

Three Things

Novel

Elinor Glyn

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THREE THINGS

BY

ELINOR GLYN



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INTRODUCTION

Contents

I HAVE called this little collection of articles which I have written "THREE THINGS" because to me there seem to be just three essentials to strive after in life. Truth—Common Sense and Happiness. To be able to see the first enables us to employ the second, and so realise the third. And in these papers I have tried to suggest some points which may be of use to others who, like myself, are endeavouring to reason out ideas to a good end.

How often one sees people who could be very happy, and who yet with incredible blindness and stupidity are running their heads against stone walls (or feather beds!) and destroying all chance of peace for themselves, their mates, and their households!

Everything is very simple when it is analysed down to what nature meant in the affair—and by doing this one gets a broader perspective.

For instance, nature meant one thing in the connection of man and woman—and civilisation has

grafted quite another meaning into it, and the two things are often at war in the State called marriage! In the chapters devoted to this subject I have tried to exploit some points which are not generally faced, in the hope that if understood they might help towards Happiness.

The thing which more than half of humanity seems to forget is *the end they have in view*! They desire something really ardently, and yet appear incapable of keeping their minds from straying into side issues, which must logically militate against, and probably prevent, their desire's accomplishment. This is very strange! A woman for instance profoundly desires to retain a man's love when she sees it is waning—but her wounded vanity causes her to use methods of reproach and recrimination towards him, calculated certainly to defeat her end, and accelerate his revolt.

I feel that in publishing this little collection in America I must ask indulgence for the parts which seem to touch upon exclusively English aspects of the subjects under discussion—because the main ideas apply to humanity in general and not to any particular country. The paper on Divorce is of course written from an English point of view, but its suggestions may be of some use to those who are interested in the question of divorce in the abstract, and are on the alert as to the results of its facilities in America. I do not presume to offer an opinion as to its action there; and in this paper am not making the slightest criticism of the American divorce laws—only stating what seems to me should rule all such questions in any country, namely,—Common sense and consideration for the welfare of the community.

Above all things I am an incorrigible optimist!

and I truly believe that the world is advancing in every way and that we are already in the dawn of a new era of the understanding, and the exploitation for our benefit of the great forces of nature. But we of the majority of non-scientists, were until so lately sound asleep to any speculative ideas, and just drowsed on without thinking at all, that it behooves us now that we are awake in the new century to try to see straight and analyse good and evil.

In my papers on the Responsibility of Motherhood I may be quite out of touch with American ideas—but I will chance that in the hope that some parts of them may be of service, taken broadly.

ELINOR GLYN.

PARIS, 1914.

I

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

Contents

THE Old order changeth, giving place to New; and it would be well to realise this everlasting fact before we decide that the world is waxing evil, and the times are waxing late. And who can say that out of the seething of the present some noble and glorious ideals of life for men and women may not spring?

Surely it is unwise to read in the writing upon the wall, as so many do, only a pessimistic presage of inevitable death. If there is writing for students of evolution to read, then it should be taken as a warning indication which direction to avoid and which to take. Unrest is a sign, not of decay, but of life. Stagnation alone gives warning of death.

And there are a number of facts to be faced before we can give an opinion either way.

The first of these is, that all civilised nations are endeavouring to stamp out ignorance and disease, and that an enormous advance in this direction can be observed in the last fifty years. And, taking a general view of the civilised peoples, a far greater number of their units now lead less dreadful and degraded lives.

And surely these indications of mankind's advancement are as plain as are some other signs of decline.

The stirring up of the masses by insufficient education is bound to produce unrest, and until the different elements have assorted themselves into their new places in the scheme of things, how can there be tranquillity? All is out of balance, and has disturbed the machinery of the country's life, for the time being. But if the aim has been for enlightenment, the eventual outcome must be good.

All scum in a boiling pot rises to the top, and

makes itself seen, concealing the pure liquid beneath, until it is skimmed off. And so we have political demagogues shouting the untenable fallacy that all men are equal, together with other flamboyant nonsense; and hooligan suffragists smashing windows. But all these are only the scum upon the outside of a great upward movement in mankind, and are not to be taken as the incontestable proof of the vicious condition of the whole mass.

The spirit that is abroad, though one of great unrest, is not one of decadence, but of progress. But it would be folly not to admit that there are aspects of it which presage disaster unless directed, just as the pot will boil over if not watched.

It may be interesting to scrutinise, with unemotional common sense, some of the causes of the present state of things, and perhaps from this investigation come to some conclusions as to their remedy or encouragement.

Nature, whether human, animal, or vegetable, will not be hurried, or she produces the abnormal. Until about a hundred years ago everything seemed to be moving on with a very slow and gradual evolution. Some things changed a little, others it would seem, not at all. And then, after the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Science and Invention appeared to join hands, and, with small beginnings, gradually assuming mammoth proportions, to revolutionise the very universe. The result has been to make life easy to a class which formerly had to work hard for the bare necessities of existence. With this came education. The lowest of the people were taught to read and write, and the most ill-chosen and elementary book-knowledge was flung upon unploughed soil, unprepared for its

reception. Nature was hurried, and began to produce, not fair flowers at once, but the abnormal and diseased. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

The education these crude minds received was not of the sort to show them their ignorance, and implant in them a noble desire for more teaching, so as to achieve a gradual advancement, but was just sufficient to stir up discontent with what was, and produce countless square pegs, clamouring to get into round holes for which they were unfitted.

Mechanical inventions did away with numbers of home duties, and even the meagre education the masses then received was enough to cause them to throw grave doubts upon the accepted religion of the country. The timid souls were released from the fear of hell, as a powerful factor for the determining of their actions. The bold felt they would have the support and sympathy of numbers of their fellows in breaking up old beliefs, and the intelligent of both kinds refused to swallow many of the dogmas any longer.

Thus the bridle which, through the Christian ages, had guided mankind, became as a mere thread. And all these loosened steeds ran wild and are still running wild, until enlightenment shall come to them, and they will perceive that each individual is responsible to God for himself.

The cry that the churches are emptying is perhaps true; and if it is a fact, then of what use to lament it? It would be more logical to search for the cause. If people do not come of their own accord, there is no law to oblige them to do so. Consequently, if the churches wish for their return, it is their business to provide fare which will induce

them to take this course.

Education has encouraged men and women to think for themselves, and the religiously minded, who would willingly remain under some guidance, have begun to perceive how very wide apart Christ's beautiful teaching is from the interpretation of it which they often receive in church; while the others, who had never any religious aspirations at all, are glad that the weight of public opinion and custom no longer forces them into irksome attendance. To fill churches with worshippers drawn there largely through hope of Heaven or fear of Hell, or because it was considered respectable and custom bound them to conform to its mandates, surely could not have been very acceptable to God. And the percentage who went truly to pour forth their love and worship, are still pouring it forth, because it came, and comes, from their hearts whether they attend church or no.

The modern spirit is full of what Edmond Holmes calls the desire to ask the teacher or person in authority for his credentials. And if these are not entirely satisfactory, the influence he can hope to wield will be nil.

To deplore anything that may happen to a country, or to ourselves, is waste of time. We should search for the reason of it, and if it proves to be because there is some ineradicable cause, intelligence should then be used to better the condition which results. Worship of something glorious and beyond ourselves will always swell the human heart, and if the accepted forms of the religion of a country can no longer produce this emotion, it is not because the human heart is changing, but because there is something in those forms which no longer fulfils its mission.

The cry of the fear of the net of Rome is futile also. People drift to where they belong, and Rome seems to offer to take all spiritual responsibility from the shoulders of her children. It gives them an emotional satisfaction which brings comfort to all, and amongst these any of hysterical nature probably become far happier and better citizens under her wing than they would otherwise have been. No nets will catch the expanding soul which is rising out of its paltry self into ideals nearer to God.

During the earlier days when religion held sway in England over at least nine-tenths of female lives, superfluous women were content as a rule to lead grey, uneventful existences, making no more mark on their time than if they had been flocks of sheep. But with the breakdown of this force, and greater freedom of ideas, they have brought themselves into prominence—the scum as a shrieking sisterhood, and the pure elements unobtrusively, as leaders of countless noble works.

Meanwhile, in every class of the community the desire “to move” is felt. Travelling, formerly the luxury of the rich, now is indulged in by an ever-increasing company. The aspect of family life is changed, and amusement is within the reach of all.

It is not reasonable to suppose with this total alteration in the view of existence, that many things that we held beautiful and sacred should not have gone by the board—things such as filial respect, gentle manners, chivalry, obedience. We are undoubtedly in an unpleasant state of incompletion as a nation to-day, but by no means in one of decadence. And if only the two great dangers do not swamp us—a mawkish and hysterical humanitarianism, and the heedless pursuit of

pleasure as the only end—the upward tendency of progress is bound to go on. Inventions, aided by science in all its ramifications, have made life pleasant, and all these benefits have come too quickly for the recipients to be prepared to receive them with calm. Their equilibrium is disturbed, and they are led into exaggerations, and so the ugly side of the spirit of the Great Unrest is born. But, underneath, the English people are a sane, healthy stock in mind and body, and when education has opened their minds and broadened their understanding, they will surely allow their birthright of common sense among the nations to have sway again. Instead of standing aside and lamenting that times are evil and that the nation is going down hill, it behoves all thinking people to gather their forces together and seriously apply themselves to consider how they can better this condition of things. In their daily life they can do so by setting up a high standard of sanity and right behaviour, by the encouragement of fine aims and high ends, by the firm avoidance of hypocrisy and hysterical altruism, and by intelligent explanation to those under their care of the reason why individual responsibility is necessary for the welfare of the community at large.

And a most important lesson for every one to learn is the law of cause and effect. The great rush of modern life is apt to produce an inconsequence of action. Anything good or bad is indulged in without time for thought as to its result. But the law of the boomerang is immutable, and its action goes on for ever—*what we send out we receive again, sooner or later, for good or ill*.

The first principle of that great and wonderful wave of “New Thought” which is sweeping over

America, and is beginning to find some understanding in this country, is that the responsibility of each individual's well-being rests with himself, and that his environment is the result of what his consciousness has been able to attract to himself.

And, as no one limits us but ourselves, as soon as a man's consciousness begins strongly to create in his own mind new and better conditions, he will inevitably draw them to himself in fact. From God there can emanate nothing but Good. It is the individual's own action which brings his punishment, or reward. If this fundamental principle could be investigated by responsible scientists, unhampered by theological influences, and with no prejudice as to the idea's being regarded as a mere *culte*, its exactness could perhaps be mathematically proved beyond a cavilling doubt. Possibly then the doctrine might be allowed to be taught in the public schools, to the everlasting benefit of the growing race.

To say the least of it, it would inculcate an immense self-respect.

There should not be, and I believe there is not, any law which can prevent the lowest in the land from rising to the highest place—*if he is fitted for it*. It is the ceaseless cry of the unfit unit for some situation above his capabilities, which is a distressing feature of modern life. But, even in this, the spirit shown in the desire to rise is good; while if he had the will to fit himself for what he aspires to, it would be splendid and great. And these are the men and women who succeed, no matter what avocations they may be engaged in. The others, the shouters, only hamper the wheels of progress and fall eventually as the dust in the ruts.

Formerly there was a hard line drawn between "gentlemen" and common men. And there were all sorts of things that, however bad he might be, a "gentleman" did not do; or if he did commit these actions, his punishment was swift. He was obliged to face the ordeal of a duel, or he received the cut direct from his own class.

These ideas of behaviour, accompanied by the responsibility for the welfare of numbers of tenants upon his property—responsibility very often nobly sustained—produced in the old English aristocrat a very fine specimen indeed. And from him downwards in all the social classes, a high tone of honour was maintained. But now the democratic idea is sweeping away these classes and these standards. The State is taking the power for good from the individual, and the machine is crushing the man; so it behooves all serious thinkers more than ever to use their logical common sense to supply the place once occupied by the old ideals. Nothing is so arrogant as ignorance—and loud shouting ever concealed an empty pate.

Part of the crude spirit of the Great Unrest of to-day manifests itself by the effort of those beneath to demonstrate *in words* that they are the equals of those above them. And, pitiful and ridiculous as this is, the spirit arose in good. It is because those underneath *desire* to be the equals of those above them, that they use the only means their limited understandings provide them with, to try to obtain their ends. You never hear of numbers of people shouting that they are the equals of the tramp in the street!

So it shows that even in this, the Great Unrest is an uplifting force. And when reason and education

have directed its current, surely we may hope that we shall arise again as a nation, like a giant refreshed with wine.

The study of the atavism of races, the study of heredity, the study of the influence of the welfare of the mother upon her unborn child, are all useful and expanding studies for ordinary thinking minds, and are quite within the scope of the average intelligence. But the modern hatred of all restraint—another failing born in the good of desire for freedom—makes it difficult to preach any course of action which would involve curtailment of time or pleasure.

You often hear people say about some misfortune, "Just as I expected, such and such happened," and they do not stop to realise that their expectancy helped the thing which they feared, to materialise. No one can deny the force of imagination. Its existence has been abundantly proved. For instance, there was a case which was in the newspapers some time ago, of the guard on a Russian train who believed he was locked into the cold-storage van, and wrote a letter describing how he was being frozen to death. And he was actually found dead in the morning, although the temperature of the car had never gone below freezing point!

People will readily credit this, but will ridicule the idea that their own imaginations are daily helping or hindering their own and others' lives.

Marconi demonstrated that messages can be transmitted by wireless telegraphy, and his discovery became a thing of commercial value. So it was believed in as nothing marvellous, but merely as a new departure of science. Yet the numberless proofs

of other currents beyond our actual sight which manifest themselves each day in every life, and influence it, are unconsidered quantities, if not actually denied.

But there they are; and though, as the demonstration of an exact science, they are laughed to scorn, their force is unconsciously admitted in a hundred cant phrases, such as, “He was under an evil influence,”—“She makes you feel better because she is so cheerful,” etc., etc.—Both these things here alluded to as forces are intangible, and yet are real proofs of the power of imagination.

This shows how tremendously important it is never to allow our imagination to run into prognostications of evil, either in predictions for our country, for ourselves, or for our friends. Each unit should try to help the great force for good by sending forth strong positive thoughts for its upliftment.

Think, for a moment, under what a terrible shadow the soul of Christian man has lain for these many hundred years! Ever since the doctrine of original sin was forced upon his belief, his soul has come into the world handicapped by millions of thought-currents expecting it to do evil, unless continuously controlled and curtailed and punished into a semblance of good! It cannot be wondered at, then, that sometimes these forces become too strong for it, and it does fall into sin. But what an insult to God, the source of all love and beauty and holiness, to suppose He would permit a tarnished atom of Himself to reach the exquisite world He has created!

All who wish for enlightenment upon this subject, and as to how they should view their children and their race, should read Edmond Holmes’s masterly work upon elementary education,

"What Is, and What Might Be."

We cannot stop the force which our own action, in giving education to the lowest people, has put in motion, and which has produced, from their status upward, the "Great Unrest." We can hardly even hope to control it; but we can and must do all in our power to guide and direct it into channels for the good and glory of our dear country, making it, as the fire Prometheus stole from heaven, an incentive to noble actions and great ends.

Could not the people with large influence, who are interested in this matter, band together and discuss some scheme for the sending out of lecturers all over England who would explain, with common sense entirely stripped of all politics or religion, to the rising generation, the vast importance of individual responsibility—the duty of all citizens—the glory of helping the great force aright? Explanations, in a practical and simple form, would do more than a thousand laws, or all the thunders from the pulpit or the platform. If the children in every school could be made to feel they are all little men and women, full of God's gift of a soul, able and willing to help the raising of their country, they would soon graft a new spirit into their homes. They would respond as readily as do the hundreds of brave men who volunteer for active service, and probable death, to reinforce a fire-brigade, or a life-boat's crew. Children are so wise when their fine instincts are appealed to.

If only this fundamental principle could be understood—that each individual has in this life, or some former one, attracted to himself the exact environment that he is now in—and that it lies only with himself whether he remains in it, or lifts himself

out of it, there would be no more class hatred, no more railing against hard luck and injustice, but a steady increase of betterment all over the world.

The unfortunate thing is, that nearly all writers and talkers and lecturers, who are enthusiasts, and therefore really believe in what they are preaching, have so little common sense.

They carry away their readers or audiences for the moment upon the current of their own divine enthusiasm, but when their utterances come to be measured by the cold light of fact, the logical conclusions are so faulty, that the whole, which contained many thoughts of great and beautiful worth, is dismissed as the ravings of a dreamer, and ceases to have any effect.

The main attribute of any religion, of any ethical teaching, of any principle—to be of use to men and women at the present stage of their development—*must* be incontestable common sense. Ridiculous sentimentality should be ruthlessly crushed, and investigation of the meaning of Nature should be strenuously encouraged. And with clear eyes we should try to see the truth. Let those born fighters who like fighting for fighting's sake, and who now wage war against windmills, being armed with prejudice and false conceptions of man's place in relation to God, turn their belligerent powers to the demolition of the double-headed Hydra, Hypocrisy and Deceit.

It is the duty of every true man and woman at this hour of their country's day to begin to THINK, to weigh for himself or herself the meanings of the signs of the times, to use their critical faculties, to face facts honestly, unhampered by prudery, convention, or the doctrines of the Church. And then

they will see for themselves that the Great Unrest is a force, the direction of which, for good or ill, lies in their own hands. And according to the way they fulfil the responsibility entailed upon them in this matter, they or their children will reap the reward, or pay the price. The Great Unrest in its seething is still molten metal, which can be poured into what mould we will.

To call this Great Unrest a sign of decadence and a presage of destruction, would be as fallacious as to say that electricity is an entirely mischievous force. Both are mischievous when undirected, and both are glorious when used for good.

The test of the expansion of man's soul is the extent of its outlook. The puny spirit sees an hour or two ahead; the more advanced probably conceives plans to benefit himself and his loved ones day by day. The developed soul desires the good of his country. But the soul that is infinite and emancipated sees into eternity and demands of God the regeneration of humanity.

II

THE GOSPEL OF

COMMON SENSE

Contents

OF all the attributes which we of the twentieth century should most strenuously encourage, that of common sense ranks first, in the face of the hysteria which threatens to weaken, if it does not swamp, all the wonderful new spirit of progress which is abroad.

Common sense applied to everything alone can restore our equilibrium as a nation, because as the years of this new century go on hysteria seems to increase. Nothing in the way of a public event can happen, from the just condemnation of a criminal for some atrocious crime, to the sinking of an ocean mammoth ship, but a large section of the public makes an outcry inspired by altruism or so-called humanitarianism, both developing into hysteria.

Let us look at the reason of this carefully, and we shall see that this state of things is the direct result of an irresponsible employment of the gigantic power of thought. Some few excitable brains start an idea, the circulation of which is made possible by the modern facilities for expression in the press. And because the majority of readers do not think for themselves, they are drawn into the current of unrest which has thus been suggested to their imagination, each individual augmenting its strength until it grows into a torrent of folly.

This proves the tremendous importance it is to a nation that each of its units should realise his own responsibility in regard to this matter. The moment that such a thing could be accomplished—that is,

that the understanding of the power of thought could be brought home to people—there are millions of sound, honest folk who would deliberately try to use their possession of it for the good of themselves and the race, and who would bring up their children to do likewise.

The wave of complete materialism which passed over Europe during what we call the Victorian period discouraged any personal investigation of forces beyond what could actually be proved by the senses. Numberless examples of natural phenomena were laughed to scorn as the illusions of the ignorant. People read their Bibles, wherein there are countless instances shown of the power of thought, and never dreamed of applying the teaching to themselves. How such a materialistic age ever accepted Christ's miracles is a matter for wonderment, although now, looked at from the point of view of those who have investigated the currents of nature, the miracles are merely a proof of Jesus' divine understanding of these currents and forces in their greatest measure. We modern people are only as yet at the experimental stage, and hedged in by timidity and custom, but there is no reason why we should not advance if we desire to do so.

Think how the power of thought showed itself about the *Titanic* disaster! There is no need now to go over its hysterical effects upon us on land, how in our misery and anxiety we praised and blamed from excitable imagination, before any actual facts could be known to justify either course. But let us instead try to imagine what in its glorious form it did upon that great ship on the night of her overwhelming.

Everything seems to have been calm and in fair order. Why? Because it has been now proved that the

majority of those on board did not *think* the ship could sink. Only a limited number of men *knew* that she not only could, but *would*, and these glorious and splendid souls did their duty to the last, with the awful knowledge of certain death in their hearts. Their names should be written in letters of gold—heroes, indeed! But, meanwhile, the power of thought had kept all calm, and had permitted the saving of the women and children without panic.

Think for a moment what would have happened if the passengers of all classes had been aware, from the first moment of the collision, that all were bound to go down who could not find places in the boats. The power of thought would then have created a mad panic of fear which no officers' pistols could have kept in check, and which might have produced a rush upon the lifeboats which would have swamped them all. But as it was, the power of thought in the few individuals who realised the general peril, was used by them in a godlike suppression of their own emotion, which produced an answering vibration of calm in the majority under their care.

I do not want to refer to the awful story except in so far as it is a concrete illustration of what I wish to write about—the power of thought examined with common sense in its relation to the happiness of each individual, and the responsibility of its employment by each individual for the benefit of the community—not from the desire to use this opportunity to circulate propaganda for any of the new ethical teachings, but simply from a common-sense point of view to see what good we can get out of a belief that is, I suppose, common to them all.

Now let us consider what most of us do actually

know about this power of thought. We all are aware that no picture can be painted, no machinery invented, before a clear vision of it has been realised in the creator's brain. Not a single conscious action can be put into motion and force without its having first occurred to the imagination. The painter's hand and brush would be of no avail undirected by his brain or mind, which has first mentally visualised what it wishes to create in fact. Draw the analogy from this, and you will see that what you think about must have an enormous bearing upon your life. If thought, when inspired by desire, is strong enough to cause the hand to reproduce the vision of the imagination of the artist, this is an incontestable proof that thought is a very strong force indeed. You will agree with this if you—each individual who is reading these words—begin to examine yourself with truth.

Admitted, then, that you perceive the force of thought. Now consider what miserable thinking is likely to bring you. It, according to the analogy above, can only eventually attract for you *in fact* the miserable conditions that you have dwelt upon in imagination. If, on the contrary, you think constantly of fine and prosperous things, you must by this reasoning, be connecting yourself with the currents which can bring them in their material form.

Therefore, every time you say "I am ill," or think "I am ill," are you not helping the illness to materialise? because the power of thought, which you cannot deny as the initial cause of every action, has then been turned to aid the condition of ill health.

Supposing for some cause you really are ill, why then help this evil state to augment by your

thoughts? Rather impede its progress as far as you can by creating good-thought conditions.

You may reply, “But I am constantly doing this, and yet nothing good comes.” Pause and use your common sense by remembering that for twenty—thirty—forty years perhaps, when you did not analyse matters, you were laying up for yourself numberless stumbling-blocks by wrong thinking, which according to the law we are discussing must be surmounted before you can start on a clear road. And the reason why you do not immediately receive the result of your good thoughts is that you are still under the action of your bad ones. But if you recognise this law of the power of thought, you need not incur for yourself any further debts to pay.

And to recognise it as a law you have only to use your common sense to see that it is not conceivable that thoughts can have no effect outside your own brain. They cannot be wasted and go into nothingness, they *must* strike some answering vibration somewhere, and it is surely rational to suppose they will strike the kindred vibration rather than some totally different one, as the Marconi messages strike the pole in tune to them. At least, it is worth while trying to believe this, because if you can it will make you happier.

Alas! I am not a scientist who can dogmatically prove every fraction of my beliefs. I only want to awaken my readers to think for themselves upon this interesting subject, for the facts are there for us all to investigate, unaided by scientists, if we will.

So without any more argument, shall we take it for granted that you are with me thus far, and have seen my point? Yes. Then let us examine what our thoughts do for us.

For example, let us suppose a man has a disease which is believed to be incurable. His thoughts tell him so constantly, and the thoughts of his friends, often expressed in words, convince him still further of his misfortune. He is certain nothing he can do will make it better, and any remedy that is applied will only meet with failure. He has made his mental picture of an incurable disease; and so he is helping the material result to accomplish itself. But, as hope springs eternal in the human breast, he still goes from doctor to doctor for fresh advice, while unconsciously nullifying the benefit he might receive from doing so by his attitude of mind in holding the belief that nothing can cure him. We must all of us know of cases like this, and have seen the gradual increase in the person's illness.

Now supposing that the starting-point is the same; the disease certainly is there, but the man is determined not to aid and augment this state of things, so whenever the thought presents itself that he has an incurable disease he persistently banishes it and replaces it with one that he will grow well. He will be aiding that condition; he will be making himself the pole in tune to receive the answering vibrations of his mental picture. He will know that he must be drawing to himself every chance that science has up till this time of the world's day been able to invent or discover for the betterment of such a disease as his. He will know that he is giving nature a free hand, and as far as he is able, he is opening every door to the probability that he may grow well. Now, if we admit the power of thought, we must admit it has power to go both these ways. Is it not worth while trying to think good things for ourselves, then, instead of evil ones?

It does not seem possible, as I understand some assert, that by mere thinking and believing we can cure even a broken arm. Because, although the principle may be right in its eventuality, no one on earth can be quite advanced enough yet to draw these forces to himself sufficiently strongly to demonstrate it as Christ did. But we are at the stage when, by our thoughts, we can certainly aid physical means of betterment. Thus when we or our friends are ill, it lies in our own hands whether we will aid or retard our or their recovery.

Long years ago, before any of these psychic waves were discussed or given the least credence, I remember a very celebrated American doctor telling me, as a curious fact, that he often got his patients over the crisis of typhoid fever by telling them cheerfully beforehand that the dangerous moment was passed, and they were not to worry over the seemingly worse physical sensations they were perhaps about to experience—these were only the reaction. In that way, he said, he removed the amount of fear from the mind of the patient which otherwise might have been enough to cause the extra exertion to the heart which would have proved fatal at the critical moment. The power of thought, you see, and nothing else, then saved them.

To continue this line of reasoning in mental, not physical, things. Supposing you feel angry and resentful towards some one, and you send out thoughts of hate and ill-will. The pole in tune to such feelings in that person will answer and return them to you, and a condition of evil will be created. But supposing that, when perhaps the justly angry and resentful thoughts present themselves, you replace them instantly with kind and loving ones. You will

have disconnected yourself with the evil thoughts of the other person, they can no longer reach you, and if he has any good in him you will have connected yourself with that good, and so peace can be established.

All this is common sense, which is the only attitude of mind with which to approach any new suggestion that we may get benefit from it, and not through our arrogant ignorance dismiss it as nonsense, until we have proved it to be such. A hundred years ago the telephone would have been considered either as magic or the vapourings of a madman if an individual had tried to explain it. We say that "France is developing a new spirit," we say "A wave of discontent seems to be passing over such and such a community," we are thus unconsciously admitting the power of forces beyond the perceptible. Why cannot we instantly grasp, then, what the power of our everyday thought is doing for us, and how careful we should be in its direction to avoid augmenting the current of foolish and harmful ones—because unity is strength. There are many grains of good to be got out of all new ethical teachings, if only they can be sifted by common sense. The unfortunate part is, that very often it is only the faddists who expound them, and they go off at a tangent. One reads several pages of illuminating matter, and then, perhaps, one comes upon a chapter devoted to proving that mankind must train itself to live upon nuts or uncooked vegetables! Or that the only way to learn concentration is for the pupil to school himself mentally to stare for so many minutes at an imaginary spot in the solar plexus!

Common sense revolts, although many may not be sufficiently trained to make the deduction that if

God, the omnipotent, original, all-dominating dynamo, gave the flesh of bird, beast and fish, and the fruits and vegetables of the earth for mankind to feed upon, it is a little ridiculous for one sect to eliminate as food all but the special part of these aliments of which it approves. Thus, common sense being affronted, all the rest of the teaching is likely to fall upon stony ground and only be received by the faddists in tune to this particular argument. No theory for the betterment of mankind will succeed now with the mass of people or make any lasting mark upon time unless its basic principle can stand practical dissection.

So that upon this subject of the power of thought, all that any one at the present stage can do, no matter what his own personal beliefs may be, is to try and awaken people to think about it themselves and make their own investigations; to open a window for any soul to look through and see what he can get from it for himself. Because, as yet, the scientists and psychologists have not been sufficiently interested in the idea to endeavour to prove and demonstrate it as an exact science beyond all controversy. When this has been done, the intelligent will credit it because they are convinced, and the ignorant because they follow the others without reason.

All I hope to do by writing this article is to point out that the power of thought is a vital factor in our lives, and can really affect every hour of them for good or ill.

Thousands of people who read the new ethical or religious books which are abroad, and even exploit their propaganda—thousands who attend the various meetings and services and lectures of the different

societies, be they “New Thought” or any of the others on more or less the same lines—never dream of applying the teachings to a single ordinary thing, and still go on with their tempers and melancholy and flurry and fuss, just as they did before they ever heard of the idea that they can control and eliminate these things. An enormous majority of the public are frightened at the very name of a new religion or ethical teaching, and think it wrong even to investigate what it teaches. But the broad-minded are unafraid of any knowledge, and can gain good by knowing about all developments of human thought, provided they approach each point with common sense and without hysteria, dismissing the idea of what we are accustomed to call the supernatural, and realising that everything has a perfectly natural explanation when it can be understood, and it is only our ignorance which makes us shy at it.

And so I would appeal to those who credit this power of thought to employ it responsibly, and to realise that they are all God’s atoms in the great scheme of things, and must use their personal force as a contribution to the vast thought-waves which can advance, or which, when ill directed, can sweep away a nation.

III

MARRIAGE

Contents

IT is an interesting subject—and one which has touched, or will probably touch, most of our lives, therefore it may not be unprofitable to study it a little, and what it means and what it should mean; because, in the present upheaval of all our old beliefs, marriage, as a sensible institution, is being attacked upon many sides.

It is extremely easy to pull down a house, but it requires skill and special training to rebuild it again; and before dragging the roof off and demolishing the walls, it would be wiser to have made a distinct plan and provided the materials ready for the reconstruction of a new habitation, that the rain and the wind may not overcome us when we have no shelter for our heads. But this is what the attackers of marriage have failed to do as yet. Here are three facts which we can begin by looking at.

Firstly. Some kind of union between man and woman, consolidated by the law, is necessary for the continuation of a race in vigour and moral upliftment.

Secondly. It is admitted by great philosophers and deep thinkers that the welfare of the community is of more importance than the fluctuating desires of the individual.

Thirdly. A fine ideal, however impossible of

attainment, is a force for good to be held up before the eyes of the mass of the people, who, however much actual education has advanced, are still too unendowed with personal brain to have any judgment themselves—their capacities only allowing them to see the effects of things upon their immediate surroundings without perceiving the causes, and therefore leaving them incapable of judging what could be good for the country, the race, or humanity in general.

After all these centuries, legal marriage still holds, because no one has been able to suggest any other union which could take its place without bringing chaos. And it seems more than likely that no one will ever be sufficiently inspired so to do! Thus let us now consider the present legal marriage as still being a stable fact, and see how we can make the best of it. In it there are two things which both man and woman forget—or refuse to face—and which are perhaps the chief causes of most unhappiness. Man forgets that his kind *words* of love and sympathy matter far more to the actual happiness of the woman than any of his *deeds*: because words fill and satisfy her imagination, which is active whenever she is alone; and kind deeds, with few or indifferent words, make very little impression upon it. Woman forgets—or will not face—the fact that man is by nature a polygamous animal. There is no use in arguing about this and saying he ought not to be, and that it is a horrible idea. It is a physiological fact, and to dispute it is to criticise the Almighty's scheme for ensuring a continued population. That man should have polygamous instincts is essential for this scheme to work against any odds.

Whatever we choose to say in contradiction to this resolves itself into empty words, the fact of nature remaining. It would be just as sensible to try to argue that, because we do not like to drink sea water, it has no business to be salt! and to decide that it is *not* salt! and that we will not recognise that *it is* salt! The ocean would just laugh at us, and remain briny! And no doubt Nature laughs at silly woman too, when she tries to judge man without understanding the elementary principle of creation.

This being grasped clearly, it must be seen that monogamous marriage is *an ideal state*, not a *natural state*, and it must be admitted to be such, and lived up to as an ideal, not undertaken with the notion that fidelity in man is *natural*, and infidelity an *unnatural* thing. It is the other way about because of the fundamental instincts of man, which continuously and subconsciously suggest to him the necessity for self-preservation, and in its larger sense self-preservation means species-preservation.

Woman, on the other hand, although unconsciously inspired by this same fundamental instinct of species-preservation, is not naturally polygamous, or rather polyandrous, because such a state would militate against this end by eventually destroying pure offspring. She only becomes so under certain conditions. Fidelity, then, is, so to speak, a natural state for woman, and she has not to fight against any fundamental instinct of her sex in order to preserve it—she has only to resist perverted desire, which is an exotic growth, the outcome of civilisation. Thus fidelity is much harder for man, who, to succeed in being faithful, is obliged to dominate a natural instinct, which is a far more difficult thing to do than to fight against an exotic

desire; because all natural things are governed by inexorable and eternal laws, and are not at the mercy of circumstance. Thus the natural instinct of man is at work all the time in continuous activity—and the exotic desire of woman is intermittent, and the result of circumstance.

Of course, all this has been said before by every serious thinker, and I am only reiterating these facts because the general readers may have forgotten them, and I must bring them to their recollection to make the rest of our discussion upon marriage clear.

These nature instincts being admitted, we can get on to a survey of legal marriage. At first, it must have been an affair of expediency. The woman was probably expected to be faithful, and brute force took care that she was so, or that she immediately paid the price of possible contamination of offspring by being killed. She was expected to be faithful for a natural reason, not for a spiritual or sentimental one; the reason being, as already inferred, to ensure the purity of the offspring. Man had no need to be faithful to one woman to secure this end, and never, in consequence, dreamed of being so.

All through Pagan times infidelity in man was rampant and recognised, and not looked upon as sin. And when woman became civilised enough to have exotic desires, she lost her natural instinct, that of preservation of pure offspring, and became liable to vagrant fancies and often a vicious creature.

Then the Church arrived and turned marriage into a sacrament; presumably with the noble intention of trying to elevate man and overcome his carnal nature. Man outwardly conformed, and, with his whole soul’s desire to be true and to uplift himself, each individual who really believed no

doubt did war with his instincts, and numbers probably succeeded in conquering them. While woman, always a creature of more delicate nervous susceptibilities, flung herself with furore under the influences of spiritual things, and in the truly devout cases overcame her grafted desires and returned to natural instincts. But in beings of both sexes who were unconvinced by religion, infidelity continued to flourish, as it does even to this day. A man who truly believes that he is sinning in being unfaithful, and who understands that outside opinion is nothing in the soiling of his own soul, but that the matter is between himself and God, will always be faithful *in body* to a woman he has wedded, whether he cares for her or not. But a man who has not this conviction, and who does not live in this intimate relation to God, has no reason to hold him from indulging his natural instinct, except the fear of being found out, and when his sagacity has suggested safeguards against this, his instinct will certainly give itself expression. It is all a question of personal belief. There are numbers of good and honest characters who do not feel convinced that entire fidelity in man to one woman was intended by the Creator, and who therefore feel no degradation in the latitude they allow themselves. It is not for us to argue which are right and which are wrong, but to stick to the subject of marriage and how it can perhaps be made happier in these present days, when all other conditions of life are changing, by a better comprehension of fundamental instincts and laws of nature.

Woman has developed so far that generally she thinks she is (and sometimes she really is!) a reasonable and balanced creature, with strong

individuality—and personal tastes and likes and dislikes. She is now ill-fitted to keep them all in subservience to man, unless he is her intellectual master. She may have wedded only because the emotion of sex (not understood as such, and called by a number of other names such as “love,” “devotion,” “attraction”) forced her at one of its powerful moments to take a physical mate—totally unsuited to her moral calibre. But she has knelt at the altar and sworn vows before God—and perhaps has fulfilled woman’s original mission in the world, and become the mother of children—so what is to be done to rectify her mistake and its unhappy consequences?

She must look the whole circumstances of it in the face and ask herself whether she herself threw dust in her own eyes as regards the character of her husband, whether he deceived her in this, or whether they just drifted together, each to blame as much as the other, through the attraction of sex and the cruelty of ignorance. She may regret it a thousandfold—but she has done the thing of her own free will, no one forced her to wed the man; she may have done so unwillingly in some cases—and for ulterior motives, but at all events she was consenting and not dragged to church resisting, and so if she is sensible she will use the whole of her intelligence to make the best of it. She will look to the end of her every action and her every thought. Will brooding over her “rights,” and the wrongs he has inflicted, mend them? Will it do anything but give her vanity —the satisfaction of self-pity? Certainly not.

If she has really evolved enough to wish to impose her opinions and individuality upon her household or the community, she will have realised

that the welfare of the home for which she is responsible, and the community to which she belongs, are, or ought to be, of far more consequence to her than her own personal emotions. Therefore she must ask herself whether she has any right to upset the happiness of the one, and the conception of good of the other, by indulging in personal quarrels and bickerings, or open scandal with her mate. A really noble and unselfish woman would never consider her personal emotion before her duty to God and to her neighbour. It is because the outlook of woman is as a rule so pitifully narrow and self-centred that she often makes a useless and unhappy wife, and shipwrecks her own and others' futures.

Man has gone on with his brute force, and his physical and mental attraction, and his tastes and beliefs and aspirations very much the same for thousands of years. Numbers of them were brutes then, and numbers are brutes still and will remain so. It is only woman who has so incredibly changed, and after staying immeasurably behind in importance and in intellectuality for countless centuries, now seeks to equal if not outstep man in all things. It would be well for man to wake up to the fact that he is now wedding a woman with every sense and nerve and conception of life far in advance of what his mother believed herself to be capable of—and so his methods towards her in return must not be as his father's were. If man wishes to have the good, domestic, obedient wife his father—perhaps one should go farther back and say grandfather!—expected—and got—he must either choose a timid weakling who becomes just his echo, or he must learn to treat the modern woman as a comrade, a being who mentally can understand and follow his

aspirations and even assist him in his desires, a creature to respect and consult, and whom he cannot rule just because he is a man and she is a woman—but can only do so, and bring her to obedience, when he has shown her his intellectual superiority and his wisdom.

Woman is as willing to be ruled as ever she was—she always adores a master; but she has grown too intelligent to bow her head just because a man is a *man*—he must be *the man*. Man is naturally fighting for his old omnipotence, which he possessed regardless of his personal endowment, simply because he was a male creature—and the foolish section of woman is fighting man, with bombs and tricks and frantic words, instead of *convincing* him by her wisdom and attainments, by her demonstrations of knowledge of life and its duties and responsibilities, that she has grown at last indeed fitted to be treated as an equal and a comrade, not as a plaything and a slave.

Who does not respect a woman who fulfils all her obligations with grace and charm, whose house is well ordered, whose friends are well entertained by her fine mind, and whose children are well brought up and full of understanding? She is indeed more precious than rubies and far more full of influence for the good of her community than she who shouts of rights and wrongs and votes and such-like. The first woman could control a hundred votes, and help a government, but the second can only clog the wheels of the sex's advancement.

Now we get back to marriage!

And the first and foremost thing to be understood is that it is a frightful responsibility to undertake, and that all those who enter into this

bond lightly and for frivolous motives, or from just drifting, will be made by fate to pay the price.

Think of it! Two people stand up and swear before God to continue to love one another until death do them part. They solemnly stand there and make vows about an emotion over which they have no more control than they have over the keeping of the wind in the south. They have only control, if they have strong wills, over its demonstration. And then in nine cases out of ten neither thinks for a moment afterwards, of his or her responsibility *of trying to make possible* the observance of these vows, by keeping alight the flame of love in the other's heart. A man utterly disillusions a woman and then blames her, not himself, for her ceasing to care for him, and being eventually attracted by some one else! A woman disgusts or bores a man, and then bewails her sad lot, and calls the man a brute for being indifferent, and a shameful creature for looking elsewhere for consolation! In all marriages there is no one to blame or praise for unhappiness or happiness but the two individuals themselves. It is his fault—or misfortune—if she no longer cares, and likewise hers in the parallel case—and it is owing to the weakness of either if outside circumstances have been able to interfere. Thus to ensure happiness there must be a tremendous sense of personal responsibility, and there should be understanding of life and understanding of nature instincts and understanding of sex instincts; and a ruthless tearing away of the false values which a Victorian age grafted upon religion, narrowing the mind of woman as to man's needs—and narrowing man's conception of woman's mental capacity.

No woman must ever forget in her relation to

man that “he who pays the piper calls the tune,” and in this I am not only speaking literally of shekels of gold and silver, but of the power incorporated in certain personalities; and man, if he chose to exert it, has always *force majeure* at his command in the last extremity, although in these days of Herculean young women he may lose even this in time!

Before undertaking to play that most difficult part of wife, every girl ought to ask herself, Does she really care for the man enough to make her use her intelligence to understand him, and to try to keep him loving her? Or if she does not personally care enough for him to trouble about this—will the situation of her husband in the world satisfy her, and make the bondage, unleavened by love, of the care of house, servants, and possible children, worth while?

Before undertaking the situation she ought to look at every aspect of the case, and question herself searchingly upon her own aims and ends, and if the actual facts will or will not fit in with them. Having made up her mind that for one reason or another it is for her happiness to take a certain man for her mate, she ought then sedulously to cultivate all the aspects of the condition which can conduce to peace and to the attainment and enjoyment of that end. She must not forget that the man has paid her the highest honour a man can pay a woman. He has selected her to be his life’s companion. He proposes in nine cases out of ten, to provide her with a home and a position in life, and to take upon himself the responsibility of her maintenance (when the woman has money of her own this question is different naturally). But in all cases the man in asking her to marry him has shown that something in her—or in her possessions—makes her appear worth the giving up of his liberty. So she

owes him just as much as the thing he took her for. If for her money, and she knows it is for that, and she has been sufficiently humble to accept him on those terms—she owes him money. If for love—she owes him at least the outside observances of love. If he has pretended love and it is for some other motive, his Nemesis will fall upon himself in the disillusion and contempt he will inspire. But in all cases the woman, through want of intelligence or pure misfortune, has crossed the Rubicon with him; she has allowed him to teach her the meaning of dual life—she has put it into his power with her to create future lives. She cannot, for any price or any prayers, recross that fatal stream. So for all reasons of common sense—and above all, sense of responsibility to the community—she had better make the best of her bargain.

Likewise, man should pause and think, Is it merely because I cannot obtain this woman upon any other terms that I am offering her marriage? Have I respect for her? Do I think she will bring happiness into my house as well as pleasure to my body? Is she suited to my brain capacity when I am not exalted by physical emotion? Am I going to curb my selfishness and behave decently towards her?

If he cannot answer these questions satisfactorily he may know that he is undertaking a hundred-to-one chance of peace and happiness. But if the physical desire is stronger than all these considerations, then he must *know and realise* that whatever happens *he must never blame the woman*. He has succumbed to the most material and alas! the most hideously strong force in nature—not because the woman tempted him, as it has been the fashion for man to say since the days of Adam—but because

there is something in himself which is so weak that it cannot listen to the promptings of the spirit when the body calls.

In each and every case it is a man's duty to be kind and courteous to a woman who is his wife. He has made her so by his free vows before God (because no one can be forced to the altar against his absolute will in these days), or he has made her so by vows and business agreement, according to the laws of his country, before the Registrar. In either case he has made her his legal wife and the possible mother of his children—units unborn who can affect the welfare of his country. He has, then, his great duties towards her. If she was a girl, he has taken from her that which nothing on earth can restore; he has made her into another being. He has been instrumental in making her—this other human soul —accept responsibilities, and he is bound as an honourable man to school himself so as to be able to help the mutual happiness and peace of their dual existence. And if he wishes to be obeyed, loved, and respected, he has to look to himself that he inspires obedience, love, and respect in his mate. She will not experience these feelings to order; and fear alone, or some other and lower motive, would make her simulate them. Man must not forget that nothing simulated can last. Truth alone remains at the end of the year.

No marriage can be certain of continuing happy which has been entered into in the spirit of taking a lottery ticket. But most marriages could be fairly happy if both man and woman looked the thing squarely in the face and made up their minds that they would run together in harness as two well-trained carriage horses, both knowing of the pole,

both pulling at the collar and not over-straining the traces, both taking pride in their high stepping and their unity of movement. How much more dignified than to make a pitiful exhibition of incompatibility like two wild creatures kicking and plunging, and finally upsetting the vehicle they had agreed to draw?

I would like to discuss now the problem of whether or not marriage could be made happy no matter how it starts, by using common sense, but the deep interest of the whole subject has made my pen already cover too much space and I must refrain in this chapter.

Only, men and women who read this, do not pass it by, but stop and *think* before you plunge, through the giving and the taking of a wedding ring, into happiness or misery.

IV

AFTER MARRIAGE

Contents

CONSIDERING the instability of all our tastes and desires and the almost total want of personal discipline which prevails in the present day, it is really remarkable that the legal marriage goes on even as well as it does!—but that the state could be much happier is patent to any understanding, and it may be interesting to look at one or two aspects of it, and see from whence comes the discord. A woman enters into matrimony for various reasons, but, in the majority of cases in England and America at least, it is because she is, or fancies she is, in love with the man at the time. He, therefore, if this is so, starts with an enormous power over her, which, if he chooses to keep it, will enable him to turn their future life in any way he will, because the greatest desire even of the most strong-minded and domineering woman when in love is to please the man. A woman only becomes indifferent as to whether or no she is doing this when she no longer cares. Therefore, it is the man's business to keep her in this state if he wants his home to be happy. The first thing for him to realise is that she cannot remain in love with him by her own will, any more than she can cease to love him by her own will—these states are produced in her by something in himself. And if he discontinues using the arts and attractions which awakened her love, he cannot expect it to continue its demonstration, any more than a kettle will go on boiling if the heat beneath is removed from it. This argument, of course, applies to both sexes. Unfortunately, in a great many cases of marriage, the simple attraction of sex has been the unconscious motive which has caused the man to enter the bond, and naturally, when he has gained his wishes he

ceases to endeavour consciously to attract the woman. And then one of two things happens; either she grows to love him more for a time, because of that contrariness in human beings which always puts abnormal value upon the thing which is slipping out of reach—or she herself becomes indifferent; and then it is a mere chance if they both, or either of them, possess character and a sense of duty as to how the marriage goes along. We will take the case of a union when both parties are in love when they start, and really desire that their marriage should remain happy. Each ought to decide that he or she will do his or her uttermost to continue to put forth those charms which enchanted the mate before the ceremony. No one would expect the bloom to remain upon grapes if he carelessly rubbed it off, but both man and woman are extraordinarily surprised and disgusted when they find their partners are no longer in love with them, and at once blame them for fickleness, instead of examining themselves to see what caused this ceasing to care—what they did—or omitted to do—which made themselves no longer able to call forth love from their mates. And until it can be grasped that all emotion of love is produced by something consciously or unconsciously possessed by the other person—and that it is not in the power of the individual to order himself to feel it, or not to feel it, but that only the demonstration of the state is in his power—unions will go on with mutual recriminations and the hitting of the heads against a stone wall.

Some natures are naturally fickle and unstable—and no matter how good and sweet the partner may be, they break away. These cases are misfortunes, but in analysing the facts the actual responsibility

cannot be laid at the doors of such people, since they could not *by will* have kept the sensation of love for their partners, any more than by will they could have ceased to care for them. They could only *by will* have been able to control the expression of their feelings. I seem to be reiterating this point to the verge of tiresomeness, but it is so vitally important to understand, because its non-comprehension produces such injustice. If John *by his will* were able to make himself remain in love with Mary, and failed to do so, then she might have a right to blame him because he had sworn that he would at the altar. But as he cannot command his actual emotion, she can only blame him for infidelity of the body, since of that, at least, it is possible he could be master. But, alas! Mary very seldom realises this, and reproaches John for ceasing *to feel loving* towards her! which is as sensible on her part as to reproach him for the skies pouring rain. John, on his side, in like case does the same thing, because he also has not understood the truth. A valuable point for both to keep in remembrance is that the attraction of sex is the basis of all "being in love." However ennobled the emotion may become afterwards, it always starts with that. (This fact is explained and elaborated in the conversation between the Russian and the Clergyman in my story, "The Point of View.") If common sense is used in thinking about this matter, it will be seen that if this was not the foundation of "being in love" the emotion would be calm, and like that of brother and sister. So, admitting that this is the foundation, it can be understood how important a part it plays in the happiness of two people bound together by law for life, and how important it is to the woman to endeavor to continue to make herself lovable in the

eyes of the man—and *vice versa—it is of supreme importance to whichever of them cares the most.* When the thing starts equally, the man nearly always cools the soonest, because of his fundamental instincts, and the force of satiation. He then probably goes on liking his wife—perhaps he admires and respects her intellect, but the thrill which used to come when her hand even touched his hand is no longer there, and he only feels emotion towards her *when he is in the mood, which would make him feel it towards any woman* who happened to be there at the moment. And just in the measure that he was passionate towards his wife, so he will be the easy or difficult prey of a new emotion. And if this aspect of the case distresses the woman, she must look to her guns—so to speak—and use the whole of her intelligence to regain her hold over his affection. She will not improve matters by lamenting or reproaching the man. If it does not distress her, then she can congratulate herself that a time of peace has come!

A woman must face the fact that man is a totally different creature from herself, governed by other instincts, which can be best explained by realising them in animals in their boldest nature aspect, *i.e.* a male dog at times will tear down any barrier that is within his personal strength to enable him to get to his mate, and a female dog will fight through unheard-of obstacles to reach her puppies. Here is a plain illustration of the different ruling original instincts in animals, and human beings are only the highest form of animal, given by God a more developed soul and a choice of action, but still influenced by fundamental nature instincts, which, beneath all the training of civilisation, unconsciously still direct their actions and affect their point of

view. Civilisation, on its good side, teaches man to overcome his bodily desires and to keep them in check, but not to eliminate them, to do which would militate against the Creator's scheme of things. Civilisation on its evil side has frequently perverted woman's natural instinct, so that in numbers of cases the wonderful devotion of the animal to her young has become numb in her, or dead. If only all women would bravely face these facts of nature instincts in themselves and in men, they would approach marriage with much broader-minded views, and would have a much greater chance of happiness, because they would realise that they must be lenient to man in the matter of his fidelity to them; and if man realised these instincts, he would enter marriage knowing he must make a fight with nature to keep the vows he has sworn, and so he would be on his guard against the first inclination to stray, instead of an easy prey to it. For, as it is, there is a recognised unwritten law among most men that honour must always be kept with "the other woman," but that it is not necessary with a wife. A man's honour towards a woman is only certain of holding with his inclinations—that is: A married to B will be unfaithful to her with C—which is technically dishonour. He will not consider that, but will tell any lie to protect C and stick to her, because his sense of honour has gone with his inclination. He feels he must "never give away C to B," although he experiences no qualm in having already tacitly "given away" B to C, by his very part of taking C for his mistress. B is also a woman, but only his wife! He has not been the least aware of it, but his sense of honour has followed his inclination, in a way it would never do over a business arrangement with

another man. To give a parallel case in a business arrangement: A makes a bargain with B that he will deal with him alone; he then finds he likes the goods of C better than those of B—but no honest tradesman would think of breaking his contract even secretly with B and dealing with C, for, if he did, he would know himself that he was dishonest, and that all his fellows who knew he had done this thing would despise and ostracise him. But a man when deceiving his wife not only generally feels no shame himself, but knows his male friends will probably not think the worse of him for it. There is not the slightest use in arguing about these facts, any more than, as I said in my first paper upon marriage, there is in arguing about fundamental instincts, and it would be well for women to realise this elastic, unwritten law of honour in men towards them, and so not expect, at the present state of man's evolution, that they will receive anything different. They must never forget that this adjustable sense of honour springs from the same fundamental male instinct we spoke of—and therefore cannot be turned round by women and applied to their own cases, because the same instincts do not come into force with them. Woman must always remember that *man is conquering primitive nature in being faithful to her at all*, and therefore she ought, if she desires that he shall be so, to look to her own every point of attraction to make it possible (if not easy!) for him to fulfil her desire. I must reiterate again that it is wiser to remember that it is civilisation alone (civilisation embracing development of moral sense, and religious sense, and the force of custom) which keeps him from straying whenever he feels inclined, and that all she can do to prevent it is to redouble her own attractions, and to

help the women of the future by instilling into her own sons' minds the idea that, as marriage is *an ideal and not a natural state*, the man who enters into it must be prepared to school himself to live up to an ideal, and control his vagrant emotions. To teach the boys a new and higher sense of honour is the only possible way to alter matters, as a grown man is seldom changed. In marriage, both partners must understand that they are undertaking to do a most difficult thing in vowing to live together and love for ever! Whichever cares the most will have to use *intelligence* to keep the other—and if it is the woman who is unfortunate enough to occupy this position, she generally absolutely sacrifices herself to gratify the man's smallest wish, and so makes herself cheap. She should use her wits and keep a firm hand over herself so as not to let herself become in his eyes of no importance.

Selfishness is another basic instinct of man, caused because he was originally and unquestionably Lord of Creation, and only in the countries where men are in the majority are the greater number of them unselfish even now to woman. In England, where women are in the majority, selfishness in every male child is fostered from his cradle. So women must not indiscriminately condemn every man as being selfish, as though it was his personal fault; they must look to the cause, and condemn that if they want to, or, better still, try to eradicate it in the future by influencing their own sons to desire to be chivalrous and unselfish to the woman of the next generation. In this way they would help to raise the standard of honour and responsibility in humanity in general.

The most selfish man is not often selfish to the

woman whom he is in love with. While she excites these emotions, however he shows his cloven hoof to the rest of the household, he will not show it to her. And even when he ceases to be in love, if his wife has filled him with respect and admiration for her, he will hardly dare to exhibit his bad qualities. You will see a man with the most odious character showing only the nicest ways to some particular person, when he wishes to stand well with that person. Therefore, to deal successfully with a selfish man, it ought to be obvious to a woman that the only effectual method to employ is to seek to create in his mind *the desire to please her*. If only men could understand that to be kind and courteous to their wives in the home would give them much greater liberty abroad, they would greatly add to the happiness of most marriages. It is her daily life which matters to a woman, because, as a rule, her brain is not developed enough to be looking ahead to the great questions of the day; and to have joy in her home is her earthly paradise.

Nearly all love marriages begin with too much emotion and too little self-control, and so become shipwrecked upon the rocks of satiety and indifference. Young people undertake the most risky experiment in the world as lightly and unpreparedly as they would go on a summer holiday!

It must be understood that all these arguments are used from the standpoint of supposing the married pair start with love. When they do not, but are entering into a marriage simply from expediency, their minds are generally calm, they have no illusions, and are therefore free to use that judgment which they would employ over any business affair of their lives, and often, therefore, they get along very

well. But these cannot be considered as ideal marriages, or likely to produce highly endowed children. And in England, at least, such unions are the exception and not the rule.

Broadly speaking, to make any marriage happy each partner ought deliberately to use every atom of his or her intelligence to think out the best method to live in sympathy with the mate, and should not simply be set upon expressing his or her own personality, regardless of the other. Chain any two animals together and watch the result! Nothing will teach what marriage means more effectually. It is only when the two poor beasts are of one mind that their chains do not gall. But human beings are above animals in this, that they have wills and talents and aspirations, and can judge of good and evil, so that their happiness or misery is practically in their own hands, and to quote an immortal remark of a French writer—"If as much thought were put into the making a success of marriage as is put into the mixing of a salad, there would be no unhappy unions!"

V

SHOULD DIVORCE BE MADE EASIER?

Contents

HOWEVER much some of us may feel that divorce can never touch our personal lives, at least the question of it in regard to the nation must always be interesting; and now, with the Majority and Minority report of the Royal Commission still ringing in every one's ears, it seems a moment to suggest some points of view upon the matter. To those people entirely influenced by religion as it is expounded from the laws laid down by the Church, there can be nothing to say, because, in the first place, their belief in the infallibility of these laws and the influence of their pastors ought certainly to keep them from sinning at all; and if sinned against, ought to enable them to bear the pain without murmur. But there are a vast number of our countrymen and women who do not consider the dogmas of religion and are not entirely imbued with respect for the laws of the Church, while nevertheless being good and honest citizens. It depends upon each person's point of view.

In this paper, as in my former ones upon Marriage, I want only to take the subject from the standpoint of common sense, while with reverence I admit that if the moral conscience could be awakened by any religious convictions whatever, so that it would keep each individual from sinning, that would be the true solution of the problem. But, while

seeking to enforce its laws in opposition to the laws of the State, the teaching of the Church seems somehow not to have been able to retain much hold over the general conscience which, ever since the first secular law came into being, has availed itself of the relief so afforded to free itself from galling shackles. The point, then, to look at sensibly is not whether divorce is right or wrong in itself, but what sort of effect the making of it easier or less easy would have upon the nation. There does not seem to be the slightest use in applying any arguments to the subject which do not take into consideration the immeasurable upheaval in ideas, manner of living, relaxation of personal discipline, and loss of religious control which have taken place since the last reform was made. The luxury of existence, the rapid movement from place to place permitted by motor-cars, the emancipation of women, the general supposed necessity of indulging in amusements, have so altered all the notions of life, and so excited and encouraged interest in sex relationships, that the old idea of stability and loyalty in marriage is shaken to its foundations. The temptations for people to err are now a thousand-fold greater than they were fifty years ago, and very few young people are brought up with ideas of stern self-control at all. This being the case, it would seem that the only rational standpoint to view the question of divorce reform or divorce restriction from is the one which gives the vastest outlook over each side's eventuality, realising present conditions and tendencies to be as they are, and not as they were, or ought to be. The forces which produced these conditions are not on the decline, but, if anything, on the increase, and must therefore be reckoned with and not ignored. What

are they likely to bring in the future? Still greater intolerance of all restraint, still more desire for change? And if this is so, will it have been wiser to have made the law harder or more lenient? That is the question we shall soon, as a people, have to try to decide.

In setting out to look calmly at the subject of divorce, no good can be arrived at by studying isolated cases, inasmuch as surely there can be no divided opinion upon the fact of the cruelty of some of them, and the certainty of their betterment by divorce. The one and only aim to keep in view is what will be best for the whole people, and no other aspect should ever influence the true citizen in making up his mind upon so vital a question. Thus surely we ought each one of us to ask himself or herself to look ahead, and try to imagine what would be the result to our nation of relaxing the severity of the present divorce law—or of increasing it. Of the effects of its present administration we can judge, so it ought to be no impossible task to work from that backwards or forwards.

But to look at any subject dispassionately, without the prejudice of religion or personal feeling, is one of the hardest things to accomplish. These two forces always make people take views as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, regardless of totally altered conditions and requirements of mankind. I hold a brief for neither side, and in this paper I only want to suggest some points of view so as to help, perhaps, some others to look at the matter with justice, as I have tried to look at it myself. It would seem to me that divorce as a means of ridding oneself of one partner merely to be happier with another must surely always be wrong,

because it must entail the degradation of conscious personal motive, in the knowledge that one had taken advantage of a law to gain an end, and to help one to break a vow solely for one's own gratification. The enormous responsibility of so taking fate into their own hands would frighten most people, if they gave themselves time to think—but they do not. Nine-tenths of them have no compunction in breaking vows, because they do not realise that by making them they have connected themselves with currents and assumed responsibilities the consequences of which to themselves they cannot possibly eventually avoid, no matter how they may try temporarily to evade them.

It would seem to me that divorce for the rich and educated should be made as difficult as possible, and the pleas investigated mercilessly, to discover if any advantage has been taken of legal quibbles for ulterior ends; but that the judge should grant decrees instantly when habitual drunkenness, madness, or anything which degrades and lowers a household or community is proved against the defendant. It would seem to me that divorces for the poor should be facilitated in every way, if this difference to those of the rich could possibly be accomplished, so that the hideous cruelty and encouragement of vice (cases of which are so admirably set forth in the pamphlets issued by the Divorce Law Reform Union) could be summarily dealt with, and relief and peace conferred upon the innocent party. Because the lives of the poor are too filled with work to be as easily influenced by personal emotion as the lives of the rich, and the lower level of their education and standard of manners admits of such far greater unkindness and brutality in their actions than in a

higher class; and thus they are the more entitled by justice to relief and protection than the highly endowed and developed section of society who can better take care of themselves. It seems to me to be a crying injustice that the law of divorce can only be administered by paying exorbitant fees for it; and that if the separation of two human beings who are admittedly bound together by law can be accomplished by law and that the breaking of the marriage vow is a sin against the law, then the poorest in the land have an absolute right that this law should be put into execution for them without special payment, just as they have now a right to the Law's working for them to catch offenders who steal their goods, or who break business contracts with them. It would seem that this is a frightful case of there being one law for the rich and one for the poor, and that it is a blot upon the boasted equity and fairness of English justice. How glorious it would be if all lawyers could be remunerated equally by the State! It would do away with a thriving industry perhaps, but it might be a great aid to real justice being arrived at, and not as things now are, when whoever can pay the cleverest pleader has the best chance of winning the case. But to get back to the views of divorce!

It would seem to me that the vital and essential question all persons wishing for divorce ought to ask themselves is, "What is my motive in desiring this freedom?" They should search their very souls for the truth. If it is because the position has not only become intolerable to themselves, but is a menace to their children or society, then they should know that they are acting rightly in trying their utmost to be free; but if the real reason is that they may legally

indulge in a new passion, then they may be certain that if they take advantage of a law designed for the benefit of a race, and use it to their own baser ends, they are invoking most dangerous forces to militate against their own eventual unhappiness. No one who is in a position where his or her good or bad example will be followed has any right to indulge in any personal feelings to the influencing in a harmful way of his or her public actions. This is the true meaning of that finest of all old sayings, "*Noblesse oblige*." To me it would seem to be a frightful sin for a man or woman for personal motives to degrade an order or a community.

So this is the standpoint I would suggest every one looking at divorce from: "Will the thing bring good or harm?—not to me who am only a unit, but to that wider circle of my family and my country?" And if common sense assures him or her that no good can come of it, then the true citizen should not hesitate to bear the pain of refraining.

It would seem to me to be wrong to allow any personal feeling at all to influence one to divorce, no matter what the cruelty of the circumstances or the justice of the grievance one had, *if by so doing the children of the marriage were injured in any way, or that the prestige of an order or the honour of a family were lowered by one's action*; but that were the husband or wife a shame and degradation to the children or the family, the individual would be entirely justified in divorcing, and would be helping the good of the State by preventing the guilty and debased partner from committing further harm. Common sense is always the truest wisdom, but it has often unhappily had to be cloaked and hampered either by spiritual superstition, prejudice, or

ignorance. So that when a flagrant case which corrupts a whole neighbourhood cries aloud to common sense to remove it by divorce, there are found hundreds of good and worthy people to oppose this on the ground that the Church does not sanction such proceeding! If the State religion administered by the Church cannot inculcate higher principles in its members, so as to prevent them from sinning, it would obviously seem to be more fair to allow the statesmen and sociologists to have a free hand in their attempt to better the morality of England than for the Church to use the vast influence it still possesses to the stultifying of these plans. The homely proverb of the proof of the pudding being in the eating seems to be plainly shown here. The religious teaching has failed to influence the people to refrain from sin and to discountenance divorce, proving that its method of imparting knowledge and obtaining influence over the modern mind is no longer effectual, and common sense would suggest changing the method to ensure the desired end. There is a story told of a French regiment in the early days of conscription. A certain size of boots had been decided upon for recruits, and this decision had worked very well when the young men were drawn from the town, where the feet were comparatively small, but when countryside youths became the majority, the boots they were given were an agony to them, and constant complaints were the result, with, however, no redress. Omnipotent head-quarters had decided the size! And that was the end of it! And it was not until nearly the whole regiment was in hospital with sore feet that it entered the brain of the officials that it might be wiser for France to regulate the size of the boots of the regiment to the feet of the

wearers. Why, then, cannot the Church devote all its brain and force to evolving some new form of teaching which will, so to speak, “fit the feet of the wearers”? Then all questions of divorce could be settled by noble and exalted feeling and desire to do right and elevate the nation. But meanwhile, with the growth and encouragement of individualism, every little unit is giving forth his personal view (as I am doing in this paper!), perhaps many of them without the slightest faculty for looking ahead, or knowledge of how to make deductions from past events, or other countries’ experiences; and the Church is preaching one thing, and the State another, the Majority report taking a certain view, and the Minority a different one—and we are all at sea, and the supreme issue of it all seems to be fogged.

An enormous section of the public, and almost all women it would seem, are of opinion that divorce should be granted for the same reason to women as it is now to men. But surely those who hold this view cannot understand that fundamental difference in the instincts of the sexes which I tried to show as forcibly as I could in my former articles upon Marriage. Infidelity in man cannot be nearly such a degradation to his own soul as infidelity in woman must be to hers, because he is following natural impulses and she is following grafted ones. A woman must feel degraded in her body and soul when she gives herself to *two men* at the same time, a husband and a lover; but a man, when he strays, if it has any moral effect upon him at all, probably merely feels some twinges on account of breaking his word, and the fear of being found out. The actual infidelity cannot degrade him as much as it generally degrades a woman, and may be only the yielding to strong

temptation at a given moment, and have no bearing upon the kind home treatment he accords his wife and children, or the tenor of his domestic life. The eventuality of what this law would bring should be looked at squarely. And it is rather a pitiful picture to think of the entire happiness of a home being upset because a wife, without judgment or the faculty of making deductions, discovering a single instance of illicit behaviour in her husband, sees fit to, and is enabled by law, to divorce him. It may be argued that the fear of this would make him mend his ways; but did fear ever curb strong natural instincts for long?—instincts as strong as hunger, or thirst, or desire to sleep? Fear could only curb such for a time, and then intelligence would suggest some new and cunning method of deceit, so as to obtain the desired end. The only possible way to ensure fidelity in a man is by influencing him to *wish* to remain faithful, either by fond love for the woman or deep religious conviction or moral opinion that not to do so would degrade his soul. The accomplishment of this end would seem to be either in the hands of the woman or in the teaching of the Church—and cannot be brought about by law. Law can only punish offenders; it cannot force them to keep from sin. When a man is unfaithful habitually, it amounts to cruelty, and even with the present law the woman can obtain relief on that ground.

In looking at a single case of infidelity in a woman, a man would be wise to question himself to see if he has not been in some measure responsible for it—by his own unkindness or indifference, and in not realising her nature; and if his conscience tells him he is to blame, then he ought never to be hard upon the woman. He ought also very seriously to

consider the circumstances, and whether or no his children or his family will be hurt by the scandal of public severance, as they should be more important to him than his personal feelings. Tolerance and common sense should always hold wounded vanity and prejudice in check. How often one sees happy and united old couples who in the meridian of their lives have each looked elsewhere, but have had the good taste and judgment to make no public protest about the matter, and thus have given each other time to regain command of vagrant fancies and return to the fold of convention!

With so many different individual views upon the right and wrong of divorce, it is impossible for either side—the divorce reform or the divorce restriction supporters—to state a wholly convincing case against the other. The only possible way to view the general question is, as I said before, to keep the mind fixed upon the main issue, *that of what may possibly be best for the nation*, having regard to the ever-augmenting forces of luxury and liberty and democracy and want of discipline which are holding rule.

Lack of space prevents me from trying to touch upon the numerous other moot points in divorce, so I will only plead that, when each person has come to a definite and common-sense conclusion, unclouded by sentiment or prejudice, he or she may not hesitate to proclaim his or her conviction aloud, so that the law of the land may be reorganised to the needs of present-day humanity and help it to rise to the highest fulfilment.

VI

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MOTHERHOOD.

Contents

AS far as the necessities for it go in the animal world, nearly all animals have a very strong sense of the responsibility of motherhood—unless they have become over-civilised, or live under unnatural circumstances. A striking example of the consequences of the latter state of being is shown by "Barbara," that thrillingly attractive Polar bear in the Zoo, whose twelfth and thirteenth infants were only the other day condemned to follow their brothers and sisters to an early grave through their parents'—and especially their mother's—gross stupidity about their bringing-up and welfare. And we who are human animals, given by God conscious souls, ought to realise the fact that civilisation and pampered environment have enormously blunted our natural instincts in this respect, just as they have Barbara's, and so we should try to restore the loss by consciously cultivating our understanding of the subject and deliberately realising the tremendous responsibilities we incur by bringing children into the world. When we think about the matter quietly, the magnitude of it is almost overwhelming, and yet there are hundreds and thousands of women who never give it a serious thought! They have some

vague idea that to have children is the inevitable result of matrimony, and that if they pay others to feed and clothe the little creatures, and give them some instruction in the way that they should go, their own part of the affair is finished. That, until a child is grown to an age to judge for itself, the parents will be held responsible for their stewardship of its body and soul at the great tribunal of God does not strike them, and it is only perhaps when the boomerang of their neglect has returned to them and blasted them with calamity that they become conscious of their past negligence.

In this article I do not propose to touch upon the father's side of the question, important as it is, but shall confine myself to the mother's, because this has always been one of my deep preoccupations to think out the meaning of it all, and how best to fulfil the trust. Obviously the sole aim of true motherhood is the moral and physical welfare of the child, and to accomplish this end we should understand that it is quite impossible to lay down any set rule, or go by any recognised and unchangeable method. For in one age certain precepts are taught which are obsolete in the next, because science and the improvement of mechanical aids to well-being advance with such giant strides. But if we keep *the end* in view it is simple enough to see that common sense and discrimination, unclouded by custom or sentiment or superstition, can accomplish miracles. The circumstances of the particular case must always govern the method to be used in order to obtain the same given end, no matter what the station in life of the parents. Thus every mother, from the humblest to the highest, ought to think out how she can best procure her child moral and physical welfare

according to her means.

In the lives of the very poor the only thing to be done for the betterment of the understanding of the responsibility of motherhood seems to be to teach the simplest rules of hygiene which animals know by instinct, and after that for the State to take care of the children as much as possible. For this very strange fact is in operation, namely, that while Nature leaves an insatiable desire to create life, she allows civilisation to rob human beings of instinctive knowledge of how to preserve it in its earliest stages, and that the human mother is of all creation the only one entirely at the mercy of imparted knowledge as regards the proper treatment of her offspring.

Into the conception of the duties of motherhood among the very poor we cannot go in this short paper—the subject is too vast—so we must confine ourselves to discussing those of a higher class where, having the means to do well, the responsibilities are far greater. I want, if I can, to open a window, as it were, upon the outlook of the general responsibility of motherhood and let each class apply what it gathers of the meaning, if it wishes, to its own circumstances.

It is the aim and end of a thing which is of sole importance; in this case the aim and end being the happiness and welfare of the child. And that is the point which I want to harp upon, the necessity of keeping the goal in view and of not wandering off into side issues. It was for the sake of the end, namely, obtaining happiness, that I tried to show in my articles upon marriage how common sense might secure this desired state. And it was to *the end* of what might be best for England that I pleaded for the necessity of using fair judgment over the question of

facilitating or restricting divorce. And it is now to *the end* of helping the coming race to be fine and true that I want to talk about the responsibility of motherhood.

Let us take the subject from the very beginning.

PRE-NATAL INFLUENCES

The thought for the child should commence with the first knowledge of its coming birth. A tremendous control of self, and emotions, and foolish habits, and a stern command of nerves should be the prospective mother's constant effort, as science has proved that all pre-natal influences have such powerful effect upon the child; and, surely, if any woman stopped to think of the colossal responsibility she has undertaken in having become the vehicle to bring a soul from God to earth, she would at least try to employ as much intelligence in the fulfilment of her obligation as she puts into succeeding in any of the worldly pursuits in life. Think of the hours some women spend in painful discipline by going through exercises to keep their figures young and their faces beautiful—the massage! the cures! and the "rests" they take to this end—but who let their waiting time for motherhood be passed in a sort of relaxation of all control—getting into tempers, indulging in nerves, over-smoking, or tiring themselves out with excitement without one thought for the coming little one, except as an inevitable necessity or a shocking nuisance. During this period the wise woman ought to study such matters as heredity. She ought to view the characteristics of her own and her husband's

families, and then firmly determine to counteract the objectionable features in them by making her own mind dwell upon only good and fine attributes for her child. She ought to try to keep herself in perfect health by using common sense, and, above all, she should *determine* to fight and conquer the nervous emotions which more or less beset all women at such time. She ought to encourage happy and loving relations with her husband, and try in every way to be in herself good and gentle and brave. It is the most important moment in the whole of a woman's life for self-discipline, because of the prodigious results of all her moods and actions upon the child, and yet, as I said before, it is one of the commonest sights to see a woman who at other times is a very good sort of creature, simply letting herself go and becoming an insupportable bore to her husband and the whole house, with her perverseness and her nerves and her fads.

If they could analyse causes, what bitter reproaches many poor little diseased, neurotic children might truly throw at their irresponsible mothers for endowing them with these evils before birth.

THE CASE OF TWO WOMEN

When the child is born—again it is only its welfare which should be thought of by the mother, and not what custom or family opinion would enforce. To me it seems that no mother ought to undertake any of the so-called duties of a mother that she is incapable of performing to the advantage

of the child, who would be better cared for by employing highly trained service. She should only force herself to do her best in uncongenial tasks if circumstances make it impossible for her to obtain a better nurse or teacher for her infant than she herself could be. She must constantly keep *the end* in view, so as to stamp out prejudice and out-of-date methods; especially she should guard against making the child suffer for her own fads and experiments. I believe I shall better illustrate what I mean by "keeping the end in view" if I give a few concrete examples, instead of trying to explain in the abstract.

Here is one example.

There were two women of my acquaintance, one of whom had an exquisitely obedient, perfectly brought-up little girl of five who was her constant thought, and a baby of two months. This mother could afford an excellent nurse, and left all the physical care of the infant to her, concentrating her intelligence upon wise general supervision, and upon the training of the little girl whose dawning character was her study. The other mother had two very ill-behaved, disobedient children of five and seven, and a baby of three months. She spent her time washing and dressing the infant, fussing over it and caressing it from morning to night, and interfering with the paid nurse, who well knew her duties. She was also quite indifferent to her appearance, and wearied her husband to death with her over-domesticity. But she felt herself to be a perfect and affectionate wife and mother, and strongly censured the other woman when she admitted that she had never washed or dressed her baby, and was even rather nervous when she held it in case she should hurt its tender neck and head. But

the proof that the first woman was a true and good guardian of God's gift to her was in the finely trained little girl, and the proof of the second woman's undevelopment from the animal stage was in her concentrated and, in the circumstances, unnecessary preoccupation with the infant, to the entire neglect of the character training of the elder children. Had they both been so poor that actual physical care of the infants devolved solely upon each mother, the first would have used all her intelligence to discover the sensible and common-sense way to carry out her duties, and the second would have continued using any obsolete method she had been accustomed to, while she lavished silly fuss and attention upon the baby.

FORE-THOUGHT FOR BEAUTY

The first woman had *the end* in view; the second did not look ahead at all, but simply indulged her own selfishly animal instincts, without a thought of what would be best for her child.

The apparently "good" mothers might be divided into two classes—the animal mothers and the spiritual mothers. The animal mothers are better than indifferent, and therefore abnormal, mothers, but are far below spiritual mothers, for they, the animal mothers, are only obeying natural instincts which have happily survived in them, but obeying them only as animals do, without reason or conscience. And the spiritual mother uses her common sense and tries to secure the continual welfare of her child, looking ahead for all

eventualities, from matters of health to personal appearance, as well as character training and soul elevation.

Numbers of women think that if they follow out the same lines of bringing-up for their children as are the recognised ones employed by their class they have fully done their duty, and that if the children do not profit by the stereotyped lessons of religion and behaviour that have been imparted to them by proper teachers it is the fault of the children, and a misfortune which they, the mothers, must bear with more or less resignation.

But indeed this is not so.

Let us take a spiritual mother's duties in rotation, beginning with the most material. After bringing into the world the healthiest infant her common sense has been able to secure, she should guard against any physical disability accruing to it that she can prevent. In all matters of health she should either make a great study of the subject herself, or employ trained aid to its accomplishment; but beyond this there are other things which, if she neglects them, the boy or girl could reproach her for afterwards and with reason. One is the fore-thought for beauty. How many boys' whole personal appearances are ruined by standing-out ears! How many little girls' complexions are irretrievably spoilt by unsuitable soap having been used which has burnt red veins into their tender cheeks. These two small examples are entirely the fault of the mother and do not lie at the door of uncorrected habits in the children themselves. No boy's ears need stick out; there are caps and every sort of contrivance yearly being improved upon to obviate this disfigurement. No girl need have anything but a beautiful skin if her mother

uses intelligence and supervises the early treatment of it. Because if she has *the end* in view, the mother will know that her little boy or girl will probably grow up and desire affection and happiness, and that beauty is a means not to be discounted to obtain these good things, and, for the securing of them, is relatively as important as having a well-endowed mind.

THE SPIRITUAL MOTHER

When the first dawning characteristics begin to show, the spiritual mother's study of heredity will begin to stand her in good stead, for she must never forget that every expressed thought and action of a small child shows the indication of some undeveloped instinct, and should be watched by a sensible mother, so that she may decide which one to encourage and which one to curb, and, if possible, eradicate. Should there be some strong inherited tendency which is not good, then her most careful care and influence will be needed. There is not the slightest use in making rules and then leaving their enforcement to servants and governesses—the true mother should see that her child thoroughly understands what it is being asked to do, and why it is being asked to do it. She should appeal to its intelligence from earliest days, and make it comprehend it is for its own benefit. For children cannot when very young be influenced by high moral considerations which come with maturer years, but only by personal gain or fear—and if ruled by fear they invariably become deceitful. It is a spiritual

mother's business to show interest in all her child's tastes and occupations, and to supervise and direct them into the best channels, and if she has several children she should watch each one's idiosyncrasies and not imagine that the same method will do for them all. What good gardener would treat a rose-tree in the same fashion which he does a tulip bulb? The spiritual mother should think out for herself, guided by what she sees are their personal needs, the best method of instructing her children in true morality—that is, honour and truth, and freedom from all hypocrisy and deceit. She should not be influenced by any set-down rules of religion or dogma, or by any precepts she may have been taught herself in her youth, if they no longer convey conviction because of the change in time, otherwise she will be following custom and losing sight of *the end*. She should make her children understand that the soiling of their own souls by committing mean actions is the greatest sin, and that what other people think or do not think of them is of no consequence, but the only vital things are what God thinks and they think of themselves. Hundreds of children's afterlives are shipwrecked because they were only taught all the dry dogmas and seemings of religion, and the real meaning was never explained to them. I know a rigorously strict clergyman's family where the children are taught and conform to all the observances of their father's church, and yet a falser, more paltry set of young creatures could not be found—they have never had it explained to them that it is impossible to hoodwink God. For a perfect example of the religious spirit *not to* employ towards children, all mothers ought to read the immortal scene between Trilby before she dies and Mrs. Bagot—when the narrow woman

expresses her puny views and Trilby puts forth her broad and true ones. It is so incredibly stupid to use obsolete methods which can never obtain the desired end just because the dominion of custom is still strong upon us, and we have not been intelligent enough to grasp and benefit by the spirit of the age. For all mothers must realise that they can never dominate the spirit of the age, and must either make vain fights with it, and be conquered to their loss, or must make terms with it and use it in its brightest and best aspect. The spirit of this age is a totally different one to the spirit of their own childhood's age. It is shorn of reverence and unquestioning obedience to elders, and is an independent creature who will only obey through conviction of good or personal benefit. Children are unerring and pitiless judges of those placed over them, and how can a mother, just because she is a mother, expect respect and reverence in her children if she earns their contempt by her conduct and selfishness?

It is the spiritual mother's duty to instil chivalry towards the other sex into her little sons from earliest years, by making them polite to herself and to their sisters. She should, before they go to school and when they return for the holidays, endeavour to influence them into liking cleanliness and care of their persons, especially when with ladies. She should try to make these little men so happy and contented, so certain of sympathy and understanding that home spells heaven for them and remains the dearest memory of their lives, and for her little girls, over whom she has a far vaster influence, she should polish their minds, explain all the true and pure principles of life—teach them the value of self-control and self-respect, and watch for and

encourage all their graces, so that when they arrive at the ages of seventeen and eighteen they may be fitted in all points to shine in whatever world they belong to, and take their places among the best of their class. Space forbids me to go on longer, although the subject seems only just to have been begun, so large is its sphere of action, but I must give one last concrete example of two women's methods, to enforce my meaning of the importance of *the end*.

Both sent their girls to the same school, where every accomplishment was taught and the highest tone prevailed that the masters could inculcate. The first mother showed deep interest in the holidays, in all her child's lessons, directed and encouraged her, opening her understanding and broadening her point of view, while she attended to every physical grace. She explained how her child should apply the knowledge she acquired during term, so that it should grow interesting, and as far as it lay in her power she endeavoured that her daughter should be fitted with every charm and attraction which could procure for her later on a larger selection from which to choose her partner in life. The other mother let her girl run wild during the holidays, and allowed her to feel that all she learned was just an irksome duty to be forgotten the moment school was over. Her appearance, her gentle manners, her refinement, her point of view, were all left to take their own chance, from the mistaken idea that it would encourage vanity and egotism in the girl to discuss these things with her—and that she, the mother, had done all that was required of her in simply providing a good education! This second mother had completely lost sight of the end, you see, and was unconsciously only thinking of herself and not of her

child at all.

And this—to think of the welfare of the child and allow no other point to obscure this—is the whole meaning of the responsibility of motherhood.

VII

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MOTHERHOOD. SECOND PAPER

Contents

WHAT I always wish to impress upon the readers who are kind enough to be interested in the articles which I write is to keep the end aimed at in view. So in this second paper upon the responsibility of motherhood, I must begin by reiterating this necessity.

No mother has a right to drift and trust to chance for the welfare of her children, and however they develop, for good or ill, she must in greater or lesser degree be held responsible.

The period when animals cease all interest in and care for their offspring only commences when these latter can safely be left to look after themselves; and so it should be with human beings. But, judging the ages relatively of animals and mankind, numbers of human mothers entirely neglect their progeny long before they have come even to the fledgling stage! How often in society one sees women of forty-five and younger with daughters of fifteen to twenty, about whose real characters and souls they know nothing! They have always been too busy with their own personal interest to give the time and sympathy required for a real mother's understanding of her children. Servants and governesses have been the directors through the most critical period of the girls' lives, and it is merely a piece of luck if they have imbibed no ill from them.

There are numbers of worthy and innocent women married to men whose characters have certain forcible and unpleasant traits, which are more than likely to be reproduced in their children, but from the limited education these good creatures have received, and the absence of all habit of personal analysation of cause and effect, they never realise that it is their bounden duty to be on the lookout for the first signs of the hereditary traits appearing, and the necessity for using special care and influence to counteract them.

A woman (unless too vain) knows very well her own failings and her own good qualities, and can, if she is wise, suppress or encourage them when they show in her children; but she cannot trace the characteristics of remote ancestors, or even be certain of what her husband has on his side endowed their joint offspring with, so her duty is to be on the

watch from the very commencement, and to use her intelligence as she already uses it in every ordinary affair in life.

People of even the most mediocre understanding are quite sensible enough to select the right implements to carry on any work that they have undertaken. A woman about to sew a fine piece of muslin does not dash haphazard into her work-basket and pick out any needle which comes first, and any thread, coarse or fine, which is handy. She would know very well that her work would be a sorry affair if she did so, and that, on the contrary, she must choose the exact fineness of both thread and needle to sew this particular bit of stuff satisfactorily, the ones she may have employed an hour before upon firm cloth being of no use for muslin.

She is keeping *the end* in view.

LOOKING AHEAD

But countless numbers of mothers never understand that any different method is necessary with different children; they just go on in the old way they have been taught when young themselves, if they trouble at all about the matter.

Every woman who has a child ought to ask herself these questions: Who is responsible for this child being in the world? Am I and my husband responsible, or is the child responsible itself? The answers are ridiculously obvious, and, when realised, the remembrance of them should entail grave obligations upon the parents.

The mother should look ahead and try to determine whether or no what seems to be showing as the result of the ideas of up-bringing in the past fifteen years is good or bad.

The main features of that system being the relaxation of all discipline and the cessation of the inculcation of self-control, because the standards suddenly became different. Formerly, to perform Duty (spelt with a big D!) was the only essential matter in life, and to obtain happiness was merely a thing by the way. In the past fifteen years the essential goal sought after has been happiness, and duty has been merely the thing by the way. But a very large number of the mothers of England have not perhaps begun to develop sufficient scope of brain to enable them to judge what will eventually bring happiness; they can only see the immediate moment, and to indulge their children's every desire seems to be the simplest way. But they forget that during this short and impressionable stage of life all strength and will-power and self-control ought to be enforced and encouraged, to enable the loved children to withstand hardships and to attract happiness in the long after years. A mother should ask herself if it is worth while, in securing a joyous and irresponsible childhood and adolescence, to leave her children at the end of them unarmed and at the mercy of every adverse blast. The great dangers which seem to be resulting from the system of upbringing in the last fifteen years are that at seventeen or eighteen most young people are satiated with pleasure and blasé with life, while they have no definite aim or end of achievement in view, and absolutely no sense of duty or responsibility to the community.

THE FIRST OBLIGATION

It would seem to me that a mother's first obligation is to enforce discipline, and to teach self-control from the earliest infancy with the fondest loving care, and to transmit that sense of responsibility for noble citizenship into her children which should have been her own guiding star.

But, again, to do so she must not employ obsolete methods without taking into account the spirit of the age which has aroused a sense of personal liberty in the youngest child, and makes it refuse to accept rules and regulations on trust. It must be convinced that they are for its good, or it will only bow to them by fear, learn to deceive, and remain rebellious and determined at the first opportunity to throw off the yoke and go its own way. I will give a concrete case of what I mean upon this point, to show how even a good woman can misunderstand the real meaning of the responsibility of motherhood, and by her method of upbringing can allow misfortune to fall upon her young family.

Here is a lady of the highest rank, who comes of a steady and worthy stock, and who has been brought up herself strictly and well. She marries a man of great position, but with rather wild blood in his veins. She has no modern ideas of only desiring a small family; she wishes to and intends to do her duty to her state, and is by no means set upon personal amusement.

As the years go on she becomes the mother of four boys and two girls. She engages the best nurses for them, and, later on, the best governesses and tutors. The children are taught their catechism on

Sundays and are drilled as those of their class into having good outward manners and behaviour. They are given orders without explanations, which they are expected to obey unquestioningly, and they are duly punished when they are disobedient. They see their parents at stated hours each day, and are seemingly a well-regulated and satisfactory young brood.

The good woman and great lady's time is naturally much occupied with social duties, and duties to her husband's tenants, and to various charities and good works in which she is interested. She fulfils all these admirably, and is generally held in affection and respect. All the children have been treated exactly the same by her, although she knows that her husband has a dishonourable, gambling, scapegrace brother who has had to be sent to Australia, and that her husband himself has had tastes, the reverse of orthodox where his emotions were concerned, though happily he has not jeopardised the family fortunes as his brother would have done had he been head. All the children have been so well brought up and instructed in the tenets of the Church that she feels quite placid and sure that she has done all that could be expected of her, and is horribly surprised and distressed when disasters presently occur. She looks upon them as the will of God and fate, but feels in no way to blame personally.

A HATRED OF PREACHING

It had never struck her intelligence that boys

with such heredity in them should have been specially influenced and directed from earliest youth towards ideas of the finest honour and proudest responsibility in keeping unblemished their ancient name; that all the stupidities and follies of gambling should have been pointed out to them; that the certain temptations which are bound to beset the path of those in their position should have been fully explained to them—all this done in a simple, common-sense fashion which would convince their understanding. She had never thought that it would be wise to make them clearly comprehend why they should try to resist bad habits and youthful lusts of the flesh—not so much from the point of view that such things are sins, as because science and experience have shown that the indulgence in them spoils health and brain and pleasure in manhood. Boys are creatures full of common sense, and their education in public schools broadens and helps their understanding of logical sequences, if only things are explained to them without mystery and too much spiritual emphasis being put upon them. They so hate being preached at! No young, growing person in normal animal health and spirits can be guided and coerced to resist the desires of the body *solely* by religious and moral teaching; he must have some definite reward and gain upon this earth held out to him as well; there must be some tangible reason for abstinence to convince his imagination and strengthen his will. And the gain he is offered if he resists certain temptations is that he will grow strong and powerful, and the better able, when his judgment is ripe enough to discriminate properly, to enjoy real pleasures later on. When the adolescent spiritual self begins to rule him, then the moral point

can be more forcibly pressed home; but it is quite futile while he is at the growing animal stage.

Our good and highly placed mother of whom we are speaking has never thought of any of these laws of cause and effect, as applied to her own nearest and dearest, although she is accustomed to think out schemes for the betterment and development of her Girls' Friendly societies, or for furthering her husband's political interests in the country.

INHERITED CHARACTER

She sees good little well-behaved daughters coming down in "the children's hour" and receives favourable reports from the governesses, and has no idea, or even any speculation about what strange and new thoughts and emotions may be commencing to germinate in their brains. Mildred has perhaps inherited her father's *volage* nature where the other sex are concerned, and early shows tendencies which ought to be sympathetically checked and directed. Catherine has got a strong touch of Uncle Billy's unscrupulousness, and is often deceitful and scheming, with a wonderful aptitude for the nursery dominoes and other games of chance. But both, taught by Fräulein or Mademoiselle—and that good old Nurse Timson!—only show their mother their sweetest side when in her company, and are meek, well-behaved little mice, influenced to be thus not from any moral conviction—because if that were so they would be good at all times as well—but swayed by the certain knowledge of personal physical gain if they make a good impression upon mother, and

certain punishment and unpleasantness from the governesses if they do not. All goes along smoothly until the rising sap of nature begins to dominate their lives; then some outward and visible sign of their inherited tendencies begins to show, the force causing its expression being stronger for the time than any other thing.

One of the boys gambles, and goes to the Jews for money. The eldest son and heir, who has never had the wiles of women revealed and explained to him, or the temptations which are bound to be thrust upon him because of his great position in the world pointed out to him, succumbs to the fascinations and falls into the snares of a cunning chorus girl. Our good mother and great lady has steadily avoided even admitting that there can be sex questions in life, and has rigorously banished all possible discussion of them as not being a subject which should be talked of in any nice family. She has never given any especial teaching to arouse pride in his old name in her eldest son, or impressed the great responsibility there is in the worthy guardianship of the fine position God has endowed him with. He has just been allowed to drift with the rest, and, unwarned and unarmed, has fallen in the first fight with his physical emotions.

INSTINCTS UNCHECKED

A third son is apparently the darling of the gods; he is full of charm. But, fearing that the gambling propensities of his second brother should come out in him also, his parents keep him with special strictness

and very short of money. The same absence of all explanations of the meaning of things has been his portion as well as that of his brothers and sisters. He has never been enlightened as to the possible workings of heredity, and shown how that as the vice of gambling is in the blood it will require special will-power to overcome it. None of these things has been pointed out to him, and so, being restive at restraint and worried for money, he soon slips into easy ways, and often allows women to help him in his difficulties. Uncle Billy's instincts and his own father's have combined in him. Both could have been checked and diverted into sane channels with loving foresight and knowledge and sympathy.

The fourth son goes early into the Navy, and the discipline and the inheritance of his mother's more level qualities turn him into a splendid fellow; but this is mere chance, and cannot be counted as accruing from his mother's care.

Here is a case where every outward circumstance seemed to be propitious, and where both parents were good and respected members of their class and race. But neither had the intelligence to realise an end, or consciously to keep it in view; they were solely ruled by tradition and what seemed to them—especially the mother—to be the proper and well-established religious methods for the bringing up of their children. So the remorseless laws of cause and effect rolled on their Juggernaut car and crushed the victims.

Now, if this mother had had the end—that of her children's happiness and welfare—really in view, she would have questioned herself as to the best methods of obtaining that end, and would not have been content just to go on with the narrow ideas which

had held sway in her own day, and which had perhaps then succeeded very well, because, as I said before, they were aided by the two forces now stultified—namely, a tremendous discipline and a spirit of the age which brought no suggestion of a struggle for personal liberty to young minds. Had she thought out all these things, she would have understood the responsibilities of motherhood in their real sense, and not only in the sense which the outward appearance judges good. She would have poured love and sympathy on each one of her children separately and individually, since she was the half-cause of their coming to earth. She would have studied each one's character, and with determined concentration have inculcated the necessary pride in fine actions in them, knowing what their pitfalls would be likely to be. She would have taught the simple religion of respect for the loan God has made in giving their bodies a soul, and she would have watched for possible signs of ill, and would finally have guided each one through the dangerous age on to the time when every man and woman must answer for himself and herself.

Heredity is sometimes stronger than even the wisest bringing up; but who can say how many families might not have been saved and kept together by a prudent and understanding mother's love?

There is a story, which exactly illustrates the point of the importance of keeping *the end* in view, told of the Iron Duke in the Peninsular War. I cannot remember the exact details, and they are of no consequence. The point is this: There was a certain tremendously obstinate Spanish general whom the Duke (then Sir Arthur Wellesley) found very difficult

to lead. The moment had arrived when it was absolutely necessary for success that this general should move his troops to a certain position. He was a man filled with his own importance, and he refused huffily to do so unless the English chief went down upon his knees to him!

The Iron Duke is reported to have replied to this message in some such words as these: “Good Lord! the winning of the day is the essential thing, not the resisting of the man’s vanity! I’ll go down upon my knees with pleasure if that will make him move his troops!” He did, and the Spanish general conceded the request and the day was won.

The great commander and astute Englishman had *the end* in view, you see, whereas the lesser brain of the Spaniard would have sacrificed the battle for a personal whim, having lost sight, in his vanity, of the importance of the main issue.

How many parents do this day after day and year after year, clinging to obsolete methods, trying to rule by worn-out precepts, all because—when you come to analyse it—their own sense of importance really matters to them more than their children’s welfare, and no one has opened their eyes to see themselves and their actions in the true light.

Although the case which I have just given of the seemingly good mother was drawn from the highest class, and so at first sight might not be said to apply to lesser grades, yet I want to show that this is not so, but that the same principle applies to the most modest little family.

Every mother should study how best she can develop and elevate the souls which by her own part-action she has brought into being, and make that aim her first thought—for surely the satisfaction of the

feeling that one has succeeded in training one's own children to high ideals and the attainment of happiness would be greater in old age than any gratification from the acquirement of social supremacy or realised personal ambitions.

I would implore every mother, of any class, ruthlessly to reject all the rules which she has been taught for the guidance of her family, *unless she has proved with common sense that they can be profitably applied to each particular case*. I would ask her to keep to no transmitted axiom, *unless it comes up to the requirements of the ever-changing and ever-advancing day*. There is only one unchangeable and immutable command which we should follow, and this is that we should not soil our souls, or render them up to God degraded and smirched when we go hence upon that journey from whence no man returneth.

In summing up both my articles upon the responsibility of motherhood, I find that in this second one I have made two statements which might read as contradictions. Firstly, I spoke of young people requiring personal gain to be held out to them as a reason for committing, or refraining from committing, certain actions; and then, a paragraph or two afterwards, I gave the illustration of the little girls' good behaviour to their mother as being only caused by the fact that it was more to their advantage so to behave. What I meant to show was that while boys are young and full of the rising impulses of nature they very rarely can have acquired sufficient spiritual belief to make them refrain from indulging in certain pleasures—or what seem pleasures to them—merely because they have been told these pleasures are wrong. For instance, on the subject of smoking. What boy will stop smoking

by being told it is wrong and that he is sinning by his disobedience? But there are many intelligent ones who will not indulge in it if it is explained to them that smoking will stop their growth and make them less likely to succeed in the cricket eleven, or, later, in the college eight. At that period the mind cannot look into unseen worlds, and is mainly occupied with realities from day to day, and therefore is more likely to be influenced by a simple explanation of what physical harm or what good in the immediate future will be the result of actions.

The little girls' behaviour to their mother is really an example of this same rule, only the principle for their action was not good, being merely temporary and strictly limited gain, and not that they should, as in the case of the boys, grow into fine, strong and healthy people, more able to enjoy life in the future.

There is another statement which I have constantly made which possibly might be twisted or misunderstood, and that is the one of the importance of the end. There are people who would turn it into the Jesuitical motto of "The end justifies the means." That is not what I wished to convey at all, but that if an end is good—and the main object, admittedly, is to obtain it—then there is no use in using methods which once might have accomplished this, but which no longer are practical because of the changed conditions, and if continued in will only lose all possibility of success.

How many fathers and mothers in past days have driven their offspring to disgrace and even death by adhering to harsh, Puritanical systems, out of date even at that time! And how many more to-day let them slip into the same abysses by their too

indulgent rule!

As I have said, over and over again, the proof of any pudding is in the eating of it; so let every mother *examine her methods with her children by this standard: Are the children developing in moral and physical welfare by those which she is using, or are they retrogressing?* Is she employing tact to guide their young fierce spirits, or is she trying to crush them by old-fashioned rules?

Questions such as these ought to be honestly asked by each mother of herself, and if the answer proves that retrogression is in progress, then she should not be so incredibly stupid as to continue in her old lines, but should examine herself and see how she can find the right new ones for her particular cases. La Rochefoucauld was wise when he said that vanity was at the root of most human mistakes. If a woman is not willing to undertake the true responsibility of motherhood, then she had far better be that sad thing which is a growing quantity in modern civilisation, namely, a childless wife devoted to dogs. Hundreds of selfish, neurotic females show the utmost unselfish devotion to wretched little pet animals, when the slightest self-denial asked of them for little human atoms is more than they can accord. What does this mean? Is it a writing upon the wall?

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