metabolism extends to the sex cells themselves. For some reason males are less resistant than females; though more boys are conceived (the sex ratio is one hundred and twenty to one hundred), at birth the ratio is one hundred and five to one hundred, and as more boy babies die than girls, the sexes are approxi-

<sup>1</sup> This explanation of one-egg twinning is not accepted by all authorities.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

mately equal after two or three years. The relatively undifferentiated state of the child seems dependent upon the inactivity of the gonads, which do not begin to function until puberty. Their function is apparently inhibited by the secretions of some of the other glands, notably the thymus and pineal body. When *precocious puberty* occurs, that is, the development of mature sex characteristics such as growth of the genitalia, facial hair, and deep voice in a boy of three or four, or menstruation and breast development in a girl of like age, tumours upon the pineal body or the pituitary gland are usually responsible. But normally it is not until seven or eight that there begins to be a noticeable difference between boy and girl; for a short time the boy is taller and heavier, then the girl begins to gain upon him, and at about ten and a half her weight is greater, and a little later she has overtaken him in height. Now the gonads become active, and under the influence of their secretions the distinctly feminine features develop: the breasts begin to enlarge, the pelvis develops a greater width, hair appears in the pubic region, and in the axillae, and menstruation is established. This takes place on the average in this climate at about thirteen and a half, though it occurs normally as early as nine and may be delayed until seventeen or eighteen. The changes in the girl's body are by no means complete when menstruation has appeared; she has not 'become a woman', and it will be several years before her full maturity is reached, which on the average is about twenty.

The boy's puberty follows about a year and a half to two years later. The skeleton becomes heavier and firmer muscled; hair begins to sprout on the chin; the voice changes, due to the growth of the larynx; emissions and sex dreams make their appearance. Many boys, according to Marañon



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

and other authorities, pass through a delayed puberty in which there is more than a suggestion of girlishness about them. They may develop considerable fat which has a feminine distribution, the skin is smooth and clear, the facial hair does not appear, while pubic and axillary hair grows slowly, and the voice remains infantile. Sometimes these features persist and we have a degree of intersexuality; again, puberty supervenes later, the boy begins to grow rapidly, and his development thereafter is normal.

### SEXUAL MATURITY

Puberty is marked in the girl by the onset of menstruation, but is much more difficult to determine in the boy; it is not really passed until spermatozoa are present in the seminal fluid. After puberty the boy is capable of procreation and the girl of conception, but, as noted above, this fact does not mean that maturity is reached; the body continues to grow and develop for several years. In fully-developed adults the skeletal system is larger in the male and the muscular system more prominent; the female acquires rounded contours, with a greater development of subcutaneous fat. The shoulders are comparatively broad and the pelvis narrow in the male, while in the female the pelvis is broad and surrounded by an abundance of adipose tissue. The breasts are well developed in the woman, while remaining rudimentary in the man. The skin of the woman is more delicate and smooth than that of the man, the hair of the head longer and finer. The hair of the man tends to retreat from the forehead, and baldness ensues in many cases; very seldom, indeed, is this trait found in woman.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

Baldness appears to be a sex-linked characteristic and not due to the thousand-and-one reasons to which it has been ascribed. The distribution of body hair is significantly different; the man grows hair on the face and trunk, which regions are normally bare in a woman; the pubic hair extends upward from the pubic region toward the umbilicus, while in the woman it stops in a horizontal line above the pubis. The limbs of the woman are commonly smooth.

After childbirth, or even without it, as women grow older they are likely to develop adipose tissue, distributed in a characteristic manner about the trunk, and they take on a 'matronly appearance'. In the early forties involutional changes set in; skin and hair changes occur, the hair losing its curl or its natural springiness and beginning to grey; physical discomfort is common, sudden flashes of heat, numbness of the limbs, vague feelings of something wrong. Menstrual changes occur, irregularity or a flow too profuse or too scanty; the gonads, which have been functioning since puberty, are getting ready to cease their work, soon ovulation will occur no more, and the woman's reproductive life is over.

In many women certain masculine features develop after the *menopause*, or cessation of the menses; hair develops on the face, the voice coarsens, and there is a general suggestion of masculinity. This is quite in keeping with the theory of the bisexuality of the gonad; now that the feminine hormones have ceased to function, the masculine features can emerge. Whatever we may think of this theory, there is no doubt of the endocrine origin of this condition.

The man, too, puts on more flesh as he grows older; the hair of his head grows scant, while his facial and bodily hair increases; but in normal cases he has no such striking



## THE BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAN

*climacterium*, or cessation of the sex life, as the woman. Sexual desire begins to die down, but the gonads are often functional until quite late in life. And men do not tend toward femininity in later life as women tend toward masculinity.

When we reflect upon the thousands of years in which man knew nothing of his origin and was content to believe the most absurd and fantastic tales, we are tempted to marvel at the discoveries of the last one hundred years. Though there is much yet to be learned, and some things perhaps that we shall never know, enough has been established to take the new-born infant out of the class of miracles, where our primitive ancestors placed it, and recognize it as the result of processes whose laws can be definitely known and their workings predicted. As experimental biology progresses, we may expect developments that now can only be guessed at, and may hope for light upon some of the problems of human existence that have plagued mankind since its life upon earth began.

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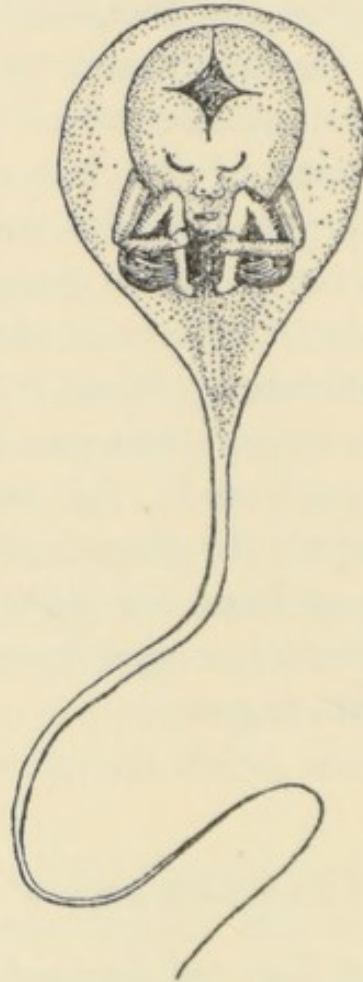


FIG. 19 – A Homunculus. Early biologists thought that the embryo was preformed in the germ cell. The 'ovists' thought that it was preformed in the egg, while the 'spermatists' held that it was preformed in the spermatozoan. (After Hertwig.)



### CHAPTER III

## SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

#### THEORIES OF SOCIAL ORIGINS

THE far-off beginnings of human society are shrouded in the mists of pre-history; what man was like when he first emerged from the animal state, what form of family life and social organization he had, will probably never be known. The researches of the anthropologists and archaeologists are continually pushing the date of humanity's birth farther back, and there seems no way of knowing how many cultural groups have arisen and departed, leaving no trace of their existence. This, however, does not prevent people from theorizing about the matter. There are scientists who believe that the monogamous family, composed of one male and female and their offspring, was developed among animals as the period of infancy lengthened, as a means for the care and protection of the female and her offspring, appearing 'as the final term of a long evolutionary series' (Jennings). This type of mating is assumed to be the rule in the higher apes, and, therefore, probably in early man. By the association of such families together for support and protection, larger groups are formed which gradually assume many of the functions formerly exercised by the small family group, and thus we have the beginnings of human society. This theory is admirably set forth by Jennings in his chapter, 'The



Biological Basis of Marriage and the Family'. As we have seen, modern researches upon sex association among animals do not support this view.

Another theory, widely held, is that the earliest societies developed out of the polygamous family, which consisted of an adult male, the 'Old Man', who possessed and kept in subjection a number of females and their offspring. H. G. Wells (15) gives a vivid account of what such an early family might have been like. As soon as the sons were old enough to arouse the 'Old Man's' jealousy, he would drive them out or kill them. They would wander about until they met another such group, whence they would steal their mates and begin their own families, or, grown strong enough, would grapple with some 'Old Man', kill him, and appropriate his wives. This is the 'patriarchal' theory of social origins; it also assumes that the male recognizes the need of the pregnant female for care and protection, and that the association thus set up lasts after the birth of the offspring; thus the 'mating impulse', or the 'matrimonial response', develops.

Still a third theory of the origin of human society is the 'matriarchal' theory, which argues that only the prolonged association of the child with the mother, together with the bond which develops among brothers and sisters who grow up together under the care of the mother, could have brought about the sense of mutual dependence and group solidarity that made society possible. In the human being the duration of infancy is nearly twice what it is in the anthropoid apes, the animal species nearest to man, and this gives an opportunity for the development of sentiment and behaviour unknown among the animals. Briffault (1) is the chief exponent of this theory.



## SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

### PRIMITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD SEX

Whatever may have been the origin of human society, primitive man must have given a large part of his time and energy to sex activities. When not occupied with hunting or fighting, stalking his enemies or avoiding them, he had little else to do. He had not learned to work or play in any recognizable sense, nor is it probable that he took any special part in caring for the children that were born to his erstwhile mates. He did not know they were his children, for he had not learned the connection between sexual union with a female and her resulting pregnancy. Myth and tradition in almost every corner of the world abound in evidence of this fact. Pregnancy has been attributed to nearly everything in man's environment. Women ate the fruit of certain trees, or were impregnated by the moon or by bathing in certain waters. Danae, of the Grecian legend, conceived by a shower of gold which reached her in her castle-prison; likewise, the Pueblo Indians relate that Montezuma was born because of a thick summer shower that drenched his mother. In recent years Malinowski (7) had studied a tribe in Melanesia, where the relation between sexual intercourse and pregnancy is apparently unknown. The woman who wishes a child repairs to a 'breeding place', usually down by the water, and there goes through certain 'magic' performances which invite a spirit to take up its abode in her. These spirits are those of the departed members of the tribe who have lived a long time in the spirit world and now wish to live on earth again. So by a magic process they become babies, and float around on seaweed, scum, or drift until a woman comes and



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

bathes in the water, when the spirit-child enters her head and is carried by a rush of blood to the abdomen, where it develops. Sexual intercourse belongs to one sphere of life, and pregnancy and childbirth to another. Says Guttmacher (5), (p. 6):

'The association in man's mind of birth with the sexual act marked a comparatively sophisticated stage in human development, and . . . this stage was not reached until countless more obvious and more dramatic explanations had been tried and found wanting.'

Under these circumstances and considering the premium put upon sex activities by their highly pleasurable nature, we might expect primitive man to be largely occupied with this side of his life. Though there are no peoples now living who have not reached a much higher stage of development than our earliest ancestors must have had, we do find savage tribes everywhere much concerned with sexual matters and completely lacking in what we would term sexual modesty. But we do not find them in an irresponsible state of complete promiscuity, for there have grown up among savages in all parts of the world more or less numerous ceremonies, customs, and prohibitions which serve to hold the sex impulse in check and at the same time provide an outlet for some of the energy thus restrained.

Primitive man has not learned to think of himself and the events of his life in terms of cause and effect. He is surrounded by mysterious forces which produce natural phenomena, such as eclipses, lightning, storms, and floods. Evil spirits, gods of various sorts, or the spirits of his ancestors hover about him, interfere with his affairs, cause him to suffer diseases, accidents, and death. To combat these evil influences and to insure success in his



undertakings, he has developed an elaborate system of ritual and numerous *taboos*, which every savage child has to learn or perish. Chief among these are the sexual taboos.

'Taboo' literally means *untouchable*, and may mean that an object or act is sacred, consecrated, or that it is unclean, dangerous, forbidden. Though taboos are expressed as prohibitions and restrictions, they are not laws in the ordinary sense, and they carry their own punishment. They probably represent man's earliest attempts to regulate and control his conduct, though their origin is now completely forgotten.

The most universal taboos, found among practically all people, are the *incest taboos*, or those which forbid sex relations (and therefore marriage) within certain prescribed degrees of relationship. This is commonly known as the *rule of exogamy*. In this country marriage between near relatives is universally frowned upon; in England until recently a man might not marry his deceased wife's sister, who was no 'blood relative' but only a relative by law. But the savage makes a different distinction; the mates forbidden to him are not necessarily blood relations but the members of his own clan, or *totem*, for all the members of his group are descended from the same totem, which is usually an animal (occasionally a plant or a phenomenon of nature), and thus sustain a mystic relationship to each other. Out of this grow all sorts of restrictions, innumerable 'avoidances', which seem to us to have no meaning. A man must not only not mate with a totem sister, but certain women must not even be looked at or spoken to. Among many tribes avoidance between brother and sister begins early; he may not come in the house if she is there, and if



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

they meet by accident she will hide in the bush and he run away. After puberty the boy must avoid his mother also, and among some tribes he must never see her again, nor may she ever speak his name. Among the Manus in New Guinea a betrothed girl must carry with her everywhere a long cloak, and if any male relative of her betrothed appears she must crouch down and cover herself with the cloak until he has passed by. Most widespread of all is the mother-in-law taboo; a man must avoid her at all costs; she must cover her face if she meets him, and if necessary to hold any converse they must shout at each other with a kraal or a tent between them.

On the other hand, actual incest in the modern sense may often be committed with impunity. If a man of one totem marries a woman of another, the children all belong to the mother's totem, and must, therefore, practice the avoidances; but the daughters are not taboo to their father. In some tribes marriages between brothers and sisters are permissible, but marriage between cousins is regarded with horror; in others cousin marriages are obligatory. Brother and sister marriage was frequent enough far into historical times; Abraham married his half-sister, and the sovereigns of ancient Egypt were often brother and sister as well as man and wife. Generally speaking, however, primitive peoples regard incest according to their definition with horror, and mankind has continued to hold this attitude down to the present day, believing that all sort of physical and mental ills will afflict the offspring of consanguineous marriages. There is not, however, much scientific backing for this point of view. The meaning of the ingrained horror of incest will probably have to be sought in the psychological rather than the physical field.



## SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

### SUPERSTITIONS

Superstition, the belief in magic, and taboo are prime factors in the primitive's life, and in no field are they more numerous than in the sexual field. Nearly everything connected with the sex life is surrounded by numerous taboos because of the superstition which the savage attaches to it. Childbirth is a dangerous process, not because of any physiological difficulties (which the savage does not recognize), but because of the readiness of evil spirits to interfere. All sorts of magic performances are carried out to insure a speedy or safe delivery. It is usually the rule that only females may be present when a woman is in labour. In some tribes the father may not see either mother or child until the medicine man has performed ceremonies of purification. Ceremonies of purification after childbirth, with offerings to a god or goddess, form part of the religions of many peoples, and have their echo in our own times in the ceremony called the 'churching of women' which takes place among certain Christian bodies.

Menstruation is another sexual function which is regarded by the savage with superstitious awe. All sorts of beliefs are current as to its origin. The girl has had intercourse with evil spirits, or she has been bitten by a snake or a crocodile which causes a wound that bleeds. Sometimes the moon is held responsible. Women must seclude themselves and not be seen by a man for a certain number of days during their periods. Almost universally intercourse is forbidden during menstruation, and according to the laws of Manu, the book of wisdom of the ancient Hindus, 'the wisdom, the energy, the strength, the right, and the vitality of the man who approaches a woman during this time,



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

utterly perish'. Menstrual blood is all-powerful for evil; if a man touches it or even if one of his possessions comes in contact with it, he will surely die. During their periods women are dangerous, not only to men, but they cannot touch a wide variety of things; wine will sour, plants wither, metals tarnish, if they handle them. If they cook food for their husbands, the latter will sicken and die. The laws of Moses (Leviticus xv, 19) provide that a menstruating woman shall be 'put apart' for seven days, and everything that she touches during the period is 'unclean'. Among the Manus the men are never permitted to know that unmarried girls menstruate except the first time. A Manus girl is secluded during her first menstruation, and after this she has an elaborate 'coming-out' party at which she is often betrothed, but after that, until marriage, she is not supposed to have any more periods. When informed by the white man that women of other races menstruate each month after puberty, the Manus shrugs his shoulders and says, 'Maybe white women do; *our* women don't'. Puberty is another period during which there are all sorts of dangers from evil spirits, and one reason for the puberty ceremonies, which we will note in a moment, is probably to guard against them.

Sexual intercourse itself is a dangerous procedure, and there are many rules and regulations prescribed for it. Very often it is supposed to sap a man's strength, to render him weak and effeminate, and therefore it must not be indulged in before events of importance, such as hunting expeditions or wars. For a certain number of days and nights the warrior avoids his wife; for, say the Zulu natives, 'if a man when the army is going out associate with his wife he kills himself, making his own eyes dark' (Crawley (2), Vol. 1, p. 70). The Malays have a seven days' obligatory period of



continence during the fishing season. Primitive hunters in British Columbia, before setting out upon an expedition, purify themselves by severe washing and fasting, and abstain from intercourse for two or three months. Not only the men who are hunting or fighting must be continent, but those who are left behind, because their acts would have an influence upon the others. Both men and women thus sometimes abstain from sex relations for many days or even months at a time.

## THE COUVADE

This is, perhaps, the place to note a most peculiar custom which has been found in different parts of the world and which extended far into historical times, as evidenced by the old French romance of *Aucassin and Nicolette*. The custom is the so-called *couvade*, and consisted in the man going to bed after his wife had given birth to a child, taking the baby with him and 'brooding' it, covering it and caring for it, whence the name, from the French word which means 'to brood'. The father received presents and congratulations from the neighbours, while the mother waited upon him as if he, instead of herself, had given birth to the baby.

There are different explanations offered for this curious custom, one being put forth by Mathilde and Matthias Vaerting (14). They believe it to be a relic of a time when women were the 'dominant' sex, being not only 'rulers of the house' as in ancient Egypt, but in the position economically, politically, and socially which men are in patriarchal societies. The men then stayed at home and took care of the house and children; women produced the babies, but men did the rest. This explanation seems very far-



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

fetched to us, but if there ever was a time in which position of the sexes was reversed, it would not seem so illogical.

Another explanation, which seems more probable, is that by means of this gesture the man acknowledged the fact of his fatherhood. It may have developed in that transition period when man was discovering his part in the process of birth, and, as so often happens, the custom lingered on in some cultures long after its origin was forgotten.

### CHILDREN IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

Where the fact of paternity is unknown, we should not expect much regard for the child on the part of the father, and the position of the children in the earliest societies was a precarious one. When conditions of life are hard, when food is scarce, or the tribe is nomadic and frequently on the move, children are a hindrance, especially as in the lowest cultures women do all the work, making camp, building the huts or other shelters, and carrying the tribe's possessions on their backs. Under such circumstances children are summarily disposed of. Only those can survive whose mothers are strong enough or clever enough to protect them, or such as are particularly lusty and promise to be of value to the tribe. Long after society became highly organized, far into historical times, infanticide continued. We are familiar with it in classical Greece, where the custom of exposing unwanted children was common. In some places it was the father who decreed whether or not the infant should live. In Sparta it was taken before the Council of the Elders, who examined it for any physical imperfections; if it were a fine, strongly-formed child, then



it would be of value to the State, but a weakling was not allowed to live. Infanticide was still flourishing during the time of the Caesars, and Augustus, in an effort to break up the custom, decreed a bounty to parents who would bring up their children. Edicts of the Church show us that it still continued after the advent of Christianity. In the densely-populated regions of the earth, India, China, and Japan, infanticide was practised far into the nineteenth century. Where existence is a continual struggle to keep alive, the higher human sentiments can scarcely flourish, and disposing of the child at birth probably seemed no more heinous to many people than drowning unwanted kittens does to us. But we must remember that when a custom has originated or is tolerated for one reason it will be taken advantage of for other reasons, and many people who could easily afford children were doubtless guilty of infanticide.

Among many primitives, however, we find the attitude expressed by the Hebrew psalmist, '... children are an heritage of the Lord; ... happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them'. These are people who have reached a higher degree of culture, have learned to till the soil and domesticate animals; here children have become an asset, they can help with the work, and they assure the continuance of the tribe. There is little regard for the child for his own sake, but only as a potential adult. Warlike tribes welcome children, especially boys, and throughout history wherever a people has been ambitious to expand its territory or extend its rule, a premium has been placed upon large families.

The treatment of children varies among different savage tribes. Sometimes they are shoved out to pick up their own food and fend for themselves at an incredibly early



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

age, and again they are allowed to suckle their mothers until six, eight, or even twelve years of age. Mother-love appears highly developed in many tribes in different parts of the world, and the savages' disinclination to punish their children is the subject of frequent remark in reports of travellers and missionaries. In general, savage children are extremely precocious in comparison with their civilized brothers; they are proficient in the arts of their tribe at an age when our children are beginning to read. Margaret Mead (12) describes the Manus boy who not only can swim like a fish by the time he can walk, but who can steer a boat at the age of three. This precocity extends to the school-room as well; age for age, savage children can learn the school subjects as easily, or more so than their civilized brothers, but their intelligence apparently begins to slow down much earlier; they seem to have reached the zenith of their powers at puberty. The matter has not, however, been sufficiently studied to enable us to draw definite conclusions concerning its meaning.

### PUBERTY INITIATIONS

Membership in the tribe is, in many primitive groups, a social matter, and the child can attain it only by going through initiatory rites. As puberty approaches, the boy withdraws from his family and undergoes a more or less prolonged period of preparation which differs in different tribes. He receives instruction upon the rights and duties of manhood, he is put through severe ordeals, fasting, being beaten, often cruelly, compelled to run barefoot over hot coals, or sharp thorns. Elaborate fictions are sometimes carried out; the boys are hidden in a cave or in the depths



of the forest, and it is announced that they have been carried off or devoured by a monster. The women and children are terrified by the monster's roars, produced by instruments in the hands of the men. In due course the ordeals are over, and those who have survived return, no longer children, but men, full-fledged members of the tribe. They have new garments and new names; sometimes they appear to have forgotten their childhood completely, not even recognizing their mothers. The puberty ceremonies are usually carried out with great secrecy, though, as tribes have been civilized, observers have been admitted to some of them. Mantegazza<sup>1</sup> thus describes the custom of initiation for Victorian (Australian) boys of fourteen and fifteen:

'A married man, one having influence and power in the tribe, carries out the *tib-but*. He shaves the head of the young man with sharp pieces of quartz, in such a way that there only remains a narrow strip of hair a quarter of an inch running down the middle of the head, from the forehead to the nape of the neck. The shaven part of the head is covered with clay. The youth is then wrapped in a curious costume of opossum skins. The greater part of his body is left bare. His body is then rubbed with chalk, mud and coal dust. Although this ceremony is usually performed in the winter, the novitiate may not cover himself.

'Prepared in this manner, he walks with a basket under his arm through the entire camp, picks up all the dirt, and incessantly cries *tib-bo-bo-bo-but*! No one speaks to him, no one annoys him, everyone seems to fear him. As soon as he sees somebody leaving his hut, he throws the dirt

<sup>1</sup> *Anthropological Studies of Sexual Relations of Mankind*, by Paolo Mantegazza, Anthropological Press, Scientific Branch of Falstaff Press, Inc., 230 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C., 1932.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

from the basket at him. To perform this act of courtesy he is not allowed to enter any house nor to throw any dirt on a woman carrying water.

'After several days, varying according to circumstances only known by the elders, and after hair begins to grow again on his head, he is delivered to the women who wash him, paint his face with black stripes and dance around him.

'From that moment on he has become a man and can go to the neighbouring tribe, steal a girl and make her his wife.'

This is a much less cruel initiation than the majority among such savage peoples.

There are other tribes in which the preparatory period takes on a profound religious significance, and the boy, in solitude, strives for a vision which shall influence his occupation and his whole future life.

Girls are often secluded, sometimes for two, three, or even five years, and often alone. In some tribes a little hut is built, in which the girl sits in a cramped position in the darkness, so that when she comes out she can scarcely walk or see. In other places she retires into the hills, where she is attended by an old woman, who teaches her the arts of her people and the lore of the tribe. Sometimes her seclusion is during the first menstruation, after which she has a 'coming-out' party and a great celebration. Again, the girls live in groups and are instructed in the women's secrets and in the tribal traditions, or are put through ordeals. The Kaffir girls in South Africa are assembled in a small group by a married woman, who takes them to the river and has them lie among the rushes. She is their teacher, and instructs them in the female arts of their people, their



education lasting from six weeks to six months, and quite frequently it involves beatings and floggings. During this time they may not drink milk and they wear no clothing, rubbing their nude bodies with ashes and mud. They make for themselves garments of rushes, and necklaces and girdles of calabash seeds in order to transfer the fertility of the plant to themselves. After weeks of instruction they are supposed to be visited by the Big Snake, which marks the end of their education, and they now bathe, shave their bodies and paint them with red, and thus accoutred return to the village, where a great celebration is held.

Boys are quite commonly circumcised at puberty, and there is much evidence that circumcision was originally the mark of sexual maturity; a similar operation upon the clitoris is sometimes performed upon the girl. After the initiation is over, it is very usual for both boys and girls to be accorded a period of sexual licence.

The puberty initiations are sometimes cruel orgies, in which the children are mutilated, tortured, and put through ordeals that may cause their death. Plutarch tells us that Spartan boys were sometimes flogged to death before the altar of a god, and to-day the Australian Bushman knocks out the boy's teeth or lashes his body till he bears through life 'a scar for every law' that he has learned. The sadism of the elders has full sway, and every means is taken to impress upon the youths the power and authority of the adults. Any tendency to individualism is nipped in the bud, for in primitive society it is the group that is all-important, and each member must think, feel, and act like all the others. And it is essential, too, to weed out the weaklings, which the ordeals do pretty effectively.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

## SEX ACTIVITIES IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

The initiation ceremonies are primarily a social matter, and may be held in some instances long before the child arrives at puberty. But in any case they seldom mark his initial sex experiences, for most savages accord their children a degree of freedom in sex play in which almost anything is permitted. Little boys and girls form play groups, whose activities are confined almost wholly to imitation of their elders. They set up housekeeping and play at sex relations with each other, carrying such activities as far as possible. They indulge in love affairs with each other, joked about by parents and relatives, and only admonished to behave themselves decently in the house; in the bush anything is permissible. Most savages cannot understand the civilized attitude toward childish sex activities; they consider that such play is natural and a necessary preparation for adult life. Even among those people who do not approve of childish sex experience, as the Samoans, there is little or no attempt to prevent the children from learning of sex in all its aspects — sexual intercourse, childbirth, and miscarriage being familiar by the time the child is ten years old. Where such play is permitted, however, the taboos are strictly observed, the child early learning who, among the other children, is or is not taboo to him.

After puberty very many primitive peoples permit what we would call promiscuous relations to both boys and girls. Margaret Mead (10) has made a careful study of adolescent sex customs as they still exist in Samoa, a culture which, while still savage, is quite advanced. Although there are numerous conventions and regulations regarding 'love-making', it is accepted as a matter of course that adolescents



## SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

of both sexes will have a period of sex freedom before marriage, which is expected to occur by the early twenties. Among many other tribes marriage occurs late, and youth is spent with a succession of lovers; others expect the young people to marry and 'settle down', as we would say, early, but not without several experiments; still others betroth their children in infancy and marry them while still not out of childhood. The children of the chiefs, or head men, however, are nearly always taboo, especially the girls; the latter are so closely guarded that they can seldom carry on a conversation with a boy, let alone carry out an assignation. But otherwise it is not until we reach a comparatively late stage of culture that we find an attempt to force chastity upon girls until marriage, and very seldom, indeed, is it expected of boys. Among the Manus both boys and girls are expected to remain chaste till marriage, though no stigma attaches to the man if he has relations with 'foreign' women; intercourse with a girl of his own people is forbidden.

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ORGANIZATION

There are various theories commonly held in regard to the origin of marriage. One sees in it a provision of Nature to secure the care and protection of the woman and her offspring. Most authorities who hold this view derive the human family from the animal family, where, among mammals, the male is supposed to develop the tendency to care for his mate, to provide for and protect her, in proportion as the infancy of the offspring lengthens. As we have seen, there is not much justification for this point of view; in a state of nature, the male animal pays little attention to the female after he has impregnated her; what follows



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

is her affair and not his. Another theory regards marriage as a device for the regulation of sex relations; the fact that among so many peoples marriage takes place at puberty and that extra-marital relations are frowned upon, in theory at least, lends colour to this view. Still a third theory holds that marriage is an economic arrangement and arose when a division of labour between the sexes had been established, so that it was an economic advantage to possess a wife or a husband. When the institution of private property developed, marriage became decidedly of value as a means of increasing and perpetuating that property. The fact that among most primitive peoples marriage is a purely business proposition, or that men only marry when they are old and have accumulated property, would speak for this view.

Undoubtedly, marriage may serve all three purposes, but when we come to an actual study of it among primitive peoples, we find every conceivable form of marriage, conditioned by the economic status of the tribe, its social organization, and its contact with higher races.

Among some of the lowest tribes still in existence, there is scarcely anything that we would recognize as marriage. A man visits his 'wife' a few times, a couple go hunting or fishing together, and the next week each has another partner. Briffault says that it is not unusual among certain Malayan tribes for the traveller to meet men still young who have been married in this sense forty or fifty times. The same author cites numerous instances of peoples among whom such loose associations are the rule. Even when marriages, in the sense of more stable unions, do exist, they are contracted only by the chiefs or the 'aristocrats' of the tribe; the vast majority of its members merely cohabit irregularly or form loose unions which are continually being



broken, each of the pair immediately proceeding to find another partner. Anyone who knows the sexual habits of lower-class negroes in America will recognize the same type of sex union found among them — and not infrequently among the lower social levels of the white race as well.

To our Western way of thinking, the 'family' means a biological group consisting of father, mother, and offspring. But when we begin to hunt for the family among primitives, we find many different types of family organization and a great variety of functions performed by these groups. 'Family' has meant — and still does — any number of things in different cultural groups; the only function which it exercises that can be called constant is that of rearing the children and providing for their status in the community. No matter in what peculiar fashion we find the family organized, the child-rearing function is always present.

A large proportion of humanity has exactly reversed the situation as it obtains in Western civilizations — that is, the organization of the family is *matrilineal*; descent is reckoned through the woman instead of the man, property is inherited through the mother, the children belong to her clan and have her name. This would seem natural enough when the fact of paternity is unknown, but it continues in many groups that are not so ignorant. In the pueblo of *Zuñi*, for instance, the houses are owned by the women, and the man's home is not with his wife but in his sister's house, and his status in his wife's home (the home of his children) is that of a visitor. This form of family organization was very common among the native American races, both North and South, at the coming of the white man. It was customary for the



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

woman to remain with her own people. In some tribes the man left his home and took up his residence with his wife's parents, supporting them and becoming, in effect, a son to them; in others he had no real share in the home of his wife and children until the latter were grown. Polygamy was practised among some tribes, and a man might have a large number of wives, but each lived in a different place with her own relatives and the husband visited from one to the other.

Not only in North and South America, but also in Africa, Asia, and the Polynesian Islands, do we find variants of this type of family. Sometimes the women have several husbands, or all the brothers of one family will marry all the sisters of another. In northern Nigeria the women of the Kona continue to live in their own homes, but instead of their husbands coming to visit them, they go to visit the men at night. Among the Malays a form of marriage is still practised in which the married man becomes entirely separated from his own family and gives up his right of inheritance. In some instances the man becomes a member of his wife's tribe, even taking her name. Among the *Igorots* of the Philippines when a girl marries, a hut is built for her and her husband alongside her parents'. In certain parts of the interior of China a man may remove from his wife's family and set up his own household after ten years of married life. In other places the wife remains at home till after the birth of her first child. In all these marriage customs it would seem that the chief significance attaches to the woman not as wife, but as mother, and marriage is important only as a means of perpetuating the clan; though it may be entered into with great pomp and ceremony, which is more likely to occur in families of wealth or importance, it can



usually be terminated at the will of the woman or her family.

Under this type of *unilateral* organization — so called because socially the family derives from one parent only — though the father may be a part of the household, he is not its head in any sense. His children look to the mother's brother for economic support, while he in turn supports his own sister and her children. The boys at puberty go to their uncle's village, which is their totem house, and often sever all ties with their native village.

There are many variants of these family types, and others that seem still more strange to us. Margaret Mead (10) has described a family in which the father has no social recognition whatever. Among the Nairs of Malabar, 'When the daughter or daughters of the house are about eleven or twelve years of age, a suitable young bridegroom of appropriate social standing is invited to the house, and a religious marriage is performed but not consummated. At the end of three days, the bride or brides (for several daughters of the house may be successively wedded to the young man) are divorced and the young husband is dismissed with presents and never appears upon the social horizon again. Later, when the daughters are grown, they may have permanent liaisons with young Nair men, or with sons of the Namburuti Brahman patrilineal groups, among whom no younger son is allowed to enter into a legal marriage. Although these liaisons may be lifelong, the lover is given no status in his wife's household; he has no control over his children, who belong entirely and unconditionally to their mother's group and have no claims over him or his property.

'The family, for all practical purposes, among the Nairs, consists of one's mother's mother and one's mother's mother's brother who is the male economic representative of



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

the household, one's mother, mother's brothers, mother's sisters, mother's sisters' children, and one's brothers and sisters. If any man were to be regarded as socially one's father, it would actually be the man who had been married to and divorced from one's mother years before; for by Brahman law, a woman can enter into only one religious marriage. Here, then, is a family in which one biological parent has been socially eliminated.'

Miss Mead further describes the situation in Borneo and in Dutch New Guinea, where marital relations are carried out with the utmost secrecy, the husbands stealing into their wives' houses at night; and they are supposed to be overcome with shame should they be discovered.

Among the Andamans, although marriage is monogamous and for life, the children are adopted from group to group, so that by the time puberty is reached the child may have three or four sets of fathers and mothers to whom he is obligated and from whom he may expect help when needed.

In Samoa we find large households, of which the most responsible male is the head. The children grow up with a large group of adults, and they are thereby prevented from getting too dependent upon any one of them, while at the same time their security is greatly increased.

The function of the family, aside from the child-rearing one, varies as greatly as its structure. Miss Mead, in the same article says:

'The degree to which the family is a group which provides for common meals, for sleeping quarters, for the acquisition of industrial skills, or for the transmission of charms, and religious knowledge, varies from a position of prime importance to a purely negative role.'



## SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

There are 'tiny' families which maintain themselves in every way, as U.S.A. pioneer families did on isolated farms, and families where the men and women live in separate quarters, or all the men of an entire village eat together after the day's work is done.

It is important for us to keep in mind the various forms and functions that the family has had among different peoples. One is naturally inclined to think of that form of social institution with which he is familiar as the norm, and to measure other forms by it, judging them accordingly. We very often hear it said that marriage is the foundation of the family, but when we study the situation we see that a large portion of the human race regards or has regarded marriage only as one link in a long chain of family relationships, and as important not in itself but only as a means to the perpetuation of the clan. Marriages may come and go, they may be permanent or transitory, but the family goes on. The child derives his security and his status not from the marriage of his parents, but from the family into which he is born. The loss of a parent is not the disaster to him that it is to the child of the 'biological' family, where it deprives him of a relationship that can seldom be replaced.

### THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN; MARRIAGE BY CAPTURE, PURCHASE, ETC.

Among other primitive races, notably in Australia and Melanesia, the women enjoy no high prerogatives. They have become the virtual slaves of the men, to be bought, sold, beaten, speared, or killed, with impunity. These races are in a very low stage of culture, but so commonly do we



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

find all over the world a social organization in which the man is the head of the family and women are his property, that many authorities believe this to have been the original form of family organization. Whether it was or not need not concern us, but since it is similar to the type of social organization under which all modern civilized peoples live, we must look at it rather closely.

Among primitive peoples who have this form of family organization, we find all forms of marriage — monogamy, polygamy, polyandry (the possession by a woman of several husbands), and all sorts of marriage customs, from the Australian Bushman, who clubs a female — perhaps only a child — into insensibility and drags her off to his hut, up to the long-drawn-out and elaborate negotiations with the parents for the possession of the woman. In very many places the marriage rites are still reminiscent of abduction or capture. Elaborate ceremonies, in which the friends of the groom distract the attention of the bride's family while the groom steals her and carries her off, are a common custom. When they are overtaken by her relatives both sides put up a sham battle, ending in hilarious wedding festivities. In many places the bride must be forcibly carried away by the man, while she herself offers every show of resistance, screaming, kicking, and biting, though she is actually not by any means an unwilling captive.

Usually the girl must be purchased from her father or relative. Mantegazza gives a list of the purchase price of women in different countries, from Australia, where she is bought with a knife or a glass bottle, to Timur, where a considerable amount of money, two to three hundred buffaloes, herds of horses, pigs, sheep, and goats, gold dust, and ornaments of gold are considered none too much for



the purchase of a woman whom the Rajah favours. Among the poorer people the man buys a wife because he wishes her to work, and he values her accordingly. But as we ascend in the economic scale, the system works to produce women who are valued not for their labour, but for the pleasure which they are able to afford their husbands. The girl is beautified in every possible way according to savage standards and taught all the arts of pleasing, that she may be desired by someone able to pay a good price for her. A man may acquire a huge harem, his wealth and power being measured by the number of women he possesses; the king of Ashanti is limited by law to only a certain number of wives — but this number is 3,333! In such an establishment as this the majority of women are not 'wives' at all, but slaves. Women are sometimes married in groups, the man purchasing a number of sisters or a group from a certain village at one time.

In other cases the man can have the girl only by serving for her a certain number of years. Jacob, it will be remembered, in ancient Hebrew history, served his father-in-law faithfully for many years to accumulate enough to purchase the girl whom he desired. Girls may be purchased incredibly young, even in infancy, and many fathers seek to marry their daughters off as soon as possible. Marriages at the age of eight or ten are not unusual among primitives. When the girl is not actually purchased, the marriage rites are reminiscent of this custom; to this day the marriage ceremonies of the ritualistic churches require the giving away of the bride, usually by her father.

The custom of the bride bringing a dowry, or *dot*, to the man is not very frequent among primitives, although it is found occasionally. The Negroes in the Sahara give their



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

women a dowry so that in case of separation, ill-treatment, or widowhood they will be able to maintain themselves. Among some other tribes the father sets the young people up in housekeeping, though this does not usually happen until after the groom has served him for a certain length of time.

Where women are slaves or chattels they can be sold again, loaned, or given away by their husbands. Exchange of wives is common, and among many peoples it is considered a breach of hospitality if the head of the household does not provide his guest with a companion for the night; very often he loans him one of his own wives. Many are the stories of the embarrassment of the missionaries at the custom.

Besides the legal wife or wives, a man may have *concubines*, who are women to whom he is not married according to the rites of the tribe, but over whom he has recognized sexual rights. They are often merely slaves and so numerous that he may not even know them by sight. The harem of the savage chief is apt to consist of the chief wife, who is sometimes the first wife and in other cases the favourite wife, a number of lesser wives, and, in addition, numerous concubines.

Although polygamy is by far the most common form of marriage among savages, monogamy is found among all peoples. Quite frequently it is only the chief who can possess more than one wife, the rest of the tribe being able to afford only one.

Polyandry is infrequent, but it exists as a legitimate form of marriage. It is still the custom among the Tibetans and some peoples of Mongolian descent. In Tibet the younger brothers, as soon as the eldest is married, become the



husbands of his wife; the children call all the husbands of the mother, 'Father'. Many women have as many as four husbands at the same time, and, besides, the woman may marry other men who are in no way related to her other husbands. This form of marriage is also found among the Eskimos and the inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands. Polyandry can only prevail in a country where the men outnumber the women, and this is usually found in isolated sections where men are seldom at war, and it has to be maintained by putting female infants to death.

Customs vary regarding separation or divorce, but it is usually very free and for all sorts of reasons. In Samoa when a husband or wife tires of the other, he or she simply withdraws from the household and goes home, and the marriage is said to have 'passed away' without more ado; neither husband nor wife considers it any virtue to attempt to maintain a relationship in which there is much unhappiness. If the wife leaves, the husband may go after her and attempt to persuade her to return, or he may snap his fingers and seek another wife forthwith. We must remember that the primitive is far from sharing our sentiments toward marriage; it is to him a matter of convenience, or pride, or conformity to tribal customs. Passionate love is not a feature of marriage; it may be reserved for a concubine or some other woman with whom the man may have a liaison, and very frequently it does not exist at all; the primitive's emotional life in general is far less intense than that of civilized man. Where women are despised and held in subjection, we cannot expect a great degree of affection or respect between married partners; there are exceptions, no doubt, but they remain the exception and not the rule.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

## VIRGINITY AND CHASTITY

Although numerous authorities assure us that there is no such thing as virginity among savage peoples, there is certainly plenty of effort made to secure it. A man will pay a much higher price for a virgin, and will go to almost any lengths to assure himself that he is obtaining one. In many tribes he has the right to examine her himself; in others the girl must stand completely naked before witnesses who examine her to discover if the hymen is intact. In Samoa the daughter of the chief, the 'Taupo', who is legally required to be a virgin, is publicly deflowered — that is, the hymen ruptured — 'at her marriage, in front of all the people, in a house brilliantly lit' (Margaret Mead, 10), by the 'talking chief' of the bridegroom, or, as we should say, 'the best man'. This custom is 'only gradually dying out', though it is now forbidden by law. In Abyssinia, Nubia, and Soudan an operation called 'infibulation' is performed upon little girls which causes the labia to grow together so that only a small opening remains. In this way the chastity of the girl is assured until her marriage; the husband may then cut the seam open, or the mother may do so in the presence of the husband. In the Orient a fiendish contrivance, known as the 'chastity belt', or 'maiden lock', was placed upon the girls, or might be placed upon the wife when the husband went away and wished to insure himself against her infidelity. It consisted of a leather or metal harness, which was securely locked upon the girl in such a fashion that intercourse would be impossible to her; the key, of course, was in possession of her lord and master. Chastity belts were in use in Europe until the second half of the eighteenth century, and examples of them can be found in



museums. Chastity reached its zenith in China, where the girl was so closely guarded that she had no opportunity to meet a man, and where virtue was inculcated by precepts and stories of women who remained chaste in trying circumstances, and by monuments and tablets which commemorated virtuous women. Young widows, or virgins whose fiancés died and who remained faithful to their memories and served their parents well, were specially decorated by Imperial Order. But these ideals applied only to the girl who would become the Great Wife; the lesser wives and concubines were under no such restrictions.

But if there were many people who esteemed virginity and considered it a girl's greatest asset, there were very many who considered the hymen an obstruction which should be got rid of before marriage. In many places even yet the mother is responsible for seeing that the hymen is ruptured, and various methods of doing so are in vogue. One of the most usual was to engage the services of a slave, or an old man, or a priest, who, for a sum of money, would get rid of the hymen either by mechanical means or by having coitus with the girl. In ancient Greece young girls were taken to the temple of Priapus, a fertility god, and deflowered by setting them forcibly upon his lap. But the custom of having the king or the priest deflower the girl was the most frequent, and persisted far into modern times in what is known as *jus primae noctis*, or 'the right of the first night'; that is, when a man married, the bride did not spend the first night with her husband, but with a priest or head man of the tribe, who was paid a good sum by the husband for performing this service for him.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

## INFIDELITY AND ADULTERY

We might infer from the immense pains taken by primitives to insure chastity and fidelity, that they are not very common. Though infidelity on the part of the wife is usually severely punished in a patriarchal society, the husband is seldom held to strict accountability except when monogamy is firmly established, and usually not then. The Dyaks, who are monogamists, expect the wife to punish her husband's paramour, but she can use only a stick. Among the Maori adultery by the woman was punished by death, while her lover had to fight a duel with the husband. The punishment for adultery ranges all the way from death to both the woman and her lover, tearing out the woman's eye or cutting off her hands, to driving her out of the house or merely sending her home to her parents.

In the tribes where women have a higher degree of influence, or where the family is organized around the mother instead of the father, the infidelity of the man is of as much importance as that of the woman. In some tribes both parties are equally punished, in others light penalties are imposed, or the act is regarded as the signal for a separation. In general, among societies so organized there is less jealousy and less severe punishment for infringement upon marital rights. This may be because men are seldom regarded as the property of women in the same sense in which women become the property of men in a patriarchal society. A woman bought and paid for is the property of a man in the legal sense, and, though he may rent her or loan her for sexual purposes willingly enough, he resents her appropriation without his consent exactly as he would resent the theft of any piece of property. Some authorities consider



## SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

that it is this attitude rather than sexual jealousy that is back of the exceedingly severe punishment for adultery which is found among so many peoples; this point of view would seem reasonable, since the punishment is just as likely to be visited upon a woman who is the man's property but with whom he has never cohabited as otherwise.

### OTHER SEXUAL ABERRATIONS

As to the status of other sexual irregularities and vices among primitive peoples, notably homosexuality and prostitution, we find the freedom of relations between the sexes and the prevalence of polygamy operating to discourage their development. Homosexuality has existed at all stages of culture that we know anything about, though often as an isolated phenomenon, and homosexual or hermaphroditic divinities were worshipped very early; but it could scarcely have flourished under primitive conditions. Margaret Mead tells us that in Samoa where, though still savages, the natives have attained a fairly high culture, casual homosexual relationships are fairly frequent, but are looked upon more as a type of sex play; people who are really *inverts*, incapable of sex feeling toward the opposite sex, are rare.

Of prostitution we will speak in the following chapter, but we may note here that it had its beginning in primitive times and long before recorded history begins. Mantegazza asserts that prostitution has 'never been lacking among any people at any time', but he is including under the term customs such as the offering of women, often the host's wife, to a guest, which are not usually thought of as prostitution. The Kaffir girl, who bargains with a man for a string of beads before she will go into the bush with



him, is exercising a right which her group concedes her, and she is no more a prostitute than the girl in a more cultured society who shrewdly selects as her husband the man who can give her what she wants of wealth and social position; both are bartering sexual favours. Among a people so savage as the Australian Bushmen, where the man promptly assaults every female he meets, pausing only to ascertain that she does not belong to a class taboo to him, there is little place for prostitution; it begins to flourish at a higher level of culture.

There remains one other form of sex activity which yet concerns us greatly and which we find everywhere we go among primitives, and that is auto-erotism. Masturbation is practically universal among savages, as we might expect from their preoccupation with sex in general, and we find little condemnation of it. In those tribes where there is little restraint upon relations between the sexes, auto-erotism gives way to the normal gratification of desire, though among children and people deprived of normal sex relations for any length of time, as occurs in the women confined in the harems of the chiefs, it is common.

The idea of sin, which enters so strongly into the modern civilized attitude toward sex, is completely foreign to the primitive mind. Sex in itself is good, the highest joy he knows anything about, and he celebrates it in all the ways at his command. His gods are sexual creatures, and he attributes to them his own feelings and desires, and suspects them of behaviour like his own; he celebrates their feasts with dances or with revels which usually end up in wild orgies, when all taboos and restrictions are off and even incest may be committed with impunity. Other dances, inviting the rain to fertilize mother earth, or the sun to



## SEX IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

impregnate her with his life-giving beams, are frankly sexual in their symbolism; games and sports are often what we would term 'obscene'. Sex permeates the thinking, the speech, the art, the religion, and every phase of the life of primitive man in a way unthinkable to us; but the only idea of sin attaching to it is in the breaking of a taboo. This, as we have seen, is a sin so deadly that the primitive will seldom risk committing it, and if he unwittingly should do so, his feeling of guilt is so tremendous that further punishment is unnecessary.

This brief survey will help us to realize that the sexual problems that are so vexing to-day are not the offspring of civilization; every one of them is found as far back as we can go toward the dawn of human life upon this planet. Sex is a mighty force, which in all times and all places has asserted itself under the guise of physical pleasure for the fulfilment of its primary purpose; and only gradually has man built up out of this crude sensuality, affection for his mate, delight in her companionship, and love for the children which so long he thought of as hers alone and not equally his. In the next chapter we will survey a little more of this long and weary road which man has travelled since he left behind his brother the beast.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE HISTORICAL PERIOD

RECORDED history begins for us with the inscriptions and decorations on the monuments and temples of long-buried cities. Bit by bit from these fragments scholars are piecing together some fairly coherent stories of the men of antiquity, though there must always remain great gaps in our knowledge, especially of that mysterious borderland of time which saw the transition from the primitive to the ancient cultures. The civilization of which ours is a lineal descendant began in Asia; but we do not know its beginnings. Six thousand years ago there were great cities in the Orient, where 'the laws and arts were blossoming', and whose customs and institutions were in many respects similar to our own; but again we find those people, as well as the societies that came after them for many thousand years, preoccupied with the question of sex. Their religion abounded in fertility gods and goddesses, their ritual we would call obscene, their temples and palaces were decorated with carvings of grossly sexual scenes. Chaldea, Egypt, the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome, even down to those periods that are familiar to every high-school student, the 'golden age' of Pericles in Greece and the Roman Empire of the Caesars, were still under the spell of sex in a way that is quite inconceivable to us.

It will help us to understand ancient man if we will remember that, even though he reached in some respects a degree of culture that has never been surpassed or even



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

equalled, he was not much beyond his primitive forbears in his understanding of the universe. The heavenly bodies, the procession of the seasons, the growth of a seed, the ripening of the harvest, were still shrouded in mystery, and explainable only in terms of himself and his own experiences. And so we find him creating gods and goddesses, endowing them with his own appetites and passions, and worshipping them with rites that emphasized their 'human' — that is, their sexual — nature. Though these rites were becoming highly symbolic, and more and more sex was being refined and 'sublimated' into artistic expression, the populace still took the symbols literally and worshipped accordingly. The solemn celebrations of the feasts of the gods ended in frank sexual orgies, in which men and women worked themselves into a frenzied ecstasy, when they lost all sense of decency and gave themselves to nameless excesses. The temple priestesses had as their chief function the satisfaction of the male worshippers; gods and goddesses of love were everywhere. But in spite of this seeming tremendous preoccupation with the sex side of his life, it is likely that ancient man's actual sex activities were not so greatly different from our own. A vast amount of energy had already been diverted from the pursuit of physical pleasure when our first glimpses of history began; the amount of intellectual labour involved in the invention of an alphabet, in the discovery of mathematical relationships or of the principles of architecture, can never be surpassed by anything man can do. And the amount of energy and labour necessary to maintain a civilization such as that of ancient Chaldea or Crete would leave little time for the kind of irresponsible sex play which we find so frequently among primitives.



## THE HISTORICAL PERIOD

### MARRIAGE AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN

In the most ancient societies of which we have any knowledge, the institution of marriage was highly developed, and women occupied a high place both socially and legally. In early Babylon marriage was a relation requiring legal agreement between the man and the woman, and women engaged in business or in the learned professions on their own account. Egypt, of which we know more than any other ancient country, was considered a 'topsy-turvy world' by the Greeks who knew it in the first and second centuries B.C., because of its marriage customs and the prominence of women. Brother and sister marriages were very common, and the family was based on a matriarchal system. The wife was called the 'Ruler of the House', as she seems actually to have been. All landed and house property was in her hands, and even single women held property and administered it, engaged in business, and so on, as in patriarchal societies is expected of the male. Hundreds of marriage contracts from the Ptolemaic period are extant, and in them the woman appears as the sole contracting party; the man had to promise to obey her in all things. One of these marriage contracts, quoted by Briffault (1) (p. 280), runs as follows:

'I acknowledge thy rights as wife, from this day forward I shall never by any word oppose thy claims. I shall acknowledge thee before anyone as my wife, but I have no power to say to thee: "Thou art my wife." It is I who am the man who is thy husband. From the day that I become thy husband I cannot oppose thee, in whatsoever place thou mayest please to go. I cede the . . . (here follows a list of posses-



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

sions) that are in thy dwelling. I have no power to interfere in any transaction made by thee, from this day. Every document made in my favour by any person is now placed among thy deeds, and is also at the disposal of thy father or of any relatives acting for thee. Thou shalt hold me bound to honour any such deed. Should anyone hand over to me any moneys that are due to thee, I shall hand them over to thee without delay, without opposition, and in addition pay thee a further twenty measures of silver, one hundred shekels, and again twenty measures of silver.'

Women, both married and single, seem to have been free to conduct themselves and their affairs as they pleased; girls had full legal rights from an early age, and an inscription of the time of Rameses III (about 1200 B.C.) states that 'the foot of an Egyptian woman could wander wheresoever she pleased, and no one could oppose her'. A woman could divorce her husband for no reason at all, and pre-marital and extra-marital sex relations seem to have been common on the part of the women. That the women abused this power there is little doubt, and some marriage contracts stipulated that the wife should 'provide for her husband during his lifetime and pay the expenses of his funeral and burial'. In general, however, the arrangement seems to have been a happy one, and Egyptian husbands were devoted and affectionate, while the wives, though they were the 'rulers of the house', seem to have been benevolent despots. The restriction of the woman's privileges and their gradual transfer to the male can be traced throughout the long history of Egypt, though to the very end many of the ancient customs prevailed.

The poems of Homer deal with a time that was already legendary to the people of historical Greece, and paint a



## THE HISTORICAL PERIOD

social world very different from the latter. The *Odyssey* has even been thought to have been composed specially for women, since the prominence of women in it is so out of keeping with the position of women in classical Greece. In the ancient civilization of Crete also, which has been uncovered by the archaeologists within the last thirty years, women occupied a position of great prominence. The friezes and sculptures show them mingling freely with the men at games and festivals, or riding in chariots driven by female charioteers. The Cretan gods are almost non-existent since their deities are nearly all feminine and the worshippers and priests are almost invariably women. There are plenty of queens and princesses, but no kings or heroes. By the seventh century B.C., however, Cretan society had become definitely patriarchal, though women still had many privileges. They inherited property and retained full control of it after marriage, and divorce was as easy for them as for their husbands.

In all the archaic or very ancient civilizations of the Orient, polygamy seems to have been usual. We know nothing of the status of marriage among the common people, as the temple decorations, the monuments, and tombs were devoted to the rulers and the priests; but since these were polygamous, we may infer that their followers were also if they were able to afford it.

## MARRIAGE AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD

Classical Greece was very decidedly a man-made world. The family was organized on patriarchal lines, and the daughters of the citizens, designed for marriage to freeborn



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

Athenian men, were brought up with that one fact in view. It was not thought necessary to educate them, and at the very time when Greek culture reached its zenith, Greek wives had the status of children under the law, were kept secluded in the 'women's house', and were for the most part serenely disregarded by their husbands. They were not, however, the property of their husbands in the sense that the women of the Orient were, since a wife did not legally become a member of the husband's family, remaining under the guardianship of her father or nearest male relative. This may have been because, unlike the custom in other patriarchal societies, the woman was not bought by her husband, but in a sense she bought him — that is, she brought him a 'dowry'. It was the chief consideration in the legal marriage, and, indeed, marriage without it was not legal, the girl being then considered 'disreputable and little better than a prostitute'; she became the man's concubine and not his wife. Free-born girls who were too poor to afford a dowry were granted a small sum by the State to make their marriage legal. Euripides makes Medea refer to this custom of the dowry in the tragedy which bears her name:

Ay, of all living and of all reasoning things  
Are women the most miserable race;  
Who first needs buy a husband at great price,  
To take him then for owner of our lives.

Marriage in Europe thus developed very differently from what it did in the Orient, where the emphasis was upon its sexual side and polygamy was the rule, as it is yet to-day. In Greece marriage had little to do with sex, but was based upon the necessity for a legal heir. The Greeks were an agricultural and trading people, and the man wished an



heir to whom he could leave his property; this was best accomplished by the marriage of one wife, and guarding her so he could be sure of the paternity of her children. Property descended through the male line, though if there were no sons the daughter inherited; but, according to the Athenian law, she must then marry her nearest male kinsman so that the property might remain in the family. Thus marriage in Europe became monogamous, and though polygamy occurred among various European peoples till far into Christian times, monogamy has remained the norm to this day in European civilizations and those that grew out of them. Founded as marriage was upon economic considerations, love was left entirely out of account; marriage safeguarded his heirs, and the man could turn elsewhere for sex satisfaction; he might have concubines, or he might entertain a mistress. Not only the average citizen, but the greatest men of Greece, whose names have been household words in Western civilization for centuries, conducted their sexual lives after this fashion. Demosthenes, in his oration against Neara, thus describes it:

‘We marry a woman in order to obtain legitimate children, and to have a faithful warden in the house; we keep concubines for our service and daily care; and Hetairai for the enjoyment of love.’

The women who played the part of mistresses to the Greek men of the classical period were known as Hetairai, literally ‘stranger-women’, because they were not Greek citizens. The accounts of the Hetairai that have come down to us picture them as beautiful and accomplished, often learned in the arts and letters and familiar with statecraft. They were free to attend games and banquets with the men,



and were charming companions to them. The legitimate wife could never attend the feasts or games, nor be seen at the theatre. That she was not content, however, to sit quietly at home while her husband enjoyed himself elsewhere is attested by the numerous accounts we have of intrigues and adultery on the part of the Greek married women. The Greeks made no special virtue of chastity, and, though they demanded it in their wives and daughters, it was more a family than a personal matter, the unchaste woman dishonouring her husband or her family rather than sinning against any moral standard. The laws against a wife's infidelity were very severe and were no doubt sometimes carried out, but they were evidently not very effective in deterring the women from their adventures. There was plenty of contemporary discussion of the situation, and different remedies offered. Plato in his Republic would recognize women as in all respects like men, only 'in all matters weaker', and he advocated a return to primitive sexual communism. But mostly the methods proposed had to do with still stricter guardianship of the woman and her closer seclusion. Such treatment, in addition to lack of education, could not fail to produce intellectually stunted creatures, and such, indeed, the Athenian wives appear to have been.

In addition to his extra-marital adventures with women, the Greek man might have homosexual liaisons, which we will discuss farther on.

In ancient Sparta we find a very different state of affairs; there girls and women were entirely free to conduct themselves as they pleased. The girls exercised naked in the Palestra or national games in the company of boys, and as much courage and physical prowess were expected from the



women as from the men. No premium was placed upon virginity, and at one time the Spartans who 'had no father' were said to outnumber those born in wedlock.

In Rome marriage transferred the woman from the power of her father to that of her husband. The Roman *patria potestas*, power of the father, was scarcely equalled in any other historical civilization.

'Our fathers', says Cato the Elder, 'have willed that women should be in the power of their fathers, their brothers, and their husbands; remember all the laws by which our fathers have bound down the liberty of women, by which they have bent them to the power of men.'

But in point of fact, the severity of the law did not result in the degradation of women that was evident in Greece. The Roman girl of the patrician class received much the same education as the boy, and after marriage she was free to come and go as she liked and shared her husband's social life, conducting herself very much as the women of to-day. There was in Roman society a tradition of strong attachment to and regard for the woman as wife and mother, which has perpetuated itself in Western nations and which is part of our intellectual heritage from Rome. Roman literature abounds in praises of the virtuous Roman matron, and the story of Cornelia, who, when her friends were boasting of their beautiful jewels, proudly brought forth her children to show them, saying, 'Behold, these are my jewels', was one of many similar tales.

As the family was paramount in Roman life, it was incumbent upon the women to uphold its honour by 'suffering chastity', as Cicero puts it. But chastity was not enforced upon them from without, but inculcated by precepts, and especially by the worship of the virgin goddess Vesta. The



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

laws against adultery on the part of the married women were very severe, but, nevertheless, it was not uncommon, and Juvenal paints us a picture of great sexual laxity and licentiousness in the later Empire. That there had been plenty of such offences earlier, we may infer from the temple of Venus, which the historian Livy says was erected in B.C. 285 out of fines collected from Roman matrons for adultery.

Although there was no corresponding ideal of 'purity' for the Roman man, the restraint placed upon the woman led in time to ideas of decency and propriety for the man also. When both sexes mingled socially the men were bound to respect the modesty which they imposed upon the women, which would naturally result in their becoming more modest themselves. But most of the women that we see in the pages of Roman history were patricians, and the laws and standards developed for them had little application to the plebeians, who for long continued to marry after their own fashion, which the patricians regarded as little better than promiscuity. It was many years before the law was changed to permit patrician marriage with the plebeians.

### SEX AND MARRIAGE UNDER CHRISTIANITY

The Roman attitude toward sex corresponds more nearly to our own than that of any other people of antiquity. The pagan attitude of the Greeks, who made a cult of sex, the Spartan freedom for both men and woman, the polygamous Orient, where women were valued solely as sexual creatures, are all foreign to our mode of thought; but the old Roman virtues of temperance and self-control, the Roman respect for the family and regard for the woman as wife and mother, are ideals to which Western nations have for long given lip



service at least. But Christianity added another factor to the situation, and that was the conception of chastity, as a religious duty and sex itself as a sin.

It is not possible for us to trace all of the influences that went into the making of this attitude, but we must glance at one or two of them. The ascetic ideal had been developed before in the history of the race, but had never found wide acceptance. Under the leadership of Saul of Tarsus, the St. Paul of the New Testament, who was the real organizer of the new faith, the early Christians developed a doctrine which glorified chastity and considered any lapse from it, even in marriage, as sinful. Paul, however, recognized that this ideal was impossible of attainment for many people, and he permitted marriage, though he could not refrain from adding that he who did not marry 'doeth better'. Chastity came to mean not only chastity of the body but of the soul, and 'celestial love' was the ideal to be striven for. Lacroix (7) says that the Christian Church concentrated its energy upon obtaining chastity because that was the one thing that distinguished it so greatly from the pagan people surrounding it. All about it was the decaying Roman Empire given over to vices and excesses, and the new religion must set itself off from all this so sharply that there could be no mistaking its adherents. It could have no traffic with unbelievers. The emphasis of the new religion was on the spirit, and it was only too evident that devotion to the pleasures of the body dimmed the pleasures of the spirit. If Christianity was to survive at all in the midst of the pagan and heathen religions that surrounded it, it must divorce itself from the alliance with sex which, as we have seen, was a feature of nearly all the pagan religions. Christians were supposed to work and pray and fast to such an extent that sex matters



passed out of their minds, and apparently many of them did, as there are numerous accounts of married people as well as the unmarried who took the vows of chastity and kept them. The persecutions to which they were subject made the Christians all the more determined. It became a favourite sport of their enemies to rape Christian virgins, and many of the early ecclesiastical rules have to do with the definition of a virgin, declaring that she is still a virgin if she has not consented.

Another thing that made the early Christians indifferent to both the pains and pleasures of the body was their belief that the end of the world was imminent. The second coming of Christ was confidently looked for, and they were supposed to be in a constant state of readiness.

Nature, however, cannot be defied beyond a certain point, and the Church Fathers had a tremendous task upon their hands. No matter how much they legislated, the sex appetite could not be suppressed, and marriage came to be tolerated, but for the purpose of procreation only. Woman was more and more degraded; she was called 'the organ of the devil', 'the gate of hell', the 'most dangerous of all wild beasts'. She became a soulless creature whose main function was the ensnaring of the souls of men, and it was taught that evil entered the world through her ancestress in the Garden of Eden. Saints fled to the wilderness, fasted, and scourged themselves to get rid of the entirely natural dreams and fantasies that the continent man experiences, and only to produce more vivid visions in which women tormented and enticed them. In a time when man was almost entirely ignorant of his own psychology, especially the psychology of sex, it was easy to believe that such fantasies were the work of the devil. From the prominent place that woman



## THE HISTORICAL PERIOD

had occupied in the early Church, she became an outcast. In 585 the Council of Macon, composed of fifty-nine bishops, decided by a majority of one vote that she had a soul.

### THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Even this did not ameliorate the condition of woman, and before long she had become a chattel, to be bought, sold, beaten and even killed by her husband who, in the eyes of the law, was her owner. Thousands of women fled to the monasteries, the only place where they could feel sure of any measure of independence or peace. Marriage continued unholy and unclean, even though the Church Fathers had done everything they could to purify it, and it was not until the sixteenth century that the Council of Trent lifted it completely out of the terrible morass into which it had fallen and made it one of the seven sacraments. But the legal disability of woman continued; she was still a chattel of her husband in the eyes of the law, her special duty being to bear children. In 1741 Frederick the Great wrote: 'I look upon women as a herd of deer in the zoological gardens of a great lord; their only duty is to propagate and fill the park.'

In spite of all this we need not suppose that women lay down tamely under the disabilities imposed upon them. Many, no doubt, ruled their households openly, or obtained their will in devious ways if they found that necessary. In spite of the laws and the pronouncements of rulers and priests, all men were not brutal tyrants, nor all women abject slaves. The point to remember is the legal status of women during the Middle Ages in Europe, which was that of a minor, subordinate first to her father and then her husband; under



the patriarchal system she was legally a nonentity, deriving any dignity or privileges that she might possess from her status as daughter or wife.

But along with this degradation of women in general went the deification of one woman in particular; men and women alike poured out their souls in the worship of the Virgin Mary. This could scarcely continue century after century without reflecting upon other women, and it is probable, as Theodore Schroeder remarks, that it had a good deal to do with the development of chivalry. The average man, unacquainted with the subtleties which prompted the attitude of priest and monk, found in other women much of the grace and beauty of goodness which was ascribed to the Virgin, and the cult of chivalry arose among the knights.

Chivalry again glorified love, placing it above all other things and admitting no barrier to its exercise. It became an elaborate game, with a special code and laws which were administered by special 'Courts of Love'. It flourished, of course, among those who had wealth and leisure to pursue it, notoriously at the Courts of the dozens of little principalities which dotted Europe in the Middle Ages. It was exceedingly silly in many of its manifestations, but it did succeed in implanting a respect for and a courtesy toward women — at least women of the ruling classes — that has had its echoes in Europe and America ever since.

Though sex in all its aspects had become such an unholy thing, we must not suppose that the majority of people had been able or even wished to control their sex activities to any extent. The poorer people, the serfs and peasants, steeped in ignorance and superstition, continued to conduct their sex affairs much as their primitive ancestors had done. The old pagan festivals, which had so much of sex



worship in them, became Christian celebrations, in which many of the barbaric customs still lingered. The peasant bride still spent the first night of her married life with the lord of the manor or with someone to whom he granted that privilege. Irregular unions were common, and girls on the feudal estates, daughters of the serfs and peasants, were the legitimate prey of any of the numerous retainers of the overlord. Illegitimate children abounded and prostitution flourished.

Into all this welter of conflicting beliefs, practices, and ideals, the Revival of Learning and the Protestant Reformation let loose the forces of individualism. Men and even women began to think for themselves. A few women, notably in Italy, became famous for their learning; high-born girls in France and England turned their backs upon the 'medieval female'; and there ensued a period of great licence and laxity at the Courts and among the upper classes. Luther declared it the right of everyone to marry, and boldly proclaimed from the pulpit that a woman's sexual needs are as definite as a man's. But another force was rising to remake marriage and sexual theory, and that was the capitalistic economy which was everywhere replacing the old medieval organization of society around the feudal lord or baron, which had made the land the chief source of wealth and divided society sharply into overlords and underlings. As trade and commerce increased, wealth and prestige attached itself no longer to land but to money, and the great 'middle class' began to make its power felt. Individualistic as it was, this rising middle class took kindly to the movements for religious reform, such as Puritanism and Calvinism. The Puritan ideals of frugality and restraint fitted in well with the middle-class gospel of prudence and industry;



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

if a man was to succeed in the fierce competitive struggle for wealth that was then beginning, he could not fritter his time away with 'wine, women, and song'.

### THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

It was this sober and industrious middle class that set its stamp upon the family life and sexual ideals of the nineteenth century. It was immeasurably aided by the appearance upon the throne of a queen whose early life had been carefully watched over by a mother who held strong views on the subject of sexual laxity. The Court henceforth frowned upon behaviour that would have been regarded as proper enough fifty years before. Sexual morality in England had been at a low ebb in the previous period, during the reigns of George IV, the Regency, and William IV, and the reaction was correspondingly severe. A rigid code of morals prevailed, girls were brought up in complete ignorance of even the elemental facts of sex, and all her life the 'good' woman was disbarred from any further knowledge of sex than that necessary to the bearing and rearing of children. In both England and America the Puritan ideals prevailed. Ministers thundered from the pulpit against sinful indulgence in the lusts of the flesh. Wives submitted to their husbands in both the Old and New Worlds, and daughters would no more have thought of doubting the views put forward by their fathers than of criticizing the edicts of Holy Scripture. The law itself recognized the husband and father as the head of the family, with all rights, both personal and property, over the wife and children; woman's place was in the home, and girls had need for very little schooling. At the same time, among the lower ranks of society irregular unions were



common and illegitimacy abounded. Such was the state of affairs during the first half of the nineteenth century, a state destined to be gravely disturbed before that century closed.

Various factors have been responsible for the gradual change that has occurred in the standards of sexual conduct that the second half of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries have witnessed. Among the most important were those resulting from the rise of industrialism. The development of the machine and the growth of the factory took women by the thousand out of their homes and made them wage-earners, no longer dependent upon husbands or fathers. Economic independence was of necessity followed by greater freedom of thought and behaviour. The fact that a girl could earn her own livelihood meant that she could leave home and obtain a far more varied experience than her mother had ever dreamed was possible. This not only engendered self-reliance and greater independence of thought and action, but altered her attitude toward men. Meeting on equal terms, the relationship between the sexes was essentially different from that which had existed in a previous generation, when the man was lord and master and the woman must helplessly await his interest and favour. By the beginning of the twentieth century the protest against the historic disabilities of woman had strengthened into the movement known as 'Feminism'. Essentially, it was the demand to possess what had for so long been regarded as the private perquisites of the male. Equality of rights was inscribed on its banners, but by this was implied equality in politics and economics rather than in sex. Nevertheless, freedom in the economic and political spheres associated with the rise in the standard of education meant that marriage as a means of subsistence was no longer essen-



tial to a woman. Henceforth a girl could lead her own life and follow her own interests with a freedom only slightly less than that of her brother. It was not surprising that before long sex should have been included among these interests.

The reaction to earlier ideals which was starting by the close of the nineteenth century was reinforced from many directions. The smug prosperity of the earlier days of industrialism was at an end, and with an increase in the difficulties of living came a tendency to doubt whether all was right with the world. Such writers as Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells were particularly sceptical on this point, and their sacrilegious rummagings among the Victorian household gods was welcomed by the younger generation, which, faced with difficulties that an earlier generation had escaped, was disposed to question the rigid sexual code of its parents. Havelock Ellis was producing his studies in the psychology of sex, and though his work was suppressed his ideas spread. In the battle between the scientific and the religious attitudes of mind, science was winning, and with it educational theory and practice were changing. Finally the World War, with its loosing of elemental passions, accelerated the changes already begun, and when it was over there was an intoxicating sense of freedom, of newness, of a chance to begin again and build a world more to man's liking. Youth movements sprang up in different countries; women, who had proved their ability in war time, pressed forward into vocations that had been closed to them before; everywhere was change, question, the discrediting of the old, the hastening toward the new.

So profound have been the changes in social theory and behaviour that this century has witnessed that many people



## THE HISTORICAL PERIOD

have thought that the old standards were gone for ever and that society was marching forward on a new road and in a new direction. But recent years have brought reaction. Russia, to be sure, continues on her frankly revolutionary course, but in Germany and Italy we see the almost complete reversal of the freedom of a few years ago, and the deliberate attempt to force woman's return to the sex roles of an earlier day. In England, the swing back of the pendulum from the freedom that followed the Great War is plainly evident. The generation of young people now growing up is in many ways more strait-laced than the one that preceded it.

What the outcome will be no one can know. But science does not reverse itself, and biologist, anthropologist, and psychologist continue to make discoveries which, once they are assimilated into our body of knowledge, cannot fail to have the most profound and far-reaching effect upon human behaviour. It is because our knowledge of the various aspects of the sex function is so new that society has not had time to assimilate it or to work out courses of action based upon it. Only by viewing these problems in the light of their history do we stand any chance of arriving at solutions that may be practicable or satisfactory.

## PROSTITUTION

We must now trace briefly the story of the darker side of man's adventures in sex as we know it within historical times. Prostitution, as usually defined, means the selling of sexual favours — 'the sale of love', as Mantegazza puts it — to different persons. Originally a highly honoured profession, it has long ago degenerated into the sorriest of trades, the very name of which is anathema to decent people.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

We have seen that among many primitive peoples sex relations were unrestrained by anything except the taboos; when love is free there is no need to buy it, and prostitution is practically unknown among these peoples. But even here we must note the differences of sexual constitution between men and women. The man knows no times or seasons, his sexual urge is constant and only restrained by the operation of a taboo; but the women must refrain from intercourse at the menstrual periods, and in very many tribes during pregnancy also. Even when these taboos did not exist, childbirth and lactation, in addition to the heavy work which is everywhere the lot of primitive woman, must often have disinclined her toward sex relations; the man would have to seek elsewhere for satisfaction. How long it was before the woman learned to take advantage of the man's apparent need and to demand a price for her favours we do not know, but certainly we find such prostitution very early in many parts of the world. Girls earned their dowries or supplied themselves with trinkets, men derived an income from selling the services of their wives or daughters; and later, as culture advanced and marriage laws became stricter, we find groups of women set apart and dedicated to man's sex needs.

In most places these groups were originally connected with the temples and formed a part of the worship of certain deities. Most nations of antiquity had their 'Venuses', or love-goddesses, and worshipped them through their 'priestesses', whom we should call prostitutes, though the money paid them was not their own, but formed part of the revenue of the temple. Goldberg<sup>1</sup> gives a vivid account of the temple of Aphrodite at Corinth, 'a city in itself, with

<sup>1</sup> *The Sacred Fire*, by B. Z. Goldberg, N.Y. (Liveright, 1930).



streets, houses, parks and shrines, enclosed within a thick stone wall'. The inside of the wall was lined with trees and shrubbery, amongst which were set the huts of the priestesses 'twelve hundred of them, a hundred for each sign of the zodiac'. Each hut was the abode of a priestess, 'an humble but sacred servant, who had dedicated her life to the great function of the goddess'. The priestesses came as little girls from all over the world, and, once accepted by the high priest, entered upon a course of training for their future duties, a training which consisted in learning 'how to dress, to arrange their hair, to use perfumes and sweet-scented powders, and to arouse the passions of men'. Yet the priestess must ask nothing for herself; she must not seek her own personal pleasure nor regard the individual who came to her, for he was a worshipper of Aphrodite and she was his priestess. If she played her part well he would honour the goddess with his gifts, and with this she must be content.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, tells us that every woman born in Babylon was forced to go once in her lifetime to the temple of Venus and offer herself to a stranger. The proud and wealthy drove in their coaches and waited with their servants about them. Others sat with wreaths of ribbons on their heads. The strangers promenaded up and down before them and each made his choice by throwing a coin in a woman's lap, saying, 'May Melitta (the goddess) bless thee'. The man had to pull the woman into the cypress grove by the ribbons. After this sacrifice of herself to the goddess, the woman returned home and was thereafter 'very virtuous'.

Temple prostitution was still flourishing in the early classical period. In Greece it was customary to beg favours of Venus with the promise of a number of girls for her



temples, or to send girls there in thanks for favours received. So Xenophon of Corinth gave the temple fifty girls in payment for his victory at the Olympic games, and Pindar the poet apostrophizes them as 'beautiful young girls who take guests unto yourselves and offer them of your hospitality . . . who burn incense before the goddess, who offer us divine aid and give us ecstatic moments'. Solon, the great law-giver of the Greeks, noting the rich revenue accruing to the temples through the practice of prostitution, conceived the idea of turning these revenues to the State, and established the 'Dikterion', where slave-girls, bought with public money, added appreciably to the income of the government. The practice of the government receiving an income from prostitution is found in many parts of the ancient world and even among savages. The chief of the Waxsaw in North Carolina was said to draw his income from the use of public girls by the tribe, as do savage chiefs in some parts of Africa to-day. In the Orient the girls were trained for their 'profession', not only in the arts of allurements and seduction, but in music, dancing, and conversation, the men expecting from them not merely sexual satisfaction but entertainment and companionship as well. In ancient Japan girls were sent regularly to serve a stated time in houses of prostitution, being all the more marriageable for their experiences; the Geisha girl is the modern version of this ancient custom.

Gradually the custom of temple prostitution fell into disuse; most that we know about it is from the accounts of the Romans, who saw it in its decadence and who have not painted a very pleasing picture of it.

We know a great deal, however, about the Greek Hetairai, those 'stranger-women' who were dedicated, as Demosthenes says, to the enjoyment of love. Many of



their names have come down to us, together with descriptions of their beauty. If we may believe these reports, they were not only beautiful and charming but intelligent and educated. They went from one lover to another as suited their fancy, and the greatest men of Greece were their protectors and admirers. They had many advantages over the married women; true, they could not take part in the religious ceremonies, but they were the centre of attraction at the public games, the military manœuvres and the theatre; and they could drive in carriages with heads and breasts uncovered, 'dressed like queens, resplendent in gold and jewels'. They were the ladies of the Court, the patronesses of art and learning; they were celebrated in sculpture and poetry; and, as Mantegazza says, 'they wrote more than one page in the history of Greece'.

The Hetairai were free women (though not Greek citizens), but the public prostitutes in the Dikterion were slave-girls. In Rome also the public girls were often slaves, brought from the far-flung lands of the Roman Empire. The names of the prostitutes were registered with the Aediles, and that these women were sometimes Roman we know from the Julian law that forbade the woman whose father, grandfather, or husband was a Roman knight, to prostitute herself for money. No doubt that women sometimes became prostitutes of their own free will, but oftener, apparently, they were owned by some man who appropriated their earnings as he would those of a horse. In the days when slavery was common, this probably did not seem such a shameful procedure as it does to-day. After the advent of Christianity, with its teachings of abstinence and chastity, it became rare sport to seize Christian girls and force them into prostitution. In addition there were always women who,



for one reason or another, were willing recruits to prostitution. The Emperor Caligula in the first century A.D. placed a special tax on prostitutes, both male and female, for the former were numerous and at one time were said to outnumber the latter. Not until the fourth century A.D. was male prostitution outlawed; before that it had flourished in the light of day and had been regarded merely as a form of sexual intemperance. Constantine drove it under cover and it became a sinful and shameful act, detested by respectable people and punished by law, and much the same attitude toward homosexuality has remained in Europe to this day.

No matter how much the Church struggled against prostitution, it seemed unable to make headway, and the Christian emperors compromised. It was said to be 'an exhaust for evil passions and obscene vices . . . a necessity and a prevention of rape and adultery'. Theodosius and Justinian attempted to regulate it, and their wrath was visited especially upon the *lenins*, or 'pimps', as we would say to-day, the men who kidnapped girls, seduced them or procured them in some other way, and hired them out as prostitutes, they themselves living on the proceeds.

In the Middle Ages, owing to the continuous wars and feuds among rival States, to the Crusades, and other causes, there was a considerable preponderance of women, most of whom were in a wretched state of poverty, and they 'took to the road'. They swarmed along the highways, overran the fairs and markets, congregated at the festivals, followed the soldiers in the armies. The cities made an effort to place them in shelter-houses, but they were too numerous to be thus cared for and continued to earn their scanty and miserable living by prostitution, which seems to have been about the only way open to them.



When the Trade Guilds arose, closely organized bodies of those who plied special trades, the prostitutes, at least in Paris, followed the custom and were organized into a guild, Louis VII making them wear a distinctive costume. At different times in history the prostitute has been set apart by her dress. 'Houses of women' in the cities, owned by the municipality or the Prince, were organized under head mistresses and enjoyed the protection of the police. Distinguished foreigners were provided with *filles de joie* at the expense of the city, and it is related that in the fifteenth century when King Ladislaus entered Vienna, he was met by a deputation of public girls clad only in gauze.

But the prostitutes were 'daughters of joy' only in name. They were harried from place to place, beaten, jailed, and from time to time suffered most dreadful persecution. Charlemagne had them dragged naked to the market place and publicly whipped; later they were often accused of witchcraft and burnt at the stake. Scorn and contumely were heaped upon their heads; they became the living symbols of sin, the 'scarlet women'; they were of all creatures the most miserable. At the same time men demanded their services, and it was believed that 'Christian' society could not exist without them. The old pagan belief in sex as one of the great goods of life to be used freely, outside the limits of the taboos, had grown into the doctrine of 'sexual necessity', the belief that the man by the necessities of his nature must have intercourse at more or less frequent intervals to keep him in a state of health. The Church had done its best to eradicate this doctrine. Saints castrated themselves or subjected themselves to all sorts of torture in order to kill sex feeling and to set an example to others; shelter-houses were provided for unfortunate women and girls, and efforts



made to convert them from their way of life; the monasteries sheltered thousands who were attempting to escape from the lusts of the flesh; but the average man, Christian or not, was incapable of grasping the Church's point of view as applied to himself. He could, however, curiously enough, grasp it for women, but not for all women, from the nature of the case; so the prostitute came to be thought of as different from other women, a 'sexual' creature, specially designed as the instrument of man's lust. This point of view is still widely held, for we find it in authoritative writings based upon statements from prostitutes themselves, who will often claim to be the victims of inordinate sex desire. We shall see that the opposite is usually true.

Since prostitution was thought of as a necessity, efforts were always made to control and regulate the 'traffic'. In the Courts of the Middle Ages, especially in France, there were great hordes of hangers-on, among whom were many prostitutes; a special officer was found necessary to control these people, and he came to be known as the 'King of the Ribalds'. He had the power of life or death over them, and it was his duty to clear out the prostitutes occasionally. Lacroix says he was the forerunner of the police commissioner, who, in modern times, attempts to deal with prostitution. Women were required to register, or to live in licensed houses; they were restricted to certain districts of the cities. But only a fraction of those engaged in prostitution could be thus controlled; the prostitute or her 'manager' found numerous ways of evading the police, or of currying favour with them and plying her trade without interference. When an army was in camp or on the march, a smaller army of prostitutes went along; and, though they might be arrested, ill-treated, or driven out, they were considered a



normal part of the picture, and have continued to be so thought of by most nations down to the present time. In modern times, when it was realized that the prostitute is practically always a carrier of venereal disease, medical inspection at stated intervals was added to attempts at regulation. In the last quarter-century an aroused public conscience has attempted to do something more about prostitution. Various investigations have been made in America in different cities, such as Boston and Chicago. Abraham Flexner made a careful study of prostitution in Europe, while Kneeland did the same for New York. Little could be done by one nation acting alone, as the traffic for centuries has had international ramifications; and various 'conventions', 'agreements', and so on among different countries made efforts to eliminate its worst features and to educate public opinion in the nations involved. These attempts culminated in a Committee of the League of Nations on the 'International Traffic in Women and Children', that title being substituted for 'White Slave Traffic', as the nefarious business was known in America and Europe, because it is not confined to race or colour.

As a result, organized or commercial prostitution and its ways became pretty well known, and most cities in America staged a clean-up which resulted in driving it under cover. Houses were no longer licensed, prostitutes were driven from the lobbies of the hotels and theatres, and it became possible for a man to walk through the main streets of a city without being solicited. The situation was greatly improved, but that it is still bad enough anyone who takes the trouble to investigate can discover. We will discuss the present status of commercial prostitution further in Chapter VII.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

But all prostitution is not organized; as we have seen, there have always been women who were willing to sell sexual favours. In times of great poverty and distress, women of ignorance and poor intelligence have always turned to prostitution, and not infrequently women of better intelligence have done likewise. The present depression is no exception; prostitution of all kinds has increased, and many girls, who normally would make their own living in an honourable occupation, have temporarily turned to prostitution. Most of these latter are 'free lances', who will get out of it if they can when times are better again.

In the seventeenth century a type of courtesan was frequent at the Courts, especially of France and England; often, but not always, she was a woman of high or noble birth, who became famous for her intrigues with nobles and princes. The names of Madame de Maintenon, Moll Flanders, and Nell Gwynn are familiar to all of us. These women were the mistresses of men of rank, even kings and princes, and occasionally married them; occasionally, also, they paid for loss of favour with their heads. This type of woman, who knows what she wants and uses her sex function to get it, is probably as old as humanity; some highly fanciful observers have found such females among the higher apes. In the present day such a woman is likely to want clothes, jewels, travel, or whatever she considers a good time. Very, very frequently she wants only security, freedom from grinding poverty or toil, the chance to warm herself for a little while at a fire resembling love; and so she becomes the mistress of first one man and then another, or she is a 'charity girl', or 'kept woman', or a 'free lance', bestowing her favours where she can get the most out of them.

In Great Britain and in the United States all these relation-



ships must be clandestine, for the Puritan tradition is still strong enough to keep them outside the pale, but in some European countries the mistress is a recognized institution, and the other relationships are common. The mistress is in some ways the modern version of the Hetaira; the man expects from her not only sex satisfaction, which he could get from the 'kept woman' of a lower class, but entertainment and relaxation as well; but the mistress has no legal rights, and the man can repudiate her at will — a situation which often leads to tragedy.

We may well ask: What kind of woman is it who can become a prostitute? Is there such a thing as the 'prostitute type', or is she developed by circumstances? But these are psychological questions and must wait for a later chapter.

#### HOMOSEXUALITY

We have noted the occasional occurrence of homosexuality among primitives. Mantegazza says it has been common among men at all times and in all places, and quotes instances from all parts of the world. It has not been uncommon among women also, especially in the Orient, where girls and women spend most of their lives in seclusion with the members of their own sex. In some primitive cultures, as well as in the ancient world, there were homosexual gods and goddesses; even the Greek Olympus, or Mountain of the Gods, was not free from homosexual leanings, and a number of myths deal with intrigues of this nature between various gods. Janus, who gives his name to January, not only had two heads, but two sexes — he was hermaphroditic; Siva, the great god of India, was originally both male and female; and Brahma created himself double — of both sexes. Images or pictures of these gods are occasionally seen, with the right



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

side fashioned to represent a male and the left a female; the faithful attach mystical meanings to these representations, such as 'the One', 'the All', 'the Union of the Creative Forces', and so on.

In classical Greece, where the life of the senses was raised to the highest pitch it has ever attained on this planet, homosexuality had a recognized place. The Greek boy of the aristocratic class was more carefully reared, perhaps, than any other boy in history; his body was developed to the acme of beauty and symmetry, he was perfected in games and sports, and accomplished in music, in poetry, and literature. The adolescent boy was glorified in Greece as nowhere else in the world; but when all this perfection was attained he was initiated into sex by becoming the 'beloved' of an older man. Having spent his youth in such fashion, in maturity he would marry, as we have seen, without love and for the sake of continuing his family; and he would seek new forms of sex gratification, with concubine, courtesan, or prostitute, or would himself seek out young boys for sexual partners.

Homosexuality flourished among Greek women also, as is well attested in Greek literature and art. The term *Lesbian*, which we sometimes see used to designate a homosexual woman, comes from the island of Lesbos, the home of the poet Sappho, who was said to be a homosexual, and where there were supposed to be many such women.

In Rome, also, we find homosexuality flourishing, especially during the classical period, and, if not openly approved, at least winked at. In the New Testament St. Paul condemns it in the strongest terms, referring to it as common 'in these latter days'; he probably had in mind the Romans of his day.



## THE HISTORICAL PERIOD

In the ancient temples the priests were often eunuchs, and offered themselves to the male worshippers just as did the priestesses; and in Greece there were special houses where boys and men congregated for homosexual practices. It is often said that these activities took place only in the degenerate days of Greece and Rome, and were part of the general let down in character and morals, but, as stated above, we find homosexuality, at least among men, everywhere that we take the trouble to look for it in the ancient world. It seems to have been merely a part of the general preoccupation with sex which we find everywhere in the earlier history of mankind, and continued to be regarded as a natural, even though unusual, expression of sexuality down to the time of Constantine. Up to this time the *lupanars*, or houses for male prostitutes, had been licensed just as were those for females. But, though it became a byword to decent people and the law in many countries dealt with it severely, homosexuality has continued on down to the present day. We often hear that it is increasing, but it is impossible to verify this statement because of the secrecy which has attended such activities ever since the days of Constantine. We hear of it more frequently, certainly, but that may be only because of the general frankness on sexual subjects which is now current. And there have been, in the last quarter-century, scientific attempts to understand and explain it, steps which thinking people now recognize as necessary in the adequate solution of any problem. We have seen in Chapter II what many medical authorities believe concerning its biological foundations, and in the following chapter we shall see some of the psychological reasons for its existence.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

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## CHAPTER V

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

IN the preceding chapters we have learned to view the fact of sex as Nature's method par excellence of securing the perpetuation of the species. We have seen the infinitely varied forms that it has taken in subhuman organisms, in mating activities, in the production of offspring, and in the provisions for their growth and development. We have noted that man differs from the other animals, not in the physical urge or appetite, which, indeed, is more constant in him than in any of the other animals except the higher apes, but in his capacity for thought and feeling, his ability to remember and to anticipate, and to invest the crude physical facts of sex with emotion. It is man's capacity for love that has changed the world, and has made sex, unlovely as it is in many of its manifestations, into the highest and purest of joys. We have seen also that this capacity for love was probably not an original endowment, but that man has learned it slowly, and people differ greatly even yet in the degree of it which they have attained. The history of civilization is very largely the history of man's sexual development, from the crude animal plane in which the attainment of his own sensual pleasure was his only consideration, through the aeons in which gradually more and more of his abundant physical energy was being diverted into the channels of work and play, and his creative forces were finding expression in art and religion and the thousand-and-one ways that man has devised to make his life on this planet



tolerable and even beautiful. Many of the customs and activities which we find among primitive and ancient peoples, or even among our immediate forbears, seem incomprehensible to us unless we view them in this light. Little by little the momentary interest and pleasure which a man and a woman find in each other during sexual congress have developed into sustained interest and affection, into forgetfulness of self, and the capacity for self-sacrifice and devotion. Little by little the fierce animal instinct of maternity has softened into a love of offspring shared by both parents, and in theory at least — alas! practice lags far behind — the chief concern of society has become the welfare of the child.

Something of the long road that man has travelled in this transmutation of a purely biological fact into emotional habits and attitudes we have seen. Projected against this background of biology and history, our own *psycho-sexual development* should be better understood, for what concerns us most as individuals is our own sexual life, and the thoughts and feelings, interests and attitudes which have developed around it.

By 'psycho-sexual development' we mean the development of the thoughts, feelings, and emotional attitudes that parallel the physical development of the reproductive system from birth to maturity. These mental attitudes are partly instinctive — that is, they are brought about by the influence of nervous and hormonal factors, since, as we have seen, they can be hastened or retarded or changed altogether by interference with the gonad at different stages of development. But that they are tremendously under the influence of environmental and educational factors — educational in the broader sense, of course — is abundantly plain if we stop to consider the various attitudes toward sex that have been held



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

by different peoples in the history of the race, as well as those displayed by different individuals or different cultural levels in our own society. So far as the sex side of his life is concerned, the individual child starts existence in this world at the identical point at which his primitive ancestors started; but by the time he has reached adulthood he has, by virtue of the interaction between his instinctual urges and the environment, developed certain mental and emotional patterns or types of thinking and feeling which prompt behaviour that is as different from primitive behaviour as the latter is different from that among the animals.

### BEGINNINGS IN INFANCY

Until a few years ago in our society it was common to think of infancy as normally completely devoid of sexual thoughts, feelings, or activities. It was the Age of Innocence, to which adults were supposed to look back with a certain nostalgia as to a Lost Paradise. Modern researches, however, have made it pretty certain that the infant mind is full of thoughts and feelings which may not be recognized by the child as sexual, but which have their basis in his sexual nature. These thoughts and feelings prompt him to behaviour which is or is not acceptable to his environment, and which in turn brings about a modification of his mental attitudes, so that the real beginnings of his future love-life are laid down at this time.

The normal setting for the child, as we know it in Western cultures, is in the biological family. It is his response to the behaviour of his parents, as well as to that of the other members of the household toward him, that determines the basic patterns of his love-life, upon which he will build all his



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

future love relationships. This centreing of the child within a small group, and one bound to him by the closest ties of blood, makes for an intensity of the emotional life which is not found among most primitives, where the clan or tribe is the unit rather than the biological family. Among the Samoans, for instance, where the infant is cared for by an older sister and where there are various aunts, cousins, and other relatives to look after it, so that half a dozen women may give it the breast when it is hungry, the emotional life develops much more shallowly than is customary among us. In our culture it is usually the mother who cares for the child, who feeds and cleans and caresses him, and a certain feeling of familiarity and security attaches itself to her. So necessary is this close association between mother (or mother's surrogate) and child, that if for any reason it fails, the child lives as an emotionally stunted creature, or indeed, in many instances does not live at all. The high mortality rate in foundling and orphan asylums, even where every modern facility for care of the children is available, seems to be largely due to this lack of individual and specialized love for the infant; the baby needs a judicious amount of handling, caressing, and loving in order to call out its 'love responses'. These love responses are at first automatic and reflex in their nature, but as the child develops they become more and more conscious and build themselves into patterns of relationships with the various people in the environment. The story in the first few months and year or two of life probably runs something like this:

Just as in the first few weeks of foetal life the child appears undifferentiated in regard to sex, both male and female organs developing out of the same type of embryonic tissue, so at birth the psychology of sex is undetermined; the



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

infant is a sexual creature with a capacity for sensual enjoyment (not, of course, in the adult sense) widely diffused over its body. Though certain regions of the body are more highly sensitized at birth, the *love responses*, that is, unmistakable signs of pleasure, can be called out by the stimulation of almost any part of the body; it is many months before the chief seat of sensation becomes localized in the genitals, where it normally remains. Some authorities hold that this capacity for sensual pleasure always remains more widely diffused in the female than in the male and that women are thus more susceptible to bodily caresses than men. The parts of the infant's body which are more highly sensitized than others have been called *erogenous zones*, pleasure-giving areas. The lips and mouth region constitute such a zone; in a sense the whole skin is an erogenous zone, since it is highly susceptible to pleasure and pain stimuli; the anal region is still more highly sensitized, as is the genital region also. We will return to this later in connection with the persistence of infantile habits. The healthy child's emotions are first probably merely the feelings of pleasure or pain set up in him by the satisfaction of his bodily needs or by neglect of them. The feelings of pleasure are habitually called out by the person who cares for him, and so his first experience of what he will later know as 'love' attaches to her; the mother thus becomes the 'primary love-object' of both boys and girls.

### STAGES OF PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Close observers of infancy are accustomed to divide the first few years into three periods, known respectively as the *oral stage* of development, the *anal stage*, and the *genital*



*stage.* The oral stage is the stage of early infancy when almost the only contact that the infant has with the outside world is through his mouth; about all he does is to eat and sleep. His bodily functions are carried on automatically and are of little concern to him; any lack of feeding, however, is immediately noted and his displeasure is very evident. Sometime during the latter part of the first year or the first part of the second he begins to take an interest in his bodily functions. No matter how early he has been trained or 'conditioned' to cleanly habits, he now becomes conscious of his bodily functions as something more or less under his own control, and very often discovers that he can use them as a means of discomfiture or annoyance to his parents or in getting his own way. This is an exceedingly important stage in infantile development, one which is not understood by the majority of parents, and, therefore, is often handled unwisely. It is not always the first point at which the child comes in conflict with his environment, since some children stage conflicts over their food very early, but it is the first point at which he is apt to be thwarted or punished for what is to him an entirely natural act. Certain personality traits make their appearance at this stage; stubbornness, self-assertion, and its opposite, which usually displays itself as submissiveness, are likely to show themselves. If the child is forced, scolded, shamed, or punished, these traits are the weapons which he can use in adapting himself to the situation, and which ever prove the most value to him are likely to persist long after this stage is outgrown and often into adulthood. It is equally unwise to show too great distress and concern, or too great irritation and anger over the baby's slips and lapses in his nursery training; his developing love for his parents, his desire to please them, or his fear of their



displeasure gets tangled up with the control of his bodily functions in such a way that the seeds of future neurosis are sometimes sown. The thing to remember is that discharge of bowel and bladder functions at this stage is a pleasurable activity to the baby, and that at this point in his career we cannot expect him to understand the matter from our grown-up angle.

The infant should not linger too long at this particular stage, or have his attention centred too strongly upon it; normally he will pass on to the next stage, which is very often even more cause of disturbance to the parent untrained in child study. This is the stage in which the child discovers the genital region as a source of pleasurable sensations; before it is over he will have pretty thoroughly explored his own body and have become exceedingly curious about sex matters in general — where he came from, how babies are born, the difference between boys and girls, or men and women, and so on. During this period the boy baby at least (and often the girl also) is very apt to pass through a period commonly known as 'infantile masturbation', which is often a source of great worry to the parent. Such worry is usually needless, for the child's behaviour does not signify that he is degenerate or abnormal, or anything more than that he has arrived at a certain stage in his psycho-sexual development. Parents who are concerned about the matter should be told that it is a very usual thing and that the child should not be punished or threatened, but that the matter is best dealt with by distracting his attention and seeing that he has plenty of play interests to keep him occupied. There are times, of course, when this infantile masturbation is pathological; that is, when it persists in spite of the above tactics, as a fairly constant habit, the child being unable to respond to



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

efforts to distract his attention or to other pleasurable stimuli; in such a case a specialist should be consulted. But in the usual case it is a 'normal' manifestation in the sense that it occurs so frequently.

When the child begins to ask questions about sex matters he should be answered truthfully. The chief trouble arises from the parents' own difficulties in the sphere of sex; adults are so often the victims of their own upbringing, and their first reaction to an interest in sex on the part of the child is one of fear and disgust. Even after we have learned better, the emotional reaction is prone to remain. It takes a long time to overcome the emotional habits towards sex that most adults of the present day had forced upon them in childhood. Many parents do not know a language in which they can explain sex facts to the child; the only words they learned in childhood are those which carry unpleasant associations. Such books as Mary Chadwick's (2) *Adolescent Girlhood*, or Mary Ware Dennett's (4) *Sex Education of Children* are very helpful in this connection.

### THE AUTO-EROTIC STAGE

This entire stage of the organization of the love-life, extending approximately over the first four years, is usually known as the 'auto-erotic stage', so named because the child's interest during this period is necessarily so largely within himself. He is engaged in getting acquainted with his body as the instrument through which he makes himself at home in the world and by means of which he finally becomes aware of himself as a personality distinct from other personalities. This point the primitive arrives at very slowly or not at all; in the most primitive societies the individual



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

is so much a part of the group that he scarcely has any existence separate from it. But the modern child by the time he has reached his fifth year is full of talk of 'me' and 'mine', jealous of his possessions, and pretty well aware of himself as a personality. Moreover, he has got his love-patterns fairly well-established; henceforth he will build upon and elaborate them, but their main directions are rather definitely fixed.

The child's first love experiences are bound up in the satisfactions of his bodily needs, which are the only things of which he is acutely conscious during this period. The mother, or the person who takes her place, is thus the first love-object, and as such is all-important for his future development. Mothers differ in the kind of love they bestow upon their babies. A mother can give her child a healthy love which he must share with others and which, while it gives him the necessary security with her, does not prevent him from reaching out to other objects of affection; or she may grip him with an intense passion which binds him to her so closely that he is never able to escape from the coils of her affection. She may be fickle and inconstant in loving him extravagantly one moment and neglecting him the next. The unwanted child cannot receive the measure of love that is his due, for, though the parent may strive conscientiously to do her best for him, her unconscious attitude makes itself known in the tone of her voice, bodily tensions when the child is in her arms, and in innumerable other ways to which the little organism is highly sensitive. If the mother is widowed or estranged from her husband, she is likely to lavish an undue proportion of love upon a boy-child; or, if she herself has homosexual feelings, she may love her daughter with an intensity that is not good for her.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

Modern psychology and child study seem to agree that only when there are a father and mother who love each other and are well-balanced in their attitude toward each other and toward the child, does the infant have its best chance at a fully rounded normal development. The child needs two parents during his formative years; without them he will remain for ever crippled in his love-life. If, as not infrequently happens, especially in certain classes of the population, the father is indifferent to the child, or the child is illegitimate and the mother for any reason is incapable of loving it, the child fails to develop the feeling of happiness and security in the presence of familiar persons and is never able to make normal love contacts or, indeed, to get a real foothold in life. This is the basis of a very great deal of delinquency and crime, as well as some of the neuroses and various other abnormalities of adult life. We must have a foothold in somebody's affections before we can get a foothold in life.

There are other factors at work also in these early years. Normally the child is born with the genital organization of the male or female, but this is no guarantee that he will develop the appropriate psychological attitude. Just as his capacity for sensation is diffused and poorly localized, so his emotions are undifferentiated; the boy has to learn, so to speak, the masculine love attitudes, as the girl has to learn the feminine ones. A little thought will convince us that this is a difficult feat and that many people never entirely accomplish it. Quite apart from the theory that human beings have not attained complete physical differentiation, there is the psychological tendency of the infant to incorporate into its own personality those of the persons surrounding it. Thus the boy may identify himself so com-



pletely with the mother that his emotional life is feminized, or he may so attach himself to the father that the latter becomes the pattern for all his later love-objects; in either case he develops in a homosexual direction. The same is true of the girl; the father who has wanted a boy may unconsciously encourage the child's identification with himself, or may even consciously attempt to make the girl a good sport and more like a boy than a girl. This seems to have been the case of the heroine in *The Well of Loneliness* which was so widely read a few years ago; the child's earliest love-patterns were established along homosexual lines.

It seems more than likely, too, that the seeds of other perversions are planted at this time also. In their essence, most of them consist of substituting other parts of the body for the genital region in the attainment of sensual pleasure. This is the normal state in early infancy, as we have seen, and when for any reason the child lingers too long at this stage, when lips or mouth or anal region become invested with too much pleasure and interest, the beginnings of what we know as perversions in adult life are laid down.

And so, quite apart from the fact that people probably differ in their original sex endowment, we see from this brief survey that by the time they are out of infancy they are already exceedingly different in their personality traits and their love attitudes. By the time the child goes to school the foundations of future personality are laid; later experiences through childhood and adolescence can scarcely change these basic patterns, though they can build upon them until their simple outlines are completely lost in the resulting personality structure, and only a thorough-going analysis can bring them to light again.

However, there is one point that needs to be noted here.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

The infant is not an entirely plastic creature which, like a lump of clay, can be moulded into any shape that one may desire. It is an organic creature with certain basic needs, both physical and psychological, which we are not by any means always able to discern, especially those in the psychological field. An infant responds to stimuli according as they play upon his needs at any one moment; for this reason different infants respond differently to the same type of training, or the same baby responds differently to-morrow from what he does to-day. We know very little yet about the mind of the young child; all we can be certain of is that he is as much in need of loving and of being loved as he is of breathing, and we can be pretty sure that his future behaviour in school and in society will be an outgrowth of his early adventures in love.

### LATER STAGES OF PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

The next stage of psycho-sexual development, usually known as the *narcissistic stage*, is one of self-centredness and self-admiration; the child's love is gathered up within himself, and his chief interest is centred upon himself as a personality. He is beginning to set himself over against his environment and to try to find himself in relation to it; his love-objects are still valued because of their contributions to his pleasure and happiness; 'I', 'me', and 'mine' are prominent in his vocabulary; he develops an alarming selfishness and a desire to show off; he will go to any lengths to get attention; he is an extreme individualist and finds co-operation irksome. Parents, especially if the child is the first or only one, are often worried at this stage of development and fear that it betokens an abnormally selfish or self-



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

assertive personality. They need to be assured that it is only a stage which normally will be left behind in the course of development. Children in the lowest two classes of school are still in the narcissistic stage, but on moving upwards they leave this definitely behind.

Up to this time children have played together without any sex consciousness, that is, without any conscious segregation into sex groups. However, the normal child is extremely curious about sex matters, and sex plays among little children, experimentation with each other, touching, looking, and discussing differences are almost sure to occur. When we remember the extreme interest in sex felt universally by savage children, we need not be surprised by such activities in our own. If the child is severely punished, shamed, or scolded for his interest, fear and shame may be developed and emotional stress engendered which, if he is a sensitive child, may result in 'nervousness'; or he may react by repressing all curiosity, not only about sex but about the world in general, and grow into a dull and prosaic child; but if he is properly enlightened and his curiosity satisfied, a long step is taken toward future normality. The majority of parents are anxious to handle this period properly and eager to learn how. Considerable help can be got from books, lectures, and parents' magazines; but the hardest thing for the average parent is to divest himself of his own personal reactions toward sex and remember that the child is incapable of feeling about the matter as he (the parent) does.

The ideal procedure is probably to answer the child's questions soberly and truthfully, with no show of secrecy, not even warning him not to discuss sex matters outside the family. As someone has remarked, the discussion of things that interest one with others of like interests is an



inalienable human right. Most children are going to talk any way, no matter how much they are adjured not to do so. There is no need, however, to carry instruction beyond the point for which the child asks, and even when he has asked and been told, one is not infrequently surprised to find that he is not acting upon his information.

Five-year-old William was playing doctor with his little neighbour of like age, and his mother was astonished to find him visiting Mary in his capacity as physician with a baby in his bag. 'Why, William,' she said, 'you know that the doctor doesn't bring the baby. Mother has told you all about that.' 'Oh, yes, I know, Mother,' he replied, 'but Mary believes it, and anyway I think it would be a lot more fun if it really was that way.'

Some authors, notably European ones, have called this period of sexual interest in children a 'first puberty', and have pointed out that after it there is an interval of several years, which has been named the 'latent period', during which sexual interests are apt to sink out of sight, and the child takes on a sort of maturity. He settles into work and play in a manner quite distinct from what he has shown earlier and what he will show again later. G. Stanley Hall once suggested that this might be a psychological remnant of an old biological stage in which man reached maturity much earlier than he does at present. Whatever it means, it is a definite stage of childhood, and passes all too soon into the next stage of psycho-sexual development, which is known as the *homosexual stage*, the stage of boy-gangs, of girls' clubs and secret societies, when the sexes withdraw from each other for a time and find pleasure in the company of their own sex. The child's love, hitherto centred largely upon himself and his own family, is spread-



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

ing out; naturally individuals of his own sex are the first to engage his attention, for it is easier to extend to them the interests and attitudes built up about himself. Sports and games, Boy Scouts and other group activities occupy the boy's mind; soldiers, athletes, and adventurers are his heroes; girls are below his horizon, nuisances if he has to bother with them, and objects of contempt and disdain. He is orienting himself in a man's world. To the girl in this stage most boys seem crude and coarse; as one girl expressed it, boys mean nothing more to them than 'queer, awkward creatures which get an unbelievable amount of pleasure out of pulling their hair, or wriggling worms in front of their faces'. She and her little girl friends have a thousand interests in common, and the boy playmates of a short time ago are left behind in her growing interest in feminine things; clothes and fashions become important, what 'the girls' are doing and wearing are her standards. A little later these little girl friendships will develop into 'crushes' and ardent affairs; the boy will attach himself to pals or harbour secret passions for heroes of the upper school. Throughout a good part of adolescence these friendships continue, and are a normal stage the preparation for adult life.

But in the meantime puberty complicates the picture. The physical sex instinct awakens, and thoughts and feelings entirely new come into the young adolescent's mind. The world about him takes on a new meaning; scales seem to drop from his eyes, and he sees things in new colours and new perspectives. The boy begins to experience emissions and sex dreams; his sexual nature forces itself insistently upon his consciousness, and if he has been left to pick up his sex education 'in the gutter' he may get the most erroneous ideas of the meaning of the entirely normal



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

phenomena of puberty. The girl experiences curious feelings in the presence of boys; embarrassment one moment and a great desire to do something startling or to show off the next; she is seized with attacks of giggling, which appear entirely unmotivated, or with spells of weeping; she is pensive and sad without knowing why. The boy also has a period of shyness and awkwardness, especially in the presence of girls; he suffers acutely from the well-meant ministrations of his female relatives, and begins to chafe under the restraints of home and school discipline.

A period of day-dreaming or fantasizing usually supervenes about this time. Although these fantasies may not be definitely sex fantasies, yet they have a sexual colouring. The girl's dreams are occupied largely with boys and men, while the boy's dreams, although they seem to be occupied with fancies of his prowess, usually have a girl or woman spectator lurking in the background. One of these day-dreams is exceedingly common: it is known as 'the foster-child fantasy', and though its origin can sometimes be easily seen in the child's love-life, at other times it seems to rise spontaneously and to have little connection with the actual situation. In this dream the child imagines himself as not the son of his parents, but actually the child of some wealthy or famous personage, real or imagined; some times it is only the father who is repudiated in these dreams and sometimes both parents. A complicated story may be built up which may be carried over a period of several years. One young girl known to the writer literally lived a double life from twelve to sixteen, being in her dreams the long-lost daughter of a wealthy and famous man, and building for herself a family to her liking, travelling with them and having a great variety of interesting experiences. In real life she led



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

a drab and uninteresting existence. Day-dreams sometimes get a tremendous grip upon the young person so that the boy or girl may become alarmed about the habit. The boy commonly begins to masturbate around this time and the day-dreams become attached to this habit, giving him an added sense of guilt in regard to them.

Some boys are greatly worried by sex dreams occurring in sleep, which are usually accompanied by emissions. The boy may believe that they betoken something wrong with his reproductive system, or that they are occurring so frequently as to 'weaken his system'. Certain magazines and other periodicals carry lurid advertisements, which describe his symptoms to a T and advise him of terrible things that may happen if he does not 'undertake treatment' with the advertiser's particular nostrum. This is, of course, all vicious nonsense; emissions are Nature's way of getting rid of surplus material, and dreams of a sex nature are very apt to accompany them.

This period is often a very trying one for teachers and parents. The children are wool-gathering when they should be studying, or they are forgetful of tasks and duties in which they have been trustworthy before. Children very frequently fall off in higher classes after having done good work in the lower, and it is many times due to the absorption of the child's energy in day-dreaming to such an extent that his work must suffer. The study period with its enforced quiet and inactivity invites dreaming, and one can stare at a page or even read through it with his mind in the clouds. In children who are already shy and self-absorbed, inclined to withdraw from association with others, day-dreaming may easily go too far and become more attractive than reality, but in the normal child it is merely a stage which will be passed through



and left behind in the course of development, and teachers and parents would save themselves a great deal of trouble if they would realize this fact.

This homosexual period centres around puberty and early adolescence, though we must remember that girls reach puberty on the average about two years earlier than boys. The girl of fourteen is experiencing the first signs of interest in the opposite sex, while not until toward sixteen does her brother begin to take a like interest in girls. There are, of course, cases in which sex interest develops earlier, but this would appear to be the average. Depending upon the custom in the particular community and the degree of freedom permitted the adolescent, love affairs, beaux, and sweethearts now become the order of the day, this state of affairs continuing throughout adolescence and normally culminating in love relationships and the desire for marriage. On the average, perhaps, the homosexual stage continues through the junior school, while in the senior school, at least in the last two years, the average adolescent girl is extremely interested in boys. The boy, however, if he is in an environment where he is not unduly stimulated may not develop heterosexual interests until his senior year in high school or until college. Friendships with both boys and girls are on a romantic and sentimental basis. The 'crushes' and homosexual friendships of this period may appear very intense, but normally they lack the depth of passion which characterizes the love attitudes of maturity. They are usually short-lived and display a rather childish tendency to possessiveness and jealousy, but are easily forgotten, and boy or girl goes on to new friendships.

This is the normal line of development of the love-life, but there are probably few of us who do more than approxi-



mate it; the fully developed adult personality with few infantile or adolescent traits and attitudes is still rather a rarity. When each stage is fully lived through and the love-patterns allowed to unfold naturally, the child grows up with a minimum of strain, the physical and emotional sides of sex developing together. But this perhaps is seldom possible; a thousand-and-one things intervene, some of them inherent in our natures and some in the constitution of our society, to say nothing of the general ignorance which still prevails regarding our sexual natures. Thus arise various types of personalities, fixations upon various levels, and childish habits of thought, feeling, or action that persist into adult life.

Normally we carry with us out of each stage of development certain habits and attitudes belonging to it, but which undergo a transformation into habits and attitudes suitable to the higher level; this is what is known as *sublimation*. But instead of sublimation we may have merely *substitution*, which means that the habit or attitude developed still belongs on the lower level although it may be more acceptable than the habit which it replaced. Even when the social attitude is quite correct, we may have emotional attitudes that normally belong to a lower stage of development; in this case we speak of *emotional fixations*, meaning that the love-life, instead of developing normally, has invested too much interest and energy at some point of the line, so that the person's outlook on life remains infantile or homosexual, or whatever it is in that particular. This involvement of the love-life with the interests and objects of an earlier stage of development is very common; we can speak of it as constituting a 'personality', because the love attitudes extend to and colour all one's human relationships.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

## AUTO-EROTIC, NARCISSISTIC, AND HOMOSEXUAL PERSONALITIES

By the time adulthood is reached the bodily interests which are all-important in the auto-erotic stage have become sublimated into a regard for cleanliness and physical well-being. There are people, however, who retain in adult life an excessive interest in their own bodies; they are cleanly to an extreme, they fuss over underclothing and soaps and shaving creams, they go through life with fingers on their pulses, finding this or that wrong with some function, which enables them to be continually occupied with their bodies. They suffer from constipation, from skin eruptions, and numerous minor ailments for which the physician can find no adequate cause; or they complain of aches or pains and are devotees of the operating room. Almost always they suffer from inability to experience satisfaction in sex relations, and may solace themselves with masturbation, or carry on a continual struggle against it. When they lapse into mental illness, as this type frequently does, they often regress to the stage of infancy, and have to be fed, bathed, cleaned, or cared for like all other babies. These people have not succeeded in sublimating their infantile desires and interests, and remain throughout life *auto-erotic personalities*.

Out of the narcissistic stage we should bring away the sentiments of self-esteem and self-confidence and regard for ourselves as personalities; but many people never succeed in the sublimation of their childish narcissism and go through life self-centred, demanding from the world the satisfaction of their own desires at whatever cost. Such people are incapable of love on an adult level; love means to them their



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

own satisfaction without regard to another's needs or desires. The narcissistic woman will demand from her husband or her family clothes and jewels or whatever she values with no regard for the sacrifices it takes to obtain them. Losses are taken as personal affronts, as spite-work on the part of fate — 'Why should this happen to *me*? Why should *I* suffer so?' The narcissistic man will demand support from his family and tolerance from society in utter disregard of his own lack of co-operation with either. These people are usually well-adjusted in the sex sphere, but on a purely sensual level; they can obtain gratification in numerous ways, and they have no sex conflicts because they have not developed ideals which conflict with their actions. In addition, their very childishness gives them charm, and thus they are often capable of binding to themselves friends whose loyalty they ruthlessly exploit. Shakespeare's conception of Cleopatra as interpreted by Miss Jane Cowl, is a beautiful example of the narcissistic woman; history and literature are full of this type, and, indeed, it would seem that the treatment accorded women through a greater part of history would deliberately foster it. Among the narcissists, one recognizes also certain delinquent and criminal types, who are exceedingly hard to deal with because of their self-centredness; nothing really touches them, and they appear incapable of reformation.

The *homosexual personality* results from the failure to sublimate the interests and love attitudes of early adolescence. The love-life and emotional patterns are arrested in their development at this stage, and, instead of undergoing the normal evolution into love for the opposite sex, remain directed toward their own sex. In adult life both men and women normally find relaxation and enjoyment in clubs and societies, as well as in intimate friends, which are all largely sublimations of



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

the love of association with one's own sex that is normal to early adolescence. But there are many people who fail to achieve this sublimation; their attachments remain sentimental and romantic, they are given to hero worship; their friendships with those of their own sex are characterized by the intensity, the tendency to possessiveness, and the jealousy which mark the 'crushes' of adolescence. This does not at all imply that these people are overt homosexuals; they may never have heard of such practices, may even marry and have children, but their most satisfying friendships are always with those of their own sex, though they may spend their lives trying to achieve completely satisfying relations with the opposite sex.

There are many variations of this pattern. Among the more common homosexual types are the Don Juans, who go from one love affair to another, always seeking something they never quite find; the over-sentimental and over-refined, usually women, who object to normal sex relations on aesthetic grounds; the men or women who are so devoted to their parents that they are unable to leave them for marriage; the types who marry but who are unresponsive or frigid in sex relations and devote themselves to children rather than spouse; and the seemingly opposite in type who are very promiscuous or in marriage insatiable in their sex demands. They are not all, it will be seen, characterized by overt interest in members of their own sex, but they are all so far as the author's rather wide experience goes, adolescent personalities, looking at life with youthful eyes and shrinking from the implications of a full maturity. But we are not here speaking of the 'inter-sexual type' whose orientation toward his own sex has a biological (hormonal) basis; in this chapter we are concerned with psychology.



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

In this psychological orientation toward one's own sex, actual homosexual experience does not play as great a part as might be expected; if the child's infantile love-patterns were not homosexual, casual experiences during adolescence seem to have little effect unless unwisely handled. Unfortunately, so great is our ignorance in such matters that they are seldom handled wisely if discovered. Expulsion from school and ostracism from the social group too often follow, and the young person finds himself branded as a 'pervert' and may easily believe that he is one. If not found out and too severely dealt with, the normal adolescent leaves such episodes behind in the course of development, repressing them from consciousness or recalling them as childish incidents for which he is scarcely responsible.

The majority of people, however, are not definitely arrested in one stage or the other of emotional development, but succeed in achieving an approximate level of maturity while retaining habits of thought, feeling, and action that normally belong in lower stages. One sees many adults who still bite their nails, suck their fingers, or, more commonly, suck at a pipe, chew gum, or engage in some sort of oral manipulation — perhaps playing with their teeth or lips with a pencil, fingers, or otherwise. Such habits are reminiscences of the auto-erotic stage, when the child normally engaged in oral plays of some kind. The narcissistic love of self-adornment and self-display is considered almost normal to women, but there are plenty of men also in whom narcissistic traits are evident. The narcissistic attitudes of hypersensitiveness, egotism, and over-estimation of one's own worth and abilities occur very frequently, while many people never outgrow the shyness and backwardness of early adolescence. The impulsiveness, the self-assertion, the 'know-it-all' attitude,



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

traits that are quite normal in early and middle adolescence, never die out in some people. Perhaps most of us entertain at least a lifelong nostalgia for the days of adolescence, when life seemed so very different from what we have found it since. So there is no need to judge harshly or to expect too much of other people; but it should help us to understand ourselves and others if we realize how difficult it is for the developing personality to avoid all the pitfalls which line the path to maturity.

And so, as some one of the psycho-analysts has well put it, by the time maturity is reached every one of us has developed, by reason of our infantile and childhood experiences, 'a certain disposition in our capacity for love, in the conditions that we set up for loving, and the satisfactions that we expect to receive from it'. The sex life has lengthened and broadened into the love-life, and has become a part of the entire personality. The two streams, mental and physical, which have been flowing along together since birth are normally united by the close of adolescence, and constitute a body of feeling which we commonly know as love for the opposite sex. Perhaps a better word for this body of feeling is *libido*, if we understand by this expression the entire love-energy of an individual in all its mental and physical manifestations. This libido, or love-energy, as we have seen, may be deflected in various ways. It may flow inward as in auto-erotic and narcissistic personalities, or it may be directed outward; it may be arrested at certain levels of development — the fixations which we have discussed; it may be dammed up within the personality, denied expression, or, as we say, 'repressed'; it may, in part at least, be deflected into more socially approved channels, a process which we know as sublimation. This is more understandable if we assume that the emotional



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

attitudes of affection and esteem, and altruistic regard for another, developed out of the relation between mother and child and were later transferred to the relation between the sexes. But in spite of this, all love has sexual elements, even in its highest and purest forms. We have seen how inextricably primitive man mixed it up with his religion, and perhaps we may say that it is only because man is a sexual creature that he has learned how to love.

### THE HETEROSEXUAL GOAL

Thus we see that by the heterosexual goal we mean not only the attainment of physical and intellectual maturity and the ability to enter into sex relationships, but the achievement of the far more difficult state of *emotional maturity*, which involves the leaving behind of childish and adolescent desires and ways of satisfying them, and the recognition and acceptance of the responsibility implied in love relationships — a responsibility extending not only to the partners in those relationships but to society as well. There are many people who never reach this goal; there are others who reach it temporarily, but who, frustrated by the failure of their attempts at love relationships upon this level, fall back to lower levels; and, as happens perhaps in the majority, there are those who are able to maintain this level in some of their relationships or in some aspects of these relationships but not in others. It would seem that, so far as the psychology of sex is concerned, we are dealing with a matter of social evolution. Not until society has reached a point where it recognizes its responsibility toward the child; not until it realizes that whatever we do at any one moment is the product of all that we have done and have been from the



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

beginning; not perhaps until society is reorganized along mental hygiene lines so that every child will have an opportunity to develop healthfully and happily in an environment that understands and provides for its emerging needs — will we be able to expect the majority of people to reach the heterosexual goal and function normally thereafter on that level.

But we may well ask: What can we do at present to change our own love-patterns? Can we recognize them as immature or undesirable? And what is there to do about it if we do?

From the nature of the case, the auto-erotic or narcissistic personality can do little about it; the arrest of development is on too low a level. The narcissist may have his flashes of insight, but they are only momentary and there is practically never anything like recognition of his basic difficulties; he is too self-centred to find himself in relation to other people. This is certainly true after maturity is reached; the child or adolescent, however, can sometimes be helped to break up his earlier fixations and to advance toward normal maturity. But the homosexual personalities are often keenly aware of their own lack of adjustment and eager to do something about it. One can often trace in his own life some of the influences that have prevented his full development. The intelligent person who is willing to face his own personality defects can frequently find a way to overcome them, and when one cannot do this, there is much to be said for accepting oneself as one is and working out a happier adjustment on this basis. After all, the world would be a dull place if we were all alike!

One other thing needs to be noted in regard to psycho-sexual development, and that is that it does not proceed at



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

the same rate in all individuals. Emotional development can be thwarted or delayed, but, since it depends in the last analysis upon physiological factors, it is doubtful if it can be hastened. As we have seen in Chapter II, it is the sex hormones that appear directly responsible for the development of the distinctly sexual feelings. In cases where puberty is delayed, the characteristic desires and types of behaviour are slow in appearing also, but there are adolescents in whom puberty makes its appearance normally who still develop emotionally at a slower tempo than the average. Sometimes matters right themselves, and the girl or boy reaches maturity late but normally. It is certainly unwise to attempt to force these young people into attitudes which they cannot feel, or into adjustments which are foreign to their stage of development.

### MATURITY

The length of the reproductive life varies in men and in women. In women it is usually said to be about thirty years — that is, menstruation begins on the average around fourteen and ceases about the middle forties. In the man puberty begins around sixteen, but it may be forty or even fifty years before his reproductive life is concluded. Mental and emotional attitudes change considerably during this time. During the twenties, in a man at least, the sexual urges are insistent, and most men either marry or form sexual attachments during this period. In women, however, one sometimes finds a conscious desire for sex relations not emerging until up toward thirty. After an earlier period of interest in boys, perhaps after a love affair or two in the early twenties, we not infrequently find the girl settling into a period of



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

work or study in which she seems fairly content for the time being. Her sex life, however, is not always as quiet as it seems; she is always on the lookout for a possible mate, or she may cherish a secret love for some inaccessible person, or she may lavish her love upon children. Often there are reasons which seemingly prevent her from planning for marriage — family responsibilities or some other obligation. Very often she does not meet the men who are particularly attractive to her; she drifts off, absorbed in other interests, always planning to marry some day, until suddenly she realizes that time is slipping fast and that half her reproductive life is gone. She may then marry the type of man whom earlier she would have rejected, or surprise herself and her friends by a wholly unsuitable love affair. The normal woman is not nearly so capable of the splitting in the love-life that occurs so commonly among men; so notorious is this fact that many students of sex have declared their belief that man is by nature polygamous and woman monogamous. Whether this is the case or not — and it is by no means proven — it seems to be true that in the average woman the libido is not divided and she prefers to marry the man to whom she can give herself whole-heartedly. There is no complaint more usual among girls in the late twenties than that they cannot meet the kind of men they wish to marry; the difficulty has undoubtedly been increasing in the last half century, when more and more women have gone to work and found themselves in situations where it was impossible for them to form associations with men of their own social and educational class. In the new era that is upon us with its enforced leisure, perhaps there will be opportunity to work this problem out.



# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

## THE PERIOD OF THE CLIMACTERIC

The married woman, however many adjustments she may have to make, is spared the restlessness which arises from unsatisfied sex urges, provided, of course, that her marital life is a normal one. But married or unmarried, there comes to most women in the forties a period of readjustment for which they should be prepared. There is no reason for the normal woman to dread the menopause; in the majority of cases it comes and goes with little disturbance, and yet there are certain features about it which often cause anxiety or worry that could be avoided if its significance were better understood.

In Chapter II we saw the physical changes that take place at this time. But in the average case, sometime before the physical changes make themselves apparent, there comes a change in the psychological field. There is commonly noticed an exacerbation of sex desire. Married women who have long ago established a certain rhythm in their sex life are surprised by a flare-up of feeling greater perhaps than they have ever had; unmarried women who have accustomed themselves to ignoring the sexual urges find themselves unable to do so. The married woman finds herself attracted to some man other than her husband; the unmarried one may find herself in the grip of a passion for a wholly unsuitable object. The frequency with which women make unsuitable or foolish marriages at this period, as well as the frequency with which married women go after extra-marital adventures, has been the theme of novels, plays, and movies until everyone is now familiar with it. The early forties have been immortalized as 'the dangerous age'. It is as if Nature, realizing that her opportunity for reproduction will soon be



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

over, stages one last drive to secure what she most desires; but it may be a most uncomfortable time for the woman who finds herself thus beset. This flare-up of feelings is likely to be of short duration or to occur only at intervals, but the mental attitude accompanying the period is likely to be more persistent. Many women become obsessed with the sudden feeling that they are growing old; they begin to think and feel differently about things; matters that have been of great interest lose their hold; life becomes different, something is going out of it. In pathological cases we very often hear the expression that 'life is over and there is no need of living any longer'. A certain stage of life is, indeed, over or about to be over; hereafter the woman will be a different person. Just as at puberty she left childhood behind and entered a new world, so now when the reproductive life is left behind she again enters a new world, but one which, when she becomes accustomed to it, holds infinite possibilities in the way of work, friendships, and satisfaction. No longer will she live in her children if she has them, no longer will she be tossed about from one pinnacle of emotion to another; the storms of her life are largely over; henceforth she will sail in calmer waters.

The psychological readjustments that must be made at this period are rendered much easier if the woman has kept more or less abreast of the times and has a variety of interest outside of her immediate ones. The woman who has devoted herself to her children, now that they are all grown and no longer dependent upon her, probably married or at least living their own lives, finds herself with nothing to occupy her time and energy. Housekeeping for herself and her husband, when she has been accustomed to looking after several people, is a tame occupation. If she has lost touch



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

with church or clubs or other organizations, if she has had little time for friends or reading, she is more than likely to feel herself lost in her new freedom and not know which way to turn. These are the women who ask, 'What shall I do, now that no one needs me any more?' From this standpoint this period is full of real dangers; the woman who has a position or a job which will suffer if she does not continue to work at it is better off than the one whose job is done when her children are grown up. The surest provision against the psychological tragedy of middle life is the cultivation of interests outside one's immediate work. There are many women whose tendency is to absorb themselves completely in their families; they are so happy with husband and children that it is hard for them to extend their interests outside. But only by keeping up outside interests is one assured of having something to fall back upon when the main line of interest is removed. Dr. Lillian J. Martin (9), who several years ago opened an Old Age Clinic in San Francisco with the idea of helping older people to better adjustments, found that the place where she had to begin was with people in middle life, especially women, who so often felt that they were entering definitely upon old age. If one can maintain a normal outlook upon life, old age need not come for many years.

The man often passes through a similar period of panic when he realizes that his libido is not as ardent as it used to be. He feels that old age is approaching, and this is much more true in the case of the man than the woman because his reproductive life is so much longer. Many men continue virile and are able to beget children up to the age of sixty or even later, though as a rule desire begins to die down before this. Marañón believes that in many men homosexual



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

desires make themselves apparent in old age. It sometimes happens that men who have undergone involutional changes develop an interest in children, and when we are shocked by hearing of an old man who has shown a sexual interest in little girls, we must remember that this is one of the aberrations of the sex instinct that takes place during this period in men. Not infrequently the objects of the old man's desires are young boys.

Both men and women seem to be extremely loth to let go their sexual lives. The woman who has had none gets into a panic and feels a compulsion to have sex experience before it is too late; the woman who has lived a normal sex life feels that she cannot give it up and that life will not be worth living without it. The man who realizes that he is approaching the end of his reproductive activities may be impelled to do things which are against his better judgment or his ethical standards. Men often feel or believe that they will be rejuvenated if they can have relations with young girls; this belief is so universal that it has been very common in all cultures to marry young girls to old men, with the idea of stimulating their failing sex desires. The situation has been made familiar to us through numerous stories, plays, and moving pictures — the man in late middle life or even old age who plays around with pretty young chorus girls, or who attempts to play the gallant with young girls and women of his own social group. These 'Sugar-Daddies' are often exploited unmercifully by a certain class of young women, married for their money, or fleeced of their money without marriage. It will help us to be more charitable with them if we can remember the biological meaning of their conduct. The average man engaged in wage-earning or in business has perhaps less time than the average woman to



## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

regret the waning of sex life. It is the man of wealth and leisure who is most often found engaging in foolish behaviour, or turning misanthropic in middle life. As in the case of the woman, the man who would fortify himself against this period must have other interests to make life worth living after the heyday of the reproductive life is over.

This is the normal or more usual story of the psychological side of sex in our present-day culture. It may vary somewhat in different Western countries because of differing customs and beliefs, and in individual cases it may vary greatly up to the truly abnormal or pathological; but with the latter we are not at present concerned. Let us now turn to the various problems that may arise in both the personal and social fields in connection with different aspects of the function of sex.

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## CHAPTER VI

### PROBLEMS OF SEX

ALL human problems have their social as well as their personal aspects, though we are so constituted that it is the personal aspect that appeals to us most. And in this chapter we shall deal with the more personal side of sex adjustment, reserving its social implications to a later chapter.

#### SUPERSTITIONS, FEARS, AND PHOBIAS

In no department of life is superstition so hard to die as in the sex sphere; half the world is still guided in its sexual conduct not by knowledge but by half-truths, traditions, superstitions, and old wives' tales. It can scarcely be otherwise so long as we set sex apart as something different from any other aspect of life and surround it with a halo of sacredness or a hedge of taboos. Much of our modern thinking on the subject is not far removed from that of the primitive, who sees in the different manifestations of sex the evidence of a power which he cannot understand and, therefore, leaves to the medicine-man to control for him. The medicine-man — the quack and the faker — is still with us, purporting to be a guide to the bewildered and the innocent, and, like his brother of old, waxing rich off the ignorance of his victims. Superstition, fear, and ignorance are the medicine-man's allies; until they can be dispersed we will have him with us.

Among the hoary superstitions that still cling to the function of menstruation is the belief that it exercises a cleansing



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

effect upon the feminine body, carries off 'impurities', and that its suppression leads to anaemia, tuberculosis, and insanity. The menses often are suppressed for a longer or shorter period in most debilitating diseases, the reproductive system sharing in the general let-down of the bodily functions; but it is in no sense a cause of such conditions.

Although the superstition which regarded menstruation as an illness and expected women to be invalids during their periods is pretty well scotched now, many girls still suffer needless pain or dose themselves with drugs in the belief that it is an inevitable part of the picture. Undue pain nearly always indicates an abnormality of some sort, and can usually be relieved by proper medical or surgical attention; when it is not due to any discoverable physical cause, one's personal hygiene may be at fault. Not only physical but mental hygiene has a great deal to do with the healthy functioning of any part of the body. The mental attitude that expects illness, that uses it to avoid work or responsibility, the fear that is sometimes set up in a girl by wrong instruction or by no instruction, the dislike and repugnance toward the menstrual function which is part of the protest against the feminine role that we find in many girls and women, may all play a part in menstrual pain and disability.

Innumerable superstitions still cluster around the facts of intercourse and of pregnancy. Girls are still incredibly ignorant concerning the anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system, and boys scarcely less so. The questions asked in class discussions or placed unsigned in question boxes often deal with superstitions primitive in type if not in expression.

We have already noted the belief that a boy should begin sexual indulgence soon after puberty and keep it up there-



after at more or less regular intervals in order to preserve his health. That this notion is little more than a superstition is suggested by the fact that the cultures which have held it most strongly have frequently held its opposite for women, i.e. that a girl must have no sex experience until marriage; 'women are different'. From what we have learned of the biology and the history of sex, it does not appear that women are different in this respect. Indeed, we might argue from the woman's biological function of childbearing, as well as from the fact that sex excitation is not drained off in the female as it is in the male by nocturnal emissions (to say nothing of her earlier maturity), that intercourse would be even more necessary to her physical health. The whole sex function is so intertwined with mental and emotional factors that it is practically impossible to separate out physical and psychological effects; but the fact that real sexual maturity in the male is not reached until twenty to twenty-five would argue against a too early beginning of the sex life. Godin,<sup>1</sup> basing his conclusions upon a long series of measurements, found that the external genitals of the male do not undergo any considerable increase in size until about seventeen, and spermatozoa are not present until eighteen or later; it is several years after this before adult size and function are attained. Marañon believes that the mechanism of the nervous and glandular reflexes involved in the normal exercise of the masculine sex function is not only exceedingly complex and slow of organization, but that it reaches full development late; he believes that full maturity is not reached in the male until thirty to thirty-five.

Nevertheless, the physical instinct is awake in most boys long before seventeen; they are tormented by erections,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 270 in Marañon's *Evolution of Sex* for reference.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

frightened by emissions and sex dreams, and, taught or untaught, turn to masturbation as a means of relief. The normal boy, if given the information he needs and kept out of the clutches of quacks and vicious companions, can be trusted to come out of this period in a few years into calmer waters. But if he has been taught, as he so often is, that intercourse is a necessity, and that to prove his manhood he must indulge, he will do so, thereby fixing in himself that divorce of sex from love which is still so frequently found and which is the source of so many marital disasters. Other unfortunate consequences may ensue from this irresponsible adolescent playing with sex, not the least of which is venereal disease. There is no doubt that sexual abstinence during this period is very difficult for the average normal boy; anyone who has the confidence of numbers of these youths knows that. But the point we are making is that much of this difficulty is due to the excessive stimulation to which he is subjected in modern society, plus the half-knowledge or false knowledge which is so often all that he has in this field.

The idea that the adolescent girl is not troubled by sex thoughts or feelings, that until she is awakened by actual experience the normal girl's love life is purely romantic and sentimental, an idea upheld by the majority of masculine writers on sex, probably merits the term superstition as much as the other. The girl is also subject to fantasies and dreams of a sexual nature, and the majority of girls pass through a period of masturbatory activity around puberty. If girls were subjected to the same amount and type of stimulation that boys are, and if our social milieu placed the same emphasis upon sex experience for them as it does for boys, we should probably see little difference in their behaviour. Certainly



## PROBLEMS OF SEX

in the cultures which accord equal freedom in such matters to both sexes, we see little difference between the two, and in the studies that have been made in recent years in America girls have not appeared much behind boys in their sexual interests. That they comparatively seldom carry them into action is surely to be attributed as much to our social standards as to any slowness of awakening on the girls' part. It is not unusual to find girls who have had a stormy adolescence, with one or several sex episodes, settling down later comparatively comfortably till marriage. Young prostitutes and delinquent girls, familiar to every Juvenile Court, are not infrequently rehabilitated, or develop a better conscience as they grow older and 'reform' of their own accord. Sex pressure becomes less and self-control grows easier as maturity supervenes.

Another of the numerous superstitions surrounding intercourse is that it is a cure for nervous and mental disorders — a belief held occasionally even by physicians. The young man or woman who is sleepless, anxious, cannot concentrate, or generally 'nervous' is advised to get married — a remedy that is usually worse than the disease, for now there are two people to suffer instead of one. Such conditions are not caused by sexual abstinence, and when they appear during courtship should be a reason for delaying marriage rather than hurrying it.

We may mention here the widespread belief, which has medical sanction in some quarters, that sexual difficulties are the main cause of nervous or mental illness, 'nervous breakdown', as it is popularly called. The work of the psycho-analytic school has done much to popularize this belief among psychologists and sociologists. Sexual difficulties of one kind or another are almost invariable accom-



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

paniments of nervous illness, but Freud himself, the founder of psycho-analysis, has always insisted upon the importance of the constitutional factor which permits the development of difficulties and brings about the inability to handle them in a normal fashion. In all such cases the psychiatrist finds sick personalities; the sexual difficulty itself is but a symptom of an underlying difficulty in psycho-sexual development. People can often be helped to a happier existence by being aided to make a better sex adjustment; but real nervous illness cannot be cured so simply.

Superstition reaches its zenith in the thousand-and-one notions regarding pregnancy. How to become pregnant and how to avoid it, how to insure the birth of a boy or girl, how to influence the child *in utero* so that it will be handsome or brilliant or musical, how to avoid 'marking' it, how to ensure an easy labour, and dozens of like matters upon which science can speak with authority, are still matters of superstitious belief and practice in a large section of our population. Dr. Logan Clendenning in *The Human Body*, tells us that a colleague of his has collected dozens of superstitions concerning pregnancy and childbirth still existing in his own community, from the belief that if the man will go to bed on his wedding night with his boots on he will father a boy, to putting an axe under the bed to stop postpartum haemorrhage, or bleeding after childbirth. There is no longer need for anyone to remain in ignorance upon these subjects, since there are authoritative books within reach of everyone who is married or contemplating marriage.

Another belief which might almost be called a superstition, since it is held uncritically by so many people, is that in a mysterious something called sex attraction, allure, appeal, or 'It'. There is a great deal that we do not yet



know about sex, and it may be that there is some element here that we do not understand, but much of it certainly is susceptible of analysis. The standards of beauty and attractiveness differ greatly in different countries. The Kaffir girl, who, with her thick lips, bone and ivory rings dangling from her nose, and her pendant breasts, is the delight of her lover's eyes, is merely ludicrous in ours; while the sheikhs over whom the romantic white girl may languish would only inspire her with contempt for their pale faces and decorously clad legs. And again, attractiveness is largely dependent upon fashion, certainly in adolescence, when any lack of conformity to the standards of the group is so noticeable. When sports clothes are in style, the girl who appears in long, clinging skirts may attract attention, but it is a strong-minded boy who finds her attractive otherwise; while just this same style of dress, when it is in fashion, becomes the most seductive. When curves are the fashion, the most voluptuous is the most attractive, and when short hair is the style the long-haired girl looks old-fashioned, and, therefore, unattractive. What we are accustomed to, what is usual or valued in our group, is what we admire, and any striking non-conformity is repellent. Minor variations, however, within the framework of the current fashion may be a matter of attraction.

It is often said of a girl who has many boy friends that she has 'come hither' in her eye; the girl may indignantly deny it and may, indeed, not be at all conscious of any effort at attraction, but she does desire association with boys and it is impossible to keep from showing it, even though the boys themselves may not be able to identify looks, words, or actions that invite them. Many experiments have shown that people give 'cues' to each other by changes of expression,



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

by little unconscious movements, and so on. This is quite aside from the fact that most people show it plainly enough when they are pleased or interested.

There is, of course, an attraction which can be deliberately learned, and which in many cultures, from primitive times on down to the present, has formed the principal part of a girl's education. But owing to the freedom of association between the sexes that prevails in America to-day, it is as often the boy as the girl who suffers from a feeling of unpopularity or fears himself lacking in sex appeal. In other cultures various methods are in vogue to help the boy overcome this situation. In many places he seeks the help of the medicine-man, who gives him charms to wear or instructions for making magic which will make him irresistible to the girls; that these charms and magic practices very often work is no doubt due to the fact that they inspire a belief in himself that enables him to approach the girls with an assurance of success, which is at least half the battle. In Samoa, so Margaret Mead (10) tells us, the boy has a go-between, a more experienced person than himself, who sings his praises to the girl of his choice, arranges meetings, and so on. In Samoa, as in a great many primitive cultures, the boys are carefully instructed by the older men in the technique of sex relationships, the girls being taught just enough to enable them to respond. In other cultures the girls are instructed by the older women. In the cultures where sex is looked upon as an end in itself, naturally much more attention is paid to such matters.

However, in the sex sphere, as in everything else pertaining to human relationships, personality plays a very great part. People differ markedly in their susceptibility to sex attraction. There are persons who cannot be in the company



of others of the opposite sex without a heightened tension, a feeling of pleasurable excitement, and it is entirely natural that such persons should immediately strike sparks from those they meet. This heightened susceptibility to the presence of the opposite sex is a part of the normal development of adolescence, but is often accompanied by a shyness that prevents the young person from learning to control and use it in social situations. Then, too, it sometimes shows itself in behaviour which is condemned as silly or unbecoming or reprehensible by parents and teachers, and the sensitive adolescent withdraws into his shell and loses the opportunity of learning how to use his attractiveness.

There are still more subtle ways in which personality plays a part in sex attraction. We have seen in the last chapter some of the devious channels into which the love-energy may be forced in the course of its development. Habits of thought and feeling are formed which permit us to extend our love in certain directions and withhold it in others, which lead us to set up certain conditions and expect certain things in our love-relationships; and though associates may not be able to say what it is that prevents a boy or girl from being attractive, a personality analysis will disclose it. But most people cannot undergo a personality analysis, and there is much about the art of sex attraction that is not particularly subtle and can be learned. An unselfish desire to give as well as to receive, to make others happy, the ability to put oneself in the background, are all elements of an attractive personality. The girl who is a good listener, who can find out her companion's interests and lead him to talk about them, is seldom a wall-flower; and the boy who is a good sport, who knows how to help others have a good time, will not be lacking in the popularity so necessary to normal development in youth. It



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

is the self-centred people who complain the most about their unpopularity.

Many years ago a story appeared in one of the women's magazines about a girl who was not popular and to whom an older woman gave a magic charm which enabled her to become so. The charm consisted of two words which she was to whisper to herself whenever she was in a group of people — 'Everybody's lonesome'. In her efforts to help others who felt shy and out of place, she forgot herself completely and had such a good time that people began to think of her as a very delightful girl. Through her experiences she developed poise and self-confidence, and presently found herself more popular than she had ever hoped to become. There is considerable wisdom in this tale; happiness is contagious; the girl or boy or man or woman who is happy attracts people as if by magic; people who are unhappy repel us, especially in youth when it is as natural to be happy, to play, to expect our friends to help us have a good time, as it is to breathe.

### THE PROBLEM OF AUTO-EROTISM

Auto-erotism, or eroticism, as it is often spelled, is a broader term than masturbation as the latter is usually understood. Auto-erotic activities include any type of self-induced sex pleasure, from reveries or day-dreams with a sexual content, to stimulation of the genital organs or some other part of the body until the orgasm is produced.

We have already spoken of masturbation as very common around the time of puberty. It has its inception in infancy, and there are children who, for one reason or another, are never quite free from the habit; in the majority, however, it



drops out of sight for a number of years, only to reappear at puberty, when the tension in the reproductive system becomes very great. Formerly the youth was taught that this was a most vicious and dreadful habit, and that it resulted in both physical and mental decay; it was supposed to be a prime cause of insanity, epilepsy, and other nervous diseases, and to render a boy unfit for marriage. Few people believe this to-day; we know that, though it occurs frequently in certain types of insanity and other nervous conditions, it is an accompaniment rather than a cause, and it does not become prominent until after the illness has developed. And if it rendered a boy unfit for marriage, we would know it unmistakably since so few boys escape a longer or shorter period of it. So far at least as the boy is concerned, Nature is probably indifferent to it; exactly the same thing happens from the physical standpoint that happens in normal intercourse — the release of tensions, the production of the orgasm, and the discharge of semen. The danger lies in the temptation to excess, since the means of satisfaction is always at hand. It is doubtful if this is much of a danger to the normal boy, who almost invariably struggles against the habit. The boy who does carry it to excess so that he seeks more and more time for solitude and indulgence in the habit, permitting sex reveries to crowd other things out of his mind until he becomes indifferent to the things that interest the average boy, is suffering from a personality disorder of which the auto-erotism is a symptom and not a cause.

In the case of the girl the situation is somewhat different. As a rule, in girls masturbation is carried out by stimulation of the clitoris, whereas intercourse normally employs the vagina; a good many studies have shown that the fixation upon the clitoris as the chief erotic zone results in dissatis-



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

faction in marriage, and that the transition from clitoral to vaginal sensitization is a very important step in feminine development. A good many women never take this final step, and the result is an inability to derive pleasure from normal sex relations. Masturbation is only one cause of this condition and perhaps it is never the only cause, back of it being the personality deviation which prompts the girl to persist in the habit. However, that masturbation among girls sometime during adolescence is very common is borne out by what few studies we have, notably Dr. Katherine B. Davis' (2) study of the sex life of twenty-two hundred women. All of her cases were adults at the time of the study, and careful inquiry was made as to the effect of the habit upon marital adjustment; the results are not conclusive, and Dr. Davis' conclusion (p. 183) is in line with what we have already stated, that masturbation is probably better regarded as a symptom of a certain type of personality than as an actual causative factor.

Anyone, however, who knows the sexual histories of numbers of people, knows that it is not at all uncommon for adults to fall back temporarily upon this means of release from sex tension, for one reason or another. There come times in the lives of normal individuals when the sex urge becomes very great — in married people who are away from husband or wife, in the unmarried who are stimulated by literature, or pictures, or the stage, or by physical contact as in dancing or caressing; occasionally, for apparently no reason at all, one is overwhelmed by sex desire. People handle this situation in various ways. The saint flagellates himself or wears a hair shirt, or wrestles in prayer for self-control; the average man may seek distraction of some sort, or grimly set his teeth and bear it, according to the degree



of personality integration he has reached; or he may resort to masturbation, pick up a street-girl, or visit a prostitute. Dr. Frederick W. Robie has pointed out that in the majority of cases coitus with a prostitute is nothing more than an auto-erotic act, the man merely using the woman as a means to the release of his own sex tension; in this sense relations with a prostitute are only a form of masturbation.

But especially in adolescence, masturbation, begun in the first place in response to a physical need, gets tangled up with the rich fantasy life of this period, and it is this far more than the actual act itself that contributes to the sense of guilt so often associated with it. When, in an otherwise normal boy or girl, it proves a habit hard to break, we almost invariably find that the satisfaction obtained from it is in the fantasies that it evokes or symbolizes. Mr. J. W., a man of thirty-two, who had made a very unhappy marriage and whose wife left him in a few months, consulted a psychiatrist concerning his vocational adjustment, which was poor and becoming poorer. The history disclosed a habit of masturbation which had persisted for many years; he had been advised to marry as a way of handling it, but was unable to make a sex adjustment and now was very much discouraged; he had fought the habit in every way he could learn of, without being able to master it. Analysis uncovered the fantasies which were attached to it, a long chain beginning in an unhappy childhood, when the boy had to fall back upon imaginary love-objects to make up for the lack of people who loved him in reality.

At this point we must emphasize the part that fantasy plays in that splitting of the love-life which is so common among men and which we have mentioned before. When the child has it impressed upon him very early that sex



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

is something shameful, 'low', the 'animal part' of his nature, he finds it hard to associate it with a person whom he really loves. In spite of all the freedom of association that adolescents have nowadays, in spite of the almost universal practice of 'petting', one still finds this attitude over and over on the part of men and boys. The loose girl, the light-o'-love, the 'everybody's sweetheart' type, can be the object of sexual thoughts, but not the girl who is really respected and loved. The separation of love and sex is many times reinforced by the adolescent fantasies, which are felt to be sinful if they deal with girls or women whom the boy loves and admires. He tries to replace their images with those of loose girls whom he has met, 'Geisha' girls or others who are 'sexual', and often succeeds in divorcing love and sex to such an extent that it interferes with his success in marriage. Sex becomes one thing and love another.

The common-sense attitude toward masturbation would seem to be then, that it is more than likely to occur at certain stages of development or under certain conditions, and that the danger associated with it is in the worry and anxiety which is rather certain to be set up, in young people at least. The healthy-minded individual will come through this stage and forget about it; but the over-sensitive youth, the high-minded and conscientious, may find himself in the toils of a habit that is exceedingly hard to break and that develops in him a sense of difference and feelings of inferiority. He needs to be assured that he is not different, and helped to work out a regime of work and play that keeps him busy and gives him a healthful fatigue at night. Normal association with his own and the opposite sex and plenty of interests to occupy his mind are very helpful. When such measures do not succeed, and when the person finds himself



unable to break away from the fixation upon self, the situation calls for a re-education of the love attitudes, for always wrong ideas and poor patterns in the love-life will be found at the basis of the difficulty.

## HOMOSEXUALITY AS A PERSONAL PROBLEM

In the preceding pages we have discussed homosexuality from various angles; we must now consider it a little more carefully as it may affect individual cases.

Let us recall again the theory of bisexuality or intersexuality. According to this theory, men and women are not primarily sexual beings, but human beings in whom sex is originally in an undifferentiated state; out of this state it develops in the direction of maleness or femaleness, never in an absolute or clear-cut fashion, but only in greater or lesser degree, so that every male has some feminine features and every female some masculine ones. In extreme cases of intersexuality we have true hermaphroditism, in which the organs of both sexes have developed in the one individual; and from this very evident condition intersexuality shades one out until for all practical purposes the individual has become wholly male or wholly female. As Beatrice Hinkle<sup>1</sup> has well said, masculine and feminine are not sex-linked characteristics, but appear in varying degrees, now in one sex and now in the other. The biological evidence for this point of view was discussed in Chapter II. 'Intersexuality' is a much broader term than homosexuality; it does not express the direction of the libido, or sex desire, but indicates a position on the line of development somewhere between

<sup>1</sup> 'On the Arbitrary Use of the Terms Masculine and Feminine', *Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. VII, No. 1, pp. 15-30.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

masculinity and femininity, with features of both. Upon this foundation of intersexuality, homosexuality develops, but not merely by virtue of the organic state of the individual (the degree of intersexuality which he possesses), but by the action of psychological factors upon the already predisposed organism; only when the predisposed person has met early in life experiences that fastened his love upon those of his own sex do we have true homosexuals. The crucial period for these conditioning experiences, at least in the boy, seems to be puberty. During this period, as we have seen, the instinct is normally unstable, turning first in the homosexual direction and later in the heterosexual one. If during this time the boy is introduced to homosexual practices, either through seduction by an older boy or by stumbling into them with a boy of his own age, he may become an invert and remain so in maturity. Another experience that Marañon mentions as frequent in the genesis of homosexuality is a premature introduction to intercourse, especially with a prostitute; the boy who makes a failure of his first attempt, perhaps jeered at or mocked by his partner, is frightened and humiliated, and may develop an aversion to women or a timidity which makes it impossible for him to associate with them, and he turns to relations with his own sex.

The psycho-analysts and psychiatrists in general are in accord with this view of the importance of the psychological factor, though the former are inclined to place the potent period for psychological inversion in infancy; only when the love-patterns get a homosexual twist are the later experiences decisive. The fact that many adolescents do have homosexual experiences and later develop normally might be attributed to either the lack of constitutional



predisposition or to early heterosexual conditionings, though the same can be said about the infantile experiences as about the later ones — it is only when they act upon an already predisposed individual that they serve to fix homosexual trends.

From all this it is evident that we cannot say a man is a homosexual because he has feminine characteristics or tastes. He may be a homosexual personality with a feminine outlook on life, successful in a feminine occupation such as cooking or designing, and yet quite correct in his sex feelings.

The development of the homosexual woman follows much the same lines, but there is a difference because the girl has to take an extra step in development if she becomes heterosexual. The fixation of both sexes is at first upon the mother; she is the primary love-object for both boys and girls. But the boy has only to transfer his love from the mother to persons like her, other women, while the girl must turn squarely around and face in the other direction. Marañón (p. 199) thus says that woman would be eternally on the verge of homosexuality were it not for the function of maternity, through which her libido is turned toward the male. It is easy to distinguish two types of homosexual women, the passive and active, the former being the very feminine, even narcissistic, type, and the latter the aggressive masculine type of woman; but here again many women of these types are entirely normal in their sex life. There is one feature, however, that is quite characteristic of homosexual women, and that is the absence of the maternal instinct; they have no real love or tenderness for children. The overt homosexual woman often gives as an excuse for her way of life that she doesn't have to be afraid of pregnancy.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

Homosexual men are divided by various writers into the corresponding classes of virile and feminine,<sup>1</sup> the former being 'highly sexed', very masculine types; and it is not unusual for the latter to wear women's clothing, sometimes because they prefer it and oftener perhaps because their virile partners prefer that they should. Ivan Bloch<sup>2</sup> tells of being at a ball of homosexuals in Berlin where the men were all in low-cut dresses. This seems to us much more abnormal than for women to wear men's clothing, which has come to have the sanction of fashion for certain occasions.

The theory that man is originally a bisexual being derives support from the frequency with which homosexuality develops wherever people are forced to associate almost exclusively with members of their own sex. For this reason it is always found in prisons, reformatories, and such institutions, and is always a problem where men are segregated despite the fact that in most countries the penalties imposed are very severe. It flourishes, often very secretly, in boarding schools and camps, which are usually composed of adolescents who are in the stage of development when it makes its strongest appeal. Many people, who under such circumstances become homosexual, are entirely normal in their sexual attitude when they again have opportunity for association with the opposite sex.

From what we have said in this and the preceding chapter it is clear that homosexuality, or 'inversion', is not a matter of wilful choice and best dealt with as a crime, but is a medical and educational problem, deserving of study and understanding treatment. There are many homosexuals, i.e.

<sup>1</sup> Marañón, because of the exigencies of his theory of intersexuality, does not agree with this.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Marañón, p. 203



persons with the wrong direction of desire, who are of high moral character and who fight all their lives against giving expression to it; and when it displays itself in its ugliest forms, its victims are hospital rather than prison subjects.

But education has an exceedingly important part to play, too. If it is true that it is the experiences of the child and the adolescent that are instrumental in its development and that, even if the predisposition is present, it must have favourable soil before it can produce inversion, then we must see to it that the child can grow up in an environment which makes for normality and where such experiences can be avoided. Parents must be led to understand the dangers of binding children too closely to themselves, and of keeping them in a childhood environment where there play and associations are almost exclusively with those of their own sex. When adolescence is reached, parents must help boys and girls to normal associations with each other; and they must appreciate the dangers of boarding schools and camps, where, aside from the enforced association with one's own sex only, we not infrequently find the homosexual man or woman who is likely to be attracted to this work. Schools and camps of the better class are now quite awake to these dangers, and sometimes lean in the other direction, that is, unjustly suspect the girl who is masculine in dress or inclined to uncouth manners, or the boy who is more or less feminine in appearance.

And adolescents — nay, even children — must be taught to avoid people who, upon slight or no acquaintance, appear overfond of them, wishing to give them presents or take them trips, wanting to caress them, and insisting upon meeting them alone. The words 'degenerate' or 'abnormal', which are so frequently applied to homosexuals, may be quite



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

misleading to the adolescent, who sees in the adult who is making such advances a cultivated, interesting, or charming person, as many homosexuals are.

There is, of course, much more than this to the educational aspects of the question of homosexuality in modern society. It is bound up with our whole social and economic system, with our double standard of sexual morality, and with the obstacles that we place in the way of early marriages. Floyd Dell (3) believes that it is encouraged by patriarchal societies because it keeps youth immature and so submissive to the father's wishes, but he is speaking not so much of overt homosexuality, as of personality development. We must learn to put aside our fear and horror of it and study it as we would any other natural and social phenomenon; only then will society stand some chance of being able to deal with it adequately.

### THE 'PERVERSIONS' OF SEX

Homosexuality is usually spoken of as 'inversion', though strictly speaking it is a *perversion* since it turns the instinct away from its normal goal, which is, of course, intercourse between the male and female. There are many perversions in this sense; any kind of sexual behaviour other than normal intercourse which tends to bring about release of tensions and resulting satisfaction can be classed as a perversion, and can occur between the sexes as well as in a homosexual fashion — or, indeed, in the individual. *Exhibitionism* is an example of the last-named group: the boy or man exposes himself where he can be seen by some girl or woman, or occasionally a child; this is a means, and usually his only means, of obtaining sexual satisfaction. *Fetishism* consists in



investing some inanimate object, such as a piece of clothing or a lock of hair, with power to arouse sexual excitement; the fetish becomes an obsession to the unfortunate person, and he treats it in much the same manner as a lover his mistress. Very strange objects sometimes serve as fetishes; *pyromaniacs*, people who have a mania for setting fires, are not infrequently found to be using the fire-setting as a source of sexual excitement. In the history of sex innumerable objects, both animate and inanimate, have been found to serve as sex-objects, to arouse sexual passion and serve as the means of satisfaction. *Sadist* is the term applied to the person who cannot be satisfied unless he inflicts pain upon the sex-object, and its opposite, *masochist*, implies the person who must suffer pain in order to receive sex satisfaction. The terms are popularly used to denote an abnormally cruel person, or an unduly submissive one, but their medical meaning is as stated above. *Flagellation* — that is, literally, whipping — is a form this perversion often takes. There have been 'flagellant sects' before now, religious organizations which made whipping themselves or each other an important part of their ritual, such exercises often ending in wild sexual orgies. We may note in this connection that it is not very wise to whip a child, especially about the buttocks, as in children of neurotic constitution it sometimes sows the seeds of this perversion.

What are usually spoken of as perversions are in essence, as remarked in Chapter v, the use of some part of the body other than the genitals to bring about sex excitation and satisfaction. Nearly if not all of them can be explained by the failure of the genital zone to acquire its normal supremacy over all other parts of the body as a source of sensual pleasure, or, as frequently happens in the man, by an experience or



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

series of experiences which makes it impossible for him to find satisfaction in a normal manner.

But here we are in the realm of the abnormal, which lies outside the province of this book. We must remember, however, that children are prone to try all sorts of experiments in the sex sphere as in everything, and we do not consider such behaviour abnormal, however undesirable it may be, and that adolescents may stumble or be led into perversions of various kinds without necessarily continuing in them. The normal personality outgrows them and leaves them behind. Again it is the predisposed, the individual with some flaw in his make-up, who becomes a sexual pervert; and because of this fact such people are worthy of scientific study. In no other way will we be able to discover how to prevent the development of perversions.

### PROSTITUTION

In Chapter IV we raised the question of the psychology of the prostitute, as to what kind of girl or woman goes into prostitution. It is not always a question of voluntary entrance for very many girls are forced into it in various ways, as we shall see in Chapter VII. But there are many girls who do choose to prostitute themselves, or willingly continue once they have been initiated.

The earlier investigators believed that a majority of prostitutes were feeble-minded; though we now would not make such a sweeping assertion, certainly mental defect and mental disease account for the complacency and blunted moral sense that many prostitutes show. Even when it is not so apparent it is often present; Carmelita is a good example. Carmelita was a very pretty, alert, and apparently



bright little Italian girl of seventeen, who was waitress at a cheap café by day and a prostitute by night, picking for her customers men who were her patrons by day, and always men who would take her 'away off' somewhere for a joy-ride'. The joy-ride, a dance at a park or road house, and plenty to eat, kept life interesting for her, and she often asked no other payment for her services; she learned to demand a price, however, from some older girls, who threatened her with the police if she did not. She continued to work during the day, enjoying her contacts and the bustle at rush hours immensely. Carmelita plied her trade for nearly a year before she became involved in a robbery and was sent to prison. Her looks and manner deceived everyone at first, though her essential childishness soon showed itself; an intimate acquaintance with her for four years, during which time she was studied from every angle, convinced the writer that her Binet age (mental age measured by the Binet test) of ten years represented as much intelligence as she possessed.

Again, many prostitutes are homosexuals, with no feeling whatever for men; often they have women friends with whom they live in sexual intimacy and upon whom they lavish all the love of which they are capable. Not infrequently one finds the girl sex delinquent who is struggling against her homosexual tendencies, and to whom relations with boys seem the lesser of two evils; in an effort to assure herself of her normality she becomes promiscuous. A girl may begin to prostitute herself to gain revenge upon a father, or a sweetheart who has deserted or repudiated her, but more often the motives behind her behaviour are unconscious; and once her feet are set upon the road, it is exceedingly hard to turn back.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

A good many women, especially the 'charity girl' and 'kept woman' types, are narcissists to whom nothing matters but themselves. The narcissist is incapable of viewing her conduct from any angle but her own, and as she is usually lazy and self-indulgent, she is a willing recruit to prostitution.

Another point we must remember in regard to the psychology of the prostitute is her lack of sex feeling. Quite contrary to the popular idea of her as hyper-sexed, she is sexually anaesthetic or frigid; she has divested the sex act of all its personal elements, has become merely an automaton upon which man, any man, can carry out his desire. Frigidity is a requisite of her trade, without which she could not continue; if she gave herself with warm feeling to every man who sought her, she would soon be exhausted. And as a rule the man does not wish anything more than she is prepared to give; she is to him merely the instrument for the satisfaction of a physical need.

The fact that the prostitute is attended in all countries by a man, called 'pimp' in America, bully in England, 'souteneur', 'Louis', or 'Alphonse' in France, and so on in other places, who is her 'manager' and whom she supports with her earnings, throws more light upon her psychology. He often treats her brutally, and she is little more than his slave, and she is just as often slavishly devoted to him. The necessity of human beings for something to tie to, for someone to belong to, is nowhere more evident. The capacity for devotion which women have perhaps more than men, as an outgrowth of the maternal instinct, still lives on in the emotionally blunted and often intellectually stupid woman who has degraded her sex life to its lowest level.

Though prostitution is a social phenomenon, 'the foulest sore upon the body politic', the individual prostitute must



## PROBLEMS OF SEX

be psychologically accounted for. To talk about 'prostitutes' as if they were all alike, as if some strange Providence had set them apart from women in general, is the mark of a medieval mind. We do what we do because we are what we are, and in this respect the prostitute is no different from the rest of us; the secret of her behaviour lies in the history of her personality, and we can scarcely condemn her without knowing this history; and when that is not possible we can only suspend judgment.

### COURTSHIP ACTIVITIES AND MARRIAGE

From a consideration of some of the more general problems in the sex sphere we turn now to the ones that concern the average young person a little more closely, those arising in connection with the social relationships between the sexes, and which normally, so long as society is organized on anything like the present lines, will have marriage for their goal.

'Courting', or engaging in activities designed to rouse the interest of another in one's possibilities as a sexual partner, is, as we have seen, older than the human race, and occurs in great beauty among some of the animals. It is a form of play activity, utilizing some of the exuberant energy of the sex instinct and thus delaying the final sexual act, which normally is its culmination. Human beings have developed it in various ways; we recall the elaborate ceremonies of capture or barter, which are a highly conventionalized form of courtship; flirting, which has broken away from the normal ending of such activities in sex relations and is pursued as an end in itself, is nevertheless a playing at love-making until a satisfactory partner is found. In patriarchal societies,



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

where young people are under chaperonage or are taught strict codes of behaviour, courtship has taken highly conventionalized forms, and the efforts of the youthful lover to circumvent the conventions and pay court directly to his beloved form the theme of folk-lore and story in nearly all such cultures. But whenever young people have had any degree of freedom of association or any power of choice in their friendships, courting or love-making has developed along what we may call 'natural' lines. Young adolescents are at first shy and awkward in each other's presence, but left to themselves they soon seek some form of physical contact with each other, holding hands, embracing and kissing; Nature is craftily leading them on to a closer contact. Among many primitives sex relations ensue as a matter of course, and the same is true in the lower cultural levels of our own society. But modern youth of the more privileged classes have developed love-making to the point where it becomes an end in itself. They attempt to separate physical intimacies, which are normally the prelude to sexual union, from their natural goal and to enjoy them in themselves.

No item of youthful behaviour has caused so much comment or so much worry and distress to modern parents; and judging from the questions asked by young people in class room discussions, personal interviews, and letters, there is no subject of more interest to them. 'What is the harm in it?' 'How far should it go?' 'What do you think of it?' are questions occurring over and over again.

From the biological standpoint, the meaning of such intimacies is, of course, the stimulation of the physical reflexes so that the orgasm may be gotten in readiness for the sex act. All authorities are agreed that the human female is slower to arrive at this state of readiness than the male; most



of them hold that the capacity for sensual enjoyment is more widely distributed over her body than is the case in the male. And so to the girl who begins such intimacies the thrills that come from kissing and embracing or from more intimate caresses may be merely an ecstatic experience that she is anxious to repeat, without any clear consciousness of its real meaning. The boy, however, can scarcely fail to be aware of the sexual nature of his feelings. It may be that, for some individuals, such caressing is a substitute activity, a sort of sublimation, and may serve as an outlet for sex tension. Many times, however, it has the opposite effect, and leaves behind a feeling of irritability and a nervous tension. This is more likely to be true of the man, for the reasons stated above, but it certainly is true many times of the girl also. Prolonged sexual excitement without gratification, for that is what it amounts to in too many cases, not only is likely to result in a state of nervous tension, but in congestion of the genital tract which may cause acute discomfort — a condition with which most genito-urinary surgeons are familiar.

Ernest Groves, an American specialist in sex education, calls this intimate caressing 'secondary sex expression', and points out that a girl may accustom herself to it to such an extent that she wishes to substitute it for normal sex relations after marriage. This is seldom satisfactory to the husband, especially when, as usually happens, her craving is for promiscuous experience.

But no hard and fast rule to guide young people in their pre-marital friendships can be laid down. People differ greatly in their response to sex stimulation; what arouses one to an unbearable pitch of feeling may be merely very pleasant to another. Herein lies the need for mutual understanding



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

and unselfish attitudes during courtship or the period of engagement. The person who shows, in a casual friendship or in courtship, the tendency to seek his own satisfaction at whatever cost to the other party, who shows, even under the guise of passionate love, an utter lack of self-control, will show such selfishness and weakness in other life-situations also. For at bottom we are dealing with the matter of personality, and there is no other realm in which fundamental personality traits show themselves so plainly as in that of sex.

### THE LOVE EXPERIENCE

But whether they believe or engage in physical intimacies or not, the majority of young people do not reach the age of maturity without the experience of being in love. As they look back upon it later, they may smile at what seems to have been a silly infatuation, or recall the experience as one of poignant beauty which they are never likely to find again. The state of being in love involves many factors, physical and emotional, conscious and unconscious, so that it is likely to impress the subject as a 'mysterious' or unique experience. The modern boy and girl, having been educated in various aspects of love by the cinema and the modern love story, are perhaps a bit more dubious about it than their parents were, a little more inclined to question their own experiences. 'What is the difference between love and passion?' 'How can one be in love with one person and be sexually attracted to another?' are questions which signalize the distance we have travelled since the decorous days of the last century, when the girl at least would scarcely have dared to openly demand such information. Companionate



marriage, birth control, and sexual incompatibility are subjects upon which young people want light, and surely they have a right to as much knowledge as we can give them. On some subjects science can speak with authority, others are controversial or matters of opinion, but nothing is gained by keeping silent about such facts as we have. Magazines and movies and advertising agencies are not silent, and there is always plenty of information of the wrong sort, or which, at best, needs interpretation.

As we know, it is only comparatively recently in the history of the race that romantic love has come to be considered the basis of marriage, and that is yet far more true in America than in any other, unless it is Russia, where young people are entirely free to make their own marriage choices. Romantic love endows the love-object with all sorts of qualities which it may not really possess, and consequently over-values it greatly; it transfers to or 'projects' upon the object feelings which are sexual in origin, though they are likely to undergo disguise and to reveal themselves as tender thoughts, solicitude for the welfare of the loved one, and emotional nuances which have little of the crudely sexual in them. It is these feelings, welling up within one perhaps suddenly, or habitually called out by the sight or thought of the loved one, that give romantic love its peculiar colouring, as well as its power and beauty. So long as the love-object can remain more or less unknown or unattainable, these feelings are likely to last; the woman who, in marriage, can succeed in holding herself still aloof from her husband can sometimes maintain the romantic illusion for him, and perhaps the man can oftener maintain it for the woman, especially if she can share only a small portion of his life. But certainly in most cases marriage shatters the



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

romantic illusion, and very often the couple find themselves totally lacking in common ground upon which to build a stable and durable relationship. That is the reason why the romantic love of the heiress and the chauffeur, or the college man and the pretty waitress, is seldom sufficient to found a happy home; when the romantic illusion vanishes, the couple find themselves so far apart in tastes, standards, and experiential background that they can only be miserable together.

But what is the meaning of this type of love, in which the choosing of the love-object seems to have been done by something outside ourselves?

No matter how unsuitable the object may seem to parents and other people, the lover himself cannot see it. The beloved girl is his soul-mate, the fulfillment of an aching need, that for which he has been unconsciously seeking all his life. These expressions give us a clue to what is actually taking place. The act of 'falling in love' or of finding oneself greatly attracted to a person of the opposite sex is not as mysterious as it seems; we are following our patterns again, being attracted by certain things of which we may be totally unconscious, but which can sometimes actually be observed by our friends or other people and which can usually be made clear in the course of a personality analysis.

But why do certain people attract us and others not? Why do most young people find some person of the opposite sex who seems to possess for them an overwhelming attraction, to such an extent that for the time being one has eyes and ears for no one else? Why single out from a whole group of girls or boys just one who seems so much more attractive than all the others?

We are often attracted to or repelled from others because



of certain physical or personality traits they possess, which in the depths of our memories are associated with loved or hated objects, usually of our childhood. Dr. Groves (7) speaks of these traits as 'fetishes' because of the extraordinary power which they exercise over us. They may be mere trifles in themselves, but they serve as cues to call up the image of a beloved person, or as quite frequently happens of an ideal that has grown up unconsciously, which we may not even know we possess. A girl's tone of voice, the way the hair grows on her neck, the way she sways her body as she walks, may attract a young man with all the power of the fetish; the set of a man's shoulders, the quick tone of command in his voice, his general air of self-assurance, capture a girl's attention and may attract her irresistibly, or make her just as sure that she dislikes him exceedingly. Something like this is perhaps nearly always responsible for the instantaneous likes and dislikes that we take to people. They can be detected usually by their unreasonableness; we suddenly find ourselves very much attracted to a person or very much repelled by him, and we do not know why. It must be admitted, however, that we usually proceed to find reasons; the human mind is prone to rationalize its opinions.

Again, childhood fixations are of very great importance in determining love-objects. The girl who has been greatly attached to her father is often consciously attracted by men who resemble him. Even when the childhood attachment has been overlaid by a later dislike or estrangement, the infantile pattern, if strong enough, will be operative, and not the later attitudes. Mrs. M. exemplifies this in a striking fashion; at thirty she had married and divorced three men, all of whom were older than herself, and quite evidently father types. But Mrs. M. hated her father; she



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

had been openly at war with him since she was fourteen, when she began to grow up and he had objected to too frequent parties and too many beaux. They were a good deal alike, impetuous and headstrong, and the girl was very unhappy. She was sure that if her father had influenced her in any way, it was to make her distrustful of men; but analysis finally disclosed a very strong childhood attachment to him, leading her to seek out men who were like him, with the result that her life with them was a repetition of what it had been at home.

The frequency with which men are attracted to women who flatter and sympathize with them or quite openly 'mother' them is often remarked upon; and both men and women are very often unconsciously seeking for the type of protective love — a love that believes in them and comforts and sustains them — which is like that to which they were first accustomed in their relations with their mothers.

Sometimes young people fall desperately in love and then after a short acquaintance fall out again, or one becomes greatly dissatisfied and wishes to withdraw from the friendship. This means, of course, that the love-object did not fit closely enough with the love-pattern. The young man unconsciously expects certain things from his beloved, and she may be incapable of giving them. He is, as we say, 'disappointed' in her. In a sense our friends are like wax figures which we clothe with our ideals; sometimes they wear the clothing nicely, and again it does not fit. Happy for the young people who can discover before marriage that they have invested the wrong persons with their ideals.

When the hold of the mother or father is too strong, it is more than likely to prevent any lasting attachment to another person. This theme has been a favourite one in



literature. In that delightful little essay, *The Witch Woman*, James Branch Cabell tells the story of the type of man who is eternally seeking something in women which he never finds. He follows his cue or fetish in one woman after another, convincing himself each time that he has found the elusive witch woman of his dreams; but each time the witch woman slips away and beckons to him from some place else, leaving him unsatisfied with the woman in whom he had thought he had found her at last. And Cabell suggests in his closing paragraphs that perhaps there may be a 'witch man' also for whom some women seek unsatisfied all their lives. The psychologist would say that the witch man and witch woman are the idealized images of the parents as those images first built themselves up in the child's mind. They can never quite materialize, for they never were flesh and blood; they were only the child's idea of powerful, wise, and loving creatures, who were, indeed, such to him, but as a flesh-and-blood man and woman were probably quite otherwise.

And so we see that romantic love is by no means the work of chance or caprice; we love according as our earlier experiences have predisposed us. This is the reason why marriage seems to be so much of a lottery, and why Cupid had always been depicted as blind; and this is the reason, too, for insisting upon a wide range of acquaintance for young people, so that they may have a chance to learn something of their own likes, dislikes, and preferences. The girl who has been brought up in girls' schools or the convent and discouraged from acquaintance with boys is likely to project her masculine ideals upon the first man she meets and to fall in love with him accordingly. But the girl who has had several love affairs is much more likely to learn to hold her feelings somewhat in abeyance until she knows a man



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

better, and the same is true of boys. It is perfectly possible for young people to learn considerably about themselves, to discover what it is that they are seeking in their love relationships, and to distrust an overwhelming passion upon slight acquaintance. The very strength and unreasonableness of these feelings betray their infantile origin. The love that is a slow growth, giving time for acquaintance with each other's traits, attitudes, and desires, is more likely to be a lasting one.

Romantic love may be consciously passionate or it may idealize passion. Until very recently the latter was more common in our culture; girls at least were borne into marriage upon a wave of romanticism that took little account of the physical aspects of the relationship, and not infrequently suffered considerable shock when confronted with it. Just how long it was in the history of the race before passion, that flame of the body that cries out for physical contact, for complete union with the object of its desire, became associated with love we do not know; it is often asserted that the ancients knew nothing of love as we think of it, compounded of tender emotion in conjunction with physical passion. Man had to travel a very long road before he could arrive at this point, and it seems easy for him to dissociate the two even yet; but undoubtedly it is the direction of social evolution. Love, not merely in its romantic aspects, but in the sense of respect and affection for one's sexual partner, a delight in sharing with him or her, the desire to care for, cherish, and defend, the willingness to sacrifice for the other's sake, is the ideal of increasing numbers of people. There are some who think these attitudes cannot be attained in marriage, and others who declare their faith that they cannot be attained outside it; but that they can be attained at all is perhaps the significant thing.



## PROBLEMS OF SEX

### THE AGE OF MARRIAGE

The age of marriage has been progressively lengthening as more and more youth has become a time of preparation, of education and training, extending far into the twenties, even up to thirty, for professional or graduate work. Some authorities, especially the endocrinologists who point to the late maturity of the reproductive system, believe that this is a good thing, especially for the man; others, stressing the difficulty of sex restraint in adolescence and early maturity, deplore late marriage, and believe that it would be much better if people married in the teens. We have seen that a girl does not reach full sexual maturity till twenty or twenty-one, and a boy not for two or three years later; though they are capable of producing offspring long before those ages, it would seem biologically wise to put off beginning a family at least until full maturity is reached. Some young people are still quite immature emotionally at this age, and fail in marriage because they are too young, in a sense, to master the technique of living together. But as our society is organized, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to marry in the early twenties; even if both are working, combined wages are pitifully inadequate to found a home, and the coming of children spells disaster. Where economic stress is not so great, the man must take time to finish his schooling and to get a foothold in his business or profession, and the years of youth are gone before he feels himself in a position to marry.

From certain standpoints there is a good deal to be said in favour of later marriages; the young people have had time to play, to develop more maturity of emotion and judgment, and are not likely to have more children than they can



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

properly bring up. Then, too, older people are not so apt to be swept into marriage on a tide of passion, and have perhaps a little better chance to make a truer appraisal of each other. The objection often urged, that women of thirty or beyond have a more difficult time in childbirth, is not so valid as it was in the days before our modern knowledge of obstetrics. Against putting marriage off to the late twenties or beyond is the fact that habits are pretty well fixed by that time and adjustment to another personality becomes more difficult.

But the greatest reason against delay in marriage arises from the fact that the sexual urges reach their height in the first half of the twenties and continence becomes, for the man at least, exceedingly difficult. The lure of sex is everywhere about him; shows and cinemas, magazines and radio, music and the dance, emphasize and suggest it; street-girls accost him, and other men regale him with their adventures. On every side it is suggested to him, tacitly or openly, that the time has come to mate; and, biologically speaking, it has. That the young man of twenty-three or four is not ready, economically, to marry, that he is not emotionally mature enough, or experienced enough of women to choose a mate wisely, is no fault of Nature's; she has brought him to the point of physical maturity, and so far as she is concerned, that is all that matters. This period in the life of the young man is handled in various ways by writers on sex. Some of them stress the fact that continence is achieved by a good many, mostly of the religious groups, and that it is certainly not harmful; others advocate a liaison or 'free union' with a girl or woman with whom the man is in sympathy, if not in love; others believe in temporary or 'companionate' marriages, which can be terminated at the will of either party; some



## PROBLEMS OF SEX

would have the State subsidize marriage so that it could occur earlier; occasionally someone advocates 'intimate fondling' as a means of release of sex tensions. But in all these proposals except that of continence, there are two people involved, the girl as well as the man; her happiness is as important as his — if he is a high-minded man, it is a condition of it — and any solution that fails to take this into account is sure to be an unhappy one.

In America '*companionate*' marriage has received a great deal of publicity in the last ten years, advocated as it is by Judge Ben B. Lindsey, whose years of experience with adolescents made him feel that early marriage was a necessity for many people. Judge Lindsey himself has always insisted that he was merely advocating what was already an accomplished fact in our civilization, the marriage in the usual fashion of two young people who have decided to live together without having children until they discover if they are well mated. This implies, of course, the knowledge and use of birth-control methods.

There are many other young people who marry expecting to stay together 'until death us do part', who for one reason or another do not want children, at least in the early years of marriage, when they are adjusting themselves to each other or having a struggle with poverty. Not often does a girl say she does not want children at all, but that she does not want them now; she expects to use 'birth-control'.

## BIRTH CONTROL

Of all the questions about sex asked by young people, those concerning birth control occur most frequently.

The term 'birth control' is not very exact, as what is



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

meant by the phrase is the prevention of conception, and 'contraception' is a better word, the one used almost exclusively in scientific and medical discussions.

Conception can be prevented in various ways, the most obvious of which is abstinence from intercourse. The opponents of birth control seldom oppose this method of contraception; they do not mean, however, as Pope Pius XI makes it clear in his Encyclical dealing with the matter, that there shall be entire abstinence between a married pair except for the purpose of procreation, but that sex relations may be had during the so-called 'safe period', or that time during the menstrual cycle when the woman is less likely to conceive. Medical authorities point out, however, that there is great individual variation among women in this matter, and that there is as yet no way of determining just when this period begins or ends in any individual woman. Abstinence implies a high degree of self-control on the part of married people, and there are many who believe it to be a 'course of perfection', an ideal which in practice can seldom be attained. But also it implies a unity of purpose, an unselfishness, and a confidence in each other, which are the fairest flowers of marriage, and which undoubtedly are attained by some couples and which must remain the ideal for all.

Abstinence is usually spoken of as the 'natural' method of contraception, and other methods as 'artificial'. Among these methods the only one that requires no further thought and is absolutely safe is sterilization, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Other methods include mechanical devices designed to prevent the meeting of sperm and ovum, or chemical agents which destroy the spermatozoa. The methods taught in the clinics, under medical auspices, are harmless and usually reliable, but their usefulness depends



## PROBLEMS OF SEX

upon 'presistence, intelligence, and self-control', as someone has said. There are other methods, some of them seemingly 'natural' enough, but likely to result in injury to either the husband or wife. Many neurologists believe that certain contraceptive practices are among the causes of nervous conditions in married people.

### INCOMPATIBILITY IN MARRIAGE

Now that there is freer discussion of sex matters than used to be the rule, we hear a great deal about 'sexual incompatibility'. It is frequently said that the chief cause of unhappiness in marriage lies in sexual disability of one kind or another, and the question is often asked, 'How is one to know just what difficulties he may encounter in marriage?' Suppose two people get married and find themselves unsuited to each other sexually; how can one be sure of this matter until sex relations have been attempted?

It is true that the causes of failure in marriage usually seem to lie in the sex sphere; but at that it is seldom we can pin them upon the physical features of sex alone. The terrifying stories that young people often hear about sexual abnormalities are mostly stories; people with pronounced abnormalities seldom are inclined to marriage. And the medical examination, which enlightened people are coming to employ as a preparation for marriage, should clear away any doubts of actual physical incompetence or abnormality.

The majority of difficulties that display themselves in the sex sphere are of psychological origin. Even abnormal sex desire, the inability to receive satisfaction by repeated acts of intercourse, known as *nymphomania* in the female and as *satyriasis* in the male, is more a disease of the personality than



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

of the reproductive system. We know something about it in animals, where it seems to be of glandular origin; but in man personality development is so intricately bound up with sexual development that it is very difficult to separate the one from the other. We have seen that different personality distortions may display themselves in this manner, as in the unconscious homosexual whose real drive is toward his own sex, and who is insatiable in his sex demands because he does not get satisfaction in heterosexual relations; and there are other psychological factors that may account for abnormal desire, although medicine is not ready to rule out the glandular element entirely.

### FRIGIDITY AND IMPOTENCE

The most frequent difficulty in sexual adjustment in marriage is known as *frigidity* in the female and *impotence* in the male. These terms imply a disorder in the sexual sphere, which is due more or less to the same mechanism, but which operates very differently in the two sexes. Frigidity is the general term employed to designate a condition in the woman who does not experience pleasure in sexual intercourse; it exists in various degrees, from partial anesthesia up to the experiencing of excruciating pain in attempts at coitus. Sometimes frigidity is caused by an actual pathological condition of the organs, but in the majority of cases no physical condition can be discovered to account for it. It is so very common that men, even physicians, have long believed that in some degree it is normal to women, and women have apparently accepted as a fact the statement that they are much less highly sexed than men. The facts that a woman can live in marriage for years and even bear children



without ever acknowledging to pleasure in intercourse, and that prostitutes are usually completely frigid, have seemed to bear out this assumption. In recent years, however, the matter has received scientific study, with the result that frigidity, even in its severe forms, seems to be largely a psychological matter, combined with the ignorance of her own sex life which has until recently been forced upon the girl. It is not uncommon even yet to find women, and young women at that, who regard the sex act with repugnance and only 'submit' to it out of regard for their husbands. There are undoubtedly women for whom sex pleasure is less keen than for others. Marañon divides women into the voluptuous and the maternal types, and says that the latter, which he regards as the normal feminine type, does not commonly develop the capacity to experience the orgasm until late in her reproductive life, toward the beginning of the menopause; he bases his view on endocrinology. Other authorities on the basis of experience with many cases, believe that in the great majority of cases frigidity results from easily discoverable causes. The woman who does not love her husband is quite commonly frigid; ignorance of a proper technique in the sex act, selfishness on the part of the husband, fear of pregnancy, unfortunate associations or conditionings in regard to sex, can all bring about frigidity. A reason frequently given is the haste and lack of consideration on the part of the husband at the first intercourse, which is almost always painful to the bride in whom the hymen has not been ruptured. We have seen that sometimes masturbation and prolonged indulgence in 'petting' seem to play a part in some cases. Distressing as it is, it can usually be overcome by tact and patience on the part of the husband and the determination on the part of the wife to achieve normality.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

A very common story runs something like this: Mr. and Mrs. C. W. have been married thirteen years and have three children. The husband is a successful lawyer, very extroverted, a very active person belonging to numerous clubs, societies, and so on, popular and well liked by his friends. His wife is a quiet, reserved, shy sort of woman, to whom sex relations are very distasteful. She was poorly prepared for marriage, having only the vaguest idea of marital relations, though in the beginning the husband was very considerate and she experienced no special trauma. After the birth of the first child she was more than ever averse to coitus, and though she tried to conceal it from her husband she was not able to do so. He feels that they are growing more and more apart. The wife is unable to see that she is at fault and, being disappointed in her marriage, is turning more and more to her children. According to her own story she has very little feeling, getting almost her only sensual enjoyment out of caresses; and she would like to substitute these for any closer relationship. She resents her husband's outside interests, and her ideal of domestic life is with a husband who is a sort of big brother or best friend with whom she can have a platonic relationship.

The first thing that strikes us here is the different personalities in husband and wife. They look upon life from different angles, expect to get different things out of it, and derive their happiness in almost opposite fashion. Each feels that the other is at fault, though the husband is quite willing to make concessions and, indeed, has done so continually. The wife feels rather justified in her attitude and has a good deal to say about the higher and more beautiful side of life. We discover that she is one of two sisters, the mother being a very dominant personality, who not only



## PROBLEMS OF SEX

managed her children's affairs but her husband's as well. It was a cultured, highly-educated household, the mother herself having taken several degrees before marriage, the father being a writer and lecturer. The mother was an extremely conscientious person and had given her children every advantage that seemed to her wise. She and her husband had been very happy together, and the whole family was very closely united. The daughters grew up without any real sex instruction, although the mother talked to them about the beauty of motherhood and the necessity of building up high characters in order to meet its responsibilities. The second daughter has never married.

With minor variations this story occurs over and over — of a girl who has had very little interest in sex matters and practically no instruction, who has thought of marriage vaguely as a state of close and beautiful companionship, and who, after marriage, finds herself unable to make the complete surrender which would bring satisfaction to herself and her husband.

But here is another case that is quite different. Mr. and Mrs. L. N. have been married six years and have a five-year-old child. They are both quite modern young people, the wife having been self-supporting before her marriage at twenty-four. She is an alert and active type, interested in many things, and when her baby was two years old insisted upon going back to work again. Since that time she has run her household successfully and held a full-time job, too. She has always been completely frigid in marital relations, and it is she who comes for advice. She realizes that there must be something wrong with her, but it is nothing that she knows how to help. Her story is that she simply cannot be interested. She and her husband have discussed



the matter freely, and she has finally told him that if something cannot be done, she prefers to be divorced. She does not, however, blame him, although she finally admits that she believes she married the wrong man. She is not in love with anyone else; neither is she in love with her husband in the way that she thinks would make it possible for her to enjoy marital relations. They were business associates before their marriage, and enjoyed the same things and had so much fun together that marriage seemed the logical thing. She was prepared for marriage, but sex relations were distasteful to her from the very first. Her mother, of whom she sought advise, told her that she herself had had little feeling until after the birth of her second child. So Mrs. L. N. hoped that things would be better after the birth of the baby, but they were not.

Here there would seem to be, on the surface at least, a lack of real tangible affection; a satisfying friendship had been mistaken for a real love affair.

However, the woman can simulate response when she has little feeling, and often does so, so that the husband may remain in ignorance of her difficulty; but the man who suffers from impotence cannot conceal it. Impotence means the inability of the male to carry through the sex act, and there is no condition more full of terror for the average man. Sex symbolizes for him the power of his manhood, and loss of sexual vigour touches him in the deepest recesses of his soul. But temporary or partial impotence resulting in premature discharge of the seminal fluid, or impotence under certain conditions, is not at all uncommon. The boy in his first sexual essays is very apt to be partially impotent, especially so if he starts out to 'prove his manhood' without any real feeling for the girl. Such a failure is exceedingly humiliating



## PROBLEMS OF SEX

and, as noted above, may give him a fear of women that drives him into homosexuality if he is already predisposed toward his own sex. At best, it is likely to make him shy and awkward with girls and women, and he may develop a marked feeling of inferiority. Like frigidity, in the majority of cases impotence is due to a psychological cause and disappears when the wrong mental attitude or conditioning is removed. The advice sometimes given to a young man about to be married, to visit a prostitute or consort with a loose girl before marriage in order to get some experience, often results in disaster, for under such circumstances the man is very likely to be impotent. In civilized man the nervous mechanism controlling the sex act is very delicate and easily disturbed; interfered with by thoughts, feelings, and memories — and the memories do not have to be conscious!

## STERILITY

*Sterility* is a condition in either the male or the female resulting in inability to produce offspring. It is much more common in the female than in the male, authorities estimating that in eighty-five per cent of the cases coming under observation the difficulty lies with the wife rather than the husband. A common cause is the closure of the Fallopian tubes by inflammation and the resulting scar tissue; the ovum then cannot descend nor can the sperm ascend; their meeting is blocked. Gynaecologists have developed a technique of examination whereby the condition can be determined if it is present, and occasionally surgical intervention is effective. There are other conditions, such as disease in some part of the reproductive tract, or an undeveloped 'infantile' condition of the genital apparatus, which can some-



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

times be remedied by treatment; and again there may be a hyper-acidity of the vaginal secretions, which kills the sperms.

Disease or injury of the reproductive system is the most usual cause of sterility in the male. Occasionally for unknown reasons the sperms are weak and unable to live long enough to make their way up the tubes. Some authorities believe that when a man is sexually very active in youth he exhausts his virility so that he is later sterile; others dispute this. But excess is undoubtedly a cause of temporary sterility.

### VENEREAL DISEASE

One other problem in the sex sphere that is of great importance both from the personal and social standpoint is that of venereal disease, which is the general term applied to a group of highly contagious and very severe diseases which are usually introduced into the body through the genital tract.

The history of the venereal diseases *syphilis* and *gonorrhea* is little known; syphilis is often said to have been taken back to Spain by Columbus' sailors after the discovery of America. We know there was a great epidemic of it after the expedition of Charles VII of France against Naples; he drew into his army men of many nations, and the Spaniards seem to have been the foci of infection. Occasionally someone, on the basis of historical description, diagnoses some ancient notable as a sufferer from syphilis, but such postmortem diagnoses have little scientific value. There are no medical descriptions of the disease or no bones with syphilitic lesions that justify us in placing it in Europe before 1450. However, it was



known in China and Japan for more than a thousand years B.C., and some authorities believe it must have existed in Europe in a mild form for many centuries before becoming virulent.

Once it got a foothold in Europe, it spread as infectious diseases always do in a new population, and received a great deal of attention by physicians, so that we have excellent clinical description of it. But the *spirochaeta pallida*, the specific organism of syphilis, was not discovered until 1906, and not until 1909, when the Wassermann test was developed, was it possible to make a diagnosis by the examination of the blood even where there are no objective signs of the disease.

The spirochaete is a corkscrew-shaped animal which, after infection, promptly begins to multiply, and the germs make their way into the blood stream and are carried throughout the body. For some time there is no local reaction, and the subject is not aware that he has become infected. After several weeks a pimple makes its appearance at the site of infection, but it is rarely painful and disappears with or without treatment in a few weeks more, leaving only a scar. Typically this is followed by a rash on the trunk, which may take one of many forms, and the person who up to this time has felt perfectly well, usually begins to have systemic symptoms. Usually not until this stage does the afflicted person consult a doctor, though the success of treatment depends upon its very early application. The symptoms may all sink out of sight even without treatment and the person remain in health for years, not knowing that he has ever had the disease, for the earlier symptoms may have been mistaken for something else. But the disease is always a generalized one, and may attack practically any organ of the body; the



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

organisms 'dig in' and give no signs of life for years, then may flare up into activity. Various diseases (though, of course, not all) of the heart and blood vessels, the lungs, kidneys, and other internal organs, of eyes and ears, in fact of any region of the body, are late manifestations of syphilis.

Syphilis, since it is primarily a disease of the reproductive system, might be expected to have an effect upon offspring, and congenital syphilis occurs very frequently in the children of infected parents. Such children may suffer any of the later forms of syphilis, although for several years they may appear bright and healthy. Congenital or *juvenile paresis* sometimes develops as late as the twentieth year.

*Paresis*, or general paralysis of the insane, is one of the most striking of the late forms of syphilis. In this, the organism invades the central nervous system, causing a destruction of the cells of the brain which results in mental enfeeblement; and, until modern methods of treatment were discovered, in the great majority of cases it was followed by death in a very few years. Since 1921 paretic patients have been inoculated with malaria; in fighting the malaria the body resistances are raised to such a pitch that the spirochaetes are destroyed. If the destruction of brain cells has not gone too far, the patient may recover a portion at least of his former intelligence, and be to all intents and purposes well. This result, however, depends upon the discovery of the condition early.

Gonorrhea, another and most prevalent form of venereal disease, is caused by a paired germ, the gonococcus. It is a local disease affecting the mucous membranes of the genital region, causing a discharge of pus and doing extensive damage to the entire reproductive system. In the female it works its way back to the uterus and the Fallopian tubes,



causing very serious inflammation; the resulting scar tissue closes the tubes and prevents the entrance of the ovum, so that the woman is thereafter sterile. This is the principal reason why prostitutes, who practically never escape venereal disease, seldom have children. When a woman who has been infected with gonorrhea gives birth to a child, the germ may get into the baby's eyes, and blindness results; this is the reason for the necessity of washing a new-born baby's eyes with nitrate of silver, which kills the germ.

The venereal diseases are acquired in the vast majority of cases by sexual intercourse with an infected person; occasionally the spirochaetes enter the blood stream through a lesion in the skin or mucous membrane elsewhere than in the genital region. During the first and second stages of the disease it is highly contagious, but since the germs cannot live long outside the body, one need have little fear of acquiring them from ordinary contacts. Both gonorrhea and syphilis, however, are not infrequently acquired by members of the family when a person in the acute stages of the disease is careless as to drinking vessels, towels, and so on. Little girls, even infants, are peculiarly susceptible to gonorrhea.

Only in the last quarter century has medical science made any headway in its treatment of these 'great plagues'. But now they are successfully treated, if diagnosed early enough. Certainly, if one has any reason to suspect that he has been exposed to a venereal disease, he should lose no time in consulting a physician and in following his directions faithfully.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

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## CHAPTER VII

### SEX AND SOCIETY

BECAUSE man is a social creature, because his personality has developed in relation to and in interaction with others of his kind, there is scarcely an item of his behaviour that does not have social significance, or is not of importance to the society of which he is a part. In this highly individualistic age one frequently hears the remark that sexual conduct is a purely individual matter and need concern no one but the parties involved. There may be a sense in which this is true, but it is very difficult to draw the line, to say where individual responsibility ceases and community responsibility begins. Sex is so intimately woven with the entire personality that what one feels or believes or practices in the sex sphere colours his conduct in other matters as well. And again, since the very continuance of human society depends upon man's sexual behaviour, it becomes of the most profound significance to that society. Whether consciously or not, man has acted upon this principle from the earliest times; as we have seen, no primitive society has ever been discovered whose members have not erected some sort of barrier to the free and unrestricted play of the sex instinct. The more highly evolved the society, the more numerous and restrictive the barriers. But owing to the 'cultural lag', many customs and beliefs which were valuable in one stage of cultural development linger on into a later one, where they may hinder the growth of practices better suited to newer knowledge. For this reason our sexual theory is still a hodge-podge



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

of superstition, tradition, and half-digested fact, and there is a wide separation between theory and practice. With these facts in mind, let us look at some sexual questions from the social standpoint.

### MARRIAGE AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

There are perhaps as many social aspects of marriage as there are personal ones. In a society like ours, in which monogamy is the norm and no other form of marriage has social or legal approval, and where the individual is so highly regarded, many questions of social importance are at once in evidence. How far shall society interfere with the right of the individual to marry? What rules and regulations shall it prescribe, what taboos shall it set up, what shall it expect of the prospective couple in the way of health, intelligence, and social responsibility?

The right of anybody who has reached a certain age to marry, and under certain circumstances his duty to marry, is even yet not called in question by a great many people. This age has been fixed by law, but differs in different countries. In England, until 1927, the statutory age for marriage was twelve in women and fourteen in men, but public opinion and social practice enforced a higher age and such early marriages, although legal, were extremely rare. In 1927 the 'Age of Marriage Act' was passed, raising the age to sixteen for both sexes. In all marriages in persons under the age of twenty-one, parents or guardians must give their consent before marriage can take place. At the same time the marriage of a minor without the necessary consent is still valid, although in such a case the parties are liable to certain penalties.



## SEX AND SOCIETY

Statistics obtained from Marriage Registrars, however, show the average age of marriage for England as a whole to be twenty-nine for men and twenty-six and one-half for women. A more detailed survey of different social and economic classes reveals the fact that the percentage of girls marrying under twenty-one is increasing in the country districts, but falling off in London. No matter what the laws, it is economics, as we have remarked before, that has the greatest influence in determining the age of marriage. It is lowest among agricultural labourers, to whom it is an advantage to marry early, or who at least have little to gain by putting it off. And it is highest in London because of the larger proportion of the professional and educated classes there.

It is an illuminating fact that although society makes certain demands before it consents to the marriage of a man and a woman, it shows little interest in their mental or physical health. This is surprising when it is remembered that it is upon the shoulders of society that the responsibility for the maintenance of defective children resulting from these unions will rest. As the law in England stands at the present moment, there is no reason why a woman of low mentality should not be wedded to a man who is equally defective. While alienists are not agreed upon the inheritability of mental disease and especially of certain forms of insanity, most of them will agree that mentally defective people ought not to have children. It is true that the obviously insane cannot marry, but the legal definition of insanity was developed when psychology and psycho-pathology were in their infancy, and does not prevent the union of many people who from the medical point of view are unfit to be the parents of children. Of recent years much attention has



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

been given in this country to the question of the hereditary transmission of mental disorders and deficiency. In 1934 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider this problem, together with the question of the sterilization of the mentally defective. As the law at present stands, the sterilization of mental defectives on eugenic grounds is illegal. Even the consent of the patient does not render it legal, and should it happen that the patient die as the result of the operation, the operating surgeon could be charged with manslaughter. The Committee, while unanimous in their opinion that compulsory sterilization of mental defectives should not be enforced, were in favour of the legalization of sterilization with the patients' consent. They based this opinion on the principle that no person should be forced to choose between the alternatives of complete abstinence from sexual activity and of risking the bringing into the world of children whose disabilities would make them a burden to themselves and society.

The whole question of what restrictions should be placed upon marriage is fraught with difficulties. Not only does the inertia of custom make it hard to change even what most thinking people agree should be changed, but authorities differ in the relative emphasis they place upon the rights of the individual and those of the State. The freedom of the individual is often incompatible with the welfare of society; everyone recognizes this in relation to the criminal or the insane person, and these people are taken out of society and their liberty absolutely curtailed. But most people are not willing to extend this principle much further, and so we have each year legal marriages among feeble-minded people, those with venereal diseases, those with criminal or delinquent tendencies, or even those who are still children, and we will



## SEX AND SOCIETY

probably continue to have them for some time to come. We should have our eyes open, however, to the social problems that such marriages create.

### DIVORCE

If public opinion is comparatively quiet on the subject of the legal requirements of marriage, it is articulate enough on the question of divorce. The divorce laws of most countries are archaic and chaotic. This is especially so in America where the divorce laws vary in different states, so that a man may be divorced and remarried in one state and find on crossing the state line that his divorce is not recognized and that he has become a bigamist. Yet in spite of the fact that everyone, and none more than the lawyers themselves, realizes the chaotic state of the divorce laws, every attempt to bring them into line with modern requirements and modern sentiments seems doomed to failure. To a great extent this is due to the fact that the churches, both Protestant and Catholic, strongly oppose any radical alteration in the legislation.

From the historical standpoint, divorce laws relate to the disposition of the property of the couple and the right of the accused party in the suit to support or inheritance, as well as their right to possession of the children. Divorce was therefore instituted for the purpose of safeguarding property rights. These ancient laws made scarcely any effort to discourage divorce except as they exercised a practical restraint because of the prospect of property loss. But during the Middle Ages when the Church had acquired control over the institution of marriage, marriage became a sacrament, and the marriage relation could not be dissolved for any



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

reason; therefore, divorce became an evil in itself, and consequently efforts were directed towards preventing it at any cost.

This traditional attitude of the Church became embodied in most of the divorce laws of Western nations, along with features inherited from the civil laws of earlier times.

Thus divorce came to be based upon the assumption that either husband or wife was guilty of wrongdoing. A marriage could only be dissolved if it were proved that one of the parties had been guilty of adultery or an 'unnatural' offence, meaning the practice of a perversion. Before 1923 adultery on the part of a wife was regarded in the English courts as a sufficient ground for a divorce, but in the case of the husband mere adultery was not enough. In order that a wife could obtain her divorce it was necessary that she should prove her husband guilty of incestuous adultery, or bigamy with adultery, or adultery in such circumstances as to constitute rape, or adultery coupled with desertion without excuse for two years or upwards. This unequal position of the two sexes was, however, altered by the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1923, which made simple adultery a sufficient ground for divorce for both the husband and the wife. If either the husband or the wife could be proved to have contracted venereal disease during the marriage and not from the other spouse, it was accepted as proof of adultery. A later attempt was made to extend the grounds for divorce. The Matrimonial Causes Bill would have enacted that desertion for a period of three years, cruelty, insanity, habitual drunkenness, and imprisonment under a commuted death sentence should all be regarded as grounds for divorce. This Bill never passed its second reading.

Every attempt to extend the grounds for divorce has



failed, and in spite of the feelings of the educated public, in spite of the opinion of those whose duty it is to administer the law, the *status quo* is maintained. The only remedy of which the public can avail itself is to supply the law with what it requires, namely proof of adultery. Mr. A. P. Herbert's recent book, *Holy Deadlock*, will provide an amusing satire for the student of history of a future epoch. He will understand that in the twentieth century, where a marriage had failed it was necessary that the married couple should add adultery and open hostility before they could obtain relief. He will also be able to point out the fact that with each tightening of the laws of divorce there occurred a rise in the divorce rate, this rise being so great in America that by 1932 there was one divorce for every six marriages.

It is asserted by some that divorce destroys marriage. But this is not the case; marriages are destroyed before they reach the divorce courts, and the facts of such destruction some time in the past must be proven before divorce can be granted. Does not the remedy lie in setting up machinery of conciliation rather than in demanding that a man and a woman who are no longer able to agree should bring evidence of adultery before their marriage difficulties can be settled? This idea is rapidly gaining ground, and there has recently been presented in the House of Lords a Summary Jurisdiction (Domestic Procedure) Bill which unfortunately was withdrawn at the conclusion of the second reading. This Bill sought to establish separate courts for dealing with domestic relations, with a panel of justices and a special time for the hearing of such cases. It also made it obligatory for the means of conciliation to be attempted before any order affecting a husband or wife was made. Mr. Claud Mullins, a well-known London magistrate, has also



advocated similar measures. He urges that domestic cases in the police courts should be conducted on lines of conciliation rather than of legislation. Men and women would approach these reformed domestic courts before difficulties in their home had developed so far that they could only be dealt with by the machinery at present existing. A new form of summons would be instituted which would not ask for relief but merely for a hearing with the other party of the marriage present. If this new procedure failed, the existing means which end in compulsory orders would be employed. Since many marriages appear to be wrecked on account of physical maladjustments, the presiding magistrate would also avail himself of the services of medical men with expert knowledge of the subject of sex. Mr. Mullins is of the opinion that if some such reforms as these were carried out in the domestic work of the police courts, valuable experience would be gained, experience which would be found equally practicable and suitable also in the divorce courts.

But the causes of matrimonial failure are legion. The great majority of young people marry without any adequate preparation for the experiences they will meet in marriage; it is not only sexual incompatibility that destroys marriages, though if a couple find themselves well mated sexually, they are far more apt to try to adjust their other difficulties. Differences in upbringing, in beliefs and ideals and habits, personality differences of various sorts, differences over money matters, different points of view regarding the rights and obligations of marriage, regarding birth control or the rearing of children, are often the beginnings of disputes that increase until unhappiness becomes the rule. The need of some sort of preparation for marriage, of a knowledge not only of sex matters and the various problems that may be



## SEX AND SOCIETY

encountered in the sex field but also preparation for living together, for a recognition of the hazards of married life and some means of meeting them, would seem to be essential if in the future divorce is to become less frequent.

### BIRTH CONTROL

From the earliest times of which we have any record various factors have operated to keep the population of a region in check. War, pestilence, and famine exert population control on a large scale, but when reference is made to 'birth control' there is usually meant some factor which operates to reduce the number of births in a population. Where the territory or the natural resources belonging to a tribe were limited and natural factors were inoperative for any reason, it was absolutely necessary to limit the number of people who were going to inhabit that territory. Many tribes knew no better method than infanticide, which, as we have seen, continued to be practised down almost to the present century in some parts of the world, and, of course, there are sporadic cases even yet. There came a time however, when women learned how to produce abortion. This period is so distant in time that we are unable to find its beginning; exceedingly primitive peoples have knowledge of *abortifacients*, agents that produce abortion, of one kind or another. However, contraceptive methods or means of preventing conception are found also in many widely separated primitive tribes. Many of these methods must have been ineffective because they consist in purely magical rites or formulae in which the faith of the participant played the greater part. On the other hand, there are some bona fide methods which are based not only upon rational grounds



but upon an excellent knowledge of anatomy. Mantegazza describes a tribe of Australians whose men perform an operation upon the boys which produces an artificial *hypospadias*, or opening on the under side of the penis, which deprives them of their ability to impregnate women with whom they have intercourse. In other tribes other methods were developed. In ancient Egypt, China, Greece, and Rome, methods of contraception were in vogue, and many medical prescriptions for that purpose have come down to us; again many of these prescriptions smack more of magic than they do of medicine, but that was in keeping with the other medical knowledge of the times. During the Middle Ages efforts at contraception appear to have been largely based on the principle of superstition and primitive magic. It was not until after Robert Malthus wrote his essay on population in 1798, in which he discussed the consequences to society of an unrestricted increase of population, that the matter came to the fore as a social problem.

Even though man has apparently always made an effort to check the birth of children, we cannot suppose that he did it with any long view of its effect upon population; it was a personal rather than a social problem. But Malthus' essay called attention to the widespread poverty and degradation that accompanied the increase of populations and set a great many people to thinking upon the subject.

In 1923 Francis Place instituted an educational campaign to spread the knowledge of contraception among the masses. He printed handbills which were widely distributed among the working people in London and the large industrial towns, and there ensued much discussion. A bitter controversy raged between its advocates and those who considered it immoral and against the teachings of Divine



authority as did (and does) the Catholic Church; nearly all of the other Churches were at that time opposed to it. The argument for birth control or contraceptive measures was that it enabled a couple to have only as many children as they could well provide for and properly bring up; that it preserved the health of the mother by insuring a proper spacing of pregnancies; and that it prevented the spread of poverty and would enable a country to keep its population at a point where there should be work and subsistence for all. The arguments against it were that it opened the door to licence on the part of unmarried people and degraded marriage by exalting the physical side of sex at the expense of the spiritual experience, which the Church considers marriage to be. Though after the death of Malthus in 1834 the discussion quieted down, pamphlets and books on contraception continued to have an enormous undercover circulation. In 1877 occurred the famous Knowlton trial, which finally (1879) vindicated the right of publication of certain types of birth control literature. The notoriety attending this trial was so great that many authorities avow that it was the greatest contributing cause to the decline in the birth rate after 1880.

In America, also, the battle was prolonged and bitter. Religious bodies and 'moral welfare societies' fought tooth and nail against the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge. In 1873 the Congress passed a law excluding information concerning contraception from the United States mails and declaring such information illegal and obscene. This law still stands on the statute books, despite numerous and continued efforts to get it repealed. In 1917 the first birth Control Clinic in America was opened in New York, and Margaret Sanger was imprisoned for thirty days for



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

opening it. In 1918 a judicial decision was given that legally practicing physicians may offer contraceptive advice for the protection of health and the prevention of disease, and since that time the number of clinics has increased so rapidly that any list is out of date before it can be published. Dr. Marie Stopes met with equally strong hostility in her campaign in England, and was compelled to fight repeated legal actions in the British Law Courts. Her 'Mothers' Clinic' was opened in London in 1921, to be followed by many more in most of the large towns, and in 1926 the Ministry of Health legalized the giving of contraceptive information for medical reasons only in the antenatal welfare centres. In 1932 the practice had become so widespread that the Lambeth Conference considered it time to give a ruling on the matter. A guarded approval of some measure of control in certain circumstances was given by the Bishops. The Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Federated Council of the Churches of Christ in America have followed the Bishops in countenancing a control of parenthood on certain justifiable grounds. The Catholic Church has continued to steadfastly oppose birth control in any form.

One of the strongest arguments in favour of contraception is the fact that where it is discountenanced abortion tends to take its place. Statistics upon this subject are of course lacking, but there is every reason to believe that an appalling number occur each year. Two very recent reports<sup>1</sup> dealing with the subject of maternal deaths in the United States show that a large number occur under circumstances that raise the suspicion of abortion, either procured illegally or self-induced. Taking the figures obtained at the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau in New York, it has been

<sup>1</sup> By the U.S. Children's Bureau and the New York City Academy of Medicine.



## SEX AND SOCIETY

estimated that there are at least 700,000 a year. The death rate from abortion appears to be rising rapidly, not only in this country but all over the world, except in Russia where abortion has been legalized, so that it is no longer performed by the charlatan or the unethical physician, or brought about by the woman herself. Abortion, unless performed by skilled surgeons, is never safe.

Though in most western countries the birth rate has been falling for several generations, the decline has been greatest among the more privileged classes. Large families are now seldom found in these classes, while they continue to flourish among the poorest and least privileged. There are many people who are greatly alarmed over the growing discrepancy between the two groups, and consider the spread of contraceptive knowledge the chief reason for it. It is undoubtedly true that the educated classes have long availed themselves of birth-control information, and it is the poorer classes who have been denied it. But whether contraception is the chief cause of population decline is open to question. Our civilization is too complex and there are too many forces at work to justify dogmatism upon the subject.

## THE EUGENIC PROGRAMME

Closely tied up with the subject of population control is that of *eugenics*. This is the term applied to the rather general science of race betterment, and deals with the various ways in which the human race may be improved from the standpoint of breeding rather than of rearing. The advocates of eugenics believe that there are too many people in the world and that their average in traits depending upon



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

biological inheritance is too low; in other words, that the human race is composed largely of inferior stock, and that the world cannot be expected to get rid of many of its most pressing problems, such as poverty and mental disease, until the average of its stock is raised. No amount of education or proper housing or of redistribution of wealth, say the eugenists, will succeed in eradicating the ills that are due fundamentally to this poor human stock, which they believe is increasing rather than decreasing. They point out that medical science has succeeded in lowering the death rate and decreasing infant mortality and has largely gotten control of the infectious diseases, so that the population is increasing faster at its lower levels than in the upper levels because of the special fertility of the lower levels. The great problem of eugenics, then, becomes to get rid of the unfit, by, in some way or other, breeding them out. While practically everybody will agree that there are large sections of our population which are composed of very undesirable individuals, it is hard to get agreement upon the methods of eliminating them. No one denies the staggering cost to the State of our institutions for the feeble-minded, the insane, and the criminals; if we add to this the cost of courts and legal procedures, of charitable and relief measures, to say nothing of clinic and hospital service which is largely supported by the responsible members of society for the benefit of the irresponsible, we get some idea of the magnitude of the problem measured in terms of money. Even at that, as everyone knows, the problem is very inadequately dealt with. Institutions can take care of only a small portion of the people who would benefit from them, who, if left at large, will produce defective offspring; birth-control measures, even if taught to the majority of these people, would not be practised, which



leaves but one method for the prevention of the reproduction of the unfit, and that is *sterilization*.

It is necessary to distinguish between sterilization and castration, the two words being confused in the minds of a great many people. Castration, as we have seen, involves the removal of the sex glands and usually causes profound changes in the organism of either the male or female. Sterilization, however, does not unsex the subject, but merely renders him sterile for life; that is, incapable of producing offspring but still capable of effecting and enjoying intercourse. In the majority of cases nothing has happened in the sex life except that the man or woman has become incapable of producing offspring.

The most usual procedure in the male is known as *vasectomy*, and consists in removing a portion of the vas deferens, which, it will be remembered, is the duct leading from the testicle, and ligating or tying the cut ends so that no sperms can pass through it. It is a simple operation and recovery is complete in two or three days.

In the female, however, the usual operation for sterilization is *salpingectomy*, which consists in the removal of the Fallopian tubes, either in part or entirely. This involves opening the abdomen and is, therefore, a major operation, requiring a general anaesthetic; but it is attended by no special risk in the average case.

While Great Britain is still hesitating on the threshold, by 1932 twenty-seven states in America had passed sterilization laws. California has gone further in this direction than any other state, over 5,000 operations for sterilization having been carried out in that state alone. The laws of the different states permit the sterilization of idiots, imbeciles, epileptics, feeble-minded, and insane; and in some cases



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

mental degenerates and sexual criminals are included. Only those may be sterilized who are considered to be a menace to society and whose defect is in all probability hereditary. Every safeguard is thrown around the patient, and it is only the man or woman who is too defective to give consent that is sterilized by the permission of the parents or guardians.

The number of those thus rendered incapable of parenthood is only a drop in the bucket, and can have little effect upon the situation as a whole. Germany, however, on January 1st, 1934, began upon a eugenic programme in which it is announced that 400,000 will be sterilized. These national experiments will be watched with the greatest interest. We must remember, however, that for every person who is actually defective there are many more who are carriers of defective genes. Unfortunately, there are no means of detecting these carriers and thereby discouraging their mating with people of like defect in the genes. Some authorities are so pessimistic on this subject that they calculate that it would take over 2000 years to breed out the defective strains in our population. Not only is man such a hybrid animal that it is difficult to predict in any case what his offspring will be, but the methods used successfully in the breeding of plants and animals cannot be applied to him. The problem is also complicated by the fact that we are unable to estimate the relative importance of heredity and environment in human development. One method of studying this particular problem is the investigation of identical twins, who, since they are in all probability developed from the same ovum, have theoretically the same genetic constitution. Studies are now going forward on identical twins who have been reared apart, studies which



## SEX AND SOCIETY

promise to throw considerable light on the development of such traits as intelligence and personality.

It must be confessed that the ideal of developing a better race by eugenic measures is beset with innumerable difficulties. The most conspicuous example of a country that dared to put into practice the theory of eugenics is ancient Sparta, and it cannot be said that her daring was justified by the results that she achieved. From the point of view of Sparta, perhaps she was successful, for her soldiers were the finest that the world has ever seen, and her army for a time invincible. But, although she gained in the physique of her citizens, she lost in the realm of art, literature and philosophy. A race horse is bred for speed, a draught horse for strength, and in order to achieve these qualities some others must be sacrificed. What quality shall be chosen when we try to improve the breed of man? If eugenics are to be applied to the human race, the application can only be on the negative side of eliminating the grossly unfit. Should this ever become feasible on a large enough scale, the benefit will be considerable. In the meantime, whatever measures raise the standards of the public health and the morale of the community, whatever forces, physical or psychological, material or spiritual, give a child a better chance to grow up normally, are helping in the development of the 'better race' toward which the eugenic programme looks.

## PROSTITUTION AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

In the preceding chapters we have taken a look at prostitution from various angles; we must now note its social aspects a little more closely.

Abraham Flexner (3) in his study of prostitution in



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

Europe defines it as . . . 'characterized by three elements variously combined: barter, promiscuity, emotional indifference. The barter need not involve the passing of money, though money is its usual medium; gifts or pleasures may be the equivalent inducement. Nor need promiscuity be utterly choiceless; a woman is not the less a prostitute because she is more or less selective in her associations. Emotional indifference may be fairly inferred from barter and promiscuity. In this sense, any person is a prostitute who habitually or intermittently has sexual relations more or less promiscuously for money or other mercenary consideration. Neither notoriety, arrest, nor lack of other occupation is an essential criterion. A woman may be a prostitute, even though not notorious, even though never arrested, even though simultaneously otherwise employed in a paid occupation'. These traits characterize the professional prostitute, who is known as such, the woman who from ancient times has been registered or inscribed or known to the police; but Flexner goes on: 'They are equally characteristic marks of the clandestine prostitute, using the term in its literal meaning to designate the numerous class of professional prostitutes whose real character is known only to their own clientele and their close female companions; of the occasional prostitute — women who alternately emerge from and relapse into an irregular life; of the incidental prostitute — those who carry on more or less prostitution without interrupting some honourable employment; of women who practise prostitution under cloak of other occupations; of women, who ceasing to be kept as mistresses practise prostitution as a stop-gap until a firmer footing is once more found; of women who reserve themselves by express arrangement for a small group, none of whom can alone afford their



support; of women, who faithful to one individual at a time are still taken up by a succession of men paying for favours; finally of married women, by no means always of the lowest class, who, perhaps irreproachable in the eyes of the world, are not above earning through ignominy the price of luxuries. Here are eight different categories, falling outside the narrow conception of prostitution, but nevertheless belonging to prostitution, if prostitution is conceived to be characterized by barter, emotional indifference, and promiscuity'. He excludes from these categories what is ordinarily known as 'immorality' and unconventional sex relationships, and broad as his definition appears it includes only those women who engage in more or less promiscuous sexual intercourse for money or its equivalent. This description and definition holds good to-day for prostitutes everywhere, for in the twenty years since it was written the actual facts of prostitution have changed but little.

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw an awakening of the public conscience to the evils of prostitution, to the fact that it was a business, operating on a world-wide scale, whose merchandise was women and girls, often inducted into it without their consent and held in it against their will. Once the public realized these facts a great wave of indignation arose, both in this country and in America. By 1917 nearly every state government in the United States had passed laws against the keeping of disorderly houses, punishing those guilty of procuring girls and women, or of living on their earnings as prostitutes.

In England licensed houses had long been abolished, and any person living on the profits of prostitution liable to prosecution. Prostitution itself did not, and does not at this moment, constitute a legal offence, but at least three Acts



are in force in the London area by means of which order and decency are maintained in streets and public places. By the vagrancy Act of 1824, the police are enabled to deal with cases in which a prostitute and a man are considered to be behaving in an indecent manner. In 1928 the Street Offences Committee recommended that all existing legislation should be repealed and replaced by a single enactment making it an offence for any person to importune another of the opposite sex for immoral purposes in a street or public place. No such law has yet been passed, and the majority of magistrates insist on evidence of actual annoying before convicting a person of soliciting.

But, we may ask, why should society be so concerned about prostitution? Isn't it after all a matter of demand and supply, and a question to be settled between the individual woman and her patrons? Society's indictment of prostitution is on several counts: in the first place it is not a matter simply of demand and supply, but of a stimulated demand and a supply recruited largely from a defenceless portion of the community by the most shameless methods. Unquestionably many women go into prostitution of their own accord: but many more, especially young girls, are lured into it in various ways by men — and occasionally women — who make money out of it. The League of Nations' reports on the 'International Traffic in Women and Children' disclose the nefarious methods by which women and girls are still recruited for the 'traffic' and the pitiful youth — in some cases as low as twelve years — of many of them. The bully stops at nothing to obtain his victim: kidnapping and seduction, forging passports, going through fake marriage ceremonies or not infrequently actual ones; following up girls whose wages are inadequate to give them a decent



living with stories of plenty in a business he knows about, or introducing them to 'swell friends' who will give them a good time; buying children from parents stupid enough or degraded enough to be willing to sell — are all means used by the men whose business it is to secure a 'supply' for their customers.

The 'demand' is stimulated not only by the street-walker, whose business it is to suggest and allure, but by the circulation of 'pornographic' pictures and literature, which are specially designed to arouse sex passion, and by alcohol, which is prostitution's indispensable ally. The association of alcohol and prostitution is as old as human history; sexual excess and drunkenness have gone hand in hand down the ages. Under the influence of alcohol men and women will do many things they would be ashamed or afraid or too prudent to do sober, and so we find alcohol and very often drugs wherever we find prostitution. Undoubtedly the volume of prostitution would be greatly lessened if it were not for the artificial stimulation of the demand.

Again, there is an incalculable economic waste in prostitution; not only the waste of the woman's time and energy, but enormous amounts of money are each year spent on prostitution, which goes into the pockets of the underworld, and adds appreciably to its sinister power. Add to this the cost of hospitals and treatments of venereal disease, the loss of earning power during illnesses resulting from these diseases, and the money spent in various ways in the maintenance of the traffic, and we have a sum that staggers the imagination.

A third count against the business is its alliance with crime and disorder; wherever criminals congregate, there prostitution shows itself, usually in its lowest forms. And



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

again we must remember that the prostitute is the focus of venereal infection. She is almost invariably the victim of venereal disease, and she infects her partners, who in turn infect not only other promiscuous women, but the 'innocent', their wives and children.

Aside from all this is the disintegration of character which the woman who engages in prostitution inevitably suffers, and not only the prostitute herself, but everyone who is connected with the business. No one expects a prostitute, a brothel-keeper, a bully or procurer or a trafficker in prostitution to be a good citizen. The degradation of the sex instinct is invariably accompanied by the degradation of all that man has so slowly and painfully built into his life through the sublimation and control of his sex energy; that prostitution still flourishes is an indication of how far man has yet to go before he has rid himself of the infantile love-patterns which drive him to seek sex without love.

Nearly all students of the subject agree that there is little likelihood that prostitution can be entirely eliminated, but the experience of civilized countries within the last twenty years shows that it can be controlled and its worst abuses got rid of. It is largely an economic question; if the profit were taken out of it, a vast deal of prostitution would disappear at once. But only through an intelligent understanding of the subject on the part of the better citizens of the community, is this result likely to be brought about.

### VENEREAL DISEASE

Venereal disease as a social problem is largely tied up with the problem of prostitution. All efforts to provide for the medical care of prostitutes so as to render them non-



infectious have been largely futile; even though the woman herself is discovered and treated, the man who infected her is not taken into account, and continues as a source of contagion.

The cost of venereal diseases to society cannot be measured in terms of money, though it runs into many billions each year in Europe alone. When we count the sterile marriages, the miscarriages, the abdominal operations upon women, the cases of insanity (paresis forms the second largest group of admissions to mental hospitals), and the diseased and idiot children, we have a truly appalling record, beside which money values fade into insignificance. It is human health and happiness, after all, that count most, and it is just these at which the venereal diseases strike.

The enormous increase in the incidence of venereal disease that followed the outbreak of the War drew popular attention to the subject. As the result of the report of the Royal Commission of 1917, the Venereal Disease Act was passed. By this it was made illegal for any unqualified person to treat venereal disease, hoping thereby to eliminate that menace to society, the quack. In order that efficient treatment should be available, clinics were opened, where patients could be dealt with, free of charge, by experts in venereal disease. While the establishment of these treatment centres provided for the needs of those already infected, it was felt by some public health authorities that venereal disease could only be adequately handled by bringing it into line with other contagious diseases and making it notifiable. This opinion, however, met with strong opposition. It was pointed out that compulsory notification would have the effect of preventing many people from applying for treatment. One of the main inducements held out to those attending the public



clinics was that complete secrecy would be preserved; notification would undoubtedly act as a deterrent. Nevertheless, the number of defaulters from treatment in venereal disease clinics was sufficiently large to provide a strong argument for those who advised the abandonment of the voluntary system, and the Edinburgh Corporation in 1928 promoted in Parliament the passage of a provisional order which gave them certain powers whereby a person suffering from venereal disease who had commenced treatment, but had neglected or refused to continue it, could be compelled to receive proper medical attention. By the same Bill, a medical officer of health who had reason to believe that any person was suffering from venereal disease, and therefore liable to infect others, was given the power of compelling such a person to undergo treatment until he or she was cured or, at any rate, unlikely to hand on infection. Compulsory notification also exists in Queensland and in other parts of the world. Although favourable results have been reported from these countries, the preponderance of opinion is opposed to its adoption in Great Britain. This view is strengthened by the unfavourable experience of the Contagious Disease Acts of 1864 and 1866, which provided for the compulsory examination of prostitutes and were repealed in 1886. Moreover, in many states of America where laws have been passed making it compulsory for a physician to report cases of venereal disease to the Board of Health, it has been found impossible to follow up all the known cases and ensure that they are properly treated. And of course there are many cases that never come to the attention of the physician.

Another question that has given rise to controversy in England has been the place of prophylaxis in the anti-



venereal campaign. Of the actual value of preventative measures there can be no doubt, for instruction in prophylaxis led to an immediate fall of venereal disease in the Navy and Army. But what has proved successful in the case of disciplined bodies of men is not likely to be equally successful in the case of the civil community. Moreover, many people have felt that even if the difficulty of instructing the public could be overcome, a knowledge of prophylaxis would act as an encouragement to immorality. It is doubtful, though, if many men are influenced to lead a chaste life by fear of disease. The chief difficulty, however, in the case of the civil community is to know by what means and at what age the necessary information should be imparted.

So far the efforts to stem the tide of venereal disease have seemed somewhat like sweeping back the ocean with a broom; and yet something has been accomplished, and more will be as people become more intelligent on the subject. The good citizen has been too much inclined to pass the matter by as something that did not concern him, forgetting that, especially in a democracy, the welfare of one is the welfare of all, and that the health of any of the members of the community is, or should be, a community concern. One's responsibility does not cease when he has made himself into a worthy citizen; life in modern society implies a continual fight on the part of intelligent and forward-looking people against the forces which seek their own ends at the expense of the health and well-being of the community. Against these forces intelligence and a 'right good will' to leave the world a better place than one found it, are the most effective weapons.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

## HOMOSEXUALITY AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

Homosexuals are prone to consider that their sexual conduct is peculiarly their own affair, pointing out that it has no social consequences in the issue of offspring, and that, therefore, society should have no interest in it. As we have seen, homosexuality has suffered social condemnation ever since the time of Constantine. Practically every civilized country has laws against the practice among men, though only Austria penalizes the homosexual woman. But if homosexuals really confined their conduct within channels which affected no one but themselves, it would not only be far less evident but much less common. The concern of society is, or should be, not with two adults who find satisfaction in each other, but with the homosexual seduction, which oftener than not is the induction of a young boy or girl into homosexual practices, which for one reason or another are thereafter continued. Homosexuals are notoriously fickle, and go from one affair to another, so that one person may corrupt a dozen youths. Society has stamped its attitude so deeply upon the majority of people, that the mere finding oneself attracted to a person of the same sex is upsetting to a good many, and homosexual advances, even though they are not yielded to, may set off nervous reactions in some personalities. The 'homosexual panic' is well known to the psychiatrist, and suicidal attempts are not uncommon.

The homosexual personality has an affinity for drugs and alcohol, probably as a means of escape from the consciousness of social stigma, and not infrequently we find the homosexual plying a trade in drugs, so that he is the centre of a vicious circle in very truth of homosexuals and drug addicts, with all the attendant degradation and crime.



Harsh and repressive measures have seldom succeeded in ridding society of the things which it hates and fears; they are driven under cover, where they do far more damage than if dealt with openly, as the modern physician deals with physical disease, hunting for causes, never content with merely getting rid of symptoms, but seeking for the maladjustments in the body that make the disease possible. And this is coming to be the ideal in the treatment of the disorders of society; but we are just at the beginnings of the development of this attitude, and its results are in the future.

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## CHAPTER VIII

# SEX AND EDUCATION

WE have heard a good deal in recent years about sex education; discussions of its importance, the best age for imparting information and various methods for doing so, have been frequent; all are agreed that the policy of silence which has for so long been pursued has proved unwise, and that 'instinct' does not teach people what they need to know about sex behaviour. But agreement upon what to teach, how the matter shall be taught, and who shall undertake it is much more difficult.

The student who has carefully followed the discussions in the earlier chapters has probably reached the conclusion that sex cannot be set off in a compartment by itself and taught as one teaches geography or botany or chemistry. 'Sex', said nine-year-old Patricia when her mother had tried to make clear the answer to her question, 'then sex is life, mother'. It is because sex *is* life that man has not yet succeeded in mastering it, that he is only beginning to dimly perceive its meaning, and to realize how inextricably it is interwoven with the warp and woof of his behaviour from the cradle to the grave. In the preceding pages we have seen something of the various forms under which man has conceived of sex. It has been a physical urge, on a par with the other great physical appetite, that for food, and with no further meaning than the pleasure of the moment. Then it became the Life-Bringer, deified and worshipped in the numerous phallic or sexual religions with which antiquity



abounded. Under Christianity it was an instrument of the devil, cunningly devised for man's destruction, or a high and holy office to be exercised only under priestly sanction and in accordance with Divine Law. If to-day we have a body of knowledge that at last makes possible something of a scientific attitude toward the problems of sex, we are still only at the beginnings, and there is a long road to be travelled before man will have knowledge and courage enough to realize his sexual possibilities.

But what are some of the practical things that emerge from a study of the biology and the history and the psychology of sex?

First of all perhaps the realization that in the sex sphere as in all other departments of human life people succeed or fail not so much by reason of what they do as of what they are. The child is the result of the combination and interaction of certain chemical and electrical (biological) forces. He has behind him not only his human ancestry, but the longer and broader line of living creatures who were man's progenitors and with whom he yet has much in common. Behind the infant human being is also the weight of human history, of the unknown thousands of years during which man has striven now in this direction and now in that; so that the child born to-day is indubitably 'the heir of all the ages', but he inherits the results of the mistakes and failures of the ages as well as of the successes. He is born into a psychological situation which, through the attitudes and reactions of his parents, has begun to shape and mould him even before he arrives, and which presses upon him from all sides while he is still helpless to combat it. And surrounding even this is the broader cultural environment which has shaped his parents and will stamp him for life



before he is ten years old. Intelligent people no longer attribute deformities and abnormalities to the 'marking' of the child by some unfortunate occurrence, nor do they attribute them to the sins of the ancestors or to the work of evil spirits. The physically deformed or diseased, the feeble-minded or insane, the sexual invert or pervert, are what they are as the result of perfectly understandable and, in many instances, discoverable causes; the same is true of the girl who has no admirers, of the boy whose aggressiveness drives away his friends, of the woman who commits adultery, and of the man who deserts his children.

In taking this point of view, we are aligning ourselves with the scientific attitude in general, putting ourselves in a position to control a situation by understanding it, and not, as our primitive ancestors did, by beating tom-toms to scare the evil thing away. Once we have accepted the fact that conduct issues from personality, we become more charitable in our judgment of others, less worried by their behaviour, and more inclined to search for our own shortcomings in the personality sphere.

From this standpoint the whole question of sex education becomes a simpler of definition, though vastly more difficult in practice. It is no longer a question of imparting information, of inculcating rules and precepts, or of setting up hard and fast categories of right and wrong; it is more even than the development of character and the training of the will. Ideally, it requires the co-operation of the whole community, and calls to its aid all the constructive forces of the environment. Practically, it becomes a matter of providing the child with an environment suited to its needs, and beyond that it is the training of the developing love life to respond in ways likely to bring satisfaction in later life. This implies



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

parents who are well-mated, who welcome the child, who understand the importance of these early years and who are intelligent in their methods of training; so sex-education begins with the parents of the next generation.

If the child's love-patterns get properly organized in infancy, the rest of his sex education will be less difficult. Information he should have when he asks for it, or even without his asking, an information that supplies him with the main facts of reproduction and the proper language in which to discuss them. This information should be acquired before puberty, because the emotional development at that time makes it embarrassing and sometimes impossible to impart the necessary facts at that period. Even at that, we cannot prepare him for his emotional experiences, and the adolescent who already is familiar with the facts of sex may sometimes be carried away by his emotions. But certainly it is much easier to deal with him and help him if he has an intellectual appreciation of his experiences.

The adolescent is entitled to as much information as he desires or we can give him. When a matter is controversial, it is of no value to teach him merely what we ourselves believe; he will inevitably seek farther, and perhaps be debarred from discussing the matter thereafter with his teachers. We cannot leave out even the ugly side of sex, because it is part of life and he is going to meet it anyway; but certainly we can teach it so that he can take an objective attitude and be spared the emotional upset that it too often causes. Perversions had perhaps best be taught as unusual expressions of the sex impulse, that in our culture are confined to people of incompletely developed or of abnormal personality — which is just what they are, so far as our present knowledge goes. While the pervert is very often



definitely abnormal, his behaviour in any case betokens a fixation on a childish level of development or a regression to it.

## SEX TEACHING AS A PRACTICAL PROBLEM

It is easy to outline the ideal toward which we must strive, but when we turn to the practical questions of who shall teach, and how, we encounter many difficulties. It must be recognized that while it is true that the great majority of British parents are in favour of their children being given some information concerning sex, they themselves are often unwilling or unfitted to act as teachers. From the experience of Tucker and Pout and from information derived from the many parent conferences arranged by the British Social Hygiene Council, there is reason to believe that in general parents prefer that the necessary information should be imparted at school. School teachers are, however, disinclined to give sex instruction; the Executive Committee of the National Union of Teachers has recently passed a motion that in their opinion 'the giving of sex instruction is undesirable and against the interests of the children in Elementary Schools'. The position is therefore that while the parent casts the responsibility on the teacher, the teacher in turn refers it back to the parent. As an example of this attitude may be quoted the experience of Mr. T. F. Tucker and Miss M. Pout in schools of South Wales. After obtaining the consent of the parents by means of a circular letter, three lessons on human sex and reproduction were given to boys and girls separately in each of the schools, but it is significant that these lessons were given by outside persons and that the teaching staff was not



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

called upon to take part in the work. Similar experiments are being made in Leicestershire and other parts of the country, the actual sex teaching forming part of a more or less comprehensive scheme of physiology and hygiene. This is felt to be a preferable arrangement to devoting the lessons entirely to sex matters.

A strong movement has been launched in Great Britain to secure the inclusion of graduated biological teaching in the regular curriculum of every type of school. At the instigation of the British Social Hygiene Council a National Conference on the place of biology in education was held in 1932 and was followed in 1934 by a Scottish National Conference on the same subject. As a result, an Educational Advisory Board was established by the British Social Hygiene Council, on which sit representatives of the Board of Education, the Scottish Department of Education, the various University Training Colleges, and all the major Education associations. The purpose of this Advisory Board is to promote the teaching of biology as an essential element in culture and as an indispensable foundation for citizenship. This movement is now supported by the majority of responsible educational authorities. The right of biology to a place in the school curriculum, provided that it is taught from a broad cultural standpoint and not utilized solely as a means of providing 'sex knowledge' is therefore fully recognized. Although the inclusion of biological teaching in the school curriculum will provide future adolescents with a better knowledge of sex, it will be of no assistance to the adolescents of to-day. In order to fill this gap, the British Social Hygiene Council has drawn up a syllabus of a short course of lectures on biology suited to the requirements of present day adolescents. This course may



be regarded as a method of dealing with the present emergency, an emergency which will no longer exist once biology has found its proper position in the school curriculum. As additional measures in the British Social Hygiene Council's programme of education there are special courses on social and sex hygiene for youth leaders and for parents.

For the young people contemplating marriage there should be definite instruction in the technique of sex-relations, with emphasis upon the fact that sex in marriage is an evolving relationship, and that complete adjustment to each other may come slowly. This is the rock upon which so many marriages break: inexperience and impatience, with a lack of knowledge of what to expect, lead young people to believe an initial difficulty to be an insuperable obstacle. They conclude, or one concludes and keeps it from the other, that they are sexually mismated, and unhappiness and too often the divorce court follow.

Experience shows that a great deal of disharmony in marriage is due to difficulties that have arisen on the physical plane, and that many of these difficulties could have been avoided had there existed a little more knowledge prior to marriage. If physical adjustment be lacking, differences of opinion that would have seemed trifling tend to grow, and these in turn increase the physical disharmony. Obstacles encountered on the physical plane have reverberations on the emotional, and vice versa those on the emotional affect the physical. It is strange that a man or woman can reach years of maturity without realizing what the physical side of marriage implies, yet this may happen. Even if something is known, the knowledge may be so incomplete or mixed with error as to be of small practical value. Attempts have been made to deal with this ignorance in America and elsewhere



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

by the establishment of marriage clinics, family relations clinics, and life adjustment centres, but in this country no such sources of information are available to those who are about to marry. This omission is not only due to the fact that the need of knowledge before marriage is not fully appreciated, but also to the difficulty of deciding who should impart it. Theoretically, the family doctor would seem to be the right person, but unfortunately all medical men are not sufficiently well equipped in sex knowledge to be the best advisers. Then, too, the experience of most of the marriage clinics in America has been that there is need for more instruction than that on the sex side of marriage alone. Marriage is a constructive task, and to give advice successfully to candidates for marriage requires the possession of wisdom as well as of learning. Suitable books are helpful, but in dealing with individual problems wide generalizations are useless, and it is upon his store of wisdom rather than on his reading that the adviser must call if he is to give real help.

The student needs to keep constantly in mind the fact that one develops his sexual philosophy on the basis of his own experiences and the needs of his particular personality. So it comes about that a dispassionate, impartial view of any problem in the sexual sphere is very hard to obtain; no matter how scientifically-minded the observer, his own point of view is bound to bias him. People who are normal personalities and who live a normal sex life are very apt to wonder what the pother is all about, and to believe that anybody can be 'decent' if he so desires; those whose sex-drive is weak will expect others to be content with the pale joys that satisfy them; the hyper-sexed or the emotionally unsatisfied are likely to be iconoclasts, smashing away at



customs or conventions that symbolize their own disabilities. The prude and the libertine, the sincere reformer and the person who believes in letting other people work out their own problems, all have their say on the question of sex, and it is well to remember that the most vocal are by no means always the best informed.

The student, unguided, is likely to be bewildered even by authoritative writers. Much of our knowledge of sex has been gained from the study of abnormal personalities, just as our knowledge of the body has been learned from the sick and diseased; many more words are still written about the abnormal than the normal in the sexual sphere, and the line is not always clearly drawn. Many writers are fond of speculation, and of stating their own opinions as if they were accepted by everybody. We need to remember that there is vastly more that is controversial in the psychology of sex than there is that is definitely proven.

When we remember that sex is life, we will not expect to learn all about it at any one point. We go on, as long as we live, feeling and experiencing, dropping old ideas and taking up new ones; making mistakes and learning from them if we are wise, spending time and energy regretting them if we are not. Things that seem right and good at one time look mean and selfish later; experiences that seem likely to break us turn out to be 'stepping stones to higher things'. Love takes many aspects as life advances; sometimes it attaches itself to persons, and again to things; it becomes devotion to a cause, or a flame of patriotism, or an ecstasy of religion. In the young, sex expresses itself as physical passion, as a desire for completest union with the beloved; in the old, with physical passion dead, sex still expresses itself in interest and affection, or sometimes in less pleasant ways.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION

All our lives our personalities may grow and develop, and perhaps the great art in life is to know how to turn to account the varied experiences that await us. For, since sex is life, it is life itself that teaches, and happy for the young when they can learn to go forward amid its inevitable risks, serene and unafraid.

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# INDEX







# INDEX

- ABERRATIONS, SEXUAL, 115
- Abortion, birth control by, 243  
death rate, from, 246
- Abyssinia, enforced chastity, 112
- Adolescence, love affairs in, 168  
necessity for normal associations, 203  
nostalgia of adult for, 174  
sex activity in, 100
- Adultery, fines for, 128  
punishment for, 114
- Africa, polygamy, 104  
prostitution in, 140
- Age of Marriage Act, 236
- Aleutian Islands, practice of polyandry  
in, 111
- America, chivalry in, 132
- American Academy of Political and  
Social Science, 11
- Andamans, monogamy of, 106
- Animals, care of young, 33  
development of the young, 32  
family life of, 40  
polygamy of, 38  
protective coloration of, 35  
secondary sexual characteristics, 34  
sex association among, 36  
sex evolution of, 27  
theory of monogamy in, 40
- Anthropological Studies in the Sexual  
Relations of Mankind*, Paolo Mantegazza, 11
- Aphrodite, temple of, 138
- Aristotle, on embryology, 59
- Ashanti, king's wives limited, 109
- Asia, polygamy, 104
- Attraction by happiness, 193  
effected by maternal or paternal influence, 216  
reasons for, 214  
standards of, 190  
unconscious, 214  
use of, 193
- Aucassin and Nicolette*, 93
- Australia, birth control, 244  
price of wives, 108  
puberty, initiation in, 96  
puberty, rites of, 99  
woman's status in, 107
- Austria, penalizes homosexual women,  
260
- Auto-erotism, case study, 197  
common in harems, 116  
definition, 56  
persistence of, 170  
problem of, 194  
remedies for, 198  
symptom of personality disorder, 195  
universal, 116
- BABYLON, MARRIAGE LAWS, 121
- Beard, Mary, 11
- Berlin, ball of homosexuals, 202
- Binet test, for mental age, 207
- Biological Foundations of Human Nature*,  
H. S. Jennings, 11
- Biology, beginning of, 19
- Birth control, contraceptives, 245  
controversy, 244  
definition, 221  
effect on population, 247  
methods, 222  
primitive methods, 243
- Birth Control Clinic, first in America,  
245
- Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau,  
statistics on abortions, 246
- Birth control clinics, increasing number,  
246
- Births, multiple, 78  
ratio to male and female, 79  
twinning, 78
- Bisexualism, occurrence of, 77  
theory of, 199
- Bloch, Ivan, on homosexuals, 203



# INDEX

- Books, on biology of reproduction in man, 83
  - on general Biology, 42
  - on marriages and family organization, 150
  - on problems, 234
  - on psychology of sex, 183
  - on sex education, 272
  - on sex in primitive society, 117
  - on society, 261
- Borneo, marital customs, 106
- Boston, investigation of prostitution in, 145
- Boys, demand for information, 212
  - ignorance of anatomy and physiology, 186
  - puberty ceremonies, 96
  - sex interest of, 168
  - value of wide acquaintanceship to, 217
- Brahma, hermaphroditic, 147
- Brahman, marriage laws, 105
  - patrilineal organization of Namburuti, 105
- Briffault, Robert, on Egyptian marriages, 121
  - on Malay marriages, 102
  - on maternal love, 41
  - on prolonged infancy, 87
- British Columbia, purification of hunters, 93
- Bully, 208
- Bushmen, prostitution at higher level, 116
  - puberty, rites of, 99
  - treatment of women, 108
- CABELL, JAMES BRANCH, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, 217
- California, University of, personality studies, 11
- Caligula, Emperor, tax on prostitutes, 142
- Calvinism, 133
- Case study, on frigidity, 225
  - on infantile fixation, 215
  - of prostitute, 206
- Castration, result of, 249
- Catholic Church, opposition to birth control, 245
  - opposition to contraception, 245
  - opposition to divorce, 239
- Cell, composition and development of the, 60
  - maturation, division of, 73
  - mitotic, division of, 72
- Central Conference of American Rabbis, approval of birth control, 246
- Chaldea, civilization of, 120
  - spell of sex, 119
- Charlemagne, punishment of prostitutes, 143
- Chastity, enforced, 112
  - inculcation of, 127
  - not forced among primitives, 101
  - no virtue in Greece, 125
  - of body and soul, 129
  - religious duty, 129
- Chicago, investigation of prostitution in, 147
- Child, auto-erotic stage, 158
  - curiosity concerning sex, 157, 162
  - effect of environment on emotional life, 153
  - effect of love on, 159
  - homosexual leaning of, 161
  - inalienable right of sex enlightenment, 164
  - individualism of, 162
  - normal child requires parental harmony, 160
  - welfare of, 152
- Childhood, seed of perversion sowed in, 161
  - sex activity in, 100
- Children, attitude of primitives toward, 95
  - freedom in America, 135
  - owe security to family, 107
  - parent child relationship, 106
  - precocity of savage, 96
- China, chastity at its zenith, 113



# INDEX

## *China—cont.*

- infanticide, in 95
- methods of contraception, 244
- Chivalry, age of, 132
- Christianity, sex and marriage under, 129
  - use of chastity in promotion of, 130
- Chromosomes, sex determiners, 71
- Church, against prostitution, 142
  - attitude toward divorce, 239
  - opposition to birth control, 244
  - refuge for women, 131
- Circumcision, mark of maturity, 99
- Civilization, early historical period, 119
- Clendenning, Dr. Logan, on superstitions, 190
- Cleopatra, narcissistic woman, 171
- Climacteric, period of the, 179
- Conception, act of, 59
- Concubines, in savage tribe, 110
- Constantine, prostitution punished by law under, 142
- Contagious Disease Acts, 258
- Contraception, abstinence, 222
  - artificial, 222
  - cause of nervous disorders, 223
  - scientific and medical term, 221
  - sterilization, 222
- Copulation, in man, 55
- Council of Macon, decision of, 131
- Council of Trent, effect on status of women, 131
- Courtesan, frequency at courts, 146
- Courtship, activities, 209
  - conventionalized forms of, 209
  - 'natural' lines of, 210
  - of adolescents, 210
- Courts of Love, 132
- Couvade, custom, 93
- Crawley, Alfred Ernest, on Zulu natives, 92
- Crete, civilization of, 120
  - feminine duties in, 123
  - patriarchal in seventh century B.C., 123
- Cryptorchidism, 49

## DARWIN THEORY, OF SEXUAL SELECTION, 35

- Davenport brothers, 11
- Davis, Dr. Katherine B., on auto-erotism of women, 196
- Delinquents, homosexual tendencies of, 207
- Dell, Floyd, on personality development, 204
- Demosthenes, on marriage, 125
- Dennett, Mary Ware, 158
- Dikterion, slave girls, 140
- Divorce, custody of children, 239
  - customs of, 111
  - grounds for, 240
  - increasing, 241
  - in Egypt, 122
  - jurisdiction, 241
  - opposition of churches, 263
- Don Juans, as homosexual types, 179
- Dowry, uncommon among primitives, 109
- Dreams, in puberty, 166
- Dutch New Guinea, marital customs in, 106
- Dyaks, punishment for infidelity, 114

## EDUCATION, AND SEX, 263

- in sex tends toward normality of child, 163
- methods of, 265
- modern trend, 264
- Egypt, marriage customs of, 120
  - methods of contraception, 244
  - spell of sex, 119
- Ellis, Havelock, 11, 136
- Embryos, characteristics of, 44
  - development of, 58
- Encyclical, dealing with contraception, 222
- Endocrinology, study of maturity in, 219
- Environment, effect of child's growth, 152
  - effect on emotional life of child, 153
- Eskimos, polyandry among, 111



# INDEX

- Eugenics, definition, 247
  - hope of experimental, 70
  - programme, 247
  - race betterment movement, 247
- Europe, chivalry in, 132
  - mistress recognized institution in, 146
  - monogamy in, 125
  - use of chastity belts, 112
- Evolution, theories upon, 21
- Evolution in Sex*, Gregorio Marañon, 11
- Exhibitionism, only means of satisfaction, 204
- Exogamy, rule of, 89
- Experimental biology, on changing sex characteristics, 75
  - on *Drosophila*, 60
  - progress of, 83
  - tests on strains, 251
- FAMILY, CHILD-REARING FUNCTION, 103
  - custom of in Samoa, 106
  - in America, 134
  - matrilineal organization, 103
  - organization, 101
  - paramount in Roman life, 127
  - primitive organization, 103
  - western organization, 103
- Fears, concerning sex, 185
- Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, approval of birth control, 246
- Fertilization, artificial, 57
  - mechanism of, 54
  - methods of, 29
- Fetishism, definition, 204
  - in courtship activities, 214
  - objects of worship, 205
- Filles de joie*, 143
- Fixations, definition of emotional, 169
  - efforts to conquer, 176
  - importance of childhood, 215
  - persistence of, 169
- Flagellation, whipping perversion, 205
- Flanders, Moll, 146
- Flexner, Abraham, prostitution in Europe, 145, 251
- Frazer, Sir James, 11
- Freud, Sigmund, 11, 190
- Friendship, homosexual, 168, 169
- Frigidity, causes of, 226
  - difficulty in sexual adjustment, 224
  - in women, 208
  - pathological condition, 224
- GEISHA GIRL, MODERN JAPANESE PROSTITUTE, 140
- Genes, composition of, 62
  - effect on heredity, 250
  - work of, 61
- George Washington University, personality studies, 11
- Germany, eugenic programme, 250
  - reversal of women's freedom, 137
- Girls, deflowering of, 113
  - demand for information, 212
  - ignorance of anatomy and physiology, 186
  - modern ideals, 210
  - puberty ordeals of, 98
  - sex interest of, 168
  - value of wide acquaintanceship to, 217
- Godin, Louis, on maturity of male, 187
- Goldbert, B. Z., account of temple of Aphrodite, 138
- Gonorrhoea, history of, 230
  - symptoms, 232
- Greece, custom of deflowering girls, 113
  - glorification of adolescent, 148
  - Hetairai of, 140
  - homosexuality in classical, 147
  - homosexual liaisons, 126
  - infanticide in, 94
  - man-made world, 123
  - methods of contraception, 243
  - on Egyptian marriage customs, 121
  - practices in houses of homosexuals, 148
  - purpose of marriage, 121
  - severe law against infidelity in, 126
  - spell of sex, 119



# INDEX

## *Greece—cont.*

- spell of sex in ancient, 119
- status of woman in, 122
- worship of Venus, 139
- Groves, Dr. Ernest R., on traits of attraction, 215
- secondary sex expression, 211
- Guttmacher, Alan, on consciousness of sex, 88
- Gwynn, Nell, 146
- Gynaecology, techniques in, 229

## HALL, G. STANLEY, 11

- on first puberty, 164

## Hermaphroditism, bisexual reproduction, 27, 29

- divinities worshipped for, 115
- rare among humans, 77
- true, 199

## Herodotus, 11

- account of temple of Venus, 138

## Hetairai, free women, 141

- in Greece, 125
- prostitutes of Greece, 141

## Heterosexualism, definition, 56

- the goal, 175

## Hinkle, Beatrice, on sex-linked characteristics, 199

## *Holy Deadlock*, A. P. Herbert, 241

## Homosexuality, as a personal problem, 199

- as a social problem, 260
- as medical and educational problem, 202
- crucial period of, 200
- definition, 56
- divinities worshipped for, 115
- efforts to prevent, 260
- increase debatable, 149
- in schools and institutions, 202
- occurrence of, 147
- of prostitutes, 207
- persistence of type, 171
- reasons for, 201
- recognized in classical Greece, 147
- remedies for, 204

## types of, 202

- uncommon among primitives, 115
- use of drugs, 260

## 'Homosexual panic', well known to psychiatrist, 260

## *Human Body, The*, Dr. Logan Clendenning, 190

## IGOROTS, FAMILY ORGANIZATION, 104

## Impotence, as cause of inferiority feeling, 228

- difficulty in adjustment, 223

## Impregnation, artificial, 231

## Incest, practised at feasts, 116

- primitive ideas of, 90

## Incompatibility, cause of, 223

## India, infanticide in, 95

## Individualism, growth of, 133

## Infancy, beginning of sex in, 153

- careful training needed, 156

## divisions of, 155

## duration in human, 86

## personality development in, 161

## personality traits in, 156

## plastic period, 162

## psychological inversion in, 200

## Infanticide, early custom of, 94

- tribal practice, 243

## Infantile masturbation, normal, 157

- pathological, 157

## Infibulation, 112

## Infidelity, Greek law against, 126

## Inheritance, defects, 70

- laws of, 66

## part of chromosomes in, 70

## 'sex-linked', 69

## 'International Traffic in Women and Children', report of League of Nations, 145, 254

## Intersexualism, occurrence of, 77

- theory of, 199

## Inverts, rare among primitives, 115

## JANUS, HERMAPHRODITIC, 147

## Japan, houses of prostitution in, 140

- infanticide in, 95



# INDEX

- Jennings, H. S., an evolution of family, 85  
 pessimism toward eugenic programme, 250
- Jung, Carl, 11
- Justinian, laws against prostitution, 142
- Juvenile Court, on rehabilitation of delinquents, 189
- KAFFIR, PROSTITUTION PRACTICES, 115  
 puberty ordeals, 98  
 standards of beauty, 191
- Kneeland, George J., study of prostitution in New York, 145
- Kona, women retain homes, 104
- LACROIX, PAUL, ON CHASTITY, 129  
 on 'King of Ribalds', 144
- Ladislaus, King, met by public girls, 143
- Laws, marriage, 236
- League of Nations, report on traffic in women, 254
- Lesbian, designation of homosexual women, 148
- Lesbos, home of Sappho, 148
- Libido, definition, 174  
 direction of, 199  
 loss of in older men, 181  
 undivided in women, 178
- Lindsey, Judge Ben B., advocate of companionate marriage, 221
- Livy, on temple of Venus, 128
- Louis XII, King, special costume for prostitutes, 143
- Love, an acquired characteristic, 151  
 divorce of sex from, 188, 198  
 experience before maturity, 212  
 patterns versus object, 216  
 product of social evolution, 218  
 romantic, 213  
 romantic not chance, 218  
 sexual elements of, 175
- Lupanars, house for male prostitutes, 149
- Luther, Martin, on marriage, 133
- MAINTENON, MADAME DE, 146
- Malabar, marriage customs, 105
- Malay, family organization, 104  
 marriage in, 102  
 superstitions, 92
- Malinowski, Bronislaw, 11  
 study of primitive tribes, 87
- Malthus, Robert, essay on population, 244
- Man, development of sex organs, 43  
 reproductive system of male, 44  
 resistance of, 79  
 the biology of reproduction, 43
- Mantegazza, Paolo, description of tribal birth control, 244  
 on customs of puberty initiation, 96  
 on Hetairai of Greece, 141  
 on homosexuality, 147  
 on prostitution, 137  
 on purchase prices of women, 108
- Manu, laws of, 91
- Manus, chastity taboos, 101  
 superstitions of, 92  
 taboos of, 89
- Maori, adultery of women punished by death, 114
- Marañon, Gregorio, on delayed puberty, 80  
 on hermaphroditism, 77  
 on homosexuality, 199  
 on homosexual tendency, 181  
 on maturity of male, 187  
 on women as homosexuals, 201  
 on voluptuous and maternal types, 225
- Marriage, activities, 209  
 among primitive tribes, 102  
 annulment, 239  
 a social problem, 236  
 birth control in, 221  
 causes of failure, 242  
 causes of incompatibility, 223  
 common-law, 236  
 companionate, 212  
 deferred economical necessity, 219  
 highly developed in ancient societies, 121



# INDEX

## *Marriage—cont.*

- ideals of, 135
- in classical world, 136
- incompatibility due to sex-abnormalities, 223
- in Ptolemaic period, 121
- later biologically sound, 219
- late versus early, 219
- laws inadequate, 237
- monogamous in Europe, 125
- origin of, 101
- re-organization of, 133
- restrictions, 236
- romanticism of, 217
- shatters romantic illusions, 214
- subordination to family, 107
- subsidize, 212
- the age of, 219
- theories on origin of, 101
- unilateral organization, 105
- Martin, Dr. Lillian J., clinic for older adjustment, 181
- Masochism, definition, 205
- Maternal instinct, evolution of, 152
- Matriarchy, in ancient Egypt, 122
- Maturity, achievement of emotional, 175
  - age of, 220
  - period of, 177
  - sexual, 81
- Masturbation, definition, 56
  - of girls, 195
  - of puberty, 195
  - symptom of personality, 196
  - theory concerning, 194
  - universal among savages, 116
- Matrimonial causes Act, 240
- Mead, Margaret, 11, 112, 192
  - on adolescent customs of Samoa, 100
  - on family organization, 105
  - on Manus children, 96
  - on Samoan aberrations, 115
- Melanesia, attitude toward sex, 87
  - status of women in, 107
- Men, aberration of old age, 182
  - attempt at rejuvenation, 182

- development of sex life, 178
- effects of aging, 82
- impotence of, 228
- in classical Greece, 123
- loath to lose sexual lives, 182
- naturally polygamous, 178
- punishment for adultery and infidelity, 115
- sterility, 229
- Mendelian law, 66
- Menopause, pathological, 179
  - psychological effects of, 179
- Menstrual cycle, mechanics of, 57
- Mental disease, importance to society, 237
- Mental hygiene, classes in, 10
  - disorders, transmission of, 238
- Metabolism, higher in males, 79
- Middle Ages, legal status of women in, 131
- Miller, Gerritt, on sex life of monkeys and apes, 49
- 'Modern American Family', 11
- Mongolia, polyandry practised by, 110
- Monogamy, 108
  - among all people, 110
  - effect on society, 236
  - easy evidence of, 85
- Morgan, T. H., 11
- Moses, laws of, 92
- Mothers, The*, Briffault, 11
- Mullins, Claud, on reforms, 242
- Mythology, worship of homosexuality, 147
- NAIRS, MARRIAGE CUSTOMS, 105
- Narcissism, criminal types, 171
  - persistence of, 170
- New Guinea, taboos of tribe, 90
- New York City, first Birth Control Clinic, 245
- Nigeria, family organization, 104
- Nineteenth century, status of women in, 134
- North America, polygamy, 104
- North Carolina, 140



## INDEX

- Nubia, enforced chastity, 112
- Nymphomania, disease of personality,  
223
- OFFSPRING, CARE OF, 33  
effect of syphilis on, 232  
maternal protection, 40  
period of helplessness, 33
- Old Age, biological meaning, 182
- Old Age Clinic, 181
- Olympus, homosexual leaning, 147
- Orgasm, necessity of, 56
- Orgies, religious, 116
- Orient, birth control in, 247  
homosexuality in harems, 147  
polygamy in ancient civilization, 123  
purpose of marriage, 124  
use of chastity belts, 112
- PAGAN FESTIVALS, SEX WORSHIP IN, 132
- Parthenogenesis, virgin birth, 27
- Patriarchy, of Rome, 127
- Paul, St., doctrines of chastity and  
marriage, 129  
on homosexuality, 148
- Pearson, Helen M., on asexual repro-  
duction, 22
- People, education in use of contra-  
ceptives, 245
- Pericles, 119
- Personalities, auto-erotic, 170  
homosexual, 170  
narcissistic, 170
- Personality, child development of, 158  
foundations laid in infancy, 161  
homosexual, 56  
love life, integral part of, 174  
put in sex sphere, 192  
reasons for abnormal, 173
- Perversion, away from normal goal, 204  
causes of, 205  
of sex, 204  
probably started in childhood, 161
- Petting, as an adolescent phenomenon,  
210  
biological standpoint, 210  
consequences of, 211  
effect on young people, 210  
modern courtships, 211
- Phantasy, part in love-life, 209
- Philippines, marriage customs, 104
- Phobias, concerning sex, 185
- Pimp, 208
- Pindar, 140
- Pius XI, Pope, Encyclical, 222
- Place, Francis, contraceptive knowledge,  
244
- Plants, sex evolution of, 25  
sex reversal of, 75
- Plutarch, on Spartan puberty ordeals,  
99
- Polyandry, 108  
infrequent but legitimate, 110
- Polygamy, 108  
common form of marriage, 110  
discourages sexual aberrations, 114  
early type of, 86  
of Indian tribes, 103
- Polynesian Islands, polygamy, 104
- Precocity, of savage children, 96
- Priestesses, as prostitutes, 138
- Primitives, emotional life of, 111  
sex life of, 116
- Primitive society, children in, 94
- Promiscuity, not tolerated, 134
- Prostitutes, professional, 252
- Prostitution, among primitives, 114  
a racket, 253  
as a social problem, 251  
as income for state, 140  
association with alcohol, 255  
control of, 144  
cost to society, 255  
definition of, 137  
devotion to managers, 208  
early practice of, 135  
economic waste, 255  
elimination improbable, 257  
increase in depression, 146  
lack of sex feeling, 208  
narcissism in, 208  
organized, 138



# INDEX

## *Prostitution—cont.*

- origin in primitive times, 115
- priestesses in, 138
- psychology of, 206
- reasons for, 207
- society recognizes evils of, 253
- temple, 139
- venereal disease, 256

## *Prostitution in Europe*, Abraham Flexner, 11

- Protestant Reformation, 131
- Psychiatrists, on homosexuality, 200
- Psycho-analysts, on homosexuality, 200
- Psychology, experiments on infant mind, 153
  - for harmony of home life, 160
  - of erotic types, 172
  - of prostitutes, 206, 209
- Psycho-sexual development, definition, 152
  - homosexual stage, 164
  - later stages of, 162
  - narcissistic stage, 162
  - stages of, 155
  - symptoms of poor, 190
  - varying rates of development, 176
- Puberty, day dreams in, 165
  - first stage of, 164
  - initiator rites of, 96
  - of boys, 80
  - of girls, 80
  - psychological effect of, 164
- Puritanism, 133
- Puritans, attitude toward sex, 134
- Pyromania, source of sexual excitement, 205

## RAPE, PERSECUTION MEASURE AGAINST CHRISTIANS, 130

## Reformation (*see* Protestant Reformation)

- Religion, fertility gods, 119
  - rules of behaviour, 128
  - sexual orgies, 120
- Repression, effect on personality, 174
- Reproduction, animal research, 43

- asexual, 22
- biology in man, 43
- bisexual, 29
- parthenogenesis, 27
- sexual attraction, 32
- specialization, 31

## Revival of Learning, 133

## Robbins Wilfred W., on asexual reproduction, 22

## Robie, Dr. Frederick W., on prostitutes, 197

## Roman Empire, spell of sex, 119

## Rome, homosexuality flourished in, 148

- marriage customs, 126
- methods of contraception, 243
- prostitutes slaves in, 141
- spell of sex in ancient, 119
- status of woman in, 127

## Russia, legalized abortion, 247

## romantic love in, 213

## SADISM, DEFINITION, 205

## Sahara, dowry to women, 109

## St. Elizabeth's Hospital, 10

## Samoa, adolescent customs, 100

- divorce customs, 111
- family organization, 106
- homosexual relationships, 115
- use of go-between in courtship, 192
- virginity requirements, 112

## Samoans, shallowness of emotional life, 154

## views of childhood sex activities, 100

## San Francisco, Old Age Clinic of, 181

## Sanger, Margaret, opening of Birth Control Clinic, 235

## Sappho, early homosexual, 148

## Satyriasis, disease of personality, 223

## Schroeder, Theodore, on development of chivalry, 132

## Sex, abnormal, 206

- attraction in, 34
- beginning of, 24
- debasing, 197
- development after birth, 79



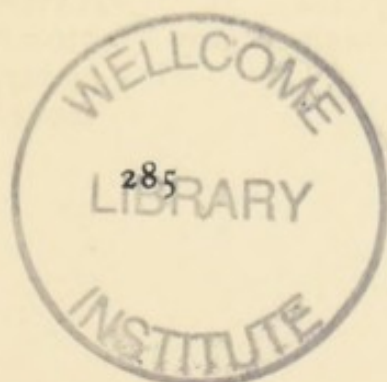
# INDEX

- Sex—cont.*  
determination of, 71  
effect of religion on, 129  
evolution of, 25  
in marriage, 269  
in primitive society, 85  
modern problems of, 137  
necessity for adjustment, 190  
part of hymen in history of, 52  
permeation of life of primitive, 112  
primitive attitudes toward, 87  
problems, 185  
psychology, 151  
secondary characteristics, 34  
summary of problem, 267  
teachers for, 267  
Sex association, animal groupings, 36  
Sex-linked characteristics, biological evidence, 199  
Sex organs, anatomy and physiology of female, 50  
anatomy and physiology of male, 47  
*Sex Education of Children, The*, Mary Ware Dennett, 158  
Shakespeare, William, character development, 171  
Shaw, Bernard, on state of world, 136  
Sin, foreign to primitive mind, 116  
sex as, 129  
Siva, hermaphroditic, 147  
Social origins, matriarchal, 86  
patriarchal, 86  
theories, 85  
Society, and sex, 235  
attitude toward homosexuality, 260  
cost of mental defectives, 247  
cost of venereal disease, 257  
indictment of prostitution, 254  
responsibility toward child, 175  
Soudan, enforced chastity, 112  
Souteneur, 208  
South Africa, puberty rites, 92  
South America, polygamy, 104  
South Wales, sex teachings in elementary schools, 267  
Soviet Russia (*see* Russia)  
Sparta, infanticide in, 94  
practice of eugenics, 251  
puberty ceremonies, 99  
status of woman in, 126  
Sterility, causes in men, 230  
causes in women, 229  
in male and female, 229  
more common in women, 229  
Sterilization, by salpingectomy in women, 249  
by vasectomy in male, 249  
for race betterment, 248  
method, 249  
States adopting, 249  
Sublimation, 174  
definition, 169  
Substitution, definition, 169  
Superstitions, concerning girls' sex interest, 188  
concerning pregnancy, 190  
concerning sex, 91, 185  
concerning sexual difficulties, 189  
of menstruation, 185  
of pregnancy, 186  
of primitive peoples, 91  
Syphilis, effect on offspring, 231  
history vague, 230  
symptoms and etiology, 231  
TABOOS, 185  
among primitive people, 89, 138  
of Samoa, 100  
Theodosius, laws against prostitution, 142  
Tibet, polyandry in, 110  
Timur, purchase price of women, 108  
Trade Guilds, of prostitutes, 143  
Twentieth century, Feminism, 135  
puritan ideals, 134  
status of woman in, 134  
Twins, types of, 79  
VAERTING, MATHILDE, ON EXPLANATION OF COUVADE, 93  
Vaerting, Matthias, on explanation of couvade, 93



# INDEX

- Venereal disease, dangers from in  
    adolescence, 188  
    laws governing, 258  
    problem in sex sphere, 230  
    social problem, 256
- Venus, favours asked of, 139  
    temple of, 139
- Vesta, worship of, 127
- Vienna, public girls in, 143
- Virginity, among savage peoples, 112  
    no virtue in Sparta, 126
- Virgin Mary, deification of, 132
- WASSERMANN TEST, 231
- Waxsaw, income from prostitutes, 140
- Well of Loneliness, The*, Radclyffe Hall,  
    161
- Wells, H. G., on early families, 86  
    on state of world, 136
- White Slave Traffic, business of, 145
- Women, as camp followers, 142  
    as chattels, 110, 131  
    changes from menopause, 82  
    degradation of, 131  
    development of sex life, 177  
    dowry in classical Greece, 123  
    effect of chivalry on status, 132  
    effect of menopause upon, 180  
    emancipation, 135  
    freedom of conduct in Egypt, 122  
    freedom of conduct in Sparta, 126  
    frigidity in, 224  
    group marriages, 109  
    homosexual lack maternal instinct,  
        201  
    husband's wealth determined by  
        number of, 108  
    loath to lose sexual lives, 180  
    loss of respect, 112  
    naturally monogamous, 178  
    place in early church, 130  
    position in ancient societies, 121  
    position in classical world, 123  
    position in middle ages, 131  
    prominence in ancient civilizations,  
        121  
    punished for adultery, 114  
    purchase of, 108  
    reproduction system of, 48  
    secondary sexual characteristics of,  
        54  
    status in Germany, 137  
    status in Italy, 137  
    status in classical Greece, 126  
    sterility, 229  
    subjection of, 107, 111
- World War, effect of sex life, 137
- XENOPHON, 140
- ZUCKERMAN, S., ON SEX LIFE OF  
    MONKEYS AND APES, 40
- Zulu, superstitions, 92
- Zuñi, matriarchy of, 103





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