

PAUL HENRI  
P19459  
COLLECTION  
SOLE

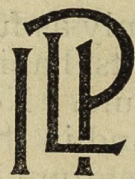
6 25 46 1 HQ / D 2011

# WOMAN

---

# The COMMUNIST.

By T. D. Benson.



**Price**  
**One**  
**Penny.**

PUBLISHED BY THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY,  
23, BRIDE LANE, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

## Woman—the Communist.

THERE is much in science to-day which is mere theory and guess work and in no department of science is there more theorising than in that of the early history of mankind. As an instance of how small a discovery can upset whole departments of science, we may take the recent discovery of radium. Previous to its discovery, it was certain that the sun was losing its heat, which could only be maintained by the falling in of worlds for its consumption. It was equally certain that the earth was becoming so cold that in measureable time it would be uninhabitable and serve only as fuel for the sun. This cooling process of the earth limited its habitable age in the past and decided its mission in the future. Now it is stated that there is sufficient radium in the sun and in the earth to enable them to maintain their present temperature practically to all eternity. This discovery destroys at once the necessity for the cataclysmic theory of the universe. We have now, so far as mankind are concerned, an eternity in the future for our dreams and an eternity in the past for our theories. I would by this example point out that science is not, as yet, infallible, and that if it can be so fallible in departments where it has been so sure, it may be equally wrong in statements which are still admitted to be but theories. I refer to the early history of mankind. More particularly as a socialist do I demur to the condemnation of those early ages of man as states of pure barbarism, those times when communism was the system of society and private property\* was unknown. So far history has been written by those who believe that private property is the rock from which humanity has risen to higher things, as though humanity could rise on the subjection and prostitution of women and the enslavement and martyrdom of men. As a socialist I believe to the contrary, that the desire for power and wealth has been

“The fruit  
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into  
the world  
And all our woes.”

Instead of being the rock on which man has risen, I believe it to be rather that Tower of Babel, which divided man into men and which instead of soaring upwards towards high heaven touched the deep hell of child slavery in the nineteenth century. Humanity cannot rise on stepping stones of inhumanity to higher things and nobler states.

\* By private property is meant the private ownership of the means by which others have to live. such as land and machinery, etc.

## THE BOOK OF NATURE.

Nature has fortunately a valuable habit of writing her own history, which men are but beginning to spell out and read. In this book of nature, nothing is too great for her to inscribe, nothing too minute for her to note. She records there equally the overwhelming of the world by ice, and the footprints of a bird, thousands, perhaps millions, of years after it lived on earth. On each frail human form she prints the past history of mankind and we have the long ages of man's evolution recorded and recapitulated in the nine months' life of the foetus before birth. We see there the various stages repeated, through which life made its way upwards and onwards, growing ever more and more complex, the stage of the fish, amphibian, reptile and mammal. Like fossils in the rocks these early stages of man's career are preserved for us to see and in seeing learn to read and understand. “Science,” says Mr. Bagehot,\* “tries to read, is beginning to read in the frame of each man, the results of the whole history of all his life, of what he is and what makes him so, of all his forefathers, of what they were and what made them so, . . . if we could but see it.”

Nature, however, does not cease inscribing her records on man when he is born, but on the frame of each one of us after our entrance into the world she has impressed the history of mankind. These later records, however, are not fully explored and when noted are not understood. We see and understand the facts of the evolution of man as contained in the foetus, but the equally valuable records of men after they have emerged from the animal stage into the human, have so far received but scant attention. Yet these early records written in the human frame are full of interest, for they tell the story of primitive man before the historical civilizations arose, they tell the story, which is still recorded in the myths and legends of the early peoples, of an age before the lust of power got hold of men and demoralized them, of a time of communism and peace and fruitfulness.

In the body of the child during the first three years of life are preserved nature's records of these early ages. From this age onwards, on men there is also written the story of the loss of this earthly paradise. “The human infant,” Mr. Havelock Ellis states,† “presents in an exaggerated form the distinctive characteristics of humanity, in the large head and brain, the small face, hairlessness and delicate bony system. By some strange confusion of thought we usually ignore this fact and assume that the adult form is more highly developed than the infantile form. In man from the third year onwards further growth . . . is to some extent growth in degeneration and senility.” These first three years of high development, as we shall see, are a fact of immense importance to women and to socialists generally. They have so far been generally ignored by writers on anthropology. If the nine months' epitome of the creation of man in the foetus be the

\* “Physics and Politics.” † “Man and Woman.”

recapitulation of the pre-human life on earth, then these first three years after birth record no less definitely a stage of high human development where peace and plenty reigned, when the animal passions were in subjection as in the animal kingdom, and bloodshed and strife and wars were unknown, of an age when humanity attained a higher level of genius than it has ever attained since. It was no mere ephemeral epoch when man's first innocence quickly passed, for if nature can condense the long period of man's evolution into the nine months' life of the foetus, then the period that requires three years for its recapitulation must be infinitely greater.

#### THE GOLDEN AGE.

In confirmation of this strange revelation by nature we have, in all the great civilizations of the world, curious myths and legends of a golden age of mankind, when the earth brought forth its fruits spontaneously, an age of happiness and innocence, free from calamities, crimes and diseases, an age of communism and fraternity. These myths and legends, taken in conjunction with the impress of such an age left on each one of us by nature, render it highly probable that the golden age is no mere fancy of the poet, but an actual reminiscence of the facts of social life in its primitive organisation of village and house communities.

So far, we have no history of mankind written from the socialistic standpoint. Such historian would point out that the records of all civilizations are but the history of mankind since the early communism was broken up, since the lust of power and possession entered in and destroyed primitive society. The history of all civilizations is but the history of individualism, when man separated himself from his fellow-men, when each for himself became the guiding principle of conduct, when equality gave way to princes, principalities, and powers, and fraternity ended in slavery. "It is just here," says Sir Henry Maine,\* "that archaic law renders us one of its greatest services. It is full, in all its provinces, of the clearest indications that society in primitive times, was not what it is assumed to be at present—a collection of individuals. In fact, and in the view of men who composed it, it was an aggregation of families." Even here, when law began,—and law only begins with private possessions,—mankind had not yet been separated into individuals, but only into families. When our historians seek, to-day, to discover what our early parents were like, they search out the most debased and bestial tribe, and point in pride to it as the beginnings of the human race. If the records of the first three years of our childhood have a meaning at all, they prove that this debased tribe does not represent the beginnings of man's evolution, but the end of a long period of degeneration and decay.

Darwin points out that the licentiousness imputed to savages, is but a period when man had retrograded in his instincts. points to thousands of years of civilization shows no Man, to-day, after

\* "Ancient Law."

higher type than those skeletons of primitive man, which have been discovered in the Diluvial period. "All those human beings," says Dr. Moriz Hoernes,\* "of whom we are in a position to form an opinion, were well formed men, who, judging from their physical structure, could have mixed with us to-day, without being in any way conspicuous. They had no simian racial indications, their skulls were no smaller, and their face had no animal formation. They were fully developed in every way." Whether these skeletons and skulls of early man show a higher development is not recorded, but in any case, this is not the result that we should obtain if civilization produced a higher human type. The knowledge we now possess emphasizes the fact that the foundations on which civilizations have been erected will not permanently sustain them, will only permit them to reach a certain height, and then they perish from their own inherent weakness.

We find each civilization starting fresh from the hearts and minds of a semi-communistic people, full of the energy and virility of a moral race, but as the concentration of power and property into ever fewer and fewer hands proceeds apace, luxury enervates the race at the top, and slavery at the base, till it passes as others before it. It is stated that when the Babylonian civilization perished 2 per cent of her population owned all the wealth; when the Egyptian passed 2 per cent owned 97 per cent of the wealth, and that when Rome perished 2,000 people owned all the Roman world.

This view of man's decadence is strongly emphasized by Mr. E. Carpenter.† "With the advent of a civilization founded on property, the unity of the old tribal society is broken up. The ties of blood relationship which were the foundation of the gentile system, and the guarantee of the old fraternity and equality, became dissolved in favour of powers and authorities founded on mere possession. The growth of wealth disintegrates the ancient society, the temptations of power of possession, etc., which accompany it, wrench the individual from his moorings, personal greed rules, each man for himself becomes the universal motto, the hand of every man is raised against his brother, and at last society becomes an organisation by which the rich fatten upon the vitals of the poor, the strong upon the labour of the weak." Civilization, indeed, from its beginning, has been but the cult of power, and the worship of wealth. Letourneau takes the same view of the disintegrating effects of private ownership. "In fact," he says, "in all civilized societies which have preceded our own, the absolute supremacy of the unrestrained and selfish rights of private property has been the forerunner of decadence, the main cause of ruin."‡

#### WOMAN.

Woman could play but a very minor part in this struggle for possession of property and power. In fact, like all the

\* "Primitive Man." † "Civilisation—Its Cause and Cure."

‡ "Evolution of Private Property."

weaker members of the race, she succumbed, and became subject to her stronger mate. "She was," says Bebel, "the first human being that tasted bondage, was a slave before the slave existed." From that early time to the present, the mothers of the race have been shut out from the strife of the world, its victims always, but rarely, if ever, its partners. This curious fact is not omitted by nature from her wonderful book. Whilst the history of the degeneration of the race is strongly impressed on the male child from the third year onwards, when, as Wordsworth says:

"Shades of the prison house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy,"

woman, strangely enough, bears but few traces of this degeneration. She, through life retains those high human attributes that the child possesses. "When we have realised the position of the child in relation to evolution, we can take a clearer view of the natural position of woman. She bears the natural characteristics of humanity in a higher degree than man, simply because she is nearer the child. Her conservatism is thus compensated for and justified by the fact that she represents more nearly than man the human type to which man is approximating."\*

Not only, however, does woman still bear the impress on her form of a golden age, and embody the high characteristics that raised it in human dignity above all succeeding ages, but she represents, along with the child, the type toward which the human race is now tending. Thus Dr. Chamberlain† states, "That the child, the woman, the best types of men of genius, and the best types of men in civilized society (cities especially), where the arts of peace outweigh the arts of war, and where industrialism has sustained the amelioration of toil due to modern invention, are the best representatives of the race type, the promise, in one way or another, of the man to be, is a view held by many authorities. Moreover," he continues, "women possess those child-like characters which the highest geniuses of the most intellectual races of mankind exhibit in all ages." "The female type," says Dr. Talbot,‡ from the standpoint of nervous and bodily development, most nearly approaches the promise of child type." Physiology thus agrees with the poet who says that "Woman is not undeveloped man," and caustically adds what the poet never thought, because man is a degenerate from that high human type of which woman is emblematic, the type towards which all that is best and noblest in the male sex is approximating.

This is a curious and unexpected revelation in the book of nature which shocks our sense of masculine superiority, but one which no amount of explanation will explain away. Yet it is one which is exceedingly comforting to the Socialist, when we see the explanation. As we have already seen, civilization has always been founded on power and possession. These necessitate constant war and turmoil, either to hold or to increase, even in the

oth

2 \* Havelock Ellis' "Man and Woman." † "The Child."  
‡ "Degeneracy, its causes, etc."

more intellectual competition of to-day. Competition between individuals and wars for trade, markets, mines, bonds, etc., are still the mainsprings of the civilization of the twentieth century, and the font of its inspiration and imperialism. They produced a system of society alien to woman's nature, in which she was unable to play her part. Being enslaved by the male in all ages, and even when not absolutely enslaved, yet out of harmony with her surroundings, she has been shut up in the home, secluded from the world. Here, in a small communistic settlement of her own, in an environment akin to her nature, woman has lived countless ages, and the high human type has been continued, for "perfect environment gives eternal life." Family life has been the nearest approach to those primitive ages before man fell, and the home has been, as Professor Drummond says, as between mother and child "a secluded shrine where the culture of everything holy and beautiful was carried on."

Undoubtedly, woman, in continuing the communism of the first ages in the home, has rescued man from absolute degeneration, and has been the salvation of the race. "To woman," says Reclus, "mankind owes all that has made us men." She will be the most potent factor in the coming socialistic state in helping man to regain those high human attributes of which she is the modern representative, "Abundant evidence," says Dr. Chamberlain, "is now forthcoming that the child and the woman, which in the best sense is nearest him physically and mentally, are the real bearers of the evolution of the race. Not soulless, as some ancient theologians and some savage tribes have believed, but bearing the soul of the race, woman the surrogate of the child, has been shaping man physically and mentally in her image, as the man of genius (not the insane genius), and the typical urban adult (not the weakling or the degenerate) demonstrate. The future humanity lies more with woman than with man, and the child is full of its prophecy." The curious part of the references of these physiologists to the high human type of woman and child is, that no explanation is forthcoming of its presence in these two. Do coming events indeed cast their shadows before in this manner? It is curious that this high development of the child should be "prophetic" of that which is to come. No theologian has, so far, ventured to suggest that fossils are "prophetic" of the time when they shall be created. The book of nature does not record dreams of the future, but facts of the past. Fossils are records of what has been. So the child recapitulates a stage in human history that has been. The degeneracy of the man also records a stage that has been and still is. The man will regain his fallen greatness as he gradually moulds his social system to conformity with that environment which has preserved in the frame of woman the early achievements of the race, the communistic life of the family.

#### CIVILIZATION AND COMMUNISM.

It is often urged that socialism will be a return to the

barbaric communism of primitive man. Of this primal communism we know nothing; a high human development does not depend on mechanical science nor do its achievements necessarily leave permanent marks on the earth. The highest culture and greatest intellectual achievements are compatible with a simple life. Many of us think that our civilization, notwithstanding its inventions and instruments, shows a very low human development, that in fact it is inhuman except to property\* and its owners. If we make nature the arbiter, she seems to select primitive communism as productive of the higher type. Physiology holds up the child as the record of a first stage of high human development and the degenerate form of man as representative of the loss of this state in civilization. Nature again presents us with woman, the present type of the old communism, with her greater powers of love and sympathy, finer instincts, swifter perceptions and deeper intuitions than man. Comparative anatomy finally proves the high type of woman and child, in the approximation to them of the man of genius, the atavist, and of the more cultured types of men generally.

As against nature's declaration in favour of communism, what has civilization to show in the uplifting of mankind. True there are great engineering works, wonderful mechanical inventions, many scientific discoveries, marvellous instruments for slaughtering each other, wealth beyond compare. But its benefits for mankind at large, in this as in all previous civilizations, are still in the future, unrealized dreams as yet. There is no wealth but life, and civilization here is poor indeed. It presents us to-day, as in former times, with an enslaved, starving people, a slaughter of the innocents unsurpassed in any age by the most barbarous tribes, prostitution and the subjection of women, Chicago stock yards, a few cultured people, few indeed compared with the mass, a wonderful organisation of society with its police, its armies and navies, organised not for the protection of life but for the greater security of power and property. Truly the achievements of civilization cannot be found in the development of human life nor in the uplifting of mankind, but founded ever on the martyrdom of men and the sacrifice of their bodies and souls, every civilization has so far been a curse and a burden to that vast majority whose shoulders have had to bear its weight.

#### WOMAN IN PRIMITIVE TIMES.

It is a curious and suggestive fact after what has been stated to find that the position of woman at the dawn of history was higher than it is to-day or has been in any succeeding age. We should naturally expect this to be the case, for the harmony between her nature and the earliest civilizations had not become so completely estranged as in later times. In Egypt where written records give us some idea of their life, we find that women were nearly the equals of men. They were not then

\* Note the current phrase "the rights of capital."

secluded in a harem, but sat at meals with the husband, father, brothers; they had equal rights before the law, which to-day they have not. They served in the priesthood and ascended the throne. The earliest deities of the human race bear testimony to woman's position, for they were equally male and female. Juno was to women what Jupiter was to men, and women performed the holiest rites of religion. Diodorus points out that the queen received more power and respect than the king in Egypt. Among private individuals, he says, women rule over men and it was stipulated between married partners that the man should obey the woman. She was often richer than the man, and was responsible for the maintenance of her parents, showing that she, rather than the sons, had the wealth. The right of inheritance was through the mother, and not as to-day through the father. Letourneau states that "Uterine affiliation continued in unchanging Egypt down to the Ptolemies, and, placing the woman in the position of an heiress, secured to her many privileges." It was late in Egyptian history that the power of woman to hold property was taken from her and not till the glory of the old civilization had waned.

In the historic clans of Greece maternal affiliation was first established, the paternal family followed the maternal. This descent of wealth through the woman was of infinite value to her, it saved her from enslavement when nothing else could do. Letourneau points out, "Upon the whole, in every country and in every time, woman, organically weaker than man, has been more or less enslaved by him, unless in some case where legislation has permitted her to use an artificial force to serve her as a shield. This fictitious force before which virile brutality has lowered its flag has been money, wherever the laws have permitted women to raise themselves to the dignity of proprietors." Economic independence was the factor which saved women in the past from entire enslavement. Economic independence is the factor which socialists propound to-day to the workers of the world as their only salvation. In this way the problem of the worker is the problem of the woman and the solution of the one is the solution of the other.

Under the Roman civilization, women who had money attained great liberty, greater than they have ever enjoyed since. According to Mr. Lecky "they had been at first in a condition of absolute subjection or subordination to their relatives. They arrived during the Empire at a point of freedom and dignity which they subsequently lost and never altogether regained. . . . With the exception of the dowry which passed into the hands of the husband, she held property in her own right. A very considerable portion of Roman wealth thus passed into the uncontrolled possession of woman. A complete revolution passed over the constitution of the family. Instead of being constituted on the principle of autocracy, it was constructed on the principle of co-equal partnership. The legal position of the

\* "Greek View of Life."

wife had become one of complete independence while her social position was one of great dignity." Once again we see it was the slavish adulation of wealth by the male which secured woman her freedom. It would, however, be but a small fraction of womankind to whom this liberty was accorded, for the possessors of wealth are always few in number.

If we look briefly at the relations between the sexes before the fight for wealth had completely enslaved woman, we find them on an infinitely higher plane than they subsequently became or even are to-day. "We might conclude," says Mr. Dickenson,\* "if we had only Homer to give us our Greek view of life, that they had a conception of woman and of her relations to man, finer and nobler in some respects than that of modern times. But in fact the Homeric poems represent a civilization which had passed away." Thus once again we find a decadence from the early ages of man. Mr. Lecky confirms this view—"It may be fearlessly asserted that the types of female excellence which are contained in the Greek poems while they are among the earliest, are also among the most perfect in the literature of mankind." Luxury and power in those early times had not yet coarsened the finer instincts of men nor forced woman to withdraw into her innermost nature the power to love, which even to-day can rarely be the guide to the altar.

#### WOMAN UNDER CHRISTIANITY.

It is, however, in the Christian era that the subjection of woman became complete, notwithstanding that Christ's teaching destroys all mastership and authority. Christianity at the outset was a communistic fraternity. Men and women were equal and held all things in common. The influence of women was paramount in the great work of the conversion of the Roman Empire. "In no other movement of thought was it so powerful or so acknowledged. In the ages of persecution female figures occupy many of the foremost places in the ranks of martyrdom."\* Christian communism did not last long, and was succeeded by Christian theology, under which Christ's teaching and women still suffer. So disastrous have been the effects of theology on woman, that Sir H. Maine states,† "No society which preserves any trace of Christian institution is likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by the Roman law." In its first conflict with the pagan religions of Europe, the Christian church was forced to bow down to their customs and adopt most of their ceremonials and rites, feasts, and gods (under Christian names). We find, consequently, that women ministered in the church in its early years, and the goddesses, Kybele, Aphrodite, Venus, Edda, and Freya, re-appeared in the image of the Virgin Mary. As the control of the church increased over the minds of men, the female officials of the church were gradually excluded. The Council of Laodicea in A.D. 365 forbade the ordination of women to the

\* Lecky "History of European Morals." † "Ancient Law."

ministry, and again in 824 the same Council complains that women still serve at the altar, and even give the communion.

The whole tendency of the church in its worship of asceticism was against the woman. Led, at first, by a justifiable revolt against the loose morality of the Roman world, and then by a passion of asceticism, woman became the representative of all that was evil and vile. Virginity alone was holy, marriage was debased. Poor Eve was the cause of man's fall, and her descendents became the recipients of all the invective that the Fathers of the Church could hurl at her. "Woman," says Mr. Lecky, "was represented as the door of hell, and the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed of the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in perpetual penance on account of the curses she has brought upon the world. Women were even forbidden by a provincial council in the 6th century, on account of their impurity, to receive the Eucharist in their naked hands." She was thus reduced in the eyes of the Church to the same low level that she occupied in Mohammedan countries, where the law forbids pigs, dogs, women, and other impure animals to enter a mosque. In the Decalogue we find that the neighbour's house is worthy of a command to itself, but in the reference to the neighbour's wife, we find her classed with the horse and the ass, and other details. The Ten Commandments themselves are addressed to men, women evidently being unworthy of notice.

Chivalry and the troubadours, and the cult of the Virgin Mary somewhat raised woman's status in the middle ages, but it was rather the worship of her sex than the recognition of her equality. We have in Grimm's Household Tales, a fair picture of the new view of woman. St. Bernard once went into a cathedral to pay his devotions to the image of the Virgin Mary. He fell thrice on his knees before it, and, full of fervour, uttered the words "O gracious, mild, and highly favoured mother of God!" Hereupon the image began to speak, and said, "Welcome, my St. Bernard!" But the saint, who was displeased by this, reproached the queen of heaven for speaking, in these words. "Silence! no woman may speak in this congregation." This is a fair sample of the worship of woman during the middle ages, which, whilst pretending to worship her, denied her rationality, or as Havelock Ellis caustically sums it up, regarded her as a cross between an idiot and an angel.

The Reformation finally closed all avenues to woman's freedom. Previously, she had a career as abbess or nun open to her. With the Reformation, she was shut up in the home more completely than ever before, her one escape being marriage. Even here, it was not the fault of Luther that polygamy was not added to the other crimes against woman. It is said that Melancthon urged Henry VIII to take another wife rather than divorce the wife he had. It was Luther, who with six others, gave permission to the German Elector Philip, Landgraf of Hesse Cassel, to marry a second wife, his first wife being still alive.

It was more the action of the civil authorities than of the Church that spared woman that crowning degradation in our civilization. Her position gradually sank lower, till she was unable to hold property, could not even demand the wages that she had earned; they belonged to her liege lord and master and could be demanded from her employer by him. Of the present view of the Church on woman, we may take Canon Knox Little as the spokesman. "Wifehood," he says, "is the crowning glory of a woman. In it she is bound for all time. To her husband she owes the duty of unqualified obedience. There is no crime a man can commit, which justifies his wife in leaving him. It is her duty to subject herself to him always, and no crime that he can commit can justify her lack of obedience." Even this year, in Anglesey, we have seen the priest ordering the woman out of church because her head is not covered, that Eastern sign of subjection.

#### EMANCIPATION.

It was not until the nineteenth century that there arose the possibility that the long subjection of woman was drawing to a close. The invention of the steam engine and machinery lightened labour, and reduced in industry the inequality between man and woman. The greed of the capitalist at once seized the woman and the child as cheaper instruments of production than men. Competition forced woman from the home, and brought her out into the open. It was a curious counter revolution. It was the lust of wealth and power, which, in the first instance, produced a system of society in which woman had no share, and which consequently confined her to the home. It was the lust of wealth which seized her again, and forced her into line with men. Morgan states that the failure of classic civilization was due to its failure to develop woman. What will be the effect on our civilization of this sudden development of woman? Already, there is practically no sphere of work that woman has not entered, or will not enter soon. So far, this has been largely from necessity, and marriage is still looked upon by most women as a means of escape from the necessity of earning their own living. This arises mainly, I believe, from the bad conditions and low wages of woman's work. Necessity, however, often starts a fashion. It is becoming customary among women of all classes, whether forced by economic conditions or not, to enter some profession or undertake public work of some kind or other. The desire to escape from the monotony of home life, now that all the home industries have been taken over as public businesses, is a factor of great strength in this change. The increasing opportunities in public life for women, are helpful in preventing the rising generation of women becoming mere pleasure seekers and parasites. It may be taken for granted that in the future, for one reason or other, women will take part equally with men in shaping the destinies of the race.

On the other hand, whilst woman is being compelled to forsake the home and become once again a part of our public

life, there is a rapid growth in society of a sphere harmonious to woman's nature, a preparation as it were for her reception, into which she can enter without violating the fundamental principles of her nature. In looking around us, we find that society has ceased to be composed of individuals, or even of families. The individuals of the nations are being gathered into groups with similar interests, co-operative, and often, to a great degree, communistic. When a move is made in any given direction, it no longer consists of single persons, but of masses of men, of tens of thousands, as witness the growth of the Labour Party. In every direction we see society being welded into huge aggregations, and these again uniting into one composite whole. There is a unification of interests proceeding, which promises soon to make the interests of the people as homogeneous as are the interests of the members of one family. At the same time, there is growing a sense of communal responsibility for the weaker members of the community, the feeding of school children, provision of work for the unemployed, a humanising of the poor-law system, old age pensions, etc. There are also numerous free communistic services arising, free education, free libraries, art galleries, parks, baths, museums, and many more. We see, in fact, a growth in society of the ethics of the family in every direction.

The two greatest movements of the nineteenth century have been the preparation for the reception of woman by the growth of socialism, and the emancipation of woman herself.

Is it a mere chance coincidence that they should be simultaneous in their public appearance? Is it not rather a natural sequence that, as industry prepares a socialistic environment, woman, the survivor of the old communism, should enter in and take possession, as of her kingdom, by right. It is but another instance of the truth of Darwin's doctrine of the survival of the fittest. A change takes place in the environment, and immediately, a different flora and fauna are produced, the more harmonious at once enter in and possess. Woman has not yet grasped the idea that her entrance into public life is permanent, and not merely an episode in her career that will soon pass. She will, however, realise it before long, and is even now demanding those rights which her services to society entitle her, and which men shrinkingly withhold.

#### ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.

Some socialists are apt to look askance at this demand of women and consider her a conservative force which is to be feared by them rather than welcomed, but still admitted to equal rights, because justice demands. The conservatism of woman is, however, not the conservatism of man, of individualism; it is rather the conservatism of the old communistic spirit which will find, in the individualism of the day, nothing that appeals to it. The conservatism of woman will be a revolutionary force in a society still founded on individualism, competition and private property, a combination which has secluded woman in the home,

shut her out from life, and subjected her to degradation unmentionable. "This organic conservatism," says Mr. Havelock Ellis, "may often involve political revolution. Socialism and nihilism are not usually regarded by politicians as conservative movements, but from the organic point of view, they may be truly conservative, and as is well known, these movements have powerfully appealed to women. The establishment of Christianity, the most revolutionary movement that has ever been seen in Europe, was, to a considerable extent, furthered by women." Women take part naturally in any revolution which is meant to overthrow our man-made civilization, and it would be hard to name a revolution in which women have not played their part. We need only think of the women martyrs in the Russian revolution of to-day, their heroism and self-sacrifice.

In granting the franchise to women, we now see that it is no mere extension, in kind, of the voters' list, it is the introduction into our national life of an entirely new element. The increase in the electorate by manhood suffrage would be an act of justice which must, sooner or later, be granted. It excites little discussion, and less enthusiasm. Its only effect would be to increase the already overwhelming working-class vote. The enfranchisement of women, on the other hand, would be the introduction of a force which will greatly strengthen the humanitarian movements of the day. "Woman," says Darwin, "seems to differ from man in mental disposition, chiefly in greater tenderness and less selfishness . . . . Woman, owing to her maternal instincts, displays these qualities towards her infants in an eminent degree; therefore, it is likely that she should often extend them towards her fellow creatures." Let us not forget that the communism of women is fundamental, and that in leaving the home for public life, she will carry it with her till it embraces the nation, if not the race. She will insist that the ethics of home shall be the ethics of public life, and the morality of man not lower than the morality of woman. The entrance of this communistic force into a semi-communistic society will quickly bear fruit. Society still retains the two elements antagonistic to woman's freedom, competition and private property. Both are nearing their end, and the influence of woman can but have the effect of limiting their last stages and intensifying the rate of progress towards a complete communism.

It is not, however, likely that woman will follow men in their arduous task of building up a collectivist state founded on a profound study of economics with its formulæ of nationalisation and municipalisation of every thing, and its herculean task of converting the mass of the people. Such a method is alien to her nature, and would, indeed, be as likely to land us into a sterile state-capitalism as into a communistic society. Women, as is their nature, will go straight to the heart of things—the immediate formation of a communistic state—with that sure instinct and intuition which, according to Darwin, are more strongly developed in woman than in man. She will force a rapid extension of the free services in every direction, especially

for weakness and necessity. In building up the new commonwealth, men need the quick perception, ready help and keen sympathy of women. Man has, so far, built up his social systems on a foundation of brute strength, from which woman has been excluded, and they have been a mere replica of man himself. But, in the new civilization that is arising to-day, there must be no suggestion of the exclusion of woman, but a true comradeship, not waiting till we have reached the promised land, but, together, moulding and shaping the destinies of the race. The society of the future must be no mere representative of the man, nor of the woman, but of both. It must include the love and intuition of the woman, and the genius and strength of the man.

#### MARRIAGE.

Whilst the advent of woman will intensify the trend towards socialism, she stands to gain much from the growth of a socialist state. It has been the economic independence of the fortunate few which has saved women in the past from absolute subjection. There is but one system of society which can guarantee to every woman absolute freedom from dependence on another for home and maintenance, and that is the socialistic state. Under communism alone will each one's independence be guaranteed. In all ages, woman has been obliged to rely upon the husband during her times of weakness, during the period of maternity. The enslavement of man and the subjection of woman in all ages show that no human being can be trusted with this great power over another. No circumstance will intensify the revolt of the wife against the power of the purse in the husband more than the growing economic independence of the girl before marriage. Having once tasted the forbidden fruit of freedom, she will unwillingly enough become dependent on her husband for every penny she requires. Once the way of escape to independence through socialism is seen by her, there will be no more ardent exponent of, nor enthusiastic worker for, the coming state.

Among the free communistic services already referred to, the right of the wife to maintenance during the period of maternity will quickly find a place. The special service for which her maintenance will be secured to her by the community can only be decided by experience. She must find her real sphere and function by the widest liberty and utmost freedom of choice, neither protected in one vocation nor forced into another. Nature alone can determine her contribution to the community.

This dependence of the wife on the husband is no more beneficial to the husband than to the wife. It has produced a marriage system which is aptly described as monogamy tempered by prostitution. The power of the purse gives a moral license against which woman is powerless to make an effective protest. If at the present moment it were possible to secure to every married woman maintenance for herself and children, we should quickly see either a wilderness of homeless husbands or such a moral reform in men that the doors of the public house and the



brothel would be closed for evermore. Charles Kingsley stated there would never be moral equity between the sexes till there was civic equality. In this he was wrong. Civic equality will give equality before the law, but it will not give moral equality in the home. Nothing can do that but the economic independence of the wife. It has been a strong defence in every age, which has permitted woman to hold property. Economic freedom is the basic freedom from which all liberty arises, whether it be social, moral, religious, political, or industrial.

When men and women stand forth free under communism, each meeting the other on terms of the most perfect equality, every trace of the present mercenary motives in marriage will disappear. The present marriage system, founded more on the legal bond than on affection, cannot be claimed by any one as a success. In the holiest of all relationships the legal bond is to-day considered the more important factor, and is the natural effort of the State to regulate marriage founded on the subjection of woman. With the growth of independence in women, the number of divorces is increasing rapidly, testifying to the unsatisfactory nature of so many marriages. The complete economic independence of women will, however, solve the question by enabling them to consult their feelings rather than their material interests in marriage. Will and affection will prove far more stable bonds than have the legal, but they can only be established on a foundation of co-equal partnership. Under communism will and affection will be supreme and legal registration but a subordinate matter like the registration of the birth of a child. Love and marriage will largely be in the hands of woman in the future, for she possesses greater powers of intuition than men and her maternal duties give greater powers of love. As both these functions will be exercised absolutely free from every trace of subordination to and financial dependence on man, marriage will be infinitely holier and more permanent than it is to-day. Under such a marriage system only, founded on affection and equality, will the sexes be able to attain that ideal state of chastity when the man will be able to look upon every other woman as through the eyes of his wife, and she will be able to look upon every other man as through the eyes of her husband.

---

This tract is issued with the endorsement of the Council of the Independent Labour Party, but for the opinions expressed therein the author is responsible.

---

*Printed by Wadsworth & Co., The Rydal Press Keighley.*