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PROSTITUTION AND THE INTERNATIONAL
WOMAN'S LEAGUE.

Human questions need for their effectual study to be regarded from all points of view, and from all points of view simultaneously. — Richard Congreve.

A YEAR or two ago there were distributed to a select few in this and some other countries some pamphlets, — one the Prospectus, and another the "Constitution and By-laws," of a projected "International Woman's League," the object of which League is stated to be "the advancement and elevation of woman throughout the world." We are told further that "the League is divided into six departments," one of which is "the department for the investigation of the question of prostitution." The programme of this department sets out thus: "*Sublata causa tollitur affectus.* Recognizing prostitution to be one of the greatest evils of social life, for the struggle against which knowledge is as necessary as for the struggle with Nature, the third department of the International Woman's League has a special purpose to occupy itself with the investigation of this social pest." The slightly foreign accent of these sentences need not prevent our wishing this League, which claims to have been "founded in

the United States of America," the utmost success in its praiseworthy objects. And if, in the remarks that follow, its methods are criticised, and broader views and a loftier attitude are urged upon its projectors, it is certainly not for want of sympathy with its general aim, — "the elevation of woman throughout the world," — or its special aim, — "the investigation (and presumably the extirpation) of this social pest," — prostitution. On the contrary, it is the very importance of the aim that prompts us to try to prevent its being either lost sight of or needlessly compromised, especially seeing that without the earnest and intelligent coöperation of woman herself the double end will be for ever unattainable.

This International Woman's League shows, at all events, one decided superiority to most of the elements in the distinctively Woman's Movement of the present day in recognizing the necessity of positive knowledge as a condition precedent for the effective betterment of human affairs. It does not seem quite so apparent, however, that the other important error of the said Woman's Movement has been entirely avoided, — that of regarding the question of the advancement and elevation of woman as a matter of struggle between the two sexes. It is certainly nothing of the sort. At this moment there are, as indeed there always have been, more men sincerely and earnestly desiring the amelioration, in every possible way, of the situation of woman than there are women actively concerned for the same end. The great obstacle in the way of this projected Woman's League is, and will continue to be, the indifference, if not the downright hostility, of women.

This recognition of the necessity of positive knowledge seems, at all events, to redeem the Woman's League from the hopeless sterility to which so many modern movements are plainly doomed by the mistake of supposing that such knowledge is needless, and that for remedying social evils strong desire will suffice. Only the recognition is considerably neutralized by the prevalence in its programmes of the method in vogue with our "Social Science Congresses," "Associations for the Advancement of Science," *et hoc genus omne*, which attempt to supply the lack of systematic investigation by mountains of undigested statistics and more or less ingenious essays on isolated topics. Science is not created

that way. But it is positive science that is looked to in this age, and ever more and more, as the final arbiter of all questions whatsoever. The question of prostitution is a question of social science and of moral science; and the very existence of these presupposes that human events, as well as the physical and chemical phenomena of the earth, are subject to immutable natural law. If human society had no proper constitution of its own, independent alike of *Kaisers* and Constituent Assemblies; if the various social relations depended only on caprice, whether of the "Sovereign individual," or the "Sovereign people," or of the "Great Potentate" for whose advent the Phalansterians have so long been sighing, — the words "Social Science" would have no meaning, but would be only "as the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal."

Such a recognition of positive science, however, as the final arbiter of all questions henceforth, even questions of morals, is the most vast revolution in its general mode of thought that our race has ever undergone. The change from the Greco-Roman polytheism to Christianity was far less radical. But then, if there were not just this radical change actually being accomplished in public opinion, the outlook for any effective dealing with the phenomenon of prostitution would not be encouraging. It has features shocking enough, disgusting enough one would think, to justify any terms of reprobation, however severe, and yet the actually existing opinion seems by no means prepared to accept the assumption of the Woman's League that prostitution is not only "one of the greatest evils of social life," but one so far remediable that reasonable persons may fairly be asked to join in a "struggle against it." As a mere matter of fact, at all events, it is well known that members of the medical profession, including even some of the highest character and reputation, find it necessary sometimes positively to prescribe to their patients recourse to prostitution as the only means of restoration to health. Every one is familiar with the utterance attributed to Dr. Abernethy, and, while physicians generally may refrain from the *brusquerie* attributed by the current anecdote to this eminent man, the substance of their counsel is the same. Some physicians, dominated by moral considerations, may refuse in any case whatever to give such advice, but this certainly does not solve the real ques-

tion, — it proves only that it remains unsolved, most urgently, moreover, needing solution, — the question, viz., whether prostitution, revolting as are many of its aspects, may not after all be preventing evils still greater. The physicians, moreover, do not stand alone. It was a woman, — not one of the male oppressors of the sex, — and a woman, too, whose purity of character and devotion to the highest well-being of our race are as much beyond question as can be those of any of the projectors of the Woman's League, who had the honesty and the courage openly to thank her "unhappy sisters for the great service they are rendering, even if unconsciously, to the more happy of their sex by protecting the peace and purity of their hearths and homes." Some years ago, moreover, the "London Leader," a publication the tone of which was a long way above that of average journalism, remarked in a personal notice of Lord Shaftesbury that, at a time when "he ought to have been sowing his wild oats," he was unhappily occupied in attending prayer-meetings and other similar effeminacies. This was to account, be it noted, for the want of vigor in the mental constitution of the subject of the sketch. And if the scientific and literary world generally, to say nothing of the common herd of vulgar sinners, could be polled as to their real sentiments, one cannot doubt that a large majority would unite in the judgment that a man who retained an absolute virginity up to the age of twenty must necessarily be a spooney. Either the physicians and the learned world generally are at sea utterly, or prostitution is a sheer necessity, not to human health merely, but to the adequate development of man's moral and intellectual nature. Evidently there is a question here towards the solution of which statistics cannot do much.

There is an inevitable waste of labor, moreover, involved in setting out to prosecute investigations into a social phenomenon of so gigantic proportions as this of prostitution, while simply ignoring the insurmountable obstacles placed in the way of such investigations — and still more in the way of all real and radical remedies — by the theological doctrine, which still has a nominal sway in our midst. One who accepts that doctrine in good faith, and without *arrière pensée*, is in strict consistency bound to recognize in the social conditions around him so many decrees of Divine Providence, the proper attitude towards which is simply that

of profound submission and humble resignation. Any attempt to regulate human affairs systematically; to institute a general Human Providence over this planet of ours; to discover in fact any radical remedy for the several ills to which our race is heir, — is simply impious. The only remedy for prostitution fairly consistent with the theological philosophy is that actually in vogue, consisting in efforts personally to save some few of its victims. And how efforts of this sort actually work we need not look far below the surface to see. The desires and the demands of men being what they actually are; the economical conditions of society remaining unchanged; the widely ramified social machinery for the supply of new victims remaining intact, — the subtraction of some few of the actual victims must needs amount practically to very little beyond hurrying forward the fate of other victims, — those already past the Rubicon, and those on the way towards it. Especially seeing that, of the social machinery for filling the maw of this bestial monster, the essentially exceptional means expressly designed and deliberately contrived for abducting by force, or fraud, or both, more or less innocent women and girls is only the smallest part. In the extreme complication of human affairs there are customs and habits, — even sentiments and ideas, — tending, and even expressly intended, to shield female honor, virtue, and delicacy, which operate, nevertheless, so as to precipitate individual women into the ever yawning abyss. But the sum total of real good accomplished by this double process, — on the one hand an illusory, if not purely imaginary, salvation of victims already irrevocably lost, and on the other a real precipitation of the fate of others, some of whom might be saved by wiser measures, — seems to be a rather problematic quantity, even if the salvation of the converted victims be deemed as complete and satisfactory as it is notoriously uncertain and shadowy. But this is really the only remedy consistent with the theological morality.

The very investigation, moreover, of the problems involved in this odious social phenomenon is precluded by the theological doctrine. A really serious and honest discussion of prostitution necessarily opens up the whole question of the normal relation of the sexes. But the theological morality has prejudged it already: the attempt to reopen it is itself an immorality. Upon its facile *à priori* method, it simply stigmatizes as sin all sexual

intimacies outside the conjugal bond. God has forbidden them: that ends the matter. Certainly, if the theological dogma were true, it would end the matter. But it would be a most singularly unfortunate ending; for it exposes the moral sense, rarely apt to be too energetic, to the fatal shock of having a deadly sin prescribed by the legally authorized and socially recognized custodians of the public health as the only possible resource against an exceptionally frightful death. And it is simply impossible that men should surmount a certain instinctive consciousness that health and sound morals cannot be in flat contradiction with each other, let the professed creed say what it will. That which is absolutely necessary to life and health cannot be a deadly sin. Either it is not a sin, or it is not a necessity. The priest and the physician come thus into positive antagonism: they give each other the lie direct. But the day is gone by, now for a very long time past, and certain moreover never to return, when the public, forced thus to choose between physician and priest, rejecting, at least so far as this question is concerned, whichever it does not accept, will really, and truly, and in its very heart, accept the authority of the priest, if, indeed, it ever really could have done so.

It is not surprising, certainly, when we see men like Spencer and Tyndall, Darwin and Huxley, — men who can command so large a place in the public mind, and whose theoretical authority is joyfully accepted by so large a proportion of the active minds of to day, — coquetting with the decaying superstitions which they are occupied in irrevocably overthrowing, but which still retain among us a nominal supremacy, that a few women, of no matter how great intellectual superiority, but comparatively unknown, and with a task before them so vast and so little popular as that of the International Woman's League, should hesitate to place themselves in direct antagonism to the actually constituted churches. But, if the time had not really come for the introduction of a new and higher morality, based upon a logical foundation much more solid than that of theological fables profoundly discredited among all the really cultured classes, the discussion of prostitution, with a view to any serious effort at its extinction, were wholly and entirely premature. If it is not premature, — and we may reasonably hope that it is not, — it is because the public faith in the ancient creeds is profoundly shaken. Moral-

ity and religion are to find in this our day a new logical anchorage ground. The various social relations will repose, in a fast approaching future, on a new ideal. Fictitious solutions of the various social and moral problems will be replaced by demonstrable solutions. And it is just for this reason, and for this reason alone, that the programme of the International Woman's League is really feasible, provided, of course, that in its working-out sound methods are followed.

As an illustration of the insurmountable obstruction placed by the theological morality in the way of all rational dealing with this question of prostitution, rather than as an indication of the really positive solution, which lies in a totally different direction, the attention of the reader is invited for one moment to the fact that, when a physician prescribes to his patient recourse to prostitution, he means simply that he must have the benefit (as he supposes it to be) of a sexual intimacy. But the same physicians who assert the necessity of a sexual intimacy for certain males assure us that they have female patients also rapidly graduating for the madhouse and premature death solely for the want of this same sexual intimacy. It is surely not absolutely inconceivable that, with a social machinery a little less rickety and out of joint than that we now have to put up with, some means or other might be devised whereby, without compromising the interests of decorum and a real morality, these two classes of unfortunates, standing thus, if our present medical theories are to be trusted, in deadly need of each other, might be brought together and enabled to supply each other's so tremendous necessities. To cut away thus from under so loathsome an institution as prostitution the formidable plea of necessity would surely be one step gained. But to the theological mind the proposition must seem an outrage that ought to subject any one making it to condign punishment.

True enough, that same theological morality will pretend that any such relations would be the same thing as prostitution after all: and it will have the support in such a view of coarse and brutal natures, whose only conception of sexual morality is the security of the monopoly they claim in their own women as the legitimate prey of their own lusts, none the less brutal, by the bye, for being legitimized. It is curious to see how ferociously moral the basest natures can become, on occasion, in the actually

subsisting mental chaos! To a rational mind nothing can be plainer than that among the theologically "sinful" intimacies there are differences vast, immeasurable. There are intimacies and *intimacies*; ay, and there is marriage and *marriage*! There are marriages which a really delicate moral sense will esteem infinitely baser, more impure, and in every way more wicked, than whole classes of extra-legal intimacies; and some of these intimacies that are immeasurably farther removed morally from prostitution than are vast numbers of legal marriages.

It is clear enough that an isolated study of prostitution cannot go far. It is the same indeed with all social questions. The English have been studying the phenomenon of pauperism now for many a long year with an abundant lack of result. They are a charming pair of twins, indeed, — these two social institutions, Pauperism and Prostitution! The problems involved have, in both cases, a positive solution; but one that will never yield itself up to an isolated investigation. The two phenomena are both destined to a final disappearance, but will never yield in the slightest degree to a direct attack. The two are, moreover, intimately interconnected: neither can be extirpated, nor even seriously diminished, the other remaining in vigor.

And, again, the existence of prostitution among us is certainly not unconnected with the existence among us also of an idle and wealthy class, a class of men without any recognized social function, — without any thing to do, in fact, but to expend in its own unregulated enjoyments a vast amount of the products of the social activity. Such a class naturally gravitates downwards, morally at all events, although with noble individual exceptions. It exerts, moreover, a fatally depressing influence upon the moral tone of society generally. It will naturally enough be looked up to at least with envy, and be imitated, especially in its vices, none the less for the envy. It makes vice fashionable, debauchery regarded as a sign of manhood. It is much, indeed, if human virtue, in all its forms, does not become, within the sphere of its influence, a reproach and a by-word. It tends to degrade art, to make of it a pander to the baser passions, instead of that culture of the nobler sentiments which is its true function. Under its corrupting influence fashion puts on the airs of the courtesan, finally even without a blush. Marriage loses its sacredness,

and becomes for large numbers only a legalized prostitution, in which woman scilicet herself, not — like the more unfortunate, but less contemptible — for a piece of bread, but for magnificent establishments, elegant equipages, and dazzling *trousseaus*.

Such a class may have been an economical necessity during the purely spontaneous period of the social evolution. It was at least inevitable in the gradual growth of our modern civilization. But, if such a class is to remain permanently at one end of the social scale, with pauperism at the other end, prostitution also must remain eternally inevitable.

Society is not a mob. It is not a mere aggregate of unconnected individual units. Nor is it a mere product of the will, the caprice, the conventional agreement, of such units. The "Social Contract" myth has survived by many centuries its older cousins, the Phoenix, the Mermaid, and the Basilisk; but, in the full daylight of positive science, it is certain to disappear with the other hobgoblins of superstition, — metaphysical or theological. Society is in reality a natural organism, and all social questions therefore are most intimately interconnected. It is the non-recognition of this fact that, more than any thing else, vitiates the programme of this Woman's League. No social phenomenon can be understood without a knowledge of the general structure of the social organism, its normal mode of existence, and the laws of its progressive development. And it is a specially fatal mistake to attempt to grapple with the question of prostitution, or with that of the social position of woman generally, while ignoring that which has been already accomplished in the direction of a positive social science. In the first place, it is indispensable to note carefully the distinction clearly demonstrated between the class of rich men out of work, the mere existence of which is so inevitably demoralizing, and the real capitalists who actually do fulfill, well or ill, the functions of industrial direction and financial administration. The latter have something to do, and they do it. Their function is not recognized, it is true, as a social function; but that is not their fault. It is the fault, on the contrary, of the leaders and guides of public opinion, — a fault no doubt inevitable until the discoveries of Comte. The function being thus unrecognized, it is exercised without any of that social responsibility rightfully attaching to it. But the fact of its ful-

filment, although in this unrecognized, and therefore irresponsible, way, furnishes for the ownership of the capital which constitutes its indispensable instrument a moral justification wanting in the other case, irrespectively of all criticism upon the modes by which it may have been acquired. A purely parasitical class is morally an excrescence. The proper mode of its excision may be, and is, a rather wide question; but it is much to know just where the social disease lies.

That wealth has a social origin, and must have therefore a social destination, in whose hands soever it may be legally vested, and however necessary may be its personal appropriation, in view even of this social destination, is a conception that will finally conquer for itself as universal a recognition as the doctrine of the double motion of the earth. With the demonstrations on which it rests we have nothing to do here. The matter in hand now, and for which the space available is none too ample, is simply the indissoluble and complicated interconnection actually subsisting between it and the double question of pauperism and prostitution.

Now, the question of the normal relation of the two sexes is plainly enough affected profoundly by this prior question of the sociality at once of industry and of the wealth which is its product. For, wealth being a social treasure, as thus asserted, it is plainly chargeable morally with the adequate provision, within the limits of real possibility, for all social needs. Society needs that all useful members be adequately sustained, and all their real wants adequately provided for. The doctrine of the sociality of wealth practically means, in fact, that the vast additions to the collective wealth of mankind, resulting from the triumphs of modern science and the practical arts under its guidance, not merely in labor-saving machinery, but also in that more perfect organization of industry rendered possible by facilities of communication and the spread of intelligence, should no longer be monopolized by a few, but shall be so administered as to secure to the whole of society the utmost possible degree of well-being of all kinds. In our actual situation the merely material progress of society has become a curse instead of a blessing. Labor-saving machinery only fills the land with "Tramps," — the American name for pauper. And pauperism is a social plague

(and a crime), in many respects more blighting than slavery itself. The invention of the steam-engine and especially the development of the railway system result in placing the whole land under the absolute domination of a small band of railway presidents, whose proceedings would compare in various regards by no means favorably with those of a gang of banditti.

True, positive social science presents this principle of the sociality of industry and of capital essentially as a moral ideal, based moreover upon irrefragable demonstrations, but in no sort of way as a socialist scheme to be carried into practical effect by legislative authority, or looking to the civil power for enforcement. How far a moral principle, however clearly recognized as resting on positive demonstration, may be capable of effectually regulating practice—life without legal enforcement may be fairly open to discussion, and perhaps there may be much to be said on both sides. Certainly, no positivist dreams that a mere sentiment, floating vaguely in society, like the vulgar humanitarianisms of to-day, without any sort of organized authority, is ever going to be able alone to grapple with questions enlisting on opposite sides some of the fiercest of human passions. But a real conviction of positive duty is a different thing, especially when provided with a social organ for its representation and authoritative utterance. Such a conviction would at least be one step gained, and, if legislation were to be finally necessary in the regulation of socio-economical relations, a definite conviction as to what is right and what is wrong in regard to such relations must inevitably be its condition precedent, unless the legislation is to be a dead letter. Those whose conceptions of legislation and jurisprudence are based upon knowledge, and not upon mere wishes and blind passions, know well enough without being "positivists," that any legislation at variance with the moral sentiment of the community has very small chance of enforcement, unless it happens to have on its side the interests of some powerful body of citizens. And in our modern civilization, become, as it is, almost wholly industrial, — the military element being reduced to a purely subordinate rôle, — the word *powerful* is only another name for *rich*.

But then, again, to make still more evident the impossibility of merely legislative solutions of our modern problems, and the

absolute necessity of a new general education inaugurating a new and higher morality, a real justice to woman is impossible without the systematic recognition of what is at all events a demonstrable fact, — that the functions fulfilled by her, and which are the exclusive apanage of her sex, while actually fulfilled within the bosom of the family, are still social functions, in nowise merely private and personal, and not only social functions, but among the very highest and most important of these. This consideration, however, especially as combined with the doctrine of the sociality of wealth, furnishes superabundant ground for the principle of positive morality that it is the duty of man, even collectively, when merely domestic resources fail, to provide for woman. Without the recognition and adequate fulfillment of this demonstrable duty it is impossible that the supremely important function of maternity should be surrounded by the protection indispensable to its proper performance. Yet it is upon this function of maternity that the real progress of society, especially the highest kind of progress, — that which consists in the improvement of the race itself, — essentially depends. The duty of the husband properly to provide for his wife depends not at all, in the purview of the only morality capable of standing its ground in this age of universal discussion, upon the low plane, so insulting to the just dignity of woman, upon which vulgar opinion now places it. It is, on the contrary, *a duty which he owes to society*.

There is, however, no one social condition which coöperates more efficiently in the machinery for furnishing new victims to this insatiable ogre, prostitution, than the utter confusion and uncertainty prevailing in the public mind as to this duty of man to provide for woman. It is recognized after a fashion on our right hand, and on our left it is utterly ignored. And this uncertainty places woman in a much worse position economically than she would be if she assumed the whole burden of her own support, *provided she would repudiate marriage altogether*. But this she will not do, and ought not to do. There are certain features in our actual society, especially as regards the treatment of woman by man, that tempt one at times to adopt the Thuggee Religion, or accept the Messiahship of Mr. Ruskin; but still, after all, Man is, on the whole, a little bit higher in the scale of existence than the Gorilla, and manifests, moreover,

tendencies towards still further progress. For the sake of the better future, the advent of which is, in spite of Black Crooks, Black Fridays, and spiritual levitations, positively assured, woman must still condescend to perpetuate the race. And this one fact dooms to utter sterility the attempted solution of the Woman's Rights Movement, especially the Sorosis branch of it, with its scheme for the salvation of the sex by business women. That some of the victims of prostitution are kept down in their fearful degradation, and some are literally cast into the abyss, by force of sheer starvation, is a terrible fact that a girl can earn more by one hour of prostitution than by a whole day, nay often by a whole week, of hard labor,—may be true enough. But "business women" can do nothing to mend that matter. So long as human labor is degraded into an object of barter and sale, so long as the blasphemies of the political economists about the "labor market" are tolerated, the inevitable effect of woman's work is to reduce wages. It is, at all events, not masculine oppression that makes female wages so much lower than the wages of men. Female employers pay women as little as male employers. Many of the real causes of the low rate of female wages have often been pointed out, but the dominant cause is generally overlooked; namely, the half-and-half recognition by actual opinion of the duty of man to provide for woman. It is the *competition of women in part provided for by their families*, and especially of women having all their *necessities* provided for, and who work only for an extra ribbon for their bonnets, that brings down often so nearly to nothing the wages of others doomed to choose between labor, prostitution, and death from starvation.

Whatever might be the case, therefore, with the questions of pauperism and the normal relations between labor and capital, if these were really susceptible of isolated treatment, there can be no possible solution of the question of prostitution save in the social installation of a higher, and much higher, moral ideal than any now recognized. It must surely be plain enough already to every careful reader that the untrammelled indulgence of masculine sexuality, and the wholesale sacrifice of women, are absolutely one and the same thing. It would matter not a straw how much this masculine license were covered up under the mask of a freedom to be extended to both sexes alike. Ninety-nine out

of a hundred of the victims of prostitution are dragged down to their irrevocable ruin even now with their own consent, gained by deception it may be, but still gained. An absolute rape, outside of the marriage bond at all events, is a very exceptional occurrence. Girls are *only* "seduced." And yet there are creatures in human form who will cry, "And has not a man a right to all the love he can win?" Love!

The question here, be it once more observed, is not one of legislation, or any sort of interference by the civil magistrate. Small help indeed can come to woman thence. Legality is one thing, morality quite another; and on no point perhaps is the distinction more profoundly important than on just this. The moral discipline needed here is one, if not to be absolutely self-imposed, at least to be accepted voluntarily. It is a question of faith and morals; it is a question, therefore, for the Church, not for the State. The interference of the civil law in any such question is a usurpation, at once impertinent and corrupting. The real wrong done to woman is the excess of sexuality in man; her remedy is in her own hands. It will be, at all events, from the moment she accepts the light of true science. For on moral questions woman's voice is naturally supreme, and its supremacy is compromised at this day only by being linked with worn-out superstitions. The purely moral forces in society, of which the supreme element is neither more nor less than feminine influence, will acquire an energy in the steadily approaching future utterly unknown in the past,—when, that is to say, they come to be based upon a doctrine positively demonstrated, over which there can rest no faintest shadow of an honest and reasonable doubt.

Theological fables are destined unquestionably to pass away into oblivion. But were all moral restraint and all moral discipline to pass away with them, farewell for ever to all real emancipation for woman! How can she by any possibility be adequately protected in her sublime and quasi-divine social function of maternity without a stringent discipline of masculine sexuality? It is here that the theological morality most fatally makes default. Nearly all that that morality attempts to do is to try to restrict sexual gratification to the limits of the conjugal bond, within those limits not daring to attempt to curb it. But it is within the conjugal bond itself that restraint is most

important. We need in fact an entirely new ideal of the marriage relation. It ought to be no longer regarded as simply destined to legalize the sexual indulgence supposed to be so necessary to masculine health. If any such necessity exists, it is exceptional, not normal. It springs from our bare, unbeauteous, sordid lives, with their low aims and brutally selfish greed. It springs from the courtesan tricks of fashion, and the dearth of which our practical life is degraded by the prevalent individualism, and the utter non-recognition of that noble social coöperation which, after all, it does by its real nature constitute. It springs from the universal coldness, hardness, dryness, — a natural result of the actually prevailing chaos of thought and the utter absence of that spirit of universal kindness, sympathy, and love, which will be the as natural concomitant of the normal Oneness in Faith and Ideal. The true conception of marriage, on the contrary, like that of all other social institutions, will represent it as destined to the progressive perfection of the race; directly and immediately the perfection of the two spouses by their mutual reaction upon each other. Specifically, moreover, the normal marriage has to surround the maternal function with every possible protection, moral as well as material. It demands of the husband, therefore, profound respect for the initiative of the wife, and teaches him to regard with horror, as a degrading brutality, any attempt to impose upon her embraces undesired. He must train himself to habitual chastity, which, instead of inflicting upon him any injury, will really, in the presence of a deep and sincere love, be in every way a source of vigor and manliness.

The giving birth to a child is certainly a social function, than which there is none of greater importance, unless indeed it be the right education of the child afterwards. Its real education, moreover, it always gets from its mother, let who will give it mere instruction. It is of the very last importance to society that this double function should be performed under the most favorable conditions possible. Among these conditions must certainly be counted the abstinence of the husband from that excessive sexuality for which conventional marriage is so often the cover, and against which the Christian morality is dumb. Surely, after having taken so much pains, and accomplished results so decisive, in

improving various animal and vegetable races, it is time we made some serious systematic attempts at the improvement of our own race. And beyond question the first step must be to place the mothers of the race in a situation to coöperate intelligently. For improvement means one thing in relation to poultry or South-downs, and quite another thing relatively to man. The lower animals are modified, turned aside from their own normal development, in view simply of certain human uses. The horse is modified from his original type, not for the sake of the horse, but for the sake of man. But the improvement of man himself is an integral improvement. It is not the turning aside from his own nature into some abnormal, or even monstrous, forms; but, on the contrary, the complete development of his natural and spontaneous progress. And it is well known to those versed in the latest developments of science that the actual vivification of the germ in the mother's womb is but one of the conditions — and not by any means an all-dominant one, however indispensable — upon which depends the character of the organization with which a child will be born. And, however important the subsequent training, it is unquestionably important also that the organization upon which the training is to act should be the most perfect possible.

A domestic morality based upon such considerations could hardly be so impotent as that nominally prevailing to-day. Generations reared under its ægis would certainly be considerably less apt for the social institution of prostitution than is that to which we have the doubtful happiness of belonging. As the new morality begins to prevail, woman, during her pregnancy, will be protected, not only against want, but against the mere dread of want, as well as against all necessity for exhausting fatigue. That this is economically quite possible, and more than possible, is manifest at once as soon as it is considered that only purely voluntary pregnancies are in question: among a population, moreover, all of whom will have undergone the new and higher education, culminating in a morality which, in the name of the grand end, — the development and perfection of our race, — places the function of procreation *under the free and exclusive responsibility of the mother.*

But of the social function which woman really fulfils, the actu-

ally prevailing social and moral theories furnish no conception in any wise sufficient. No one can very well avoid recognizing that every man existing, or that ever can exist, is physically a product of woman. We fail to consider, however, to how vast a degree woman is the educator, as well as physically the mother, of man. In all the relations of life, not as mother only, but as sister, as daughter, and especially as wife, woman is constantly reacting upon man all through his life, developing his sentiments either higher or lower, and in fact making him just what he is. True, the Christian morality, with its insulting treatment of woman, gives her no hint at all of the vast power for good or evil really placed in her hands, and does nothing therefore to direct her to the true and proper use of it. It is no wonder, therefore, and it is not in the least to be cast in the face of woman as in any wise a slur upon her wisdom and goodness, that she has never recognized this vast power as a social trust to be employed for the progress and perfection of our race, but has, on the contrary, regarded her power over man as the men of business have treated their capital and skill, as the men of letters, and even the artists as well as the men of science, have treated their several gifts, — simply as a means for their own personal aggrandizement. The women, indeed, are incomparably less to blame than any of these. Women have had in great degree a spontaneous, although blind, sentiment of their duties, and nobly done much excellent work in this direction. It is our childish moral system, and blind theological religion, that are almost alone to blame for any generally prevailing female deficiencies. These alone can account for the strange madness which could suppose the substitution of any sort of industrial operation for this sublime educative function an "elevation of woman." One expects such an appreciation, of course, from a political economist; but it is surprising to see a woman so far deserted by her habitual good sense and intuitive insight as to be misled into imagining, ever so momentarily, that a human being is a product of less worth and dignity than a bale of cotton!

If, then, there is connected with the universal obligation on the part of man to provide for woman a voluntary renunciation of industrial careers on her part, — except, of course, in cases of special aptitude, — it is simply on the ground that the proper

function of woman is far higher, both in social importance and in moral dignity, than any of the functions of the industrial sphere. Woman's function is, in a word, the production of men. And it is the whole sex that the positive morality summons to the self-conscious and intelligent performance of this noble social function, the importance and the dignity of which are not surpassed, nor even equaled, by any of those exceptional careers to which only a favored few of the sex can ever aspire. And if these favored few are thus inspired by a resentment not at all appeased by ever so frank a recognition of the entire legitimacy of those exceptional destinations where the aptitudes actually exist, we must endure that resentment as we best can. The favored few always seem to think the dissemination of universal well-being in some way an infringement of their rights. But while thus representing the perfection, and in some degree even the enlargement, but especially the assured stability, of HOME as the fundamental condition at once of order and of progress, both social and moral, the new social doctrine also recognizes that woman has a second function in addition to the strictly domestic, — as cooperating, that is to say, in the formation of public opinion. It recognizes a similar function in the working classes, properly so called. Sober reflection on the importance of such a function makes it plain how illusory would be any solution of the labor problem that dealt only with its economical elements. The force of public opinion, however, is by no means rightly appreciated either as to the importance of its development, or as to its possible efficiency when rightly developed, and when provided with its legitimate means of expression. The actual doing of the material work of the world is an indispensable social function, of course; but it would be for ever liable to be cheated of its true end, if there could not be evoked from among the general mass of the citizens a powerful public opinion to control the general course of its direction. The generality of views, however, and generosity of sentiments, needed for this higher and finer function rarely exist in minds preoccupied with the thousand petty cares of administration. The two prime elements, therefore, of the public opinion of the future are necessarily women and the working classes.

Besides, when wealth is abused, it is women and the working-

men who have to suffer the worst of the resulting evils. They suffer now, both the one and the other; and they so suffer because, in fact, wealth is abused, grossly abused. It is in vain that the cynical egoism prevailing in actual society, and which finds its expression alike in the press and on the rostrum, turns their complaints into ridicule; the deep dissatisfaction at all events manifestly exists. It is destined to go on increasing, and in no wise to die out. "Equal Rights" agitations and "Labor Reform" agitations may be equally impotent to effect any radical change, or any change at all perhaps. They suffice to manifest the profound unrest. They are powerless only because the two social forces which they represent mistake the sphere in which they can effectively act, and the remedies really adapted to their wrongs. As soon as these two forces come mutually to understand each other, and to understand also the natural laws of the social organism of which they are in their own sphere supreme elements, they will find, and society will find, that they are irresistible. In the practical sphere they are necessarily subordinate; in the spiritual sphere they are normally the dominant forces. Practically they are oppressed, insulted, trodden down, simply through the metaphysical and theological superstitions to which they still cling. From the moment the light of positive science reaches them, their final and definitive triumphs will begin.

But the influence which woman can exert upon public opinion in the drawing-room is incomparably more powerful than that which she can wield from the platform. Some women can command attention from public audiences: to them the platform will always, and ought always, to be open. But the influence thus to be wielded is not specifically feminine. In character, it does not differ from that which can be exerted from the same position by a man. But a public opinion formed exclusively by the platform, even tempered and refined by the pulpit, — by a pulpit ever so profoundly in harmony with the highest light of the age, — would still be essentially deficient. It would be deficient in power, as well as in elevation, and especially in that sympathetic quality to the importance of which the modern mind is so deplorably blind. The corruptions of to-day are in great measure due to the want of feminine influence upon public opinion. For, indeed, the gen-

uine feminine influence may be defined in one word as the social conscience.

Such an influence must, however, in order to attain its proper ends, be an enlightened influence. Positivism, indeed, as a social movement, is all summed up in education. According to the founder of the Positive Philosophy, all our modern problems have but that one solution. Education, at all events, is the one universal *radical* solution. There may be many immediate measures which will accomplish from time to time alleviations of our worst miseries, or even give a foretaste of the positive blessedness awaiting man in the future. But no immediate measures can be radical; no radical measures can be immediate. And, moreover, immediate measures can really do permanent good, and can even escape being ultimately an intensification of our actual misery, only on condition of being in full harmony with, and in the same direction as, the radical.

The influence of woman upon public opinion, as exercised in the drawing-room, is essentially the influence of the whole sex. The positive conception of the family and of the social organization tends to open the drawing-room ultimately to the whole body of the people. The pulpit and the platform can offer careers to a very small number only, a peculiarly favored few, of either sex, — especially with our present educational organization, in which the higher instruction is essentially the monopoly of the rich. And this is the most unjust, by the bye, of all existing monopolies. That which a healthy social state really demands is that every woman in the land shall have opened to her a sphere wherein she can exert the utmost influence which, by her natural and acquired capacities, she is capable of exerting. And the proportion of women whose influence would be in the main a source of elevation — ay, and even of enlightenment — to the other sex, is incomparably greater than is reckoned by the somewhat brutal appreciation actually prevalent in society. Still more will this be the case under the positive system of education, which will communicate to the whole body of the people, of both sexes, the highest instruction and the highest culture.

How such a conception of the social destination of woman could ever have been imagined any sort of "subjection," it might be hard to tell. One can only see how the privileged classes of

almost all shades of opinion, and all sorts of creeds, and of both sexes alike, may naturally resent so radical a popularization of all real social benefits. "Of what use is it to be rich or gifted or a genius, if all the poor, and the feeble nobodies, are to be as well off as we are?" Such a feeling is natural enough, — as natural, indeed, as the opposite feeling, that of social devotedness and universal sympathy, — and, moreover, incalculably more prevalent. If such a resentment shows itself sometimes in intentional misrepresentation of the new faith, there is nothing in that very surprising. Misapprehension is always easy enough without the perverting influence of dislike. Still it remains the fact that the positive doctrine can never have a decisive social prevalence unless it be procured for it by the influence of woman. Woman alone can confer upon it its due practical sway. It can never be attractive to the male sex. It requires a discipline of his strongest passions such as no theological religion ever dared to claim. It has neither prestige nor supernatural rewards to offer in compensation. And if it does offer the working classes deliverance from the very real oppressions they now have to suffer, their demagogue leaders can easily keep them in ignorance of it; and, even if they did not, some merely political and economical schemes for their redemption would seem to them more certain to give relief, and be for many reasons much more acceptable. The fact that no merely economical measures could permanently improve their situation without a personal improvement in themselves, — without in fact a higher education, — will be long enough in making itself recognized by them. No one can fairly appreciate culture, unless he is already the subject of it, at least in some degree; and moral culture will only be a little less distasteful to the mass of the poor than it is to the rich. The kind of satisfactions it promises, or rather yields without promising, can be appreciated only after being already experienced. The sacrifice demanded of men is asked for only in the name of the freedom and dignity of woman and the permanent improvement of the human race to flow from the just protection of her maternal and educative functions. A few chivalrous souls may be attracted to it on this very ground; but the mass of men will easily find a thousand specious arguments by which to excuse their rejection of a morality so far above their habitual aspirations.

True, the working men will have to find out in the long run that there is no other solution of their side of the social question that is really complete, and indeed no other that is not radically chimerical. But it may take a score or two more Parisian massacres of working men, capped by the still more infernal cruelty of the odious calumnies which attribute to the victims the crimes perpetrated by the oppressors, — the whole modern press, by the bye, joining in the Satanic chorus, — and other similarly delightful experiences, to open their eyes. But the female sex has nothing to hinder the manifestation of its spontaneous aptitude to appreciate, and cherish with enthusiasm, the new teachings, save only its theological superstitions. So far as woman can attain a sufficient emancipation from these superstitions, without the moral deterioration which is so apt to wait upon that emancipation, her ardent acceptance is assured beforehand.

But the influence of woman even alone, when exerted in cooperation with the irrefragable demonstrations of positive science, would still be finally supreme. Prostitution will ultimately disappear; but it can be only through the gradual prevalence of the positive morality. Every other solution is demonstrably chimerical. Aside from this morality and an organized public opinion to sustain it, there is only one consolation for the International Woman's League; and that is in the assurance of Mr. Herbert Spencer that the evils resulting from the diseases entailed upon men by this institution of prostitution have been exaggerated. Perhaps this is true. Exaggerations are common enough in all directions. In the end, however, it will be found that woman will demand the total extinction of this institution as a veritable "pest." And when she seriously makes the demand, understandingly, basing her demand upon the positive demonstrations of social and moral science, and with full purpose and determination insists upon it, the demand will have to be complied with.

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