

ANTI-PROUDHONIAN IDEAS

ON
LOVE, WOMEN & MARRIAGE

I will establish enmity between you
and the woman... She will crush your
head and you will bite her heel.

GENESIS, iii, 15

SECOND EDITION
augmented by a critical review of the book
WAR AND PEACE

BY



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LAST REVISED MARCH 31, 2024.
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED

1861

These *draft translations* are part of an ongoing effort to translate both editions of *Proudhon's Justice in the Revolution and in the Church* into English, together with some related works, as the first step toward establishing an edition of Proudhon's works in English. They are very much a *first step*, as there are lots of decisions about how best to render the texts which can only be answered in the course of the translation process. It seems important to share the work as it is completed, even in rough form, but the drafts are not suitable for scholarly work or publication elsewhere in their present state. — Shawn P. Wilbur, translator.

ON THE BOOK

WAR AND PEACE

“It is a theory of the mind that when it misunderstands the truth that is its point of referenc, it oscillates between contradictions.”

(Economic contradictions.)

When we defended women, and in the name of women, sentiment, against the attacks of the author of *Justice in the Revolution and in the Church*, we accused M. Proudhon of being at base only a worshiper of force. The accusation was new, and it could, three years ago, pass for reckless. It seemed contradicted, in fact, by the opinions attributed until then to the famous writer, by his most noisy theories, by the theses and above all by the titles of his most famous works. But, because there was a contradiction, it did not follow that we were wrong. This is what M. Proudhon himself, logically, had to prove one day or another; and he met our expectation beyond what was necessary. His last book, in which he sings of Hercules and sanctifies victory, is an admission, as frankly as possible, of the worship he professes today for the right of the strongest.

To see M. Proudhon so easily at contradictions that contradictions seem natural to him, one is tempted to inquire under what influences he acts. In inquiring into his origins, we find two principal causes of the faculty that he possesses to such an eminent degree.

On the one hand, Mr. Proudhon is Franc-Comtois, — you know the rest. Now, Franche-Comté, say the geographers, is a very strange and diverse country, half German and half Latin, remarkable for an infinite variety of sites, productions and climates. There is the same power, the same diversity in the intellectual faculties of the inhabitants; sometimes the philosophical instinct and the often dense naiveté of the Germans predominate in them, sometimes it is the irony and skepticism of the Latins. In this regard, M. Proudhon is the type par excellence of the Franc-Comtois. He alone sums up the very diverse aspects of the race and the soil of his country. So we can say that he was doomed to contradiction by his birth. He is a born gainsayer.

On the other hand, the beginnings of the illustrious polemicist seem to have been influenced, if not directed, by fervent Catholics. The proof is in a certain very orthodox work, his first literary essay, which brought him to be sent to Paris to develop his talents there. Now, an education where one offers to the first admiration of youth this God of the Bible who, in hatred of all logic, created man for happiness, delivered him to temptation, punished him for having succumbed to it, and

proves his inexhaustible love for his creature by constantly chastising them, this education to which M. Proudhon owed his first ideal, cannot but have singularly encouraged his native tendencies.

Whether or not we have found the secret of M. Proudhon's contradictions, they are obvious and numerous.

He began by reacting against the God who had oppressed him. One day, a new "Prometheus," he thought he had stolen the torch of goodness, and he cried out, in a fit of mad pride, by showing the Divinity stripped of its attributes: "God is evil!" But the remains of the idol did not fall to dust at his feet. The incense continued to rise towards the clouds, and the deified M. Proudhon remained alone, without adoration and without cult, face to face with the wrathful sky.

Since then he has wanted to strike again and harder... But, at that supreme moment, the voice of Jehovah was heard, and Mr. Proudhon, on his knees, heard this: I am the true God, the only strong one! Tremble, for I punish the proud in his wife, in his children, in his servants, in his flocks, etc., down to the fourth generation.

And the proud man trembled.

What it was given to M. Proudhon to hear through the brushwood, he comes today to tell us again. Let us be attentive, because the new Moses claims to bring from of this new Sinai, the tables of the Law, dictated by the God of armies.

In the book *War and Peace* we witness, as always, the creation of an abstraction, new researches on the absolute. For M. Proudhon, it is a matter of studying war *in itself*, that is to say apart from all the phenomena connected with it.

When we once reproached M. Proudhon for being a disguised partisan of the transcendental method, M. Proudhon could oppose to us his theory of immanence, conceived, brought to light, even buried in the book of *Justice*, and to which its inventor gave for basis the human conscience; but, in *War and Peace*, this theory of immanence, the benefits of which he had denied to woman, is reduced to its simplest expression. M. Proudhon appears to us to have sacrificed it because it would have made an obstacle to the blossoming of his new theory.

Abandoned for this reason, *immanence* is entitled to all our regrets.

The antinomic method, more fortunate, reappears here and deploys its innumerable resources, which seem to serve, under the pen of the illustrious Franc-Comtois, only to favor the birth of certain original, contradictory formulas, instead of helping to reach a logical conclusion.

Not only is the system of antinomies developed to infinity in each of M. Proudhon's books, but it hovers outside over the entire work, obliging the reader to make eternal reservations.

One notices, however, in the midst of all these evolutions, an idea constantly welcomed, always present, and everywhere glorified, which develops through all obstacles, and grows as the others fade away. This idea is that of the advantages and merits of force. We have seen it walk with a firm step towards the bold conclusion that it has at last reached.

Destruam et œdificabo! said the author of the *Economic Contradictions*. Faithful to his motto, long after having destroyed, he persisted in destroying again. But nothing was seen to rise from

the midst of the rubble, and time refused its assistance in fulfilling the Latin quotations of the demolisher.

There are people in today's society who are tired of scandalous proposals, and who, after having applauded certain bold criticisms that have come to their place, are finally worried about rebuilding. For it is not enough to pile up debris when it comes to rebuilding the social edifice; you have to look for the cement that will unite stone to stone again.

One destroys with pure force, with brutality, with insult, monuments and social prejudices; nothing is built with all that. M. Proudhon has never managed to form more than light heaps of sand which are then swept away by the very breath of the person who raised them.

The end of all M. Proudhon's theories is the glorification of force.

Did he not try to constitute value by basing it on the productive force of man? Didn't he want to dethrone a chimerical divinity, who no longer sent down lightning, to put in his place a real and strong creature? Hasn't he resolved to establish justice through marriage, which it suits him to call the recognition of the rights of the strongest? Finally, hasn't he just discovered that destructive force has become, through war, the PRODUCER OF RIGHT?

Destruam et œdificabo!

We could say of M. Proudhon what he said of Rousseau: "If he is logical, it is in the obstinacy of paradox."

In this connection it might be well to point out how those who profess the love of paradox are all led to the same goal by different paths. Rousseau wanted to consider in society only the manifestations of sentiment. M. Proudhon wishes to consider in it only the play of physical forces. Well! Voth, on this steep slope, have been led to make an apology for primitive manners and savage laws.

That to in order arrive at this glorification of force, the author of *War* saw himself forced to destroy confidence, love, charity, a certain justice that is well worth his own, what does it matter! M. Proudhon was not to encounter sentiment in the ways of force where he did not seek it.

The author of *War* urges us to talk again about this right of the strongest, which he once said was "a miserable equivocation for the use of emancipated women and their collaborators."¹ Since he commits us to it, let's talk about this right again, and let's try in our turn to prove what M. Proudhon was trying to prove elsewhere, that, "in fact of the ideal, power is not in acrobatics."²

Moreover, to combat the theories of the author of *War and Peace*, we can invoke, with more right than he, what he calls "the universal conscience, the testimony of the human race, the aspirations of peoples, the needs of the masses, etc."

¹ Of Justice in the Revolution and in the Church.

² *Ibid.*

What is this mass that you always take as witness for the needs of your case? Could it no longer be this “passive, infertile nature, a sterile womb where the seeds of private activity are fertilized?”³

It pleased you, at the time when you spoke of the masses in such an unreverential way, to insult at the same time the men to whom it pleases you today to make amends, as well as to the masses. “Hobbes,” you told us, “is the theoretician of despotism.”⁴ You called de Maistre “this bard of reaction;” and you added “that he only has value through the revolution that he apes by contradicting it.”⁵ Those who, more than you, have remained devoted to their convictions, would they not have some reason to believe that they have the right to judge you at this hour as you judged common enemies yesterday?

Your followers should advise you to make a decision. Since you are always condemned to pick up what you knocked down the day before, do not destroy any more. In fear of constantly contradicting yourself about a host of people and things, do not insult anyone or anything.

You are a son of 93: beware of calling the Girondins “femmelins,” the Jacobins “eunuchs.” You call yourself a republican: talk to us less often about “republican ineptitude.” You want to constitute value after having shown us the uselessness of capital, stop talking to us about “popular imbecility, socialist hypocrisy.” You claim the help of woman for the realization of your legal organ: do not come and spout nonsense about her that hurts her deeply.

On whom, then, would you count if you were put on notice to build up for good? Do you think we forget insults so quickly?

Time, say the prophets, does not erase from the memory of the God of Israel the insult he received from man. So Jehovah himself remembers, and he proves it harshly to you now.

“God,” you once told us, “contradicts man, constantly seeking to lead him astray, to destroy him.”⁶ Suddenly you see the God of Armies pass by, you fall in love with his great sword, and, with an ardor as imprudent as it is youthful, you run after him as children do when meeting soldiers. Stop quickly, because a great danger threatens you! I believe that you had a presentiment of this danger at the time when you exclaimed: “If one day I must be reconciled with God, this reconciliation can only be accomplished by my destruction.”⁷

Why should the author of *War and Peace* worry about the contradictions he discovers in his own consciousness, when he sees them everywhere at the same time? “One finds,” he tells us, “eternal contradictions between the fundamental data and the authentic aspirations of humanity.”

³ *Economic Contradictions*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

This masterful phrase, made to dazzle pedagogues, basically covers only a rather mediocre antinomy.

It is in order to solve it that the book *War and Peace* was written.

The antinomy once discovered, Mr. Proudhon thus lays down the terms of a first proposition: "War is something entirely internal and observable in the phenomena of consciousness." Let us therefore study war in the sphere of pure reason, and, in fear "of being a hundred times cruder than the barbarians," let us take care to deny it "all spirituality."

Let's not count for our enlightenment on what the famous critic calls "the verbiage of the jurists and the materialism of the military." If we ask the author of *War and Peace*, he will show us that, "far from being a passion of an inferior order, war is a divine fact!"

What is a divine fact? we ask. "Everything that occurs outside the series," responds M. Proudhon, "or serves as an initial term, admits neither question nor doubt on the part of the philosopher. The divine imposes itself by force; it does not answer the questions addressed to it, and does not suffer demonstrations."

According to this, we might believe that the author of *War*, satisfied with his definition, will refrain from questioning the divine fact. But not only does he question it, he claims to demonstrate it. This is because it belongs to him alone to explain certain mysteries. It is true to add that M. Proudhon did not completely deprive himself of the attributes of divinity by proclaiming the name of Jehovah.

War is a divine fact! For the savages perhaps, in whom you recognize a metaphysical instinct superior to that of the philosophers, but not for us, I imagine! Those whom you call, not without irony, the civilized, seem to me to have long since torn the bloody veils of war. It is not a divine mystery nor the ideal which these veils concealed, it is crime and horror.

That war exists, no one disputes it, but that it is observable in the phenomena of consciousness, that is false and bad to say.

War, that old bombarded divinity, only exists objectively in the domain of man's thoughtless action. When it is represented by its primordial fact, the attack, it can only be inspired by the most powerful negation of the phenomena of consciousness, by brute force. War exists like cannibalism, like slavery, like fetishism, like paganism... It is one of those errors through which all societies pass, and which they reject with disgust, after having welcomed them with enthusiasm.

Errors disappear, but rights are eternal. War is therefore not PRODUCTIVE OF RIGHT. It may be that it is for you "a phenomenon of a divine order, miraculous even, rising to the height of a religion." This no longer concerns us. We do not know, alas! How to interpret the mystical meaning of certain inspired words, which all the prophets have used to demonstrate the *divine facts*.

"War is just and holy on both sides," you say. Stop there, sir, you are pushing everything to the extreme; de Maistre, your ally, does not go so far; he affirms the divinity of war only in its results. In this I find him more prudent than you. What should we think of the wars of religion, if they had been made by the just and the saints against the just and the saints? You definitely like to embarrass your friends.

Proudhon the ally of the Catholic de Maistre! MM. Guizot and Villemain partisans of the papacy!

Isn't it permissible to wonder how the new generation will get out of this maze? Who, then, will serve as its guide in the paths of the new faith? Will it not stop if, believing the paths of the future open, it sees them encumbered with apostates?

As usual, M. Proudhon's new discovery summarizes all human and social phenomena. Always the absolute! Let us judge: "War is our history, our life, our whole soul; it is legislation, politics, the State, the country, the social hierarchy, the right of nations, poetry, theology; again, it is everything! And further on: "War is an institution, a belief, a doctrine, liberty!" What a confusion of words! The most curious is certainly this: "Without war, would we even have this idea of *value* transported from the language of the warrior into that of the merchant?"

This definition of value, although slightly far-fetched, isn't it original? This is sufficient proof of the extent to which M. Proudhon is possessed by his new creations.

Let us listen to one of the cries of his soul: "Hail to war, this bloodshed in waves, these fratricidal carnages that horrify our philanthropy!" Then he adds, alluding to such a foolish philanthropy: "I fear that this softness will lead to a chilling of our virtue." This recalls the enthusiasms which the author of *War* felt at the distant sight of the "sublime horrors of the fusillade," and his indignation against the "cannibals" who put an end to them.

The paradise of the author of *War* is today Wal-halla where the heroes engage in endless battles: "Does this paradise mean nothing to your intelligence or your heart?" asks Mr. Proudhon.

"Ormuzd and Ahrimane," he adds, "are engaged in an eternal combat! The author of *WAR* is mistaken. Zoroaster said on the contrary that the fight of Ormuzd against Ahriman should not be eternal. Ormuzd, who is the god of good and peace, must defeat Ahriman, god of war and evil, after six thousand years. As Zoroaster revealed this other *divine fact* to us a very long time ago, we can hope that those times are near.

M. Proudhon, after having reviewed all the religions, tries to prove to us that their ideal is the warrior ideal. He even goes so far as to exclaim: "Christ is the sword!"

The illustrious convert also teaches us that "divine right is the figure of human right. Is it not rather the opposite proposition that is true? *In itself*, whatever M. Proudhon may think today, divine right does not exist; it is an ideal created by man and which man constantly seeks to realize. One could say of divine right more or less what Chateaubriand, not without provoking the mockery of the author of *War*, said of God: If divine right has made human right in its image, human right has returned the favor! Finally, didn't the French Revolution irrevocably destroy divine right the day it proclaimed the rights of man?

You note with sadness that "the braggarts of liberalism, emancipated by the revolution of 93 from the jurisdiction from above, pass without uncovering their head in front of a cross."

Is it then so difficult to excuse the liberals for their impoliteness towards this cross which represents in their eyes the eternal affirmation of divine right? Be less harsh on the liberals and remember that you were more *boastful* yourself of old, when after counting the attributes of the Godhead, you declared them to contradict your own.

Is it for us to ask for your indulgence for the liberals? We believe liberalism above your attacks and our defense. But there are other oppressed beings on whom the slightest insult weighs, because everything overwhelms them at will, and for whom we implore your generosity. We want to talk about the weak. Is it irrevocably that you have said of them: "They must bow respectfully and silently before the decrees of force? The peoples, you add, have always bowed before these judgments. No, the peoples do not bow *respectfully and silently* before the decrees of force; all the historical facts prove the contrary. The weak struggle as much as they can against the strong, and they use every means! To bow before the judgments of force would be to recognize its evil cause, and the weak do not want it, they will never want it! If they bow, it is like a flower bent by the storm, to languish, wither, and die.

The wars you dream of are tournaments, where the adversary, dismantled *according to form*, by an adversary stronger than him, rises and salutes three times, once to the sky, once to the gallery, once to the winner. After that he comes out of the lists. But the real war, the one that provokes hatred, merciless vengeance, murders, rapes, pillage, fires, crimes of all kinds, that alone exists. It is cruel to have deified it.

M. Proudhon sees war everywhere. "To act," he says, "is to fight." Wouldn't acting today be much more like putting nature at peace with itself by associating its forces with those of humanity?

"We cannot act without war," continues Mr. Proudhon, "it is essential to humanity." Yesterday you said the same of justice. Don't you sometimes confuse justice and force, and don't you often make one render the judgments that the other has already rendered? We know now that you prefer force to justice, and we are not surprised to see you add that "great captains are superior to great legislators." Few people, I believe, will be of your opinion, and will place the benefits of Alexander, Attila, or Caesar above those of Solon, Lycurgus, and Zoroaster.

"In the eyes of a woman," you say, "the warrior is the ideal of virile dignity; women love stronger than they do." Allow me to stop you. Just because you see idle bourgeois admiring the soldier, idle like them, don't conclude that they admire the warrior. What they like, what they appreciate, is both the shiny costume and the leisure of the soldier in garrison. But turn the soldier into a warrior with a wave of the wand; place him among the mutilated corpses, sword dripping with blood in hand, face and clothes covered in powder, and you will then see how many women love the warrior! In the village, when the conscript goes away, people weep, not only because he may die far from the steeple — some return — but because he is exposed to losing the holy love of labor in the regiments. The idleness that pleases town women only inspires contempt in the peasant woman.

"Slander if you can what you don't understand," M. Proudhon tells us, speaking of war. Is it therefore necessary to slander war at the present time to be right about it? Wouldn't it suffice to cite certain facts, which, presented without reserve and without interested consideration, would destroy its prestige and would make it horrifying? We would perhaps venture to do so, if we had not been warned by M. Proudhon that "in the high and low regions of society, there is a certain animadversion against those who fight it."

Thus M. Proudhon, by deifying war, has gained influence in the *high and low* regions of society. He is able to defy what he calls in a friendly way “the ignorance and stupidity of the jurists.”

War being a *religion* for M. Proudhon, he comes to teach it to our society, which he depicts — apart from the *high and low* regions, no doubt — “as ignorant of its origins as it is ignoble in its incredulities.” Finally, in the design of establishing the new dogma, he relies on “popular reason” — formerly *imbecility* — to overcome, he says, “philosophical reason.” There would be a surer way to get the better of philosophical reason; it would be to oppose to it the reason of the strongest. This is perhaps what M. Proudhon means by *popular reason*. But I believe that it would not be indifferent to address the *higher* regions rather than the *lower* regions to find it.

M. Proudhon writes in huge letters that WAR IS PRODUCTIVE OF RIGHT. This maxim is definitely the great discovery of his book. He jealously claims priority for it, and it might indeed belong to him.

It is justice and not war that produces right. Hasn't the recognition of a right in humanity always been rather a call to union, to order, to peace, than an encouragement to warlike tendencies? War does not produce right, because it is impossible to maintain that law cannot be prior to combat. Whatever M. Proudhon says, war is always profoundly unfair on one side, when it is not on both. Has he who possessed the right always been victorious? War is an oversight of human reason, an interruption in the course of justice, and, as you yourself agree, a *correction* of humanity. However, is it not when humans commit acts contrary to justice, that a correction is inflicted on them?

The new theories of M. Proudhon oblige him to deny his greatest admirations. Kant, welcomed with enthusiasm in the *Economic Contradictions*, sees himself completely neglected by the author of *War*, who retains a remnant of esteem for him only because he doubts eternal peace. Men like Grotius, Wolf, Vattel, for whom M. Proudhon had consideration, questioned in their turn, have in vain responded with one accord that war is full of chances, essentially destructive, M. Proudhon takes no account of their arguments, and he repeats without echo his beloved aphorism: “War is productive of right!”

Remarkably, each time that M. Proudhon persists in defending a thesis contrary to sentiment, his style becomes heavy and down-to-earth, his wings imperceptibly detach. But what use are the wings since they cannot help us to conquer the beautiful country of the ideal, since, according to an already old opinion of M. Proudhon: “The kingdom of heaven itself is won only by force.”

The author of *War*, as a conscientious apostle, catechizes us at length on the religion of force, and it is charity on his part, for he thinks that “forgetfulness or ignorance of this religion would risk making us soon lose the power to love, to know, even to the moral sense.”

In the past, we allowed ourselves to be moved by the poetry of justice, which M. Proudhon defined: “This veneration of man for man.”⁸ Now we are called upon to applaud the poetry of war, which seems to us to be something quite different. “Thank God, epic poetry is over!” exclaimed the

⁸ *Of Justice in the Revolution and in the Church.*

author of *Economic Contradictions*. Thanks be to God, he himself will return it to us and sing in his turn: "This right of conquest sung by Voltaire and which is no longer tolerated today."

We like surprises, and Mr. Proudhon, who knows human weaknesses, always has some in store for us. He takes his poetic inspiration here from outside the Bible, which would be of no help to him, if the Bible remained what it was in the *Economic Contradictions*: "This hymn to justice, to charity, to the leniency of the powerful towards the weak, to the voluntary renunciation of the privilege of force!" M. Proudhon, in the book of *War*, as in that of *Justice*, even goes so far as to prefer "the *Aeneid* to this *macédoine* of the New Testament." But rest assured, we will soon again find the *macédoine* and the Bible.

After having saved epic poetry from oblivion, restored the right of conquest, deified force, M. Proudhon declared himself powerless to strengthen the Church. Why didn't he come sooner? He would have taught it — it is M. Proudhon speaking — "while celebrating the God of armies, to speak to the peoples and to the kings of the right of war. Then the teaching of the Church, rising to the height of its revelation, would have conquered, never to lose it again, the temporal power by the legislation of force."

But alas! the Christian empire no longer being able to be constituted, M. Proudhon predicts to us in what deplorable manner "we are going to fall into this ridiculous question of nationalities which we will henceforth find in perpetual contradiction with the law of force." The author of *War* hastens to tell us happily that "the centripetal force is superior to the centrifugal force, and that condensation has become the law of Europe." This reassures us and we are less worried to see politics invaded by this stupid spirit of liberalism, abominably centrifugal, which currently overflows from all sides. The audacity of the Liberals truly passes all measure! Would you believe that they spread their anarchic doctrines in spite of the right of war and the right of nations, before which — Mr. Proudhon asserts it at least — "respect for nationality does not exist!"

Instead of fighting against Austria and Russia, the Italians, the Hungarians, the Poles would do better to *bow respectfully and silently* before the superior powers who have only executed upon them one decree, when they could execute two: "the one that the victory bears on the State, and the one that the victory bears on the enemy... to absorb the State and eat the vanquished!" In truth, what are these so-called oppressed people complaining about? The higher powers, after bringing them to their senses, have they not always ended up letting them bury their dead? As for those whom such disinterestedness would not have disarmed, let them fear to put themselves in contradiction with justice; for, as M. Proudhon teaches: "Iniquity in political questions is to affirm what the right of force has condemned."

The *so-called* democrats, the *so-called* republicans, the *so-called* socialists, with whom the author of *War* must not be confused will perhaps find something to take up here; but what does it matter! If they insisted, M. Proudhon, borrowing from the good Lafontaine a phrase that he regrets not having invented, would be there to remind them, too, that "the reason of the strongest is always the best."

About the principle of nationalities, the revealer of the right of force, dealing with contemporary issues, tells us: "that Italy has lost the sense of movement... that it is hanging on

Robespierre's tail; that the freedom it claims is a mystification!... and that finally, if Austria were to return to crush Piedmont, victory would only prove once more this sad truth: that there is no Italy ; for in Italy there is no force.”

Along the way, the author of *War* tries to make us understand how the Neapolitans committed cowardice, “by abandoning their young king who was ready to make concessions.”

For Hungary, one wonders what means it would have of escaping the yoke of Austria when, on the one hand, in the words of M. Proudhon, “the call for insurrection, comes out of the right of war, is immoral,” and when, on the other hand, “the alliance becomes the worst political combination.”

With regard to this axiom about insurrection, we will recall another of M. Proudhon on the same subject. Elsewhere he said of the insurrection: “Any society in which this power is suppressed is a society dead to progress.”

Today, the author of *La Guerre* wants the weakest to succumb and to recognize not only the government of the strongest, but his God. “War knows no dogma, and religious unity is necessary,” he said.”

Thus, according to M. Proudhon, the weak would be destined to submit eternally to the barbaric law of the strongest, and “the savage” could affirm with the author of *War*, and “with as much reason as the metaphysician, that justice is nothing but force.”

In the name of this savage theory of justice, slavery would be rehabilitated, and, “instead of abolishing it, we would place the slave trade under the protection of the government.”

Society would be entitled, according to the teachings of this morality, to establish “the preponderance of the husband over the wife, of the father over the child, by the right of the strongest.”

And when the weak, reduced to impotence, bent his humiliated forehead to the ground, the strong would exclaim in the voice of M. Proudhon: “This is what seems to me, I do not hide it, the ideal of human virtue and the height of rapture.”

I could insist more on these unworthy conclusions and show to what point we were mistaken when we thought we saw in the author of the *Economic Contradictions*, of *The Creation of Order in Humanity*, of *Justice in the Revolution*, etc., a liberal, a republican, a socialist. There are people that we absolutely want to force to be what they are not, what they cannot become. They seem in eternal contradiction with themselves and are in reality only with the character that one lends to them. We must finally get used to considering Mr. Proudhon as a partisan of the right of force and its consequences. Let him therefore affirm in the company of his new allies: “that the right of force is a true right, and that, of all forms of justice, war is the most sublime, the most incorruptible and the most solemn.”

But what war? War *in itself*, isn't it? for you are forced to recognize that the facts do not always correspond to this magnificent concept of your mind. If one day we were able to believe, while reading you, that “the truth *in itself* is an infinity of times more true than our science,”⁹

⁹ *Economic Contradictions*.

another day we could, not without reason, think differently with you that, "when it is a question of knowing if the way in which we conceive things is in conformity with what happens in things, we must know if the report of our reason is adequate to the reality of phenomena."¹⁰ In the end, and thanks to the authority of phenomena, we believe ourselves entitled to conclude that war produces pure brutality, and that the right of force is a revolting abstraction to which justice has already been done.

M. Proudhon quoted, in the *Economic Contradictions*, a passage from Plato's *Gorgias* where it is said that Socrates one day combated, in the name of equality, the specious reasons of a certain Gallices in favor of the right of force. If the author of *War* is Gallices, why am I not Socrates? But I am neither Socrates, nor Athenian, nor man, and if I spoke of equality, just like the slave who speaks of liberty, I would be obliged to invoke the principles of charity, devotion, fraternity, and claim socialism. "You talk to me about charity, devotion, fraternity," M. Proudhon would answer us, "I remain convinced that you don't really like me and I feel very well that I don't like you... As for socialism, it has never been anything, is nothing and will never be anything."¹¹ If we were not convinced, M. Proudhon would undertake to reduce us to silence by adding: "The theory of peaceful equality, founded on fraternity and devotion, is only a counterfeit of the Catholic doctrine of renunciation of the goods and pleasures of this world, the principle of beggary and the panegyric of misery."¹²

Faced with such an argument, we would admit that we were forever crushed, if the author of *War* did not himself hasten to make us reborn in hope by rehabilitating Catholic doctrine: "The Creator," would he continue in another tone, "by subjecting us to the need to eat, wanted to lead us step by step to the ascetic and spiritual life... Poverty is the principle of the social order and our only happiness here below; we must ask God for our daily bread... Poverty is the true providence of the human race. To an enemy of poverty I would answer: Drop the mask! and I would add: Poverty is the greatest truth that Christ preached to men."¹³

We could now, without risking being accused of making alone *the apology for beggary and the panegyric of misery*, combat, in the name of peaceful equality, the specious reasons of M. Proudhon in favor of the right of force; but, as a woman, and although in agreement with the author of *Justice in the Revolution*, we would be afraid of being led straight back to the Epistles of Saint Paul. We prefer to let Mr. Proudhon recite his *Pater* in peace and pray for us, so that, according to his own words: "Man infected from birth may be regenerated in this life, by an

¹⁰ *Of Justice in the Revolution*.

¹¹ *Economic Contradictions*.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *War and Peace*.

intervention of the Creator, and so that souls may not are more seduced by the illusion of wealth and the lure of voluptuousness.”¹⁴

When Jehovah, more favorable, it is said, to therequests of new converts that, at the humble prayers of his most constant adorers, will have turned his paternal eyes towards us, we will be able, guided by the author of *War*, to return to the good old days. A radical transformation will take place in our minds. We will no longer wish to think without horror of these revolutions "that are made only for the satisfaction of needs.”¹⁵ We will ardently call for the day when, by *the constitution of value*, by the equilibrium of production and consumption, all wealth will be destroyed, and poverty, *our only happiness here below*, will be definitively created. Happy day! When the woman, *disciplined by marriage*, will again become submissive, obedient, housewife. Blessed day! When, according to M. de Maistre, as well as according to M. Proudhon, “justice can do without liberty!”¹⁶ Then, but only then, tournaments will be organized to develop among the peasants the warrior instinct, and the rabble, on the sole condition of knowing how to hold a spear, will be allowed to produce right by taking part in war. War! which M. Proudhon, in the fire of his enthusiasm, calls “the most sublime act of our moral life.” War! to which, he adds, “no other act of our moral life can be compared: neither the imposing celebrations of worship, nor the acts of sovereign power. It is the act that honors us the most before creation and the Eternal!”

In his book *Of Justice*, M. Proudhon, speaking of women, wonders if what he is saying is serious. Reading the book *War and Peace*, how many times have we been tempted to ask him the same question. A very remarkable thing indeed! It is that those who disdain to take the light of feeling seriously, expose themselves to being disdained and not taken seriously. They are condemned to see everywhere, like the author of *War*, only “sophisms, contradictions, cowardice of reasoning, accumulations of anomaly.” They return, without being aware of it, to the age when sentiment, represented by woman, exercised only a limited influence on social destinies. All their attempts at restoration are tainted with archaeology. M. Proudhon is striking proof of this. Are not his bank of exchange and his theory of value worthy of the good times of Nineveh, Tire and Carthage? Isn't the theory of women's inequality and the way it is expressed reminiscent of a comedy well known to the Greeks? As for the theory of war, it dates at least from Caesar's *Commentaries* .

M. Proudhon recognizes the eternal hostility which exists between the right of force and feeling, when he declares that, “since the beginning of the world, women have agreed to curse war.” It is a reproach that he addresses to them. We accept it, adding that war is the worst negation of feminine feelings and that woman hates it like anything that oppresses the weak, consecrates social inequalities, and pushes man back into centuries of barbarism.

¹⁴ *War and Peace*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

"I am a man," cried M. Proudhon, "and what I love most in the world is this bellicose humor which places one above all authority, above all love, and by which a man reveals himself to be *the One* who penetrates the reason of things." Love, not force, can become the revealer of the ideal. It therefore seems to us at least clumsy to diminish feeling at a time when we need it to show more confidence in itself. For feeling alone can fight against this inexplicable drive that pushes a whole class of men, in a century of progress, to see in science only a means of perfecting the engines of destruction. It is thanks to the growing influence of feeling that war tends to disappear and to become defense rather than attack. Just as social justice has triumphed over the revolt of individuals, let us hope that human justice will triumph over the antagonism of peoples.

M. Proudhon's book entitled *War and Peace* could surely better justify its title. Three-quarters are devoted to war; about fifty pages to the peace. M. Proudhon wished, towards the end of his two volumes, to make a concession to this public which he places outside *the high and low regions* of society. It is to be regretted that the author of *War*, in confessing his cult of force, felt obliged to make necessarily insignificant reservations, and that he, in speaking of peace, committed one of those petty hypocrisies that baffle naive hearts. The concession of the rest exists only in form, in substance it is completely illusory. M. Proudhon admits that an unlimited truce can be granted to us in the near future, but he refuses to believe in an eternal peace, which he would consider as the sign of immobility and the index of social decline.

Mr. Proudhon's path now seems clearly traced. His cult for the right of the strongest will lead him from contradiction to contradiction and perhaps from fall to fall.

Seeing the author of *Justice in the Revolution* affect such a profound contempt for sentiment, we predicted that he would seek his ideal in the manifestations of force. The fate of M. Proudhon is reserved for all those who, like him, want to see in society only the elements of repulsion, combat, domination, and refuse to take account of attraction, sympathy, union and, finally, of the powers of feeling.

When he spoke of love, the author of *Justice* exclaimed that "possession in love brings disgust!" He now believes that eternal peace would bring social decay. The fatality that weighs on the destinies of M. Proudhon seems to condemn him to complete ignorance of one of the most intimate faculties of the human being, a faculty that emanates from the woman's consciousness before emanating from the collective consciousness, a faculty that one might believe to be divine although it is foreign to force, and whose mission is to produce in being and in humanity the indefinite renewal of the ideal.

ANTI-PROUDHONIAN IDEAS ON LOVE, WOMAN AND MARRIAGE

(1858)

GENERAL

When the strongest heads have such good reasons to doubt themselves, the most humble can claim to be listened to for a moment.

Marquis de SAINT-AULAIRE.

M. Proudhon is a deep and narrow, paradoxical and *simplist* mind, who has spent his life — and this is a great pity — in *search of the absolute* .

First, placing his *absolute* in equality and finding, in the right of property, a nullifying impediment, he formulated the famous aphorism, which he used as a motto and a scarecrow, a veritable antiphrase, very badly explained by its author and still misunderstood by the public: “Property is theft!”

Then looking for the *absolute* of Method, he thought he had found it in the series, and he wrote his book *The Creation of Order*, a real metaphysical-economic mess, where we find the badly digested ideas of Fourier mixed with the principles of Adam Smith and the philosophy of Kant.

M. Proudhon emerged from the semi-darkness of serial dialectics only to enter the clouds of antinomic logic. Here the author changes method and master. He follows Hegel instead of Fourier. But the goal has not changed: it is still a question of the *great work*. His absolute, this time, is in the discovery of a fixed law of value. Where can we find this law? In the labor done outside of capital. Hence the necessity of a return to primitive mutuality: no more rents, no more interest, no more property, no more government. In economics, *free capital*; in politics, *an-archy!*

The February Revolution revealed to M. Proudhon various processes for arriving at the absolute; for example, the fixing of value, the general reduction of prices and wages, the organization of credit by the extension of maturities, etc. But it is in the bank of exchange that he thought he had found it definitively and without return. Convinced then of having reached the promised land, he published this declaration intended to guarantee his adherents against new trials and new disillusiones, which then had such a great impact:

"I swear before God and before men, on the Gospel and on the Constitution, that I have never had or professed other principles of social reform than those related in the present act, and that I ask nothing more, nothing less, than the free and peaceful application of these principles and their logical, legal and legitimate consequences. I declare that, in my innermost thought, these principles, with the consequences that flow from them, are all socialism, and that outside of them, there is only utopia and chimera..."

And at the end of the piece:

"This is my testament of life and death. I allow him alone who could lie while dying to suspect its truth!

"If I was wrong, public reason will soon have done justice to my theories: all that remains for me is to disappear from the revolutionary arena, after asking forgiveness from society and from my brothers for the trouble that I will have caused in their souls and of which I am, after all, the first victim.

"That if, after this denial of general reason and of experience, I were to seek one day, by other means, by new suggestions, to still agitate minds and maintain false hopes, I would call upon myself, from now on, the contempt of honest people and the curse of the human race."

We know what became of the people's bank; as for the oath, inscribed on the sheet of a newspaper, it had the fate of sheets and oaths. There came the wind of reaction; — would the *Eurus* of the revolution have done better? — He took away the sheet and the oath, and nothing has been heard of them since.

If I recall these old things, does this mean that I claim to blame M. Proudhon for having had ideas of negation, opposition, protest, and for having conceived projects of reform?

Not at all. To deny, to protest, to oppose, it was his right, as it was his duty to produce his ideas when he thought them good; if, moreover, it was in his character to whisper his words into a megaphone and accompany them with the noise of the tom-tom and the bass drum, I see no harm in the fact that M. Proudhon, after having used his right and accomplished his duty, let himself go according to his character; I forgive him again for having frightened the children and even for having distributed, often without discernment, insults and blows to those who found themselves under *the tangent of his hand* or under the wind of his words.

But what I blame in M. Proudhon is the inconsistency of his views and the presumptuous assurance of his proposals; it is a certain narrow-mindedness that prevented him from seeing the complexity of the social problem and made him believe that it could be solved by a simple formula; what I blame in him is that self-conceit that pushes him always to promise more than he can keep, and to raise hopes that he cannot satisfy. By acting thus, he tires the attention of the people, bewilders their minds, wearies their devotion. What I especially condemn in M. Proudhon is to have associated the public with his vain search for the *absolute*, to have exclaimed at the beginning of each of his books: "*Eureka!* I have found it! when he had found nothing at all, and had never ceased to offer his elixir of the day as the universal panacea.

An objection will be made to me. What! you will say to me, you accuse M. Proudhon of having spent his life in search of the absolute, whereas the absolute is the monster he fights, the

nightmare against which he fights, the Proteus that he wants to destroy and that he pursues under his various disguises!

Alas! Yes. I accuse him of giving himself up in secret to the cult of Moloch, of which he breaks, before the people, the altars and the statues; and this is not one of the least contradictions of this mind, so logical and at the same time *so inconsistent*.

I say that M. Proudhon, who denies the absolute and proscribes it under its known names, under its ontological denominations, always seeks the absolute and never sees anything but the absolute side of things.

To seek the absolute is to leave the real, the possible. It is to create an abstract entity. It is to attribute existence to what is only a conception of the mind.

Well, isn't that what M. Proudhon does when he sees reason in man and refuses to see sentiment in him, or better, when he considers social being only in terms of its relations of justice, without wanting to consider it also under its relations of love, affection, solidarity, mercy?

I do admit that the absolute is one of the categories of the understanding and even one of the attributes of being; but it is not being, it is no being. The absolute, considered in itself, is and will never be anything but an abstraction.

Any being that will be called *absolute* will only be a vain entity, a chimera, and if we want to take it as a type, make it *an ideal* for reason or for conscience, this conception will be an obstacle to justice, will prevent fulfillment of the law, and sooner or later will stop the progress of the human spirit. It is in this sense that M. Proudhon was right to combat the absolute, under the name of ideal or under any other denomination.

But it is not true that the ideal is inevitably doomed to the absolute.

Who prevents me from taking my ideal in being itself, in the world, in nature, and consequently conceiving it outside of the absolute?

Can't I have the idea of a being better than me, more beautiful, more powerful, without supposing him to be *infinitely good, infinitely beautiful, infinitely powerful*? And better yet, can't I conceive of a being higher than the human being in the series of beings, having other qualities, or only more developed ones, without for that giving it this character of absolute perfection and immutability that would oblige me to place it outside the laws and forces of nature, which govern and know only relative and contingent phenomena.

What is more, I say that this ideal conception, this belief in a superior *state* in the living series, is necessary for my moral progress and my autonomous development. This is what determines my activity, what *causes* my improvement. Why would I walk forward, if I don't see a goal to reach? why should I fight, if I have nothing to conquer?

To want to destroy the ideal is to attempt the impious work of Erostratus; if you had the misfortune to succeed in it, you would have done nothing for the justice you want to serve, but you would have destroyed the determining cause of progress, and humanity would be condemned to perish motionless in the place where you have encountered it. The work of the wise is not to deny and destroy, but to instruct and improve. The notion of the ideal needs to be rectified whenever the state of souls demands it. Today this rectification of the ideal, which will at the same time be a

adjustment of the conscience, has become necessary. May the ideal be brought into harmony with science and with reason, may it enter into the general laws of the world and of life, and come to be reflected in the consciousness of the human being, rising and purifying as this consciousness develops and purifies itself: this is what we must want, what we must pursue, what we must ask of those who, like you, Monsieur Proudhon, make themselves the guides and teachers of humanity. But, for God's sake! Let us put an end to your ogre and Torquemada methods: burning is not responding.

Your harsh, tenacious and biting mind vigorously grasps a particular question and does not let it go until it has been dissected down to its most tenuous fibers, down to its most hidden parts; but it is powerless to generalize and reconstruct.

Your gaze aims far and straight, but it does not take in the objects as a whole. It can know the different parts of being, but it does not see being itself, in its living unity, with its limits and its relations.

The dialectic, in which you have an absolute confidence, is, in your hands, a true instrument of precision, able to solve all problems, or at least you believe it is so; but it is, in the end, only an instrument. Your dialectic has no heart. Now, to understand life, one must be alive oneself; and were you the most powerful brain in creation, you will never know man and humanity, if you are only a brain.

It is not enough to agitate ideas and dash them one upon another like waves upon waves; it is necessary that the breath, which walks on the waters, prepares the creation and even in the midst of chaos allows us to sense the order. Finally, it is not enough to separate the earth from the darkness of the abyss, it is also necessary to make the light shine and pronounce the *fiat lux!*...

M. Proudhon's latest work is a new journey in search of the absolute.

The absolute, this time, is called *Justice* .

It is a question of proving that justice suffices for everything; that with justice one needs neither religion, nor love, nor ideal; much more, that religion, any religion, that love, any love, that the ideal, any ideal, are contrary to *juridical* reason and must be pruned from a society based on justice.

“The fundamental, organic, regulating, sovereign principle of societies is justice.

“What is justice? The very essence of humanity.

“What has it been since the beginning of the world? — Nothing.

“What must it be? — Everything.”

Thus the author of the book of *Justice* expresses himself, in his preface, copying Sieyès in his famous brochure on the *Third Estate*.

It is, we see, always the same way of concluding, paradoxical and annoying.

Whether justice is the very essence of humanity, I don't know and don't quite know what that means; but to argue that justice has been *nothing* since the beginning of the world, that it dates from yesterday, that it emerged fully armed, with its sword and its scales, from the head of Jupiter-Proudhon, and to add, as a corollary, that henceforth justice must be *everything*, isn't this having a

true commitment to the philosopher's stone, a monomania for the absolute? Thus love, charity, devotion, mercy, do not belong to humanity, and in the society conceived by M. Proudhon, these virtues cannot find a place. Thus the Revolution, of which M. Proudhon calls himself the son (an ungrateful son who calumniates his mother by making her in his own image), was mistaken when it understood them under the name of fraternity in its triple formula! Thus, nature herself was mistaken when, in order to make man, uniting feeling with reason, it wanted the conscience not only to be enlightened by reason, but also to be warmed by the heart and to become for the human being a moral sun, a center of both light and flame!

We do not pretend to assess M. Proudhon's book here.

After the judicial condemnation, the critic cannot condemn him without cowardice, nor absolve him without running the risk of lacking respect for the thing judged. But there is a part of M. Proudhon's book that has not been incriminated; it is the one dealing with women and marriage. There are things that every woman who knows how to hold a pen has the right to regard as personalities; it is to these personalities that I claim to respond.

For M. Proudhon speaks too loudly and speaks too resoundingly for it to be possible to oppose to his reasons mingled with insults the disdainful silence usually deserved by those who speak a certain language. Besides, combating error is always a duty, and the fulfillment of this duty becomes a virtue when it is pursued with inferiorly unequal weapons. M. Proudhon represents force, since he is a man; I, weakness, since I am a woman. But there is something above force, it is the truth; there is something that outweighs the tightest dialectic, the most skillful argumentativeness, it is simple common sense. The cause I defend will win, but it won't be without struggles and efforts. It needs to be defended against several, against many. Yesterday, it was against the adversaries of progress; today, against M. Proudhon; tomorrow perhaps, against the friends of progress and misunderstood liberty. Courage then! Let us gird up our loins and prepare ourselves for the struggle, and, what is worse, for the insults. Yes, insults! For when men fight among themselves, they apply themselves only to killing each other; but when they struggle against a woman, either hurt pride or sheer brutality, they first and foremost seek to insult her sex or person, knowing full well that she is defeated when they have slandered her.

LOVE

The unfortunate, he never loved!
Saint THERESE, speaking of Satan.

When he was writing the monograph on property, M. Proudhon, *who aims and does not look*, and therefore only perceives what *he aims at*, seeing only the abuses and injustices of property, and ignoring what is fundamental in it, as well as what is perfectible and transformable in it, went off shouting from the rooftops: "Property is theft!" Then, dealing with the question of God, as he saw in God only the irrational characters of supernaturalism or the idolatrous aberrations of paganism, M. Proudhon exclaimed with that voice which belongs only to him and to the late Stentor: "God is evil!" Well, the invectives he addressed to property and to God, in his sacrilegious need to insult what others respect and adore, he addresses to love. "Love," he exclaims, "even inspired by religion, even sanctioned by justice, I do not love it!"

Moreover, love has avenged itself for the injury done to its divinity.

On this subject, which has inspired so many other writers, even those deprived of all talent, M. Proudhon finds himself far inferior to himself, and one wonders, reading him, how it is possible that a force that animates the whole of nature, makes animals sing and almost makes them talk, produces on a man of so much wit an entirely opposite effect, extinguishing his spirit, perverting his logic, clouding his judgment, weighing down his sentence, altering his style, which, in many pages, becomes pasty, hesitant, painful, embarrassed. Could it not be that this force can act on the intelligence only through the organs of feeling, and that if love is a lever capable of lifting the world, it must find in the heart an essential point of support? Now, M. Proudhon does not suspect the existence of this point of support in others and seems, for himself, to have never felt the need for it.

However, we would not be able to explain his bias against love if we did not know that M. Proudhon sees in love, as just now in the ideal, as formerly in property, in capitalism, an obstacle to the realization of justice.

As we can see, the intention is good; but it is always the same mania.

Property is the basis of all society; but property has produced slavery and usury: let us suppress property!

God is the necessary ideal of progressive consciousness; but God having been clothed with supernatural attributes which, by placing him outside moral laws and cosmic reality, pose him as an obstacle to harmony and as a limit to progress, let us not try to give birth in souls a higher conception of the ideal: let us simply suppress God, and erase the idea of him from the mind and heart of humanity!

Finally, love, *through Eve and through Adam*, has caused us to lose paradise; it caused the loss of Ilion and is not reducible, — the monster! — to juridical categories: let's suppress love!

These are very simple processes, accessible to everyone. It is science as Toinette does it when, disguised as a doctor, she advises Argan to have his arm cut off because it draws all the food from the other, and to have his right eye gouged out in order to see more clearly with the left eye.

“The human species, like all living races, is preserved by generation... The concurrence of the sexes, with a view to generation, takes place under the influence of a particular feeling which is *love*. It is this powerful attraction that, in all the species, where the sexes are separated, pushes the male and the female to unite and to transmit their life by a mortal orgasm; hence that well-known, profound saying: *Love is stronger than death*, which means that the being who has tasted love no longer has anything to fear from death, because love is death itself, death in joy: *Euthanasia*. Love is therefore the apogee and consummation of life, the supreme act of organized being; under all these titles, it can be defined: *The matter of marriage*. But if the role of love in generation is very obvious, we do not see to what end it is given in society, whose proper principle is justice.”

This is how M. Proudhon expresses himself, speaking of love in suitable terms so long as he considers it *naturally* and apart from his absolute and exclusive idea of justice. But here comes justice, to which everything must be submitted. “Isn't it the proper principle of all society?” although it cannot, alas! to live well with love for a long time; at least M. Proudhon assures us of it. “Love, of which we have just spoken,” he says, “has its basis in the organism; it is pure in beasts (*sic*), that is to say free from all moral or intellectual feeling; but in man it rises to the *ideal* by the excitement of *beauty!*...” What misfortune! Listen again:

“Idealism thus joins the pruritus of the senses, more and more exalted by aesthetic contemplation, to appeal to the generation of man and woman and make this couple the most loving in the universe.” And that's not all: “By triumphing over the repugnances of the mind, through beauty, we are exposed to the seductions of idealism, a hundred times more terrible than those of the flesh!...” Now, according to M. Proudhon, through idealism, the source of all evils, one falls into promiscuity, into unisexuality, into sodomy, into pederasty, into hysteria, into nymphomania...

And, as M. Purgon says, into bradypepsia; from bradypepsia, into dyspepsia; from dyspepsia, into aepsia; from aepsia, into lientery; from lientery, in dysentery; from dysentery, into hydropsy; and from hydropsy, into the privation of life where your madness will have led you. And I add that it is well done.

However, until now it had been believed that beauty ennobled love, and that sexual attraction was purified by the ideal. M. Proudhon has changed all that. The beasts, who know neither beauty nor the ideal, really practice *purity* in love. We must take them as models and get as close to them as possible. Man alters love and corrupts it by mingling with it his intellectual and moral feelings which are like the superphysical elements of his nature; the ideal, in love, as in progress, “degenerates fatally into debauchery, and instead of perpetuating social life, leads civilization to its ruin.” Fortunately, there exists a remedy against the *ideal*, which is *justice*; and a remedy for *love*, which is *marriage*. — Holy simplicity!

We shall see later what M. Proudhon means by marriage; let us listen to him again speak of love, and see how he claims to remedy the ideal by justice:

“Love is a movement of the senses and of the soul that has its origin in the rut, an organic and repugnant fatality, but one that, immediately transfigured by the idealism of the mind, imposes itself on the imagination and on the heart, as the greatest, the only good of life, a good without which life appears only as a long death...” Another would have said: Love has its principle in the senses, and would have made himself understood just as well. But M. Proudhon always prefers the coarsest word; he finds it more effective. He had, however, just now, beginning this study, invoked the Holy Spirit: “May the seraphim who purified the lips of the Prophet also deign to touch mine, so that in this erotic subject, my word may remain chaste.” It seems that, in the absence of the Holy Spirit, who did not want to yield to his ironic call, he had to be content with the spirit that dictated to Voltaire the verses of the *Pucelle*. But the spirit of Voltaire, in the rough hands of M. Proudhon, seems to have lost its variegated wings and put on the straw-lined clogs of a Franche-Comté peasant.

Let us see, however, what becomes of love: “It is withdrawn from the will of the one who experiences it, it is born spontaneously, unintentionally, inevitably. It happens without our knowledge, in spite of us...” This is not new; but here is what is more so: “Love, thus given by nature and the ideal, has only one goal, reproduction, until justice assigns it a new purpose. It is a drama that, by its nature, is played only once and whose evolution is divided into two opposite periods, one of ascent or desire, the other of satisfaction or decline.”

And first of all, it is not true that love only aims at reproduction. The goal of love is in love itself, that is, in the happiness it promises and gives. We love in order to love and not to have children. To love is to enlarge your life. To procreate is to limit it by perpetuating it. Reproduction is a fact of a natural and general order and not only of an human and individual order. Nature ensured the reproduction of the species through pleasure: humanity, through love, rises far beyond pleasure; it obtains the doubling of the powers of each individuality by mutual sympathy, a sympathy that, prolonged, produces the identification of the two beings from the threefold physical, moral and intellectual point of view.

M. Proudhon does not understand this; however, he seems to suspect something of it when, painting love in its ascending phase, he shows the soul becoming absorbed, merging into the person of the loved object, dreaming of a continuous, inviolable, eternal possession. But, according to him, possession destroys what desire had made; and it is above all here that he misunderstands love in its splendid ideal. “The heart having enjoyed,” he said, “the flesh being satisfied, in vain does the imagination make an effort to retain the soul in ecstasy. Reason awakens and blushes; liberty in the depths of consciousness lets its ironic laughter be heard; the heart detaches; reality and its consequences, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, make the ideal pale. Happy then is he whose need to pull himself together does not lead to hatred and disgust!”

Stop there, sir! You insult the love of honest people. It is not even passion and its phases that you are describing; it is debauchery. Your disillusioned lover is not a decent type; he comes out of the arms of some girl, dragging with him the odor of vice, ashamed of himself, disgusted with his companion, perhaps hating her, because he feels that he has degraded, lowered himself, belittled himself with her. No, sir, you do not understand love *in humanity*, because you misunderstand in

man, especially in woman, the moral and intellectual being, because you want to see in the human being only organized matter.

Certainly, the attraction that comes from the senses is of great importance, and we can admit that it is the starting point of love.

But if the soul tends to become absorbed, to merge in the loved object, don't you see that this impulse on the part of an intellectual and moral being cannot be purely animal? Don't you see that the mixture of two beings endowed with moral and spiritual attributes, to be complete, cannot stop at physical relations? Don't you also see that if the desire for fusion, for absorption, is reciprocal, it will require an equal exchange of qualities? Which amounts to saying that in this trade of an I and a Not-I that merge, without ceasing to distinguish themselves, it is necessary to admit, so that justice is respected and that no one is fooled, a certain equivalence, present or future, real or ideal, of the two beings. M. Proudhon, who does not want the human being to be able to be represented by the woman, cannot introduce into her relations with the man the idea of equivalence, nor consequently that of justice. M. Proudhon, who limits love to a purely physical union, cannot admit between two beings of different sex, *but who are equal to each other*, this fusion, this mixture of their intellectual and moral nature by the exchange of their rational and artistic elements, of their qualities of heart and mind.

Such, however, is the law of the development of a truly normal sexual passion conceived in the fullness of being. And because M. Proudhon sees in woman only the female, in love only the excitation of the senses, and, because of that very fact, cannot rise to the understanding of this law, must we accept his lame criticism and inconsistent logic?

By what right does this automatic reasoner, this instrument of syllogisms, does he come to condemn the ideal in love, when he takes into account in love only what is most material, and therefore less ideal? "It is through beauty that love enters into idealism." — Yes; but as this idealism, in the being endowed with feeling and reason, is constantly controlled by intercourse between the heart and the mind, it does not remain exclusively subject to the action of the senses more or less overexcited by physical beauty. Do we not see it maintained by goodness, by esteem, nourished by intelligence, renewed by grace, increased by admiration, exalted by moral beauty, elevated by glory, perpetuated in a way by dedication? Certainly, the ideal that applies only to the beauty of the form is transitory and fragile like this beauty or rather like *the idea* of this beauty, which is even more fragile and much more transitory. But the ideal in man is always the reflection of his self together with the image of the external object. It is worth what man himself is worth, rising like his spirit, purifying itself like his conscience. It is the horizon of moral and intellectual being, marching and widening before it, as marches and widens indefinitely before the footsteps of the traveler the horizon that his gaze embraces. In a word, it is with the ideal in love as with the ideal in religion. Do you want to rectify, to improve the idea of God? Rectify the understanding, improve the consciousness. Do you want to purify love in the real and in the ideal? Purify the feeling, enlighten the intelligence.

When he treats of love, as when he speaks of God or of property, M. Proudhon never sees anything but the absolute; he studies God in itself, property in itself, love in itself. This is a result

of his scholastic education, a deplorable result that invalidates his logic every time he tries to come out of pure negation.

So, in all his works, what a powerful dialectic wasted to no avail! What vain and ingenious criticisms! What strength and what sterility! How many strokes of the sword in the water! How many slain enemies who were mere clouds! What brilliant spear thrusts aimed at windmills!

How can we know property in itself, when property is only a relation, resulting from the nature of things, proportional to time, environment, race, degree of civilization? modifying, changing as ideas, mores, needs, beliefs change and change?

How to know God in oneself, if not by revelation?

And love in itself, what idea can we have of it? Isn't love a law of being, that is to say a relation *equivalent to the state* of the individuals who experience it? Purely bestial in the savage, brutal and coarse in the barbarian, but with a beginning of idealization, it purifies itself and rises with the civilization of which it is one of the most powerful elements. We can follow it in history, and distinguish its different phases of development, characterized by events, institutions or great individuals. We know what it was in antiquity, among the Indians, the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans; what it was among the Germans and the Gauls; what it became in the Middle Ages, among Christians and Muslims; what it is in our modern societies. We know all this, approximately, of course, and taking into account the thousand differences that can result from times, circumstances, characters. Likewise, for the future, we can, knowing what it was in the past, what it is in the present, see love in a higher ideal; but this superior ideal will have the indefinite character of everything that belongs to the future. It may seem perfect to us, but of a quite relative perfection. It will be the best, the highest, we can *currently* conceive; but as we advance towards this ideal, towards this goal, we will know how to create a *more perfect* ideal and pursue a still higher goal. So go find love within yourself, in the midst of so many contingencies and relativities! Agree that love in itself is knowable neither in the past, nor in the present, nor in the future, and that it can only be placed in the absolute, that is to say in that which is not, in what cannot be.

Knowing that love manifests itself only by its relative, contingent, transient characters, and convinced that love, like the other categories of progressive being, *is perfected* with the whole being, what case can we make for the general and absolute rules that M. Proudhon claims to lay down? What does it matter that after having painted sensual love, the only one he wants to understand, he exclaims "that inconstancy in love is in the very order of things, and that every man, without exception, feels it!" What does it even matter that he adds, in a supreme insult to the human heart, "that to love properly so called, offspring are odious, and that it is not uncommon to see animals get rid of them, when their ingenious lubricity did not know how to prevent them!" Are these not vain blasphemies resting on puerile abstractions? Will it be admitted that there cannot be a man constant in love, that there never has been and that there never will be? Make no mistake about it, the whole question is there. What does the abstract rule belied by practice mean? Any abstraction contradicted by a concrete fact is false, absurd, dangerous; this is the supreme criterion of logic. "To love properly speaking..." — What is that? — to love considered in itself, to

love, blind force, double-current battery, magnetic rod, metal chain polarized at its extreme points, to this love that resembles nothing alive, “the offspring are odious.” — In truth? - Parbleu! “And it is not uncommon to see animals and people get rid of them...” — What! Animals too? Is it then the ideal that determines them in this? Fortunately, — great God! — for humanity, it is a question, in M. Proudhon's book, of love *made* without man or woman and of offspring created without father or mother, in a chimerical world that has no inhabitants and no exists nowhere, *except in an ideal state*, in the bony box of a petrified brain. *Requiescat in pace!!!*

After having shown love considered in itself, that is to say apart from *human feelings*, M. Proudhon seeks how society will go about subjecting this force to what he calls justice. I ask permission to quote verbatim his own recapitulation of his compelling reasons; the whole system of M. Proudhon is in these two or three pages:

“Faced with this complication of embarrassment arising either from the inevitable failure of love, or from the onerous weakness of women and the fragility of her attractions, or finally from the even more onerous feeding of children; in the presence of this inevitable lassitude, of this humiliating disappointment, of this imminent depravity, of this tyranny of the strongest which awaits the woman, of this danger which will strike an unfortunate offspring, one guesses what must have been, at all times, the desire of the human heart, and what gave birth to the mystical institution of marriage.

“Love, we would like it to be reciprocal, faithful, constant, always the same, always devoted, always ideal.

“Woman: what a beautiful creature, if she cost nothing, if at least she could be self-sufficient and cover her expenses through her work!

“The children, we would be consoled if they did not spoil the mother, if love and its pleasures lost nothing, if later the children could repay the parents for their advances.

“Now, marriage, in the spontaneity of its institution, has precisely in view to satisfy this triple wish; it is a sacrament by virtue of which, first, love, from being inconstant as nature has made it, would be made fixed, equal, durable, indissoluble, its intermittences softened, its awakening more sustained; second, the woman, with so few resources, would become a useful auxiliary; paternity, so costly, would be the extension of the self, the pride of life, and the consolation of old age.

“Finally, marriage, as conceived by the universality of legislators, is a formula of union by which domination would be given to the spouses over love, that formidable fatality born of the flesh and the ideal; the woman would acquire an economic value (I have the hope that one of these days, each single person will receive a flyer announcing the following: Furnaces, women, economic and improved cooking pots, P.-J. Proudhon system, patent pending), and children would be offered as a blessing and wealth.”

“Is this serious?” M. Proudhon then asks himself. I confess that this seems serious to me. Marriage, that is to say the union of two persons who love each other, whatever may be the formulas of the sacrament, is to love what the fruit is to the flower. As for the formulas, the fashions, the external practices of this union, they vary according to the environment, the times, the mores, according to the degree and the form of civilizations. But marriage considered in its greatest generality, that is to say as the union of two beings who love each other and associate to live together, is not, as M. Proudhon supposes, the antithesis of love. Legislators have never

intended to make it the remedy for love: a substitute, yes; an antidote, no. There is a series that is both logical and natural, which is very simple and generates no contradiction: Love, marriage, children, family, society... But let's follow Mr. Proudhon again:

"The guarantee," he says, "that marriage claims to offer against the failings of love, supposing it effective, would be its denaturation; it supposes, in fact, that the object of love would not only be to serve generation, that it would also have another end, either of pure voluptuousness or, on the contrary, of morality: two things which, it seems, are equally repugnant to it."

This is not reasoning, it is evading reasons; it's toying with logical arguments like a trickster plays with the nutmeg he squeezes in and out of his goblets, to the amazement of the crowd.

M. Proudhon has said, in fact, that the only object of love is to serve generation. But who granted him these absurd, these odious premises? No, the goal of love is not only to serve generation, the propagation of the species; it also has many other ends, no less sacred, no less important. Yes, its end is voluptuousness; yes, its end is happiness in the fact of paternity and maternity; yes, it has as its end the betterment of individuals, the perfection of races and species, the indefinite progress, the endless development of being; yes, it has all these ends and many others besides which you do not suspect, poor unfortunate blind man who wants to judge colors!

"As for the woman," continues our conjurer-logician, "the calculation based on her productive capacity, it is all that there is more false, as we will see (we will see the contrary); bad partner who costs on average much more than she brings in, and whose existence rests only on the perpetual sacrifice of man.

"Let us not speak, please, of the fruits of love; by nature, which alone presides over their procreation, ingratitude is their lot, I almost said their right. *Love*, says the proverb very well, *does not rise again*."

Admitting that children do not return in filial tenderness to their parents the love they have received from them, is it permissible to misunderstand the happiness that the heart experiences in loving? I am not speaking only of love between the sexes, but of all kinds of love and especially of paternal and maternal affection. The father and the mother have for their child this inexhaustible tenderness that does not require return. It is no longer selfishness for two; but it is at the same time love of oneself, for oneself and for others. "What I love in our child," said a wife to her husband, "is you and me; but what I adore in him is himself."

I do not have the courage to follow M. Proudhon any further in his analysis of love and its necessary transformation by justice. Suffice it to say that after a good search, he finds no other means of submitting love to legal reason than the institution of marriage. What do you say of the discovery? It was well worth spending such a great expense on logic and such a display of erudition! We will see later that justice as he understands it, is a supreme injustice, because it disregards equality and suppresses the autonomy of one of the two beings.

As for marriage, for the moment let us confine ourselves to saying that, as M. Proudhon understands it, it is indeed the tomb of love.

"Marriage," he says, "must tame love in the name of justice... Marriage is not abandoned to amorous inclination, which is not discarded, but which is only of the second order... Cohabitation

follows marriage; but, just like the love that makes it desirable and embellishes it, it is only an accessory that the spouses have the right to use or not to use, at their common convenience... Love and cohabitation do not make marriage and are not indispensable to it..."

Such, according to M. Proudhon, are the principles that presided over the institution of marriage and which must be maintained. We will see later what he claims to add to it. For the moment, we want to confine ourselves to establishing that love is duly excluded from it by law and justice. If you doubted it, read this little family story with which he ends his study on marriage:

"I had the good fortune to have a mother who was chaste above all, and, despite the poverty of her peasant education, of an exceptional sense. As she saw me growing up and already troubled by the dreams of youth, she said to me: *Never speak of love to a young girl, even when you propose to marry her.*

"It took me a long time to understand this absolute precept in its wording, which prohibited even the excuse of a good motive. How could love, this thing so sweet, be reproved by the mouth of a woman? Where did she get this austere morality? Never, I declare, have I read or heard anything of this force. Was she claiming that spouses shouldn't love each other?... Oh no! She had divined, by a lofty sentiment of marriage, what philosophical analysis has demonstrated to us; that love must be drowned in justice; that to caress this passion is to diminish oneself and already to corrupt oneself; that by itself love is not pure; that once its office has been fulfilled by the revelation of the ideal and the impulse given to the conscience, we must set it aside, as the shepherd, after curdling the milk, withdraws the rennet; and that any amorous conversation, even between betrothed, even between spouses, is offensive, destructive of domestic respect, of the love of labor and the practice of social duty."

How do you find the curds and rennet? Isn't that pretty? As for the advice that M. Proudhon puts in his mother's mouth, it does not have the scope that he wants to give it. Engaged couples may indeed not discuss their love directly. A thousand sentimental correspondences are established between two people who love each other and are enough for them, at least as a prelude to an approaching union. But wanting two beings who have sexual relations not to tell each other what they are feeling, wanting the mind and the heart to be silent when the senses speak, is to bring man down to the level, — What am I saying? At the level? Even below the brute, for the brute sings of love before indulging in the transports of its senses; it is to reproduce in other words that shameful sophism that we have already had occasion to point out: *"that love is pure among animals, because it is free from all moral and intellectual sentiment."* Now, that certain uncultivated natures, that certain ignorant and rude couples are sufficiently backward to have remained with that bestial purity which was doubtless the starting point of primitive humanity, we really want to believe it; but let us be offered such a state as an enviable ideal, let there be a progressive writer,

To the chariot of Reason harnessed from behind,

who systematically supports such monstrosities, that would arouse indignation and disgust, if one did not know that these ideas are too *goat-hooved* to be taken seriously anywhere but in the society of fauns, sylvans and satyrs of either sex.

WOMAN

. It is nothing,
It is a drowning woman.

LA FONTAINE.

It happened among the Yquiariates that a husband dissatisfied with the culinary science of his wife, who moreover was very plump, killed her and served her to his friends at a feast, to compensate himself, he said, by this godsend, for the boredom that her inexperience in the kitchen had caused him.

UPLIFTING LETTERS.

M. Proudhon's theories on love are too backward, too far removed from general feeling, for them to have any proselytizing power over our contemporaries. His doctrines on woman are quite otherwise dangerous; they express the general feeling of men who, to whatever party they belong, progressives or reactionaries, monarchists or Republicans, Christians or pagans, atheists or deists, would be delighted to find a way to reconcile both their selfishness and their conscience in a system that would allow them to contest the benefits of exploitation based on force, without having to fear right-based protests.

Power imposes itself because it is necessary; it is maintained only by proving that it is legitimate.

M. Proudhon tried to establish that the subordination of women is based on nature, and he tried to construct *an order* that maintained this subordination, a justice that sanctioned it. He wanted to perpetuate the reign of force by legitimizing it; that is his crime.

This crime is irremissible.

It is that, from now on, in the eyes of any woman who is aware of *her moral value, of her personality, of her natural autonomy*. God helping — and woman too — it will soon be so in the eyes of thinking humanity of both sexes.

M. Proudhon affirms, without hesitation, the *physical, intellectual and moral inferiority of women*. That's saying a lot. Let's examine.

And first of all, physical inferiority: "On this point," he said, "the discussion will not be long; everyone passes judgment."

Not so fast, please, sir; before going further, it would be good to agree.

If M. Proudhon, in comparing woman to man from the physical point of view, means to speak only of muscular force, it is probable, in fact, that everyone will pass judgment, that is to say that everyone will admit that, generally speaking, the man, in front of the dynamometer, is superior to the woman. But one must be blind or one-eyed at the very least, and see things only from one side in order to perceive in the human body only strength. Isn't there also grace, beauty? Now, if man, as physical force, is to woman as 3 is to 2, in turn, woman, M. Proudhon further agrees, as beauty

of forms, is to man as 3 is to 2. There is therefore, physically, compensation; we might add that the woman has her kind of strength as the man has his, and that if man, by the size of his muscles and the thickness of his bones, prevails over woman, when it is a matter of lifting or supporting burdens; the woman, by the predominance of fluids, the greater elasticity of her fiber and the arrangement of her nervous apparatus, outweighs man in resisting force. She bends and does not break. Where is the Hercules who would support, without breaking, the efforts of childbirth?

But, after all, what does this social inequality based on the inequality of power mean? Since the invention of gunpowder, are there strong people who can impose their will and weak people who are forced to submit to it? Aren't all men equal before the gun, and isn't *Hobbes*, worshiper of force like M. Proudhon, a hundred times right when he says that woman is the equal of man? man, since she can always kill him?

Everything M. Proudhon says about the *masculinity* of force is not serious and proves nothing moreover, if not his penchant for a physiological technology that borders on obscenity. Establishing the superiority of man over the sexual functions he fulfills amounts to saying that woman is less necessary than man for the propagation of the species. M. Proudhon does not shrink from this renewed enormity of the Greeks.

"The human being," he says, "complete, adequate to its destiny, I speak of the physical, it is the male who, by his virility, attains the highest degree of muscular and nervous tension that his nature and his end allow, and thereby the maximum of action in work and fight.

"Woman is a diminutive of man who lacks an organ to become something other than an ephebe."

This is only impertinent; I pass over what is coarse; let us see what is serious;

"Everywhere bursts the passivity of the woman sacrificed, so to speak, to the maternal function: delicacy of body, tenderness of flesh, breadth of breasts, hips, pelvis, even the conformation of the brain."

Yes, no doubt, nature, above all reproductive and conservator of species, made woman *for maternity*, as it made man to fertilize and defend her. But humanity also has its creation; it is science that, in its progressive development, creates the social being and gives it new qualities. Socially the woman acquires, like the man, forces, powers that she did not have. Both do not confine themselves, like inferior beings, to assuring by their sexual relations the perpetuation of their species; nature has provided enough for it. They have many other things to do, many other relationships to establish, many other forces to develop; and for all these functions, as for that of generation, I say that both sexes are necessary; I will prove it later.

Such is not the opinion of M. Proudhon:

"In herself," he says, "I always speak of the physical, the woman has no *raison d'être*; she is an instrument of reproduction that it has pleased nature to choose in preference to any other means, but which would be an error on its part, if the woman were not to find her personality and her end in another way.

"Now, whatever this end may be, to whatever dignity the person must one day rise, the woman remains nonetheless, from this first point of view of the physical constitution and until more fully

informed, inferior before the man, A KIND OF MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN HIM AND THE REST OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.”

Nature guilty of error when it created woman! It seems that M. Proudhon would have found something better than that. Decidedly this man becomes god!

Couldn't it have found another means of breeding? he tells us, following Euripides. This is not new; we have heard fairground clowns repeat in their *spiel* these jokes of the Greek theater, seasoning them with coarse salt. We still laugh about it sometimes; but what does that prove? What proves more is the line at the end. It is obvious that if the woman, *inferior to the man, is only a middle term between him and the rest of the animal kingdom*, an ambiguous species linking the ape to the man or the man to the ape, as we will, it is in vain that she would come to claim justice. There is no justice except between equals. She will be eternally condemned to serve man, unless he prefers to eat her sometimes.

My God, Gentlemen! Do you know that people would have laughed in the past, in France, in the days of Molière and Voltaire, when there was still common sense, at a gentleman who came to spout such nonsense? What does it mean: “Inferior before man!” She will be inferior to him the day he learns to do without her; until then, she will be sometimes the slave, sometimes the mistress, since he does not want her as a partner.

But what follows is even stronger: “The woman a middle ground between man and monkey!” “Monkey yourself,” our grandmothers would have said to M. Vadius; a species is usually composed of male and female, and cannot, as a species, be considered abstractly from one term or the other.

If the woman is the link that binds the human species to the simian species, she therefore ceases to belong to the human species, which will no longer be represented by her male; but then what becomes of the species?...

I am truly ashamed, for the reader, of having to point out such nonsense to them; but M. Proudhon has such a reputation as a logician that one is obliged to take seriously even his jokes.

It is moreover on these mental leaps that he will try to establish right.

“Woman,” he says, “inferior to man in physical strength, is inferior to him from the point of view of production.

“The numerical ratio 3:2 again indicates from this point of view the relation of value between the sexes; consequently the distribution of the advantages, unless, I repeat, that an influence of another nature modifies the terms thereof, must always be in this proportion, 3:2.”

“This,” continues M. Proudhon, “is what justice says, which is none other than the recognition of relations, and which commands all of us, men and women, to do to others as we would like them to do to us, if we were in his place.

“Let no one come and talk to us any more about the *right of the strongest*, this is only a miserable equivocation, for the use of emancipated women and their collaborators.”

Poor M. Proudhon! he will hear about it for a long time to come about the right of the strongest, and he will suffer from it himself, as he wants others to suffer. He seeks the basis of right in the superiority of force and he does not want to be told!

Even if the man produced more than the woman, that would prove nothing in court, nothing in relation to natural right, nothing again from the human point of view. Because one man produces more than another, is he any more a man for that? M. Proudhon does not say so; but he tries to establish that he is *more* a citizen, and must have *more* political importance: thus, such race of men, which produces 3 against some other that produces 2, must weigh in the government as 3, while the other will weigh as 2, i.e. command the other. It is so, he says, with the woman; therefore, *by force*, in combat, in the workshop, in the forum, the preponderance is acquired by the stronger sex, in the proportion of 3 against 2, which means that the man will be the master and that the woman will obey. *Dura lex, sed lex!*

First, it is not true that those who produce the most are those who weigh the most on the government. I remember having heard an ancient legislator say: "While they labor for us, we legislate for them;" thus speaking of those who produce material wealth, which clearly proves that producing and governing are two functions that have nothing in common between them. But, in any case, to confuse the product with the right seems to me a very illogical work, whether it is attempted against women or for the proletarian.

If the woman produces less in the workshop, she will receive less, she will consume less; the same inequality exists in all classes of workers. The question of justice is not there; it will be in the free disposal of the products; it will be in the freedom that you will assure her of consuming the *value* that she has created. If she claims anything else in the name of justice, she is wrong. But take care, this freedom to labor, this security of production that she asks of you in the name of justice, if you refuse it to her, she will replace it by the practice of an idle consumption, which she will impose on you by love, or by what resembles it, and you will have this fever for outfits, this luxury of rags that ruins you, gentlemen *keepers*, and which demoralizes you, *kept* ladies.

M. Proudhon, entering into practice, — what practice! — tries to prove that the woman is so impeded by the very burdens of sexuality that she has almost no time left for productive work: "Not to mention her ordinaries which take 8 days a month, 96 days a year, it is necessary to count for the pregnancy 9 months, the replacements 40 days, breastfeeding 12 to 15 months, care for the child, from weaning, 5 years; in all, 7 years for a single childbirth; assuming 4 births 2 years apart, motherhood takes 12 years from women!"

How short he must be on reasons to invent with such force! M. Proudhon has foreseen that we would complain about his accounts. "We must not quibble and haggle here," he is careful to add. No sir; you want us to spare you your exaggerations and close our eyes to your horse-trading. So be it; we will even pay for your writings, although we have nothing to do with them. It is, however, according to this little-mistress' calendar that you are going to conclude: "that the woman, by her organic weakness and the *interesting position* in which she will not fail to fall, as long as the man lends himself to it, is fatally and juridically excluded from any political, administrative, doctrinal, industrial direction."

But what does it matter! We will catch you again on something else.

The intellectual inferiority of woman comes, according to M. Proudhon, from the weakness of her brain, as her physical inferiority comes from the weakness of her muscles.

“Physical strength,” he says, “is no less necessary for the work of the mind than for that of the muscles; so that, except in the case of disease, thought in every living being is proportional to force.”

On this account, a porter will be a *stronger* thinker than a philosopher; decidedly, M. Proudhon's God is the dynamometer.

But here's something else:

“If the organic weakness of woman, to which the work of the brain is naturally proportioned, had no other result than to shorten in its duration the action of the understanding, the quality of the intellectual product not being altered, the woman could perfectly, in this respect, compare herself to the man; she would not return as much, she would do just as well; the purely quantitative difference, resulting only in a difference in wages, would perhaps not suffice to motivate a difference in social condition.”

Well, that is better reasoned; unfortunately, it goes wrong.

“Now, this is precisely what does not take place; the woman's intellectual infirmity bears on the quality of the product, as much as on the intensity and duration of the action; and as, in this weak nature, the defect of the idea results from the lack of energy of the thought, one can say that the woman has an essentially false mind, of an irremediable falsity.”

This is what would have to be proven. M. Proudhon does not prove it. He quotes Kant, Hegel and Goethe, then words borrowed from a few women who prove absolutely nothing on the question and whose names are, on the contrary, eloquent protests against the supposed infirmity of female intelligence.

Let M. Proudhon prove that the woman has a false, radically false mind, and I pass on condemnation for all the rest.

But if it is indisputable that woman can arrive at the true, what matters the route by which she arrives there? She reasons differently from M. Proudhon, it is possible; but she knows, like him, how to enlighten and convince; I even claim that she will be able to straighten him out when he goes astray, and correct him when he is wrong, which happens to him only too often. After that, let it be thrown in our heads that, as Daniel Stern admits, “woman only arrives at the idea through passion,” what does it matter to us, as long as she gets there. Even more, I say that this is what constitutes her strength and what shows the usefulness of her intervention in masculine logic; she most often introduces an element that he lacked, the sentimental element that is no less necessary than the purely rational element, in all questions that interest society, man or even nature.

But where M. Proudhon is truly original, where he triumphs, is in the theory of the resorption of germs. He returns to it with complacency to establish the intellectual inferiority of women. We will not follow him on this ground; but we will quote a word from a physician friend of ours, a distinguished physiologist, who, after having read this theory of the resorption of germs, said to us: “M. Proudhon has the effect on me of having learned physiology where Mme. de Pourceaugnac had studied the judiciary, in novels.” Unable to assess for myself, I confine myself, on this point, to the judgment of the doctor. Suffice it to the reader to know that, according to our adversary, the woman, not possessing the germ, the resorption of the spermatozoa cannot take place in the brain.

Therefore, the brain is not fertilized in women. This is what makes universals escape it. She does not know how to abstract. "Capable up to a certain point of apprehending a found truth, she is not endowed with any initiative; she does not notice things, her intelligence does not make a sign to itself, and without the man who serves as her revealer, as a verb, she would not leave *the bestial state*."

All this is very curious, at least as an imagination; but as logic, it is crushing!

"Let us conclude now," said M. Proudhon. Since, according to all that precedes, intelligence is in proportion to force, we find here the relationship previously established, namely: that the intellectual power being in man as 3, it will be in woman as 2.

"And since in economic, political and social action, the strength of the body and that of the mind cooperate together and multiply one by the other, the physical and intellectual value of man will be physical and intellectual of the woman as 3×3 is to 2×2 , that is 9 to 4."

Thus, force, always force! It is the sign of salvation. The praetorians thought the same when they chose the giant Maximin as emperor, because he was stronger than a horse; tomorrow you will choose Arpin or Rabasson; why not Caligula's horse? why not the steam engine, which represents a far greater sum of force?

Let's move on to another exercise: the moral inferiority of women. It is no less demonstrated than the two preceding ones. Listen to the oracle:

"No, the woman considered in relation to justice and in the hypothesis of what is called her emancipation, would not be the equal of the man. Her conscience is weaker from all the difference that separates her mind from ours; her morality is of another nature. What she conceives as good and evil is not identically the same as what man himself conceives as good and evil; so that, in relation to us, the woman can be qualified as *an immoral being*... Hence again this instinct of subordination which is so easily translated in women into an aristocracy, since aristocracy is nothing other than subordination considered by the subject who, from the bottom of the ladder, has climbed to the top... By her nature, woman is in a state of constant demoralization, always below or beyond justice; inequality is characteristic of her soul... Domesticity is also less antipathetic to her; unless she is corrupted or emancipated, far from running away from it, she seeks it out, and notice again that, unlike man, she is not degraded by it... What woman loves above all and adores, it is the distinctions, the preferences, the privileges... What is justice for a woman's heart? Metaphysics, mathematics... Woman wants exceptions, she is right: she is infirm and exceptions are for the infirm. As with ideas and justice, it is still through man that modesty comes to woman. Modesty is a civil virtue... by herself, the woman is immodest; if she blushes, it is from fear of man."

I pass and of the best; finally, M. Proudhon can be summed up in these terms:

"*Woman is a receptivity*: just as she receives the embryo from man, she receives mind and duty from him... Inferior to man in conscience as much as in intellectual power and muscular strength, the woman finds herself definitively, as a member of both domestic and civil society, pushed into the background; from the moral point of view as well as from the physical and intellectual point of view, her comparative value is still like 2 to 3. And since society is constituted on the combination of these three elements, work, science, justice, the total value of the man and woman, their ratio and consequently their share of influence, compared between them, will be as $3 \times 3 \times 3$ is to $2 \times 2 \times 2$ or 27 to 8."

Such are the ideas of M. Proudhon on woman. We see that it was difficult to put it lower. Well, with all this M. Proudhon puts on the airs of a knight and tries to pass himself off as the *defender of the beauties*. After having refused everything to woman in the name of right and justice, he is going, in the name of the family and of what he calls religion, to offer her the most beautiful fate in the world; in the meantime, he must speak to her in his loudest voice, so as to recall the wolf answering the stork which demands its due:

What! It's still not much
To have taken your neck from my throat!
Come on, you are ungrateful.
Never fall under my paw.

Well no, mister wolf! We want justice and not favor. We will get it from you, or at least from your fellows. Will you refuse it, when we have demonstrated to you, not only that equity requires that you grant us our due, but that your most pressing interest so requires it, and that your salvation and ours, social salvation, make it a law for you?

I could have, following you step by step, pointed out your paralogisms and your many contradictions. It would have been a little war.

I want much less to beat you than to convince you; to cure you, for you are ill, that is my most ardent wish. Leave me hope. In any case, to make an effort so that others who share your views on women are cured, and so that those who would be disposed to take them are preserved from contagion, such is my duty. It seemed to me that, to complete it, the best thing to do was much less to refute your arguments, which are worth very little by themselves, than to show that the problem you have posed has been solved, but that you have not been able to solve: *Justice in society for women as for men*. I will try it in a few pages and will invoke neither the angel of eloquence nor the seraph of theology; but, acknowledging my inability to grasp universals and distill abstractions, I will appeal to simple common sense and try to speak its vulgar language.

If there are philosophers who no longer understand this language, I am counting on you, Monsieur Proudhon, to translate it for them into a fine metaphysical style, *peppered* with big fishy words to keep their serious brains awake, as they maintain and excite the appetite, spices and condiments with which a skillful cook knows how to season his sauces.

M. Proudhon proposes to raise, through the conjugal collectivity, feminine individuality to the height of the stronger sex. "You will see presently," he said, "woman attain *from the impurities of her nature* to an incomparable transparency."

Thus, for M. Proudhon, brought up in the prejudices of an outmoded myth, woman is always the source of evil and the mother of impurity.

O incorrigible Nazarene!

Leave behind the fables and symbols. Let us examine the history of mankind in its positive development.

Without going back to a question of origin, if we take the human being when it begins to study itself, to know itself, we see it male and female, like all species, and the two sexes appear to us to be endowed with different qualities, no doubt, but are equal at the starting point.

The female gorilla or gibbon is hardly less strong than the male, and the latter is hardly less beautiful than his companion. From Adam to Eve the difference is not greater.¹⁷

However, the first societies could only rely on force. It is at the beginning of societies that the predominance of man is most absolute, because force is the indispensable element of a social establishment that is beginning.

But when society is founded, when external obstacles, conjured up by a solidly established internal force, allow the social organism to develop, the other human faculties show themselves and demand satisfaction. For the social being is not only an organized force, it is also intelligence and feeling. After ensuring its existence, it wants to enlarge and develop itself. It has intellectual and moral organs; society must also have corresponding organs.

Individually, it is love, it is conscience, it is justice, it is the idea. Socially, society made in its image must be all that.

The whole law of the progress of humanity is in this multiplicity of human needs, requiring social needs which correspond to them.

Dare to say that these social organs, beginning at the family, developing by the tribe, by the city, by the church, by the fatherland, and growing in such a way as to become international, humanitarian, universal, are created and developed without woman and outside of her influence!

No. In this creation, as in all others, both sexes are necessary. The female alone cannot fertilize anything; the male alone cannot produce anything.

Every social institution results from the combination of force, the male element, with love, which is possessed by both sexes, and with beauty, the female element; and this combination is always determined by a true or false, exact or deceptive ideal of justice.

The predominance of force over beauty, when it is not a transitory and revolutionary fact, is a sign of barbarism; the predominance of beauty over force, when it is not a religious and palingenetic fact, is proof of corruption.

The social ideal is the realization of justice by the combination of force and beauty united by love.

But let us leave abstractions and aphorisms, since as well, in our quality of woman, we must be unfit for it, and examine the facts.

It suffices to cast a glance at history to recognize that the civilization of a people is proportional to the role of women among that people, to their influence, to their moral dignity; the more a society becomes civilized, the more the woman acquires there value and consideration. So that we

¹⁷ Admit that you both had
Long nails, a little black and dirty,
Hair that was rather untidy.
Complexion dark, the skin brown and tanned.
Voltaire, *le Mondain*.

can say, if we consider a society in history, that the degree of elevation of woman will give the measure of the degree of civilization that this society has reached. A people can be very civilized and carry within it the proletariat, pauperism, see modern Europe; slavery itself, see America; it cannot be civilized if half the human species is outside of social life.

Much more, in every nation, in every race where the woman is isolated from the social movement, confined in the harem, in the gynaeceum, kept in ignorance of the things of the fatherland and of humanity, progress properly speaking, spontaneous, autonomous progress, is impossible. Such nations are condemned, like the Turks, like the Arabs, to be absorbed by others or to perish.

Let it be well known that society is only progressive when the influence of woman can be felt in it, when woman contributes, at least indirectly, to its legislation, its mores, its beliefs. If civilization can be regarded as the *amortization* of force, it is to woman that we owe it.

Savagery is strength in all its reality. There, the male dominates absolutely. The man carries arms, or rather he carries nothing at all. The woman fulfills all the servile functions there, even those of beast of burden. Man hunts, struggles, fights, deliberates, governs and does justice. *Savagery* is, without a doubt, the longest stage of humanity. How many nations, how many races have never left it and become extinct there!

Barbarism is a first step taken outside of pure force. The feminine element counts for something there; the influence of women is indirectly felt there. Man is sensitive to beauty and pays it a certain homage. Laws are made, customs are established that protect the woman at least as a wife and as a mother. Force has already ceased to reign exclusively over the world. Progress is possible.

Wherever man, determined by race, soil, climate, has felt beauty, civilization has flourished. The cult of beauty earned women their influence on Greek genius, and brought to the Athenians that splendid flowering of art which we still admire today and which, after more than two thousand years, guides us and enlightens us. And yet, even in Greece, the influence of women has been indirect and distant, more symbolic than real, more religious than political.

Humanity has always persisted in walking with one foot, looking with one eye, when nature had given it two feet to walk forward, two eyes to fix its goal and embrace its horizon.

Does the history of humanity exist? It is the story of the males in humanity that should be told. Also, what is in this story? Battles, massacres, floods of blood; oppression, injustice, betrayal, setbacks, sterile revolutions, shameful reactions, and in the midst of all this some gleams inspired by love, devotion, the spirit of charity, paternity, mercy, a spirit that has its cult and its refuge in women, in women which has almost no role in the story.

Indeed, woman, we are told, barely exists in history; and this argument is used against her. Her absence from history is equivalent to a patent of incapacity.

We do not want to take advantage of a few great female individualities, which are like milestones planted on the road to progress, to show that man was not alone when humanity passed through there.

I admit that woman hardly exists in history, and this is the crime of force which, having reigned almost exclusively up to now, has given the feminine element only the smallest possible place. As long as society was able to consider itself as being in an embryonic state or in formation, the social functions of woman there were difficult to determine, and her role, played in the shadows, occupied only a very small place in the pages of history. But we must be allowed to ask whether, in the social organism as it is today, the functions should not be divided into two large divisions. In a word, are there not in humanity considered as a collective being male organs and female organs? And shouldn't this distinction be found in every society, in every single and multiple collectivity, like a people, a nation?

Make no mistake about it, the whole question is there.

In fact, if there are functions in political, economic and artistic society that are specific to women, women should be considered as social individuals just as much as men. Consequently, it is no longer from the male that they will receive their value, as the zero receives its value from the figure that precedes it. They will no longer only have their importance in the family, the only one that M. Proudhon recognizes in them, they will be *de jure* and *ipso facto* members of civil society. Ceasing to exist solely in the state of reflection or *receptivity*, according to the elegant expression of the master, they will affirm themselves as activity, as freedom, as virtuality, as autonomy; and from then on the question of equality or inequality would cease to exist. The woman being able to be declared superior to the man in the functions proper to her sex, as the man could be in the functions attributed to his, there would be nothing more between the two sexes than a question of functional equivalence. One might ask whether the functions of the stronger sex are superior or inferior to those of the fair sex; but the question would be resolved at the same time as it was posed, all the social attributions having the same value and the same importance in society. In a concert, which is valid only by the agreement of all the parties, does one ask oneself if some are more important than the others? Suppress only one of the parts, there is no more concert, there is no more harmony. Let us therefore never forget that from the point of view of the whole, that is to say from the social point of view, all truly social functions have the same value and are positively equal, and let us not imitate Mr. Proudhon who, attributing the spirit of invention exclusively to man, while he grants the spirit of popularization to woman, wants this to be, for the male sex, a title of superiority over the female sex, as if society did not need those who popularize as much as those who invent, those who, by talent or by feeling, make a certain truth understood, as much as those who discovered it by chance or by genius.

I therefore affirm that in a well-organized society, there are male functions and female functions, and I add that the latter are neither less numerous nor less important than the former.

And when I say the functions, I mean at the same time what concerns the trades, the arts, the sciences and the administration properly so called.

Do you want some examples?

As far as trades are concerned, I see some that are suitable for women, as there are some that are suitable for men. Thus, while those that require strength must remain the prerogative of the strong sex, those which require taste, tact, address, must be allotted as much as possible to the

weaker sex. The trades of mason, carpenter, joiner, locksmith, are obviously male trades; but those of dressmaking, retail trade, those of millinery, of floristry, are certainly female trades, and there are a host of others which one could, without inconvenience, add to these, as machines transform and feminize *them by equalizing them*.

I know there is a terrible argument against women's labor; but I do not want to reproduce this argument, because I could only answer it by addressing the question of prostitution on the one hand, and that of wage labor on the other, and I cannot deal here with these two very big questions. Besides, it is not essential to the work that I have undertaken.

If I pass from trades strictly speaking to more general functions, I see the intervention of women still easier to determine.

So, in education, isn't the role of the woman, shouldn't it be at least equal to that of the man? Doesn't moral education fall to her by preference? Does not that of early childhood belong to her exclusively? And, finally, shouldn't the education of girls be entrusted to teachers who are women and, as far as possible, wives and mothers?

M. Proudhon, with that presumptuousness that imposes on fools and has so often succeeded in him, wants modesty to be a masculine virtue and woman to receive it from man, like, for the rest, all the other virtues. Is it therefore to teach modesty to their wives that these gentlemen have replaced midwives with obstetricians? It used to be only the confessor who shared with the husband, now there is the doctor; and even the confessor confined himself to the soul, when he did not go beyond the limits of his sacred character: the doctor defiles the soul and the body.

But, they say, it must be; there are no female doctors, midwives are not sufficiently educated, etc., etc. And why are midwives poorly educated? Who teaches them? Who receives them? Who regulated their profession? Isn't it the men, especially the doctors? And wouldn't they like it that way? What reason is there for not admitting women to doctorates, and for not creating preparatory schools for women? Do we fear the insufficiency of their intellectual capacities? There is competition there that will be able to classify them.¹⁸

As for me, I see in the woman, much more than in the man, the qualities that are appropriate to a practitioner: liveliness of glance, delicacy of tact, softness of tone, sympathy of manners. They limit themselves to making the woman a nurse, a sister of charity. It is something, but it is not enough. She who is fit to give care must be fit to order it. Women are granted functions relating to sentiment; they are denied those that require knowledge. We make stupid feelings and blind and deaf science. We want to give a heart to science, enlightenment to feeling, by asking that we constitute medicine-woman alongside medicine-man. A woman doctor who will have been a mother will take better care of the children and will understand women's illnesses better than a man; before her, the girl and the young woman will be able, without shame, to describe the evil that torments them and unveil their secret infirmities.

¹⁸ We will cite the example of Doctor Elisabeth Blackwell, who knew how to overcome, by dint of talent, the prejudices of the faculties of America.

This is not the place to review all the functions suitable for women; let us confine ourselves to affirming that there are none that are *really organic* that they cannot share with man, and this, for the reason that the social organism being male and female, it is necessary that all the organs that have a general character have a male side and a female side, while special organs such as professions belong more particularly either to one or to the other sex.

Thus, in the administration itself, the part of the man and that of the woman are perfectly indicated. Take, for example, this administration in what is fundamental, the municipality. Every municipality has a mayor; we know its functions. Well, next to the mayor there is room for a woman, for a *mayoress*, as in the family, next to the father, there is room for the mother. The functions that would suit the female head of the commune are not currently fulfilled, or are badly fulfilled; they are those that relate to physical and moral hygiene, to manners, to charity, to education. The MAYORESS would have the upper management of crèches, asylums, charitable institutions; it would have the supervision of schools and public establishments from the point of view of morals and *economy*; she would visit the nannies and advise that the children of the town should not be left to die of hunger and pain in the village, under the pretext of feeding them *by enterprise* at 20 or 25 francs a month.

It must be clearly understood that, as society organizes itself, it creates organs that correspond to its degree of development and must be more and more perfect; these organs are called institutions: thus, while the primitive institutions had the aim of organizing force, those that are now being created tend rather to organize the love of humanity.

The institutions of the present and of the future are institutions of mutuality, of guarantees, of charity. Their aim is above all to spread knowledge, to generalize well-being, to guarantee individual existence by the aid of the community, to succor weakness, infirmity, disease.

Institutions of this nature require, much more than those of earlier phases, the help of women, and when we see what the needs of society today and the tendencies of the social movement are, it is impossible not to recognize the growing importance of the role that women are called upon to fulfill in society.

The men who, like M. Proudhon, want to bring us back to patriarchy by imprisoning women in the family, are *quintessential abstractors* who see nothing of what is happening around them, and disregard the collective life that every day develops new needs, generates new forces and gives rise to social foundations responding to these needs and organizing these forces. They no doubt have good intentions; they believe they serve, if not the cause of progress, at least that of morality, which always ends up being also that of progress. By forcing woman to confine herself to the family, by forcing her to be only wife and mother, they hope to remedy this fever of luxury and dissipation that possesses her more and more, and becomes a cause of social dissolution, an element of moral corruption and disorder.

But they are wrong. It is not by further narrowing the field of her activity that they will stop the woman in her drifting; it is, on the contrary, by giving this activity the means of satisfying itself through legitimate means.

Women must be given a serious education, and, as far as possible, a professional education. They have to become *producers*. Labor alone has emancipated men; labor alone can emancipate women. Let the woman be able to honestly earn the clothes that adorn her and embellish her, and instead of dragging her silk dresses and lace shawls in the dust of the pavement, she will walk free and proud in the modesty of a dress that will reveal her beauty without branding her virtue and taxing her honor. The education that we give to women being fit only to make dolls of them, do we have the right to be surprised that they pose as dolls in the eyes of men and that they end up, unhappy, by taking seriously the stupid role they were taught from childhood?

Let no one accuse me of ignoring the role of women in the family: I want, just like M. Proudhon, women to apply themselves to being wife and mother; but I maintain that it is not true that family life suffices for the physical, moral and intellectual activity of woman. The role of the brooding hen is no doubt very respectable, but it does not suit everyone and is not as absorbing as one would like to say. And first of all, there are many women who do not marry, then there are a large number who are obliged to add their daily work to the daily work of their husbands. Two producers, in one household, are better than one, and in a family where the father, who has only his job, is obliged to support his wife and three or four children, I wonder how they live if they live, how they eat if they eat, how they are dressed, heated, housed, and what education the children receive. Labor, in any case, is moralizing, when it is not excessive — then it is stupefying; — and I do not see that the virtue of the wife can ever have to suffer from the labor of the worker. What are the ordinary recruiters of prostitution, if not the impossibility of honest work, insufficient wages and finally idleness, that eternal ancestor of all vices? To open to women the careers of free and suitably remunerated labor is to close the doors of the brothel. Men, will you?

After the hypocrisy that ruthlessly blights feminine vices, fattened and nurtured by male corruption, what has always shocked me about men is the profound disdain with which they treat the woman who has reached maturity. From that moment, the most sensitive reformers cease to concern themselves with her fate. Man begins at thirty-five or forty to be suitable for all jobs; so far he inspires little confidence. His intellectual development is only truly complete at this age. It was then that the public functions fell to him. It took him thirty-five or forty years to make his moral individuality and to acquire a physiognomy. How is it that when man only begins to be something after reaching maturity, woman, on the contrary, from that moment ceases to be something? Is woman then nothing after flowering? Can man alone give the fruit?

The woman, having hitherto been considered only from the point of view of the pleasure of the male or the preservation of the species, was valued only as beauty or as motherhood. In a society constituted by men and for their benefit, woman was appreciated only as wife and mother; but if woman is a free individuality, an intellectual and moral activity, she will have her own value, she will make her own law. She will no more receive her conscience and dignity from man than man receives his dignity and his conscience from a being outside of him. As we can see, it is the doctrine of *immanence* (Proudhon style) applied to women. When we have made M. Proudhon admit that woman is a human being, an organized freedom, we will make him say all the rest, and

he will perhaps go further than us, because he is excessive in all things, and never sees anything but absolute logic, independent of middle terms.¹⁹

In the meantime, let us confine ourselves to affirming that woman is a free being who develops to intellectual maturity just like man; that if she is made as a beauty at twenty, she is not so in all the aspects of her being; that her mind and heart mature and develop as long as in man himself; that she can rise to the understanding of general ideas and general interests through the application and exercise of her faculties; that finally, she is, like man, a conscience and an intelligence, and that, like him, she can progress indefinitely, as long as her organs have not arrived at fatigue or exhaustion.

A woman, after seven or eight years of marriage, ceases to be absorbed in the cares of motherhood.

The preoccupations of love have weakened; she lives less in others, in her husband, in her children, and aspires more to live in herself. Allow me also to tell you that the woman is earlier and more completely liberated than the man from sexual desires and needs. What will you do with this activity which wants to apply itself to external things? Will you repress it within, at the risk of producing these reactions so fatal in women of thirty or forty? Will you condemn this woman who wants to produce intellectually to endless sterility, or will you force her to turn to the side of gallantry? Catholicism at least had church attendance which, if it did not satisfy her mind, satisfied her heart or at least cheated her hunger. Let's see, be good, gentlemen masters; recognize then that a woman who no longer wants to please and who is no longer absorbed by the cares of the family is still good for something, that she can render social services, administer, supervise, sell, buy, *produce* finally, from the point of view of art, trade, industry, and that this time that she can employ outside the household represents at least two thirds of the time that it is ordinarily granted to her to live; which is well worth talking about. What the devil, gentlemen! We are of flesh and bones like you. We feel we have a soul, and whatever M. Proudhon says, we have a head and something in it. Are we so crazy to want to use all these gifts from heaven... after you, but still for you? For, in the end, it is for your happiness and your relief that we ask to share with you the burden of social work, as you share with us that of the propagation of the species.

The insufficiency of our intelligence, the weakness of our brain, etc., etc., these are doubtless reasons; but do these weaknesses of our nature prevent us from reigning over you? Is it then more difficult to labor than to lead males? We see, moreover, many women who govern their house, their industry, their trade and their husband on top of the market. These are exceptions, you say?

¹⁹ Here is what we read, on page 216 of Volume II of M. Proudhon's work: "Man is free; he cannot not be, because he is compound, because the law of every compound is to produce a resultant that is its own power, because the human compound being formed of body, of mind, subdivided into more and more special faculties, the resultant proportionate to the number and diversity of the constituent principles must be a force free from the laws of body, life, and mind, precisely what we call free will."

I ask if this applies to women as well as men. Take care: if you say yes, there is no more *transcendence* for woman than for man, and then all the freedoms, *all the powers* that we demand for woman are logically granted to us.

They are numerous, numerous enough to make a rule. By what some do, you see what others could do if careers were open to them. In the arts that have been permitted to them, such as the theatre, women equal men, if they do not surpass them; in the other branches of art, their place is also marked on the same line as men.

Thank you and recognition to those who have demonstrated for others. A sex that gave Mars, Rachel and Ristori to theater, Rosa Bonheur to painting, Staël, Sand and Daniel Stern literature, to thought, proved that it was intellectually mature and worthy of sharing social work.

As for the moral maturity of woman, I would be ashamed to try to demonstrate it: those who do not see it are blind and I even believe that they are dead; so let the dead bury the dead and move on. Salvation is before us!

MARRIAGE

Amongst unequals no society.

Milton

We have seen the debasement of woman; we are now going to see her exaltation. After the first exercise, the second became indispensable.

Here is how M. Proudhon expresses himself at the head of his theory of marriage:

“General result of the discussion: reduction of love to absurdity by its very movement and its realization.

“Reduction of woman to nothingness by the demonstration of her triple and incurable inferiority.

“This is where the analysis has led us so far. Love and woman, two essential elements of life, would come together for his misfortune; the first would be its poison, the second would appear as the agent of seduction that pours us this fatal cup. In woman, the Fathers of the Church cry out to you, and in the love she inspires, is found the principle of all corruption and all discord: she is the cross, the contradiction and the shame of the human race. Impossible to live with it and to do without her! To do without her is the last outrage for virile dignity, a crime worthy of death...”

After having shown the woman fatally tainted with original weakness, with virtual impotence, and *naturally* inferior to man from the triple physical, intellectual and moral point of view, M. Proudhon must have wondered how he could reconcile such a theory with the social fact that has placed woman everywhere beside man, and which every day seems to attribute to this half of the human species a more marked importance. However, after having searched well, he found that the woman being a *passivity*, a *receptivity*, could acquire, by her union with the man, all the physical, intellectual and moral qualities that nature had refused her, and that, through marriage, she rehabilitated herself, rose from her original sin to the point of becoming, if not the equal, at least the indispensable complement of man, who finds in her his embellished image, the exaltation of his being, the glorification of his virtue and the realization of his ideal.

“As the woman,” he says, “takes her body from the man, *os ex ossibus meis et caro ex carne med*; as she takes her ideas from him, so she receives from him her conscience and the principle of all her virtues.”

We see that if Saint Paul had not made the inferiority of women flow from the Hebrew Genesis, M. Proudhon would have had the honor of having invented his theory. But as Saint Paul came eighteen hundred years before him, it is necessary to recognize in the apostle of the Gentiles a certain right of priority. May I be allowed to recall the words of Saint Paul as they are reported in the Gospel (Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. xi):

“7. For as for man, he should not cover his head, seeing that he is the image and the glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man.

“8. Because man was not taken from woman, but woman was taken from man.

“9. And also man was not created for woman, but woman for man.

“10. Therefore the woman, because of the angels, must have on her head a mark of the power under which she is.

“11. However, neither the man is without the woman, nor the woman without the man in Our Lord.

“12. For as woman *is* by man, so also *is* man by woman; but all things proceed from God.”

Elsewhere Saint Paul (Epistle to the Ephesians, ch. v), expresses himself thus:

“22. Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord.

“23. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, and he is also the savior of his body.

“24. As therefore the Church is subject to Christ, so also shall wives be subject to their husbands in all things.”

Thus M. Proudhon, who understands love more or less as the Fathers of the Church understood it, who wants, like the Church herself, indissoluble and eternal marriage, speaks like Saint Paul of the relationship between man and woman. After Saint Paul, he professes that the woman comes from the man, and with this apostle, he decrees her subaltern character, for the excellent reason that the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man. Finally, like Saint Paul, he tries to uplift woman by representing her as the glory of man; only he stops there and does not add with the apostle of the Gentiles that man is the glory of God: he suppresses God; but this is only a detail.

For the rest, let us do this justice to M. Proudhon. The borrowing that he makes from Christianity of his doctrine on marriage, he was pleased to admit openly and confessed in these terms before the Bishop of Besançon:

"You see, Monsignor, it is Christianity, it is the Church, it is you yourself who, without knowing it, are going to provide me with the theory of marriage..." All this is for the best.

But should we inherit from those we murder?

And then, it is good, no doubt, to show oneself to be in agreement with the Church, but one should also be in agreement with logic. But what is this logic? Who accepts the conclusions of Christianity on woman and rejects the principles on which these conclusions are based and from which they flow?

That Saint Paul, who takes as his point of departure the miraculous account of Genesis, with regard to creation, original sin, concludes with the inferiority of woman, with her subordination, and represents her as the image of man, while man alone is the image of God, Saint Paul has the right to do so. Saint Paul remains in the rigor of the principles he adopted; but let M. Proudhon, who rejects any supernatural intervention and who would regard it as an insult for anyone to suspect him of taking the account of the Mosaic creation literally, come and affirm us seriously, he who does not admit the search for origins, that woman was produced to serve as a complement to man, that she is begotten morally, intellectually by man, receiving from him her spirit and conscience, and that, moreover, *ex nihilo*, like that of the world, according to the Catholic version — since the woman considered *naturally* is deprived of all spontaneity, and does not even possess

the human attributes, placed between the man and the bestial series, that seems to us supremely illogical and contradictory!

In truth, when such important borrowings are made from Christianity, one ought to show it more gratitude and not disdain so much its *Credo quia absurdum* so vilified by the rationalists.

In summary, M. Proudhon's theory of the woman to whom he miraculously returns by marriage — a sacrament! — all the virtues, all the strengths, all the values that he had *originally* denied her, would only be a paraphrase of the words of Saint Paul, if he had not thought of something which gives his Hebrew-Christian system a certain stamp of originality. Unfortunately, the idea on which this improvement rests is a false idea. It was written that M. Proudhon would find nothing good, at least for the reconstruction, for the synthesis, on a subject that he tackled in such a brutal manner. Love, in order to punish him, would it have knotted his feelings here, obscured his intelligence?

The idea, moreover, is always the same. It is always about justice. Only so far M. Proudhon had believed that it sufficed to remove from the human conscience all transcendental, divine, religious, ideal influence, to constitute justice; but, after having written a hundred and fifty pages on this subject, he realizes that he has done nothing for the constitution of justice, if he has not discovered its own organ: "Sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, each have their organ; love has its own; thought also has its own, which is the brain, and in this brain each of the faculties of thought has its little apparatus. How could justice, a sovereign faculty, not have its organism proportionate to the importance of its function?" This organ that becomes, one does not quite know why, an organism, that is to say a being, is the couple, it is the man and the woman united by the bonds of marriage.

"Nature," says M. Proudhon, "has given sexual duality as the organ of justice, and just as we have been able to define the human individual as an *organized liberty*, so we can define the conjugal couple as *organized justice*. To produce justice, this is the higher goal of the androgynous division: generation and what follows, no longer figures here except as an accessory."

This is a sentence that would have gladdened the heart of Perrin Dandin! Regarding Perrin Dandin, I remember that Mr. Proudhon belongs to a family of jurists, and that those of the Proudhons who were too poor to become jurisconsults or lawyers always remained fierce litigants, straddling law and procedure. It must be believed that this passion for the judiciary is in the blood. M. Proudhon is both a jurist and a litigant, uniting in his person the qualities of the various Proudhons who came before him. But let's talk seriously.

What does this new metaphysics signify which tends to confuse the laws resulting from the relations of beings with these beings themselves? What does this ontological creation of a legal organism mean, and how much longer will we understand each other in France, if we start speaking this language?

Is absolute justice then anything other than an ideal to which our conscience seeks to approach more and more without ever being able to attain it in its totality?

Relative justice, the only one we can know, does it not result from the relations established between two or more beings, and is it not our conscience that realizes it?

Is not this organ the organ of justice or rather of judgment? Is it not the balance that weighs, the criterion to which we submit the facts in order to judge them, assess them, *weigh them* by comparing their ratios; and this criterion, although fixed as an actual measure, is it not changing, modifiable, subject to the influences of time and place, like our whole being?

And isn't what we say of one conscience true of all consciences? And in a given society, if we speak of a law of the collective conscience, will this law be anything other than the common expression of a decision taken at a given moment by all or by the generality of individual consciences?

Do you now want to say that there will come a time when all consciences will formulate the same judgment, express the same decision, decree the same law, and do you want to call this harmonic state of individual consciences, the social, collective, humanitarian conscience? I don't see any problem with it. Do you also want us to make this common consciousness an organ of humanity considered as a collective being, as a living whole, and to call it the *juridical organ* of humanity? I still want it. What do words matter when you know what they cover? But do not say that a man and a woman create by their more or less sacramental union an *organ* for humanity, which would have been deprived of it if they had lived in celibacy, concubinage, polygamy or polyandry: that would be absurd; and do not add that the first function of the couple in marriage is to produce justice: that would be funny and we would laugh.

Let us go on, however, and see what the organ of justice should be, and how it is made. I quote:

"The juridical organ will therefore consist of two people: that is a first point.

"What will these two people be in relation to each other?

"If we make them similar and equal, or else, by varying the equivalent aptitudes, these two persons will be between them as the man is to the man, or the woman to the woman, as 1 is to 1, 2 to 2, as A is to A. There will therefore be two essences respectively complete, consequently reciprocally independent: there will be no organism. An association more or less precarious may come out of it; we will not have the desired duality. No juridical organ, hence no justice. Man will remain savage, or will only form imperfect societies, packs like dogs, communities like bees and ants.

"Experience confirms this prediction. Between individuals of equal value and similar pretensions, there is naturally antagonism, jousting, lottery, speculation, discord, war; little respect, little affection, no devotion. Under these conditions, justice cannot live, develop, become for man a religion and a glory... Justice requires a duality formed of two individuals, dissimilar and unequal qualities, different inclinations, characters opposites, finally such as nature posits them in the father and the child, better still in the conjugal couple, under the double figure of the man and the woman."

This, then, is what one arrives at, when one puts logic at the service of a false idea, of a bad cause! One is carried away by the ardor of the defense, one finds reasons everywhere, and one goes so far as to contradict one's own principles. Here is a man who has written three volumes to support equality and establish justice, and who, having reached the end of his third volume,

defends inequality and wants to make it the foundation of justice; which amounts to the very negation of justice.

People who write to teach us nothing are guilty: they steal our time; but those who write to make us *unlearn* are much more culpable: they partially kill our intelligence, they lessen our moral value, they diminish our being. One could almost say that between the former and the latter there is the difference that exists between thieves and murderers.

By giving us a new and radically false notion of justice, M. Proudhon works to *unteach* us about justice. I openly accuse him of it, and I summon him to come back to this whole part of his book, to retract it or at least to erase it from the next editions; for if that were not thoughtlessness on his part, it would be a crime.

This man defends the Revolution, makes it the starting point of the new world, and he forgets this magnificent inscription, which she traced in the frontispiece of the temple of our laws, and which, having entered our mores, will always dominate our codes: ALL FRENCH PEOPLE ARE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW!

Equality is the fundamental stone of our legal edifice: outside of equality, there is no justice, because outside of equality, there is no common measure, no comparison, no possible judgment, no general formula, no of law !

What is the law other than the abstract determination of relations reflected in the understanding and thus formulated unitarily by conscience?

For the law to be made, there must be relations; a comparison must be able to be established, unity between distinct terms must be created. Now, unity cannot be achieved, comparison can only be established between terms of the same nature. We can compare various objects in their relations of extension, heat, and weight; but one cannot compare extension to heat, to gravity, to light, and establish a common law between different categories, between heterogeneous natures.

Similarly, justice can exist only between beings of the same nature, equal in rights and duties, *essentially* and *potentially* equal.

If you have sometimes seen the law established between unequals, as between masters and slaves, lords and serfs, the master and his workmen, apprentices or servants, this does not prove that the law is possible in inequality, on the contrary; know that the law was produced between these beings of unequal condition, because there were egalitarian relations between them. It noted, this law, by its very existence, that in such and such cases, there was equality between them, that is to say reciprocal right and therefore mutual obligation, in relation to the principle, to the common bond that united the parts. Its object was to proclaim a certain essential equality between the contending parties and, moreover, to constitute on the point that it regulated a potential equality by the intervention of the power responsible for enforcing the law. It was society that, by putting itself through the government, through the state, on the side of the weakest, momentarily re-established equality. Without this balance, due to social intervention, the law would have been impossible, or else would have remained a dead letter, if it had been limited to recognizing the essential equality of the parties on a given point. It was necessary to support this recognition of reciprocal rights with a force that protected the weak and made them, on a point determined by

the law, the equal of the strong. Justice could only be on this condition: justice truncated no doubt, partial, mixed with a lot of abuse and arbitrariness, but finally justice recognized in principle, and henceforth founded in the series where it would not fail to develop.

If we examine all the social series, we will see that humanity has advanced towards justice only by marching towards equality. Any inequality suppressed was a partial realization of ideal justice, at the same time as a conquest of order, a further step on the road to socialization.

And now we are told “that between individuals of equal value there is no possible justice, but antagonism, jousting, lottery, speculation, discord, war, etc.” We hardly expected to see the lottery in this matter, and speculation! — “And that between equal or *equivalent* persons, justice cannot be constituted, because these persons will be among themselves as the man is to the man, as the woman is to the woman, as 3 is to 3, as 2 is to 2, as A is to A, that is to say two essences respectively complete, consequently reciprocally independent.”

What does this jargon mean and who are we kidding here? Come on, Monsieur Proudhon, we are all in on the secret. You know as well as we do that between two beings of different natures justice has nothing to do. You said it about animals, and you were cruel towards them, because, misunderstanding the bonds of feeling and life that bind us to all beings and to the universe, you locked yourself in your judiciary shell and only wanted to see between yourselves and the outside world relations of justice. Well, has what you said of justice then ceased to be true? Is there justice between two *essentially* and *potentially* different beings, between the cat and the mouse, between the wolf and the lamb? Let us see, Mr. Proudhon, you who are an economist, what ratio of exchange will you establish between what is worth 9 and what is worth 28? To arrive at a contract of voluntary exchange or a legal judgment, will you not be obliged to equalize the values and make them meet in a common term? You will subtract from 28 or add to 9, until the two objects *are equal*; it is only then that the law will be possible, and that the fact of exchange will be realized. Be convinced that the constitution of justice is not done otherwise.

To weigh, you need two objects subject to the laws of gravity, and a balance that determines their ratio. To judge, two facts are needed, and an intelligence that compares and decides. To constitute justice, two men and a conscience are enough. This conscience can be a result of the intellectual and moral faculties of these two men vibrating as one on a determined point; it is other than the individual consciences of each; it is distinct from their personality, in the sense that it did not exist before the contact of the two beings, but it is not independent of themselves, it is not autonomous: it is not a real entity; it does not belong to itself and is only recognized in each person's own conscience. Generalize these facts and you have a social conscience; better by an association composed of free and equal men, of citizens. And as society expands and grows, the number of rays that, starting from individual consciousnesses, end in the collective consciousness, increases and multiplies. There is a conscience of the city, of the nation, of the Church — Christendom has its conscience — and finally of humanity. This is what we aspire to. But, apart from that, looking for a juridical organ is madness! You would do as well to seek the squaring of the circle or even the spirit that answers in the table or that makes it move, and which, too, is only the resultant of the forces or intelligences of the witnesses, combined in a common action, a

resultant manifested by a formula that belongs to all, and in which most often none among the witnesses recognizes their own thought.

M. Proudhon wants to constitute the juridical organ with the human couple. But, to establish relations of justice between two beings, it is not only necessary that these two beings be equal and have equivalent relations, as we have said, but it is also necessary that these two beings be free. Man, M. Proudhon tells us, is an *organized liberty*; very well, and I conceive perfectly two free and intelligent organisms contributing to the formation of a fact of conscience, generalizing it and making it the rule of their future actions, the law of their mutual relations. Here, there is truly justice, because there are two parts, knowledge and liberty; both parties *know together* and *coact* freely. But the woman who, according to M. Proudhon, *neither knows nor acts by herself*, who receives her consciousness from the man; the woman who is not an *organized liberty*, how could she establish a relationship of justice with a man? Does she know her law, if she is unconscious, and can she do it, if she is only a receptivity? And if she is incapable of determining her own law, how can she contribute to a common law that takes account of her personality and includes, in its generality, the particular conditions of her being? Now, if this common law that must regulate the relations of man and woman is only the expression of the free being, of the male, it will formulate only half of the relations of the couple. It will be entirely for the benefit of the male, or rather it will not be a law in the true sense of the word, that is to say the harmonic result of a double relationship, a general rule resulting from the truth of things; it will be there a law imposed from without by an arbitrary will which depends only on itself. It will be, in relation to the woman, *transcendentalism*. Only, instead of coming to her from God, the yoke here will come to her from man. Tyrant for tyrant, is it really worth changing? For my part, I prefer the other, even represented by his ministers; he is farther from me and much more disinterested in the questions that divide us.

As we can see, M. Proudhon's system on the constitution of justice does not stand up to analysis. From whatever side one looks at it, it is easy to reduce it to absurdity. We could study it in the various accessories with which the rich imagination of its author has been pleased to adorn it, but what is the point? Haven't we said enough? If there are still doubts in the minds of our readers, let them read the account in the book itself, from page 430 to page 473 of the third volume; they will complete their conviction on this unfortunate attempt at legal and matrimonial restoration, and will undoubtedly arrive, like us, at this conclusion that M. Proudhon was no more successful in his attempt to exalt women through conscience, that in his efforts to prove the physical, intellectual, and moral inferiority of the fairer half of the human race, and that he would have done as well to abstain on either point.

THE SAME SUBJECT

And I will seek justice from Justice.

MOLIÈRE (*the Miser*).

I don't know if you share my feeling; but it seems to me that anyone who addresses the public should not content himself with having demonstrated the error, that they owes to their readers — were they only one! — that they owes it to themselves to show where the truth lies. Which amounts to saying that after destroying a conception, you have to propose another... better one.

Having denied the value of M. Proudhon's ideas on love, women, marriage, it remains for me to affirm something about this important trilogy. I will undertake it, not as a utopian philosopher, but as a person without authority, but also without a love of noise and brilliance, who by nature is much more concerned with the real than with the ideal, with the best currently possible than with the perfect, and who, in the absence of the science that she lacks, cares above all about simple common sense, and consults it as much as she can.

M. Proudhon has summed up his ideas on the question in a kind of catechism by questions and answers, very well done as well, apart from the thesis, which is the one we know, and therefore detestable. We will imitate this form, which forces to be clear and simple, and which is exclusive of any phraseology.

But, before that, we have another duty to fulfill.

We have just presented impartially the thesis supported by M. Proudhon on marriage considered as a juridical institution and as an instrument for the rehabilitation of women; but having only reproduced the principal idea, neglecting the details, we fear that we have given too bad an idea of this part of the work. It must be said that M. Proudhon, in this chapter, has often redeemed, by the brilliance of style and the elevation of thought, the poverty of logic in his system. Never, perhaps, was a worse thesis more skillfully and more brilliantly defended. Moreover, we have reported the gross nonsense he addressed to women, it is fair to show him striving to repair the harm he has done them, applying himself to getting them up ideally on the altar, after having them *positively* in the mud.

His love gave me a new virginity,

said Victor Hugo's Marion Delorme, speaking of Didier. Did M. Proudhon want the woman, forgetting the humiliations he had subjected her to, to send him some thanks of this kind? In any case, he found charming things to say to her. Allow us a few quotes. Moreover, we will thus have the opportunity to again point out dangerous errors with regard to women framed in very pretty compliments; because if this chapter of the marriage is for them only a distribution of sugar-coated pills, in all of these, the sugar often serves only to cover the gall, perhaps the poison.

“What is woman? asks M. Proudhon; and he answers:

“Woman is the conscience of man personified. She is the incarnation of his youth, his reason and his justice, of what is purest, most intimate, most sublime in him, and whose living, speaking and active image, is offered to him to comfort him, to advise him, to love him without end and

without measure. She was born of that triple ray which, proceeding from the face, brain and heart of man and becoming body, mind and consciousness, produced, as the ideal of humanity, the last and most perfect of creatures."

This mythology is quite a bit in contradiction with what has been said previously about the native impurity of woman and her radical inferiority from the triple physical, intellectual and moral point of view; but M. Proudhon replies that the contradiction does not come from him, that it is in the subject itself: the woman is only a heap of antinomies!

"Woman is beautiful. I regretted, I confess, not having to paint her in the style of a Lamartine: an indiscreet regret. Enough others will celebrate the one whom the universe adores, whom childhood cannot gaze on without ecstasy, old age without a sigh. After what I have said of her miseries, the only thing I am permitted to do in speaking of her joys is simplicity, above all calm.

"When the Church represents the Virgin to us in her radiant immortality, surrounded by her angels and trampling the serpent under foot, she paints the portrait of woman, such as nature poses her in the institution of marriage.

"She is beautiful," I said, "beautiful in all her powers; now, beauty having to be at home both the expression of justice and the attraction that leads us to it, she will be better than man; the weak and naked being, whom we have found fit neither for the labor of the body, nor for the speculations of genius, nor for the severe functions of the government and the judicature, will become by her beauty the engine of all justice, of all science, of all industry, of all virtue."

You have tasted the sugar-coated pill; in the middle of sugar, you will find bitterness. The author continues: "Where does woman's beauty come from first?" Let us note this: "From the very inferiority of her nature." And here is how:

"We can say that in man beauty is fleeting; it has nothing essential for him; it is not in his destiny; he crosses it quickly, to reach strength as quickly as possible. The man at sixteen is not yet a man; the young girl, on the contrary, is already a woman, and the years do not bring anything, except maybe some experience.

"Beauty is the true destination of the sex; it is its natural condition, its state... Nature therefore rapidly pushes the sex towards beauty; this goal reached, it stops there. While the man goes on, she seems to be saying to the woman: You won't go any further, because you wouldn't be beautiful anymore."

We cannot allow such words to pass without protest.

The human being is very complex; it is a multiple unit. Among its various attributes there is beauty and there is strength. In women, the first is predominant; the second predominates in man. But, because nature applies itself above all to making the woman beautiful and the man strong, does this mean that the man is only strength and the woman only beauty? The woman also has her strength, as the man also has his beauty; but they both have something more: it is a potential power of moral and intellectual improvement, the principle of which is doubtless in nature, but the means of action of which are in the state social. It is no more true that the development of woman stops at beauty, than it is true that the development of man stops at strength. When both have reached the fullness of their physical development, it is then that moral and intellectual creation begins for them, the elements of which they borrow from society. Woman once woman, like man once man, create for themselves a spirit and a conscience; the individual then acquires a character of his own, a character that is all the more marked in that he has further developed his faculties by

exercise and will. This autonomic creation, which reproduces itself on the physiognomy and gives it a character, is quite as independent of what constitutes physical beauty as of what constitutes muscular strength. It is organic, and consequently fatal, in the sense that it is proportional to the power of the organs and the harmony of the faculties; but it is also free, because it is the will that determines it. Finally, it is contingent, because it depends on the influences of time and environment. In any case, and this is what is important to note here, this creation of the moral being lasts as long as the organs are in their state of health and harmonic functioning. In a word, if it is true that the woman is a beauty as the man is a force, the woman, like man, is a consciousness that creates itself and an intelligence that develops indefinitely.

If this is not the case at present in concrete generality, accuse only your ignorance and your barbarity. If the autonomous creation of the moral being is not very visible in our social environment, is this a reason for misunderstanding it in principle, and is it not enough for a few superior types that have occurred and are occurring every day to prove that the species can go at least that far?

M. Proudhon has written a sentence that should earn him many indulgences, if women distributed them: "It is our social miseries, our iniquities and our vices that make women ugly, that bruise women." This is a word from the heart; is it good of him? We must nonetheless be grateful to him for having said so; to have thought of it is to have made it one's own, and with regard to feeling, that is as good as having created it first.

M. Proudhon, to speak with dignity of the beauty of woman, does not need to borrow anyone's pen. He finds charming ways of expressing his ideas on this subject; he has words full of caresses, sentences all velvety, and sometimes jets of feeling, bursts of poetry:

"Woman, transparent, luminous, is the only being in which man admires himself; she serves him as a mirror, as the water of the rock, the dew, the crystal, the diamond, the pearl serve him, like the light, the snow, the flowers, the sun, the moon and the stars.

"She is compared to everything that is young, beautiful, graceful, shiny, fine, delicate, soft, shy and pure: to the gazelle, to the dove, to the lily, to the rose, to the young palm tree, to the vine, milk, snow, alabaster. Everything seems more beautiful by her presence; without her all beauty vanishes: nature is sad, precious stones without brilliance, all our arts, children of love and beauty, insipid, half of our work worthless.

All this is charming, but it is poetry, literature; it doesn't prove anything. Here comes the reasoning and everything will go wrong. There will be no more reason to applaud, it will be necessary to refute. We quote the following, it is important:

"In short, what man has received from nature in power, woman has obtained in beauty. But beware, power and beauty are immeasurable qualities. (Here power no doubt means vigor; for there is no antinomy between power and beauty, beauty also being a power.) To establish a comparison between, to make them the object of an exchange, to pay for the products of force with the possession of beauty, is to debase the latter, it is to cast the woman into servitude and the man into

iniquity. The beautiful and the just²⁰ touch each other by intimate relations, no doubt; but these are two categories apart which cannot give rise, in society, to a similarity of rights, to an equality of prerogatives.

“Let us only note that if, in relation to vigor, man is to woman as 3 is to 2, woman, in relation to beauty, is also to man as 3 is to 2; that this advantage is undoubtedly not given to her to leave her in abjection, and that while waiting for the law which must regulate the relations of the spouses, beauty of woman is the first of his rights, as she is the first of his thoughts.”

Reading this paragraph has revealed to us the main source of M. Proudhon's errors and the secret of his various journeys in search of this *absolute*, which he thought he had found, sometimes in the suppression of interest, sometimes in the arrest of value, sometimes in exchange without the intermediary of monetary capital, and finally in the constitution of a juridical organ, which is indeed the most vain of his inventions.

The fundamental error of M. Proudhon, the source of all the others, was never to see the law in things, to study two terms in their relations without wanting to refer these relations to a third term that determines their expression., the actual meaning.

I will try to make myself understood without metaphysics, or with as little metaphysics as possible.

To think is to weigh. If we consider our understanding as an instrument of appreciation, we see that, similar to the balance with two scales, our faculties are double. They thus grasp two facts, two things, in their relations, and determine their difference. But to determine this difference, a common law previously recognized is necessary, which serves as a reference point for the double current, as a measure for the double phenomenon. Thus, in the fact of comparing two heavy bodies in their ratios of weight, there are indeed the two scales that give the more or the less; but to determine the difference, to express it and convert it into fact, you need a criterion of gravity, which is part of the balance, or which you attach to it at the moment of the operation (like the weights), but which, in its unit norm, is prior to and superior to the fact of weighing, and is related to the general law of gravity. In this operation you submitted a phenomenon to its proper law, you brought it back to unity; you have compared two things with each other in their relation to a general law and you have formulated a new fact. Well, our understanding proceeds in the same way. Only, our understanding which is alive, is at the same time the agent and the instrument of the operation. Like the balance, it has its two scales and it has its own measure; but the use of measure and scales belongs to it. However, like the balance, it only reproduces a general law. He contains this law within himself in its principle, summarizes it in its unity, represents it in the ideal order, and, while being subject to it, uses it freely to create facts, to produce intellectual acts.

²⁰ One of M. Proudhon's processes consists in introducing into his reasoning a term that was not in the premises and which modifies its consequences. So it is a question here of strength and beauty; but under the skillful pen of the subtle quibbler; strength was transformed into power, then into justice. Why speak of the beautiful and the just, when it is a question of strength and beauty? We must always be on our guard against these sleights of hand. But how many people are caught by them!

Here, we have taken as an example the most general law that we know; but there are other secondary, special laws that furnish us with criteria for the various orders of phenomena.

We have measures for times and for spaces, we have measures for the phenomena of heat, of sound, of light, for all the manifestations of our senses, for all the facts of natural life and of social life.

In a word, nothing presents itself that we cannot attach more or less directly to a general law; there is no phenomenon that is not the result of a double relation and of a law; and likewise in the understanding there can be neither idea nor knowledge without the double condition of law and relations, or, in other words, without two facts, and a third already accepted, serving as a common measure to the two other facts, and representing facts or rather prior notions reduced to a unity of formula, that is to say to a law more or less general. This is the process by which in the cosmic order, as in the intellectual order, concrete facts, always complex and multiple, are reduced to abstract unity. As a fact occurs, it is seized by law, and ORDER REIGNS. Any fact that we cannot reduce to a law remains for us inexplicable. If there could be a phenomenon in the natural order that did not enter into a general law, there would be an element of disturbance in the world; order would be disturbed. Such is the use of the miracle. This is why all dealers in miracles are *moral* troublemakers.

I don't know if I managed to make myself understood. The analysis of the remedies proposed as panaceas by M. Proudhon would enable us to shed some light on the subject; but that would be long and outside our scope. We will cite only one of these remedies, and the main reason it gave for its efficacy.

In his program for the *Banque du Peuple*, which had, as is well known, the aim of furnishing an organ for the exchange of values without the metallic intermediary, M. Proudhon, considering money as a parasitic value, claimed that its employment, costly to the producers, was useless in exchange, and assured that it could be suppressed in circulation as well as in the creation of products. To make clear all the uselessness of this *general link*, he supposed the introduction of a common syllable, and always the same, between all the syllables of the language, as in this sentence: La *fi* · mon · *fi* · naie · *fi* · a · *fi* · é · *fi* · té · · *fi* · tée · *fi* · for · *fi* · en · *fi* · tra · *fi* · ver · *fi* · l'é · *fi* · chan · *fi* · ge. All this means: *La monnaie a été inventée pour entraver l'échange. Money was invented to hinder exchange* . Money, according to him, placed itself in the same way among all values and embarrassed exchange and circulation, as this interposed syllable embarrassed language.

Well, in his criticism of the role of metallic money, M. Proudhon, by *disregarding* this intermediary, made the mistake of taking account only of ratios, and of ignoring the unitary element that gave them a universal character and the brought under the law. The relations result from the values put in presence by the traders; but the law belongs to the common value that serves to assess them, to tax them, to determine them, to *express* them, so to speak, to the understanding of all, and to reveal them, in a way, one by the other.

In other words, in the fact of exchange, it is not enough to have two individual powers, a seller and a buyer, a third power is also needed which, by fixing the value, creates unity between the

parties, and attaches the particular fact of exchange to a general law, reproduced in the social order.

This third power therefore represents the intervention of society itself.

And this is so, because metallic money is not only a type intended to reduce other values to a certain unit of measurement (the franc, the pound); it is also, and this is what makes its superiority, a real value having an absolute, I mean universally accepted character. This property of universalization that it possesses, it gives to the particular fact of exchange or of sale and purchase; so that by its adequate relationship with it, any value becomes, from the particular value that it was, a universal value, that is to say that it is accepted everywhere and by all.

M. Proudhon's error is the same when, comparing man to woman, he asserts that their products are not equivalent. He would be right, no doubt, if it were a matter of seeking the equivalence of products in the direct barter of those that belong to strength with those which belong to beauty. It may have been so in the primitive ages. Where there are only two terms, a man who represents strength, a woman who represents beauty, I see no possible equivalence, no law of exchange in products, hence no justice. On the one hand, there must be violence and abuse of power; on the other, servitude, sometimes tempered by trickery or seduction. But the social state, in constituting and developing itself, had to change this state of things. Strength in the state of society is no longer in direct relation to beauty. An intermediary exists, an organization has been formed that receives the products of beauty, transforms them and converts them into social wealth, into elements of civilization. The relations between man and woman meet in this organism, which gives them a character of unity and generality, and from which they emerge balanced, subject to the law and *equivalent* in relation to the social order and the universal order. Thus, when M. Proudhon estimates that for vigor, the man is to the woman as 3 is to 2, while for beauty, the woman in her turn is to the man as 3 is to 2, he provides the elements of a very simple equation, if instead of placing oneself, as he does, from the point of view of the man, or from the point of view of the woman, one puts oneself from the point of view of society, the only true, the only just, the only one where one can judge both terms. Man as strength gives society 3, as beauty he gives 2; the woman, for her part, gives 2 for strength and 3 for beauty. Therefore, the man gives 5 and the woman 5. So, in a society which is strength and beauty all together, the woman gives as much as the man. So there is equivalence; therefore, there must be equality of advantages, equality of protection, equality of rights and duties. Is that clear?

Allow us a few more quotations:

"As an auxiliary on the side of the mind, by her reserve, her simplicity, her prudence, by the vivacity and the charms of her intuitions, *the woman has no need to think for herself*. Can you imagine a female scholar searching the sky for lost planets, calculating the age of mountains, discussing points of law and procedure? Nature, which does not create duplication, has given another role to woman; it is through her, it is through the grace of her divine word, that man gives life and reality to his ideas, constantly bringing them back from the abstract to the concrete; it is in the heart of woman that he deposits the secret of his plans and his discoveries, until the day when he can produce them in their power and their brilliance. She is the treasure of his wisdom, the seal of his genius: *Mater divinæ gratiæ, sedes sapientiæ, vas spirituale, virgo prudentissima*. Auxiliary

on the side of justice, she is the angel of patience, resignation, tolerance, *virgo clemens, virgo fidelis.*"

There follows a poetic paraphrase of the litanies of the Blessed Virgin, which proves in the author, if not a real sentimentality, at least a great warmth of blood. "Never," he says in conclusion, "have I been able to hear these litanies sung without a thrill of pleasure: *Ô pia! oh benign! O Regina!* it's to go mad with love..."

It is to have a heart tender to temptation!

we would say to him with Dorine, if he had not hastened to reassure us with this profane apostrophe which we have already had occasion to mention: "And love, even inspired by religion, even sanctioned by justice, I do not love it!" Alas!

"Woman has no need to think for herself!" Just the words of the King of Naples: "My people," he said, "have no need to think for themselves; I undertake to think for them!" Happy reconciliation of ideas between royal autocracy by divine right, and male autocracy by Proudhonian logic!

Let us finish, because M. Proudhon has nothing more to teach us. He continues thus, for many pages, mixing satires with compliments, spouting out things that are often contradictory, based on lame logic, and always presented from a false point of view, because he is exclusive.

The exclusivism of his point of view casts on everything he says, on the very truths he encounters, a false clarity that makes them doubtful and suspect.

Mr Proudhon, you are definitely a great writer: you have a lively and communicative warmth, you have passion and you have style, you have the ability to direct and structure, you know how to arouse interest and maintain the attention, you know the subtleties of the art and the secrets of the trade, you skillfully prepare the effects and you hear the tirade admirably... but you lack common sense. Why don't you make melodramas with or without music? You would have great success there.

SUMMARY

D. *What is woman?*

R. *Naturally*, the woman is the female of the man; she represents one of the two halves of the human species, and contributes her half to constituting and maintaining the laws inherent in her species: she is therefore worth, before nature, what the male, who represents the other half, is worth, neither more nor less.

Socially, the woman is half of the couple, without which society could not exist. She furnishes society with elements other than those that the man brings, but which are no less indispensable to it. It is the harmony of the feminine elements and the masculine elements that makes social harmony, and it is their combination that determines the progress of mankind.

D. *Is the woman an autonomous personality?*

R. The woman, considered in herself, is an individuality; she has her own laws, which combine with natural laws; in a word, she is a being. She acquires knowledge of the general laws to which she is subject and which she grasps through intelligence; she is therefore a personality. Finally, she is free in her conscience and makes her own moral law: she is therefore autonomous.

What we have just said is true of the human being. We have considered it from the woman's point of view; we could have considered it from the point of view of man, and the definitions would have been the same.

Q. *If the man is a personality and the woman a personality, then the man and the woman are two beings? How then can we say that the couple forms the social being?*

R. Let's avoid logomachies, they always come from the confusion that we make of the concrete and the abstract.

In reality, there is no human being, no social being, outside of man or outside of woman: the social being is the man; the social being is the woman.

But as in the species the male and the female unite to create a new being, so in the state of society the man and the woman, completing each other, give rise, through their union, to a moral creation that is not a real being, but which, in relation to society, represents a real organism. Only we must not lose sight of the fact that this organism, which we call the social being, would only be a vain abstraction if we wanted to consider it apart from man and woman; without the male and the female, the couple is nothing.

So, phenomenally, the social being is nothing. It cannot fall under our senses; but, considered abstractly, it is the result of the qualities proper to man and of the qualities proper to woman.

D. *Is woman equal to man?*

R. One blushes to have to ask such a question. It is both insulting and stupid.

Before nature, all beings of the same species are equal, because the laws of the species are the same for all. Before society, all the beings that make up this society are equal, because society itself is only the result of their relations united by a common law.

If there are inequalities between men, it is because society itself does not affect them in all their relationships.

Wherever there is society, there is law, and wherever there is law, there is harmony of relations, that is to say equality. Since woman furnishes society with social elements no less essential than those furnished by man, the law that results from their reciprocal relations has only to sum them up in a general formula in order to create unity. As for the diversity of functions, it contributes to harmony and results, through the common law, in equivalence, which should not be confused with equilibrium, any more than equality should be confused with uniformity. The balance belongs to the law, never to the fact. If there were perfect balance between two phenomena, there would be no more comparison, no more judgment possible; if, between two concrete forces, there would no longer be movement; likewise, if there were perfect equality in the sense of uniformity or resemblance between two beings, there would no longer be action, there would no longer be life. Balance belongs to abstract force, to mathematical law. Equality, likewise, is proper to the law. It is because the law is the result of relations and the relations are subject to the law that there is equality. Suppress society, and there is no more common law, hence no more equality between men, but also there are no more true relations. There will be war, pursuit, massacre, manhunts, cannibalism.

As we can see, the terms peace, society and *equality* are united in solidarity; they belong to the same series, the antinomy of which is war, savagery, *inequality*, etc.

I will summarize:

The woman is the equal of the man before nature, because she belongs to the same species, and the law is *one* among all beings of the same species.

The woman is the equal of the man before society, because the social law is *one* for all the members of the association and implies the reciprocity of rights, duties and the equivalence of functions.

D. If the woman is the equal of the man, you will agree at least that she is different in her organic powers, in her aptitudes, and, from this, you will doubtless not refuse to determine what is the role of men in society and what is the role of women?

R. Nature knows no duplication. Society should not know any. The two elements whose combination forms the social being are not identical; if they were, they would not constitute a new organism. Each human being has aptitudes that are specific to it, because it possesses predominant qualities. Among these aptitudes, there are some that have a masculine character, others that have a feminine character. Nothing is easier than to classify social functions under one label or another; but we must be careful, in the application, to give all men all the masculine qualities, and all women all the feminine qualities. We find in practice a host of exceptions. Thus, muscular strength is predominant in man, but there are many women more vigorous than certain men. Exceptions become even more numerous in the intellectual domain. There are many male intelligences among women, and it is not uncommon to find men who have the qualities of finesse, acumen, penetration, which are more particularly the prerogative of the weaker sex. Likewise, for feeling, there are men in whom it manifests itself by a feminine sensitivity, and there are women who push the firmness of the nerves to stiffness, the energy of the heart to dryness, to hardness.

If therefore it is useful, from the point of view of social organization, to take into account the functions that represent the feminine element and those that represent the masculine element, it would be very dangerous for liberty to wish to determine in advance the respective roles of men and women, and to confine both in functions imposed by the gender of each.

From the moment when the law is considered to be the proper, individual expression of beings, it is no longer permitted to invent it. From the natural point of view, it must be studied in the organism and derived from the proper functions of this organism; from the social point of view, it must be freely formulated by the moral being itself. Each free and intelligent personality makes its own law, realizes its autonomy, when it puts its actions in harmony with its faculties, when it establishes the equation of its functions with its aptitudes. Attractions are proportional to destinies, as the founder of the Phalansterian school has rightly said.

Whether it is a question of man or woman, the human being being a conscious and intelligent activity, must never be constrained in the exercise of its faculties. Society not being an authority *sui generis*, an external power, and existing only through the co-operation of the personalities that compose it, negates itself in its very principle, when it penetrates into the sphere of the personality in order to arbitrarily arrest its legitimate expansion. The sphere of each is only limited by the sphere of others. Society has no sphere of its own, at least in relation to social beings. It is the medium in which these beings function, as the ether is the medium in which the celestial spheres, weighted one by the other according to their own laws of gravitation, make their revolutions without ever deviating from their orbit.

Thus, leaving social functions equally accessible to all intellectual and moral activities, under the sole condition of merit and without consideration of sex, such is the moral obligation of any society based on the recognition of human autonomy. Not accepting this obligation, as far as women are concerned, would amount to excluding women from humanity: it would be denying them the attributes of human being.²¹

D. What should we think of this maxim: Woman is the complement of man?

R. It must be accepted by completing it with this other that is similar to it: Man is the complement of woman. It's a matter of perspective. Both sexes are equally indispensable to the formation of the social being, and in the individual order man can no more do without woman than woman can do without man.

Q. And in relation to progress, to the ideal, to conscience, what is the share of influence of women?

²¹ Let us point out, however, that we are reasoning, in all this study, only from the point of view of principles, and that we do not claim to demand their realization without taking into account times and places. For a host of social functions women are generally far from being of age. But many men are also far from being morally and intellectually major, which did not prevent the Revolution from proclaiming the right of all French men to all jobs. The Revolution erased, in principle, the differences of condition between men. It is also in principle that it is a question of erasing them between the sexes. Let us first get a fair idea of everyone's rights; it will then be up to future generations to enter the path of achievement, by increasing, through education, the number of mature intelligences in both sexes and in all classes of society.

R. It is equal to that of man.

Progress is perpetuated by the social relations of men and women, as the species is perpetuated by their natural relations. But it is no more true to attribute to woman the role of the *ideal* than it is to attribute to man the exclusive role of *activity*. The ideal of the human being is his own elevated image, enlarged, ennobled by the imagination. Only, man seeks this ideal in woman, woman in man; love, like attraction, pushing beings to unite through their different poles, that is to say to complete each other. It is in the same sense that it is true to say that woman is the conscience of man, taking care to add that man is the conscience of woman; but it would be simpler and more exact to consider the conscience of woman as the mirror in which man looks at his moral being, to show woman mirroring and examining herself in the conscience of man. Man and woman are also for each other a means of improvement and progress, as they can become for each other a reason for falling and abasement. It is therefore important for men not to allow women to corrupt themselves in superstition or ignorance. Every distorted, obscured woman's conscience furnishes man with a false criterion that clouds his judgment and a backward ideal that only serves to diminish his moral being, instead of developing and enlarging it as his destiny would have it.

Q. In your analysis of the masculine and feminine elements whose combination forms the social being, what is the role of women in relation to religion, justice and social administration? And first of all, what is it with regard to religion?

R. Religion being the most general function of the human being, since it must be regarded as the bond that not only unites all men among themselves, but that also binds each of us to all beings and to God himself, whether we combine the idea of God with that of the universal whole, with nature, or whether we see under this word a distinct personality, religion, we say, because it is a social function that sums up all the other functions, belongs equally to all the sexes; I say to all genders, because children who represent as a third gender also have a role in religious functioning...

D. What is the role of the female element in justice?

R. All social law being a common criterion to which the actions of each are related, it is a question, in all legal cases, of comparing the relations to the law, the facts to the rule, the practice to the theory.

But while the law is simple, the facts are always complex, logically linked to other unknown facts; it very often happens that they belong, at least in part, to other laws than those to which they are referred. In a word, by the complexity and the indefiniteness of their elements, they escape in their totality from our appreciation. The practice of justice therefore takes place only by approximation. But the absolute is in us only through the idea, and we must content ourselves with a relative justice, as with a relative love, as with a relative science; social law, provided it is known to all who are subject to it, and accepted by the general conscience, is a sufficient criterion for social justice. Only, we must not lose sight of the fact that this social law is dead and that it is a question of judging living beings, that it is a simple abstraction and that it is a question of judging concrete, therefore complex facts. If we had to compare together ideas of the same order or

homogeneous objects, the judgment between relations of the same nature would be simple and probably just; but we have to compare human acts to ideas, and to apply identical laws to personalities unequal in intelligence, in knowledge, in light, in strength, in morality, in freedom, and subject to the most diverse influences of time, environment, age and upbringing. This is why, in the theory of justice, we must not only see the abstract idea of right drawn from the feeling we have of our dignity by transferring to this same feeling to others; we must see the appreciation of the facts in their relationship with right, and in the practice of justice we must not only be concerned with the *essential equality* of beings subject to the same law, we must also take into account their *potential inequality*.

It results from what precedes, that these come closest to justice, who, at the same time as they represent the law most purely, also most accurately represent phenomenal individualities; or, in other words, these will be the best judges who, while knowing the law and obeying it, will best put themselves in the place of those they have to judge.

But if the knowledge of the law belongs to the understanding, compassion (to *suffer*, to *feel* with) belongs to the feelings. Justice is therefore not only of an intellectual order, it is also of an emotional order. To judge one's neighbor, one must not only know how to abstract, one must also know how to love. A judge who could not be moved would be a detestable judge, almost an executioner. Men have understood this so well that they have never been able to form the ideal of an implacable judge. Their deities, even the most barbaric, have always been accessible to pity. Hence the prayers, conjurations, sacrifices. *Fatum*, destiny, the only conception that had an immutable character among the Greeks and Romans, has never been personified. It remained outside Olympus and deprived of worshippers. This is because religion can only admit what is alive, and can only embrace conceptions having the attributes of being.

If sentiment, if love, is an element of social justice, it is obvious that the being in whom, it is said, sentiment predominates, that woman has a share of influence in the practice of justice and a role to play there; it will be, if you like, a role of compassion, of merciful intervention, which may

have its source in facts taken outside the case itself, although relating to the person of the accused or the parties; but this role exists, this influence is salutary.²²

D. What is the role of women in social administration?

R. As long as the State only represented force, as long as society was organized only for war, the role of women in administration had to be nonexistent. But as the reign of force fades, as society organizes itself for peace, the role of woman acquires more importance and scope, the element she represents mingles with all social functions, and in many of them becomes predominant. Charity and fraternity are feminine virtues that conquer hearts every day and want

²² This is not enough, however, and we believe that the current civilization can do more. If we must, perhaps for a long time, still take the representatives of the law from the sex that hitherto has risen highest in the abstract conception of right, it would be good, it would be wise, it would be equitable to choose from both sexes the persons responsible for assessing the facts and deciding all practical questions of guilt or innocence.

The institution of the jury, in order to realize the law in its living form, needs to represent society, under its double aspect. This institution, by the simplicity of its workings, the ease of its functions, allows the introduction into its bosom of adults of either sex; the addition of women would take away nothing of its gravity, and would add to it something in sentimentality, in kindness and also in bearing, in solemnity, in brilliance.

Wherever women are lacking, men behave badly and neglect to elevate themselves, or at least to show all their worth.

But it is especially for the accused that the sight of women would be sweet, healthy.

For the young man brought before a court for a first fault, a crime perhaps, what better reason for hope, what better cause for tenderness and perhaps for repentance, than the aspect of this woman who will decide on his fate and who reminds him of the one to whom he owes his birth! For the young woman who began with a weakness and who, to conceal her shame, committed a crime, what reasons for her to count on human justice, when she knows that this justice has a woman's heart like hers and mother's entrails! Do we believe that this unfortunate woman who, seduced or bought by a man, then abandoned to her shame and her misery, has become an infanticide, believes herself to be judged by her peers when she has only men before her? Being judged by our peers it is to be judged by those who can put themselves in our place and feel as we felt. Ask these jurors and these judges, however just you suppose them, if they can understand, they who are men, the torments and miseries, the pride and the shame of women and girls. It is impossible.

I know very well that justice is not generally understood in this way, and that many exclude feeling from it. Rigor seems to them the first safeguard of order. For a long time, however, rigor has made itself the companion of justice; one does not see what good has resulted from it. Wouldn't it be time to try a bit of charity, of enlightened and sympathetic charity, of that which suffers from the pains of others and which wants to relieve them? Or rather, is it not time to understand justice, not as revenge, but as reparation, and to make of the penalty itself a means of purification for the crime, a cause of moral improvement for the criminal?

If we desire the participation of women in the practice of justice, when it is a question of persons, with all the more reason do we desire it when it is a question of interests, for example, in labor courts. When it comes to the positions exercised by women, shouldn't it be appropriate that among the judges who have to pronounce on the relations of entrepreneurs, or entrepreneurs with their workers, women should be largely represented? This from the point of view of competence as well as from the point of view of equity.

to be represented socially by their own institutions. Luxury, wealth, the taste for beauty, spread more and more, and by their development extend the domain of woman. Where the feminine element acquires such great importance, it is impossible that women should not be called to fill the roles that belong to them. They already fill a number of them. As they rise in intelligence, they will know how to conquer less secondary ones. As for us, our mission must be limited to proclaiming the principle of equality or equivalence of the two elements, male and female, in administrative functions as in others, pointing out that it is not a question of claiming between men and women the sharing of functions, but only to recognize the free access of all, women or men, to the functions to which each is best suited.

D. How much influence do you reserve for women in the family?

R. Like our opponents, we want the influence of women in the family to always be present. But we add that, for this influence to be salutary, woman must acquire free possession of herself and ignorance, prejudice, and superstition must cease to hinder her moral and intellectual development. When woman enjoys her autonomy, her maternal virtues will have lost none of their strength, but her social power will have increased. Her intelligence, her feeling, in order to radiate further than the family, will nevertheless have their seat and their hearth in the mind of the wife, in the heart of the mother. If society is only the enlarged family — which we do not admit, society being something other than the family — the elements of the family must be *socialized* in their double nature; the influence of woman must make itself felt, like that of man, in the enlarged circle of their activity.

D. What about love?

R. I say that love is an essential attribute of being, and that it is, in its manifestations, proportional to the living individuality that experiences it. This is true of human beings as of all beings. In the human being, it rises and purifies itself, passing from the animal part to the moral and intellectual part, rising and purifying itself as the social being enlightens and improves morally.

D. What do you think about marriage?

R. Marriage, considered outside of the religious sacrament, is nothing other than the publication of a freely consented union between two individuals of different sexes. The man and the woman represent two offshoots detached from two trunks, of two different families, which unite to form a new trunk, the starting point of a new family.

In the fact of marriage, I see the two spouses, the family and society.

1. With regard to the spouses, I say that marriage must above all be a free union, motivated, inspired on both sides by love: so nature wills it. It is the reciprocal attraction that legitimizes and sanctifies, in a way, carnal relationships.

2. The role of the family is limited to purely moral intervention. The consent of fathers and mothers adds great value to the love of spouses, sheltering it under the wings of the family. The union takes on, through the approval of the parents, a character of perennality and generality that it would not have had if it had remained isolated and individual. The generations thus relate to each other and are aware of the bond that unites them.

3. Finally, the role of society consists in socializing a fact of an individual order, in making public and authentic the union of two of its members, and in taking note of the new situation that is made for them.

That marriage should be monogamous, our feeling and our reason demand it, the interest of the species demands it, morality commands it. But that marriage should be indissoluble, that seems to me impossible to reconcile with liberty, with autonomy, and even with good morals.

It is understood that we do not mean to speak here of religious marriage. The sacrament no doubt introduces completely new elements into the question. Divine intervention perhaps gave it a virtue that it did not have: from a transitory union, like everything human, it miraculously made an eternal union. The dogmas admitted, logic can support the perpetuity of marriage, even beyond death.

But, apart from any super-human or extra-social intervention, there is nothing that can justify the perpetuity of a commitment having as its object the bringing together of two personalities, because there is nothing that can justify the annihilation of the person, the abjuration of the will, not even voluntary consent.

Marriage, it will be said, does not constitute the annihilation of the person. No, when love is harmonious, because the two people are only one through the accord of feeling. Their hearts vibrating in unison, the law of harmony always ends by putting an end to momentary divisions of mind or temperament; but when the two spouses have become odious to each other, when living together is unbearable to them, the sharing of the person is the worst of all forms of slavery.

Legal separation remedies this state of affairs to a certain extent; but this is only a hypocritical transaction between fact and law. However, it is already the recognition of this fact: that it is impossible to oblige two free beings to keep all their life the oaths that they made themselves one day. The denial of the eternal vows, such is, after all, the principle of our civil law. It is only a question of realizing this principle in marriage.

Physical separation, which obliges the spouses to live each on their own, and does not allow them to contract a new union, is an encouragement to the worst morals. It prohibits the husband from concubinage in order to throw him into the brothel; for if he had a concubine, the separated wife could still cause him to be convicted of adultery.

As for the wife, what would become of her if she had the misfortune to be a mother? And if she becomes so, the spouse is recognized as the father of another's child. Thus, whenever the law of nature is disregarded, disorder is created, then attempts are made to conceal it by lies and hypocrisy. But lies and hypocrisy do not remedy anything, the evil remains, and the social body is becoming more and more gangrenous.

"The durability of marriage alone constitutes," it is said, "the family, and makes it durable. If you allow the father and the mother to separate, the family dissolves; if, moreover, it is possible for them to remarry and they both do so..." Well, we answer, from that moment the family is reconstituted. The children have a double family; they are going to be loved by four, instead of being loved by two. "But," they continue, "you introduce elements of discord into families: the mother will always prefer her children to those of the other." We do not see much inconvenience

in the mother having more tenderness for the children descended from her, as long as she does not harbor hatred for the others.

And why would she hate them? Because they come to reduce the share of fortune that her own would have. Here we encounter inheritance, the sole cause of the destruction of families, the source of all fraternal hatred, the origin of so many poisonings of husbands and of all parricides. Ah! if we wanted to purify the family of all the impurities that defile and corrupt it; if we wanted to base filial respect on sentiment and not on interest!...

But no; we much prefer to perpetuate the institutions of patriarchy in a society that is nothing less than patriarchal

In summary, our ideas about marriage are nothing very new and above all nothing very threatening. We ask that marriage lose, through the possibility of divorce, its character of absolute durability. The absolute is never worth anything in fact. Whenever it is introduced into human acts, which are all relative, disorder is prepared and contradiction is inevitably brought about. The absolute must remain in the realm of abstraction and the ideal. Thus, in marriage, while excluding eternal vows before society, it is to be hoped that two beings who contract a union believe in the perpetuity of their present feelings and *swear* to love each other for life. This is an ideal commitment that has great moral value, but which socially cannot have the character of a contract.

Thus, marriage, removed from the absolute and the infinite, takes on, as regards time, the *indefinite* character that suits matters of sentiment, and ceases to be contradictory to the liberty of the spouses, who will always be masters of their will, and who, knowing that they can always regain possession of their individuality, will be brought to a moral progress that can only be accomplished in beings having the government of themselves and the responsibility for all their acts.

D. Marriage is not only a union determined by love, but also establishes a community of interests between the parties. How do you reconcile these two elements?

R. By determining for each their own sphere, by separating the contract of interest from the fact of marriage.

The current law recognizes and regulates the separation of property between spouses. What is the exception, can, without inconvenience, be made the rule, marriage not necessarily carrying with it community of property.

Marriage can go on without association; these are two facts independent of one another, although they may very well coexist; but they coexist harmoniously only on the condition that they do not merge.

It is therefore important that any matrimonial union be accompanied by a contract that regulates the interests of the parties and determines the conditions of their association. The contract is synallagmatic and authentic. It binds the two parties to each other and to society. It must be published and have a certain date. It is necessary that each of the parties, if necessary, be able to demand its execution in the face of social justice, and it is important that society, that the

public know to what extent the responsibility for its acts lies with each of the spouses and what is the value of the commitments they can make with regard to third parties.

It is understood that for this responsibility to be real, the woman must have ceased to be considered a minor by civil law, and each of the spouses must be able to dispose of what belongs to them and only what belongs to them.

D. Can you sum up in a few words your ideas about women and marriage?

R. It is easy after what has been said already.

The woman, being a human being, an *organized liberty* like man, has the right to deploy her physical, intellectual and moral faculties, to obey the laws of her being, to make her own fate. As she represents half of the social being, she has, in society as in the family, functions of her own. To say that a woman should be a housewife or a courtesan is to urge all women to become courtesans who do not know how to be housekeepers or whose intelligence and activity extend beyond the household. Society has masculine functions and feminine functions; the former belong to men, the latter should preferably be assigned to women. As for marriage, I consider it as a union provoked and sanctified by love, freely consented to on both sides and with full knowledge of the facts, that is to say made between two adult beings or, in the case of the minority of the partners, *which is always regrettable*, with the assistance of the parents, and finally completed by the intervention of society which, by recording it, gives it an authentic and social character. I add that this union has no end; that it is reputed to last as long as life, but can always be broken by will of the spouses, in agreement with the decision of the arbitrators or judges who represent society; for society, having intervened in the fact of marriage, must also intervene in the fact of dissolution. What the parties and society have done, society and the parties can always undo.

END.