GEORGE WALTER LIONEL

THE INTELLIGENCE OF WOMAN

Walter George
The Intelligence of Woman

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24936717
The Intelligence of Woman:

Содержание

I 4
1 4
2 9
3 22
4 25
5 30
6 36
7 44
8 50
II 56
1 56
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 57

Walter Lionel George
The Intelligence of Woman

I
THE INTELLIGENCE OF WOMAN

1

Men have been found to deny woman an intellect; they have credited her with instinct, with intuition, with a capacity to correlate cause and effect much as a dog connects its collar with a walk. But intellect in its broadest sense, the capacity consecutively to plan and steadfastly to execute, they have often denied her.

The days are not now so dark. Woman has a place in the state, a place under, but still a place. Man has recognized her value without coming to understand her much better, and so we are faced with a paradox: while man accords woman an improved social position, he continues to describe her as illogical, petty, jealous, vain, untruthful, disloyal to her own sex; quite as frequently he charges her with being over-loyal to her own sex: there is no pleasing him. Also he discerns in this

unsatisfactory creature extreme unselfishness, purity, capacity for self-sacrifice. It seems that the intelligence of man cannot solve the problem of woman, which is a bad sign in a superior intelligence. The trouble lies in this: man assumes too readily that woman essentially differs from man. Hardly a man has lived who did not so exaggerate. Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, agreed to despise women; Napoleon seemed to view them as engines of pleasure; for Shakespeare they may well have embodied a romantic ideal, qualified by sportive wantonness. In Walter Scott, women appear as romance in a cheap edition; Byron in their regard is a beast of prey, Doctor Johnson a pompous brute and a puritanical sensualist. Cervantes mixed in his romantic outlook a sort of suspicious hatred, while Alexandre Dumas thought them born only to lay laurel wreaths and orange blossoms (together with coronets) on the heads of musketeers. All, all – from Thackeray, who never laid his hand upon a woman save in the way of patronage, to Goethe, to Dante, to Montaigne, to Wellington – all harbored this curious idea: in one way or another woman differs from man. And to-day, whether we read Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. George Moore, M. Paul Bourget, or Mr. Hall Caine, we find that there still persists a belief in Byron's lines: —

> "What a strange thing is man! And what a stranger
> Is woman!"

Almost every man, except the professional Lovelace (and he knows nothing), believes in the mystery of woman. I do not. For men are also mysterious to women; women are quite as puzzled by our stupidity as by our subtlety. I do not believe that there is either a male or a female mystery; there is only the mystery of mankind. There are to-day differences between the male and the female intellect; we have to ask ourselves whether they are absolute or only apparent, or whether they are absolute but removable by education and time, assuming this to be desirable. I believe that these differences are superficial, temporary, traceable to hereditary and local influences. I believe that they will not endure forever, that they will tend to vanish as environment is modified, as old suggestions cease to be made.

This leads us to consider present idiosyncrasies in woman as a sex, her apparently low and apparently high impulses, her exaltations, and, in the light of her achievements, her future. I do not want to generalize hastily. The subject is too complex and too obscure for me to venture so to do, and I would ask my readers to remember throughout this chapter that I am not laying down the law, but trying only to arrive at the greatest possible frequency of truth. This is a short research of tendencies. There are human tendencies, such as belief in a divine spirit, painting pictures, making war, composing songs. Are there any special female tendencies? Given that we glimpse what distinguishes man from the beast, is there anything that distinguishes woman from man? In the small space at my disposal I cannot pretend

to deal extensively with the topic. One reason is the difficulty of securing true evidence. Questions addressed to women do not always yield the truth; nor do questions addressed to men; for a desire to please, vanity, modesty, interfere. But the same question addressed to a woman may, according to circumstances, be *sincerely* answered in four ways, —

1. Truthfully, with a defensive touch, if she is alone with another woman.
2. With intent to cause male rivalry if she is with two men.
3. With false modesty and seductive evasiveness if she is with one man and one woman.
4. With a clear intention to repel or attract if she is with a man alone.

And there are variations of these four cases! A man investigating woman's points of view often finds the response more emotional than intellectual. Owing to the system under which we live, where man is a valuable prey, woman has contracted the habit of trying to attract. Even aggressive insolence on her part may conceal the desire to attract by exasperating. These notes must, therefore, be taken only as hints, and the reader may be interested to know that they are based on the observation of sixty-five women, subdivided as follows: Intimate acquaintance, five; adequate acquaintance, nineteen; slight acquaintance, forty-one; married, thirty-nine; status uncertain, eight; celibate, eighteen. Ages, seventeen to

sixty-eight (average age, about thirty-five).

2

It is most difficult to deduce the quality of woman's intellect from her conduct, because her impulses are frequently obscured by her policy. The physical circumstances of her life predispose her to an interest in sex more dominant than is the case with man. As intellect flies out through the window when emotion comes in at the door, this is a source of complications. The intervention of love is a difficulty, for love, though blind, is unfortunately not dumb, and habitually uses speech for the concealment of truth. It does this with the best of intentions, and the best of intentions generally yield the worst of results. It should be said that sheer intellect is very seldom displayed by man. Intellect is the ideal skeleton of a man's mental power. It may be defined as an aspiration toward material advantage, absolute truth, or achievement, combined with a capacity for taking steps toward successful achievement or attaining truth. From this point of view such men as Napoleon, Machiavelli, Epictetus, Leo XIII, Bismarck, Voltaire, Anatole France, are typical intellectuals. They are not perfect: all, so far as we can tell, are tainted with moral feeling or emotion, – a frailty which probably explains why there has never been a British or American intellectual of the first rank. Huxley, Spencer, Darwin, Cromwell, all alike suffered grievously from good intentions. The British and American mind has long been honeycombed with moral impulse, at any rate since

the Reformation; it is very much what the German mind was up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Intellect, as I conceive it, is seeing life sanely and seeing it whole, without much pity, without love; seeing life as separate from man, whose pains and delights are only phenomena; seeing love as a reaction to certain stimuli.

In this sense it can probably be said that no woman has ever been an intellectual. A few may have pretensions, as, for instance, "Vernon Lee," Mrs. Sidney Webb, Mrs. Wharton, perhaps Mrs. Hetty Green. I do not know, for these women can be judged only by their works. The greatest women in history – Catherine of Russia, Joan of Arc, Sappho, Queen Elizabeth – appear to have been swayed largely by their passions, physical or religious. I do not suppose that this will always be the case. For reasons which I shall indicate further on in this chapter, I believe that woman's intellect will tend toward approximation with that of man. But meanwhile it would be futile not to recognize that there exist to-day between man and woman some sharp intellectual divergences.

One of the sharpest lies in woman's logical faculty. This may be due to her education (which is seldom mathematical or scientific); it may proceed from a habit of mind; it may be the result of a secular withdrawal from responsibilities other than domestic. Whatever the cause, it must be acknowledged that, with certain trained exceptions, woman has not of logic the same conception as man. I have devoted particular care to this

issue, and have collected a number of cases where the feminine conception of logic clashes with that of man. Here are a few transcribed from my notebook:

Case 33

My remark: "Most people practice a religion because they are too cowardly to face the idea of annihilation."

Case 33: "I don't see that they are any more cowardly than you. It doesn't matter whether you have a faith or not, it will be all the same in the end."

The reader will observe that Case 33 evades the original proposition; in her reply she ignores the set question, namely why people practice a religion.

Case 17

Votes for Women, of January 22, 1915, prints a parallel, presumably drawn by a woman, between two police-court cases. In the first a man, charged with having struck his wife, is discharged because his wife intercedes for him. In the second a woman, charged with theft, is sent to prison in spite of her husband's plea. The writer appears to think that these cases are parallel; the difference of treatment of the two offenders offends her logic. From a masculine point of view two points differentiate the cases:

In the first case the person who may be sent to prison is the bread-winner; in the second case it is the housekeeper, which is inconvenient but less serious.

In the first case the person who intercedes, the wife, is

the one who has suffered; in the second case the person who intercedes, the husband, has not suffered injury. The person who has suffered injury is the one who lost the goods.

Case 51

This case is peculiar as it consists in frequent confusion of words. The woman here instanced referred to a very ugly man as looking Semitic. She was corrected and asked whether she did not mean simian, that is, like a monkey. She said, "Yes," but that Semitic meant looking like a monkey. When confronted with the dictionary, she was compelled to acknowledge that the two words were not the same, but persisted in calling the man Semitic, and seriously explained this by asserting that Jews look like monkeys.

Case 51, in another conversation, referred to a man who had left the Church of England for the Church of Rome as a "pervert." She was asked whether she did not mean "convert."

She said, "No, because to become a Roman Catholic is the act of a pervert."

As I thought that this might come from religious animus, I asked whether a Roman Catholic who entered a Protestant church was also a pervert.

Case 51 replied, "Yes."

Case 51 therefore assumes that any change from an original state is abnormal. The application to the charge of bad logic consists in this further test:

I asked Case 51 whether a man originally brought up in Conservative views would be a pervert if he became a Liberal.

Case 51 replied, "No."

On another occasion Case 51 referred to exaggerated praise showered upon a popular hero, and said that the newspapers were "belittling" him.

I pointed out that they were doing the very contrary; that indeed they were exaggerating his prowess.

Confronted with the dictionary, and the meaning of "belittle", which is "to cheapen with intent", she insisted that "belittling" was the correct word because "the result of this exaggerated praise was to make the man smaller in her own mind."[1]

Case 63

In the course of a discussion on the war in which Case 63 has given vent to moral and religious views, she remarks, "Thou shalt not kill."

I: "Then do you accept war?"

Case 63: "War ought to be done away with."

I (attempting to get a straight answer): "Do you accept war?"

Case 63: "One must defend one's self."

Upon this follows a long argument in which I attempt to prove to Case 63 that one defends, not one's self but the nation. When in difficulties she repeats, "One must defend one's self."

She refuses to face the fact that if nobody offered any resistance, nobody would be killed; she completely confuses the

---

[1] The notes as to Case 51 have not an absolute bearing upon logic in general, but the reasons put forth in her defense by Case 51 are indicative of a certain kind of logic which is not masculine. I must add that Case 51 is a woman of very good education, with many general interests. – The Author.

defense of self against a burglar with that of a nation against an invader. Finally she assumes that the defense of one's country is legitimate, and yet insists on maintaining with the Bible that one may not kill!

Case 33

Case 33: "Why didn't America interfere with regard to German atrocities in Belgium?"

I: "Why should she?"

Case 33: "America did protest when her trade was menaced."

I: "Yes. America wanted to protect her interests, but does it follow that she should protest against atrocities which do not menace her interests?"

Case 33: "*But her interests are menaced.* Look at the trade complications; they've all come out of that."

Case 33 has confused trade interests with moral duty; she has confused two issues: atrocities against neutrals and destruction of American property. When I tell her this, she states that there is a connection: that if America had protested against atrocities, the war would have proceeded on better lines because the Germans would have been frightened.

I: "How would this have affected the trade question?"

Case 33 does not explain but draws me into a morass of moral indignation because America protested against trade interference and not against atrocities. She finally says America had no right to do the one without the other, which logically is chaos. She also demands to be told what was the use of America's signing the

Geneva Convention and the Hague Convention. She ignores the fact that these conventions do not bind anybody to fight in their defense but merely to observe their provisions. I would add that Case 33 is a well-educated woman, independent in views, and with a bias toward social questions.

Naturally, where there is a question of love, feminine logic reaches the zenith of topsy-turvy-dom. Here is a dialogue which took place in my presence.

Case 8

Case 8, who was about to be married, attacked a man who had had a pronounced flirtation with her because he suddenly announced that he was engaged.

Case 8: "How can you be so mean?"

The man: "But I don't understand. You're going to be married. What objection can you have to my getting engaged?"

Case 8: "It's quite different." Nothing could move Case 8 from that point of view.[2]

I do not contend that bad logic is the monopoly of woman, for man is also disposed to believe what he chooses in matters such as politics, wars, and so forth, and then to try to prove it. Englishmen as well as Englishwomen find victory in the capture of a German trench, insignificance in the loss of a British trench; man, as well as woman, is quite capable of saying that it always rains when the Republicans are in power, should he happen to be a Democrat;

---

[2] Probably owing to woman's having for centuries been taught to regard the vain aspirations of the male as her perquisites. – The Author.

man also is capable of tracing to a dinner with twelve guests the breaking of a leg, while forgetting the scores of occasions on which he dined in a restaurant with twelve other people and suffered no harm. Man is capable of every unreasonable deduction, but he is more inclined to justify himself by close reasoning. In matters of argument, man is like the Italian brigand who robs the friar, then confesses and asks him for absolution; woman is the burglar unrepentant. This may be due to woman as a rule having few guiding principles or intellectual criteria. She often holds so many moral principles that intellectual argument with her irritates the crisper male mind. But she finds it difficult to retain a grasp upon a central idea, to clear away the side issues which obscure it. She can seldom carry an idea to its logical conclusion, passing from term to term; somewhere there is a solution of continuity. For this reason arguments with women, which have begun with the latest musical play, easily pass on, from its alleged artistic merit, to its costumes, their scantiness, their undesirable scantiness, the need for inspection, inspectors of theaters, and, little by little, other inspectors, until one gets to mining inspectors and possibly to mining in general. The reader will observe that these ideas are fairly well linked. All that happens is that the woman, tiring of the central argument, has pursued each side issue as it offered itself. This comes from a lack of concentration which indisposes a woman to penetrate deeply into a subject; she is not used to concentration, she does not like it. It might lead her to disagreeable discoveries.

It is for this reason – because she needs to defend purely emotional positions against man, who uses intellectual weapons – that woman is so much more easily than man attracted by new religions and new philosophies – by Christian Science, by Higher Thought, by Theosophy, by Eucken, by Bergson. Those religions are no longer spiritual; they have an intellectual basis; they are not ideal religions like Christianity and Mohammedanism and the like, which frankly ask you to make an act of faith; what they do is to attempt to seduce the alleged soul through the intellect. That is exactly what the aspiring woman demands: emotional satisfaction and intellectual concession. Particularly in America, one discovers her intellectual fog in the continual use of such words as mental, elemental, cosmic, universality, social harmony, essential cosmos, and other similar ornaments of the modern logomachy.

Case 16

Case 16 told me that my mind did not "functionalize" properly. And gave me as an authority for the statement Aristotle, before whom, of course, I bow.

A singular and suggestive fact is that woman generally displays pitiless logic when she is dealing with things that she knows well. An expert housekeeper is the type, and there are no lapses in her argument with a tradesman. It is a platitude to mention the business capacity of the Frenchwoman, and many women are expert in the investment of money, in the administration of detail, in hospital management, in the rotation of servants'

holidays (which, in large households, is most complex). It would appear that woman is unconcentrated and inconsequent only where she has not been properly educated, and this has a profound bearing on her future development. There is a growing class, of which Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Havelock Ellis, the Countess of Warwick, Miss Jane Addams, are typical, who have bent their minds upon intellectual problems; women like Miss Emma Goldman; like Miss Mary McArthur, whose grasp of industrial questions is as good as any man's. They differ profoundly from the average feminine literary artist, who is almost invariably unable to write of anything except love. I can think of only one modern exception, – Miss Amber Reeves; among her seniors, Mrs. Humphry Ward is the most notable exception, but not quite notable enough.

This tendency is, I believe, entirely due to woman having always been divorced from business and politics, to her having been until recently encouraged to delight in small material possessions, while discouraged from focusing on anything non-material except religion, and from considering general ideas. Particularly as regards general ideas woman has lived in a bad atmosphere. The French king who said to his queen, "Madam, we have taken you to give us children and not to give us advice," was blowing a chill breath upon the tender shoot of woman's intelligence. Neither he nor other men wished women to conceive general ideas: women became incapable of conceiving or understanding them. Thence sprang generalization,

the tendency in woman to make sweeping statements, such as "All men are deceivers," or "Men can do what they like in the world," or "Men cannot feel as women do." It is not that they dislike general questions, but that they have been thrust back from general questions, so that they cannot hold them. Here is a case:

Case 2

With the object of entertaining an elderly lady, who is an invalid, I explain, *in response to her own request*, the case that Germany makes for having declared war. She asks one or two questions, and then suddenly interrupts me to ask what I have been doing with myself lately in the evenings.

This is a case of interest in the particular as opposed to the general. It is an instance of what I want to show, – that woman drifts toward the particular because she has been driven away from the general. To concentrate too long upon the general is to her merely fatiguing. Doubtless because of this, many middle-aged women become exceedingly dull to men. So long as they are young all is well, for few men care what folly issues from rosy lips. But once the lips are no longer rosy, then man fails to find the companion he needs, because companionship, as differentiated from love, can rest only on mental sympathy. Middle-aged man is often dull too; while the middle-aged woman may concern herself overmuch with the indigestion of her pet dog, the middle-aged man is often unduly moved by his own indigestion. But, broadly speaking, a greater percentage of

middle-aged and elderly men than of such women are interested in political and philosophical questions.

These men are often dull for another reason: they are more conventional. The reader may differ from me, but I believe that woman is much less conventional than man. She does all the conventional things and attacks other women savagely for breaches of convention. But you will generally find that where a man may with impunity break a convention he will not do so, while, if secrecy is guaranteed, a woman will please herself first and repent only if necessary. It follows that a man is conventional because he respects convention; woman conventional because she is afraid of what may happen if she does not obey convention. I submit that this shows a greater degree of conventionality in man. The typical Englishman of the world, wrecked on a desert island, would get into his evening clothes as long as his shirts lasted; I do not think his wife, alone in such circumstances, would wear a low-cut dress to take her meal of cocoanuts, even if her frock did up in front.

It is this unconventionality that precipitates woman into the so-called new movements in art or philosophy. She reacts against what is, seeking a new freedom; even if she is only seeking a new excitement, a new color, a new god, unconsciously she seeks a more liberal atmosphere, while man is nearly always contented with the atmosphere that is. When he rebels, his tendency is to destroy the old sanctuary, hers to build a new sanctuary. That is a form of idealism, – not a very high idealism, for woman

seldom strains toward the impossible. In literature I cannot call to mind that woman has ever conceived a Utopia such as those imagined by Bellamy, Samuel Butler, William Morris, and H. G. Wells. The only woman who voiced ideas of this kind was Mary Wollstonecraft, and her views were hardly utopian. Nothings, such as Utopias, have been always too airy for woman. The heroes in the novels she has written, until recently and with one or two exceptions, – such as some of the heroes of George Eliot, – are either stagey or sweet. Mr. Rochester is stagey, Grandcourt is stagey, while the hero of "Under Two Flags" is merely Turkish Delight.

3

A quality which singularly contrasts with woman's vague idealism is the accuracy she displays in business. This is due to her being fundamentally inaccurate. It is not the accurate people who are always accurate; it is the inaccurate people on their guard.[3] Woman's interest in the particular predisposes her to the exact, for accuracy may be defined as a continuous interest in the particular. I suspect that it indicates a probability that by education, and especially encouragement, woman may develop a far higher degree of concentration than she has hitherto done. In her way stands a fatal facility, that of grasping ideas before they are half-expressed. It is a quality of imagination, natural rather than induced. Any schoolteacher will confirm the statement that in a mixed class, aged eleven to twelve, the essays of the girls are better than those of the boys. This is not so in a mixed university. I suspect that this latter is quite as much due to the academic judgment, which does not recognize imagination, as to the fact that in the later years of their lives the energies of girls are diverted from intellectual concentration (and also expression) toward the artistic and the social. This untrained concentration produces a certain superficiality and an impetuousness which harmonize with the intrusion of side issues, – to which I have

[3] I have observed for two years the steady growth in the accuracy of the work of Case 33, due to her having concentrated upon her instinctive inaccuracy. – The Author.

referred, – and with the burgeoning of side issues on the general idea.

Nowhere is this better shown than in the postscript habit. Men do not, as a rule, use postscripts, and it is significant that artists and persons inclined toward the arts are much more given to postscripts than other kinds of men. One might almost say that women correspond by postscript; some of them put the subject of the letter in the postscript, as the scorpion keeps his poison in his tail. I have before me letters from Case 58, with two postscripts, and one extraordinary letter from Case 11, with four postscripts and a sentence written outside the envelope. This is the apogee of superficiality. The writers have run on, seduced by irrelevance, and have not been able to stop to consider in all its bearings the subject of the letter. Each postscript represents a development or qualification, which must indicate the waste by bad education of what may be a very good mind.

I would say in passing that we should not attach undue importance to woman's physical disabilities. It is true that woman is more conscious of her body than is man. So long as he is fed, sufficiently busy, in good general health, he is normal. But woman is far more often in an unbalanced physical condition. There is a great deal to be said for the Hindu philosophical point of view, that the body needs to be just so satisfied as to become imperceptible to the consciousness, as opposed to the point of view of the Christian ascetics, who unfortunately carried their ideas so far that they ended by thinking more of

their hair shirt than of Him for whose sake they wore it. In this sense woman is intellectually handicapped because her body obtrudes itself upon her. It is a subject of brooding and agitation. I suspect that this is largely remediable, for I am not convinced that it is woman's peculiar physical conditions that occasionally warp her intellect; it is equally possible that a warped intellect produces unsatisfactory physical conditions. Therefore, if, as I firmly believe that we can, we develop this intellect, profound changes may with time appear in these physical conditions.

4

The further qualification of woman's intellect is in her moral attitude. I would ask the reader to divest himself of the idea that "moral" refers only to matters of sex. Morality is the rule of conduct of each human being in his relations with other human beings, and this covers all relations. Because in some senses the morality of woman is not the morality of man, we are not entitled to say with Pope that

> "Woman's at best a contradiction still."

She is a contradiction. Man is a contradiction, apparently of a different kind, and that is all. Thence spring misunderstandings and sometimes dislike, as between people of different nations. I do not want to labor the point, but I would suggest that in a very minor degree the apparent difference between man and woman may be paralleled by the apparent difference between the Italian and the Swede, who, within two generations, produce very similar American children. But man, who generalizes quite as wildly as woman when he does not understand, is determined to emphasize the difference in every relation of life. For instance, it is commonly said that woman cannot keep her promise. This seems to me entirely untrue; given that as a rule woman's intellect is not sufficiently educated to enable her to find a good reason

for breaking her promise, it is much more difficult for her to do so. For we are all moral creatures, and if a man must steal the crown jewels, he is happier if he can discover a high motive for so doing. Man has a definite advantage where a loophole has to be found, and I have known few women capable of standing up in argument against a trained lawyer who has acquired the usual dexterity in misrepresentation.

In love and marriage, particularly, woman will keep plighted troth more closely than man; there is no male equivalent of jilt, but the male does jilt on peculiar lines; while a woman who knows that her youth, her beauty are going must bring things to a head by jilting, the male is never in a hurry, for his attractions wane so very slowly. Why should he jilt the woman, – make a stir? So he just goes on. In due course she tires and releases him, when he goes to another woman. That is jilting by inches, and as regards faithfulness a pledged woman is more difficult to win away than a pledged man. (To be just, it should be said that unfaithfulness is in the eyes of most men a small matter, in the eyes of most women a serious matter.) A pledged woman will remain faithful long after love has flown; the promise is a mystic bond; none but a tall flame can hide the ashes of the dead love. And so, when Shakespeare asserts, —

> "Frailty, thy name is woman,"

he is delivering one of the hasty judgments that abound in his

solemn romanticism.

This applies in realms divorced from love, – in questions of money, such as debts or bets. Women do run up milliners' bills, but men boast of never paying their tailors. And if sometimes women do not discharge the lost bet, it is largely because a tradition of protection and patronage has laid down that women need not pay their bets. Besides, women usually pay their losses, while several men have not yet discharged their debts of honor to me. It is a matter of honesty, and I think the criminal returns for the United States would produce the same evidence as those for England and Wales. In 1913 there were tried at Assizes for offences against property 1616 men and 122 women. The records of Quarter Sessions and of the courts of Summary Jurisdiction yield the same result, an enormous majority of male offenders, – though there be more women than men in England and Wales! And yet, in the face of such official figures, of the evidence of every employer, man cherishes a belief in woman's dishonesty! One reason, no doubt, is that woman's emotional nature leads her, when she is criminal, to criminality of an aggravated kind. She then justifies Pope's misogynist lines:

> "O woman, woman! When to ill thy mind
> Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend."

Most men, however, have abandoned the case against woman's dishonesty and confine themselves to describing her as a liar,

forgetting that they generally dislike the truth when it comes from a woman's lips, and always when it reflects upon their own conduct. For centuries man has asked that woman should flatter, but also that she should tell the truth: such a confusion of demands leads the impartial mind to the conclusion that vanity cannot be a monopoly of the female. But it is quite true that woman does not always cherish truth so well as man. The desire for truth is intellectual, not emotional. Truth is a cold bed-fellow, as might be expected of one who rose from a well. And among women cases of disinterested lying are not uncommon. Here is Case 16:

An elderly woman talked at length about not having received insurance papers, and made a great disturbance. It later appeared that she had not insured. On another occasion she informed the household that her son-in-law had been cabled to from South Africa to come and visit his dying mother. It was proved that no cable had been sent.

I have a number of cases of this kind, but this is the most curious. I suspect that this sort of lying is traceable to a need for romance and drama in a colorless life. It springs from the wish to create a romantic atmosphere round one's self and to increase one's personal importance. Because men hold out hands less greedy toward drama and romance they are less afflicted, but they do not entirely escape, and we have all observed the new importance of the man whose brother has been photographed in a newspaper or, better still, killed in a railway accident. If he

has been burned in a theater, the grief of his male relatives is subtly tinged with excited delight. Romance, the wage of lies, is woman's compensation for a dull life.

5

Vanity is as old as the mammoth. Romantic lying, obviously connected with vanity, is justly alleged to be developed in woman. No doubt woman's chief desire has been to appear beautiful, and it is quite open to question whether the leaves that clothed our earliest ancestress were gathered in a spirit of modesty rather than in response to a desire for adornment.

But it should not be too readily assumed that vanity is purely a feminine characteristic. It is a human characteristic, and the favor of any male savage can be bought at the price of a necklace of beads or of an admiral's cocked hat. The modern man is modish too, as much as he dares. At Newport as at Brighton the dandy is supreme. It would be inaccurate, however, to limit vanity to clothes. Vanity is more subtle, and I would ask the reader which of the three principal motives that animate man – love, ambition, and gold lust – is the strongest. The desire to shine in the eyes of one's fellows has produced much in art and political service; it has produced much that is foolish and ignoble. It has led to political competition, to a wild race for ill-remunerated offices, governorships, memberships of Parliament. Representatives of the people often wish to serve the people; they also like to be marked out as the people's men. There are no limits to masculine desire for honors; seldom in England does a man refuse a peerage; Frenchmen are martyrs to their love of ribbons,

and not a year passes without a scandal because an official has been bribed to obtain the Légion d'Honneur for somebody, or, funnier still, because an adventurer has blacked his face, set up in a small flat, impersonated a negro potentate, and distributed for value received grand crosses of fantastic kingdoms. Even democratic Americans have been known to seek titled husbands for their daughters, and a few have become Papal barons or counts.

Male vanity differs from female, but both are vanity. The two sexes even share that curious form of vanity which in man consists in his calling himself a "plain man", bragging of having come to New York without shoes and with a dime in his pocket; which, in woman, consists in neglecting her appearance. Both sexes convey more or less: "I am what I am, a humble person … but quite good enough." The arrogance of humility is simply repulsive.

Ideas such as the foregoing may proceed from a certain simplicity. Woman is much less complex than the poets believe. For instance, many men hold that woman's lack of self-consciousness, as exemplified by disturbances in shops, has its roots in some intricate reasoning process. One must not be carried away: the truth is that woman, having so long been dependent upon man, has an exaggerated idea of the importance of small sums. Man has earned money; woman has been taught only to save it. Thus she has been poor, and poverty has caused her to shrink from expenditure; often she has become mean

and, paradoxically enough, she has at the same time become extravagant. Poverty has taught her to respect the penny, while it has taught her nothing about the pound. If woman finds it quite easy to spend one tenth of the household income on dress, and even more,[4] it is because her education makes it as difficult for her to conceive a thousand dollars as it is for a man to conceive a million. It is merely a question of familiarity with money.

Besides, foolish economy and reckless expenditure are indications of an elementary quality. In that sense woman is still something of a savage. She is still less civilized than man, largely because she has not been educated. This may be a very good thing, and it certainly is an agreeable one from the masculine point of view. Whether we consider woman's attitude to the law, to social service, or to war, it is the same thing. In most cases she is lawless; she will obey the law because she is afraid of it, but she will not respect it. For her it is always *sic volo, sic jubeo*. I suspect that if she had had a share in making the law she would not have been like this, for she would have become aware of the relation between law and life. Roughly she tends to look upon the law as tyrannous if she does not like it, as protective if she does like it. Probably there is little relation between her own moral impulse, which is generous, and the law, which is only just. (That is, just in intention.) This is qualified by the moral spirit in woman, which increasingly leads her to the view that certain

---

[4] See "Uniforms for Women," and observe extreme figures and details of feminine expenditure on clothes.

things should be done and others not be done. But even then it is likely that at heart woman does not respect the law; she may respect what it represents, – strength, – but not what it implies, – equity. She is infinitely more rebellious than man, and where she has power she inflames the world in protest. I do not refer to the militant suffragists, but to woman's general attitude. For instance, when it is proposed to compel women to insure their servants, to pay employer's compensation for accident, to restrict married women's control of their property, to establish laws regulating the social evil, we find female opposition very violent. I do not mean material opposition, although that does occur, but mental hostility. Woman surrenders because she must, man because he ought to.

That is an attitude of barbarism. It is a changing attitude; the ranks of social service have, during the last half-century, been disproportionately swollen by woman. Our most active worker in the causes of factory inspection, child protection, anti-sweating, is to-day woman. Woman is emerging swiftly from the barbarous state in which she was long maintained. She will change yet more, – and further on in this chapter I will attempt to show how, – but to-day it must be granted that there runs in her veins much vigorous barbarian blood. Her attitude to war is significant. During the past months I have met many women who were inflamed by the idea of blood; so long as they were not losing relatives or friends themselves, they tended to look upon the war as the most exciting serial they had ever read. Heat and

heroism, what could be more romantic? Every woman to whom I told this said it was untrue, but in no country have the women's unions struck against war; the suffragettes have organized, not only hospitals, but kitchens, recreation rooms, canteens for the use of soldiers; many have clamored to be allowed to make shells; some, especially in Russia, have carried rifles. In England, thirteen thousand women volunteered to make war material; women filled the German factories. Of course, I recognize that this is partly economic: women must live in wartime even at the price of men's lives, and I am aware that a great many women have done all they could to arrest the spread of war. In England many have prevented their men from volunteering; in America, I am told, women have been solid against war with Germany. But let the reader not be deceived. A subtle point arises which is often ignored. If women went to war instead of men, their attitude might be different. Consider, indeed, these two paragraphs, fictitious descriptions of a battlefield: —

"Before the trenches lay heaped hundreds of young men, with torn bodies, their faces pale in the moonlight. The rays lit up the face of one that lay near, made a glitter upon his little golden moustache."

"Before the trenches lay heaped hundreds of young girls. The moonlight streamed upon their torn bodies and their fair skins. The rays fell upon one that lay near, drawing a glow from the masses of her golden hair."

Let the masculine reader honestly read these two paragraphs

(which I do not put forward as literature). The first will pain him; the second will hurt him more. That men should be slaughtered – how hateful! That girls should be slaughtered – it is unbearable. Here, I submit, is part of woman's opposition to war, of the exaggerated idea people have of her humanitarian attitude. I will not press the point that as a savage she may like blood better than man; I will confine myself to suggesting that a large portion of her opposition to war comes out of a sexual consciousness; it seems horrible to her that young men should be killed, just as horrible as my paragraph on the dead girls may seem to the male reader.

Some men have seen women as barbarous and dangerous only, have based their attitude upon the words of Thomas Otway: "She betrayed the Capitol, lost Mark Antony to the world, laid old Troy in ashes." This is absurd; if man cannot resist the temptation of woman, he can surely claim no greater nobility. Mark Antony "lost" Cleopatra by wretched suicide as much as she "lost" him. If because of Helen old Troy was laid in ashes, at least another woman, guiltless Andromache, paid the price. To represent woman so, to suggest that there were only two people in Eden, Adam and the Serpent, is as ridiculous as making a woman into a goddess. It is the hope of the future that woman shall be realized as neither diabolical nor divine, but as merely human.

6

We must recognize that the emotional quality in woman is not a characteristic of sex; it is merely the exaggeration of a human characteristic. For instance, it is currently said that women make trouble on committees. They do; I have sat with women on committees and will do it again as seldom as possible: their frequent inability to understand an obvious syllogism, their passion for side issues, their generalizations, and their particularism whenever emotion is aroused, make committee work very difficult. But every committee has its male member who cannot escape from his egotism or from his own conversation. What woman does man does, only he does it less. The difference is one of degree, not of quality.

Where the emotionalism of women grows more pronounced is in matters of religion and love. There is a vague correspondence between her attitude to the one and to the other, in outwardly Christian countries, I mean. She often finds in religion a curious philter, both a sedative and a stimulant. Religion is often for women an allotrope of romance; blind as an earthworm she seeks the stars, and it is curious that religion should make so powerful an appeal to woman, considering how she has been treated by the faiths. The Moslem faith has made of her a toy and a reward; the Jewish, a submissive beast of burden; the Christian, a danger, a vessel of impurity. I mean the actual faiths,

not their original theory; one must take a faith as one finds it, not as it is supposed to be, and in the case of woman the Christian religion is but little in accord with the view of Him who forgave the woman taken in adultery. The Christian religion has done everything it could to heap ignominy upon woman: head-coverings in church, practical tolerance of male infidelity, kingly repudiation of queens, compulsory child-bearing, and a multiplicity of other injustices. The Proverbs and the Bible in general are filled with strictures on "a brawling woman", "a contentious woman"; when man is referred to, mankind is really implied. Yet woman has kissed the religious rods. One might think that indeed she was seduced and held only by cruelty and contempt. She is now, in a measure, turning against the faiths, but still she clings to them more closely than man because she is more capable of making an act of faith, of believing that which she knows to be impossible.

The appeal of religion to woman is the appeal of self-surrender, – that is, ostensibly. In the case of love it is the same appeal, ostensibly; though I suspect that intuition has told many a woman who gave herself to a lover or to a god that she was absorbing more than she gave: in love using the man for nature whom she represents, in faith performing a pantheistic prodigy, the enclosing of Nirvana within her own bosom.

But speculation as to the impulse of sex in relation to religion, in Greece, in Egypt, in Latin countries, would draw me too far. I can record only that to all appearances a portion of the religious

instinct of woman is derived from the love instinct, which many believe to be woman's first and only motive. It is significant that among the sixty-five cases upon which this article is based there are several deeply religious single women, while not one of the married women shows signs of more than conventional devotion. I incline to believe that woman is firstly animal, secondly, intellectual; while man appears to be occasionally animal and primarily intellectual.

Observe indeed the varying age at which paternal and maternal instincts manifest themselves. A woman's passion for her child generally awakes at birth, and there are many cases where an unfortunate girl, intending to murder her child, as soon as it is born discovers that she loves it. On the other hand, a great many men are indifferent to their children in infancy and are drawn to them only as they develop intellectual quality. This is just the time when woman drifts from them. Qualified by civilized custom, the attitude of woman toward her child is very much that of the cat toward her kitten; as soon as the kitten is a few weeks old, the mother neglects it. A few months later she will not know it. Her part is played. So it is not uncommon to find a woman who has been enthralled by her baby giving it over entirely to hired help: the baby is growing intellectualized; it needs her no more except as a kindly but calm critic. And frequently at that time the father begins to intervene, to control the education, to prepare for the future. Whether in the mental field this means much more than the difference in temperament

between red hair and black hair (if that means anything), I do not know; but it is singular that so often the mother should drift away from her child just at the moment when the father thinks of teaching it to ride and shoot and tell the truth. Possibly by that time her critical work is done.

Indicative of the influence of the emotions is the peculiar intensification of love in moments of crisis, such as war, revolution, or accident. Men do not escape this any more than women: the German atrocities, for instance, largely proceed from extreme excitement. But men have but slender bonds to break, being nearly all ready to take their pleasure where they can, while women are more fastidious. Woman needs a more highly charged atmosphere, the whips of fear or grief, the intoxication of glory. When these are given her, her emotions more readily break down her reserves; and it is not remarkable that in times of war there should be an increase in illegitimate births as well as an increase in marriages. Woman's intellect under those pressures gives way. A number of the marriages contracted by British soldiers about to leave for the front are simple manifestations of hysteria.

As for caprice, it has long been regarded as woman's privilege, part of her charm. Man was the hunter, and his prey must run. Only he is annoyed when it runs too fast. He is ever asking woman to charm him by elusiveness and then complaining because she eludes him. There is hardly a man who would not to-day echo Sir Walter Scott's familiar lines, —

"O Woman! in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made."

It is not woman's fault. The poetry of the world is filled with the words "to win" and "to woo"; one cannot win or woo one who does not baffle; one can only take her, and men are not satisfied to do only that. Man loves sincerity until he finds it; he can live neither with it nor without it; this is true most notably in the lists of love. He is for falsehood, for affectation, lest the prize should too easily be won. Both sexes are equally guilty, if guilt there be.

More true is it that many women lie and curvet as a policy because they believe thus best to manage men. They generally believe that they can manage men. They look upon them as "poor dears." They honestly believe that the "poor dears" cannot cook, or run houses, or trim hats, ignoring the fact that the "poor dears" do these things better than anybody, in kitchens, in hotels, and in hat shops. Especially they believe that they can outwit them in the game of love. This curious idea is due to woman's consciousness of having been sought after in the past and told that she did not seek man but was sought by him. Centuries of thraldom and centuries of flattery have caused her to believe this – the poor dear!

In ordinary times, when no world-movements stimulate, the chief exasperation of woman resides in jealousy. It differs from male jealousy, for the male is generally possessive, the female

competitive. I suspect that Euripides was generalizing rashly when he said that woman is woman's natural ally. She is too sex-conscious for that, and many of us have observed the annoyance of a mother when her son weds. Competition is always violent, so much so that woman is generally mocking or angry if a man praises ever so slightly another woman. If she is young and able to make a claim on all men, she tends to be still more virulent because her claim is on *all* men. This is partly due to the marriage market and its restrictions, but it is also partly natural. No doubt because it is natural, woman attempts to conceal that jealousy, nature being generally considered ignoble by the civilized world. In this respect we must accept that an assumption of coldness is considered a means of enticing man. It may well be that, where woman does not exhibit jealousy, she is with masterly skill suggesting to the man a problem: why is she not jealous? On which follows the desire to make her jealous, and entanglement.

Because of these powerful preoccupations, when woman adopts a career she has hitherto frequently allowed herself to be diverted therefrom by love. Up to the end of the nineteenth century it was very common for a woman to abandon the stage, the concert platform, and so forth, when she married. A change has come about, and there is a growing tendency in women, whether or not at the expense of love I do not know, to retain their occupations when they marry. But the tendency of woman still is to revert to the instinctive function. In days to come, when we have developed the individual and broken up the socialized

society in which we live, when the home has been swept away and the family destroyed, I do not believe that this factor will operate so powerfully. In the way of change stand the remnants of woman's slavish habit. No longer a slave, she tends to follow, to submit, to adjust her conduct to the wish of man, and it is significant that a powerful man is seldom henpecked. The henpecked deserve to be henpecked, and I would point out that there is no intention in these notes to attempt to substitute henpecked husbands for cockpecked wives. The tendency is all the other way, for woman tends to mould herself to man.

A number of cases lie before me:

Case 61 married a barrister. Before her marriage she lived in a commercial atmosphere; after marriage she grew violently legal in her conversation. Her husband developed a passion for motoring; so did Case 61. Observe that during a previous attachment to a doctor, Case 61 had manifested a growing interest in medicine.

Case 18 comes from a hunting family, married a literary man, and within a few years has ceased to take any exercise and mixes exclusively with literary people.

Case 38, on becoming engaged to a member of the Indian Civil Service, became a sedulous student of Indian literature and religion. On her husband's appointment to a European post, her interest did not diminish. She has paid a lengthy visit to India.

There are compensating cases among men: I have two. In one case a soldier who married a literary woman has turned into a

scholar. In the other a commercial man, who married a popular actress, has been completely absorbed by the theater, and is now writing successful plays.

It would appear from these rather disjointed notes that the emotional quality in woman is more or less at war with her intellectual aims. Indeed it is sometimes suggested that where woman appears, narrowness follows; that books by women are mostly confined to love, are not cosmic in feeling. This is generally true, for reasons which I hope to indicate a little farther on; but it is not true that books where women are the chief characters are narrow. Such novels as *Anna Karenina*, *Madame Bovary*, *Une Vie*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* make that point obvious. As a rule, books about men, touching as they do, not only upon love, but upon art, politics, business, are more powerful than books about women. But one should not forget that books written round women are mostly written by women. As women are far less powerful in literature than men, we must not conclude that books about women are naturally lesser than books about men. The greatest books about women have been written by men. But few men are sufficiently unprejudiced to grasp women; only a genius can do so, and that is why few books about women exist that deserve the epithet great. It remains to be seen whether an increased understanding of the affairs of the world will develop among women a literary power which, together with the world, will embrace herself.

7

In the attempt to indicate what the future may reserve for woman, it is important to consider what she has done, because she has achieved much in the face of conservatism, of male egotism, of male jealousy, of poverty, of ignorance, and of prejudice. These chains are weaker to-day, and the goodwill that shall not die will break them yet; but many women, a few of whose names follow, gave while enslaved an idea of woman's quality. Examine indeed this short list:[5]

Painting: Angelica Kauffmann, Madame Vigée le Brun, Rosa Bonheur.

Music and drama: Rachel, Siddons, Ellen Terry, Sarah Bernhardt, Teresa Carreño, Sadayacco.

Literature: George Eliot, Jane Austen, the Brontës, Madame de Staël, Madame de Sévigné, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Browning. More recent, Mrs. Alice Meynell, Miss May Sinclair, "Lucas Malet," Mrs. Edith Wharton, "Vernon Lee."

Social service and politics: Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Miss Jane Addams, Madame Montessori, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Ennis Richmond, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, Florence Nightingale, Mrs. Havelock Ellis, Mrs. Sidney Webb, Miss Clementina Black, Josephine Butler, Mrs. Pankhurst, Elizabeth Fry. Observe the

---

[5] I associate the arts with intellectual quality. (See "Woman and the Paintpot.") Broadly, I believe that all achievements, artistic or otherwise, proceed from intellect.

curious case of Mrs. Hetty Green, financier.

This list could be enormously increased, and, as it is, it is a random list, omitting women of distinction and including women of lesser distinction. But still it contains no unknown names, and, though I do not pretend that it compares with a similar list of men, it is an indication. I am anxious that the reader should not think that I want to compare Angelica Kauffmann with Leonardo, or Jane Austen with Shakespeare. In every walk of life since history began there have been a score of men of talent for every woman of talent, and there has never been a female genius. That should not impress us: genius is an accident; it may be a disease. It may be that mankind has produced only two or three geniuses, and that one or two women in days to come may redress the balance, and it may be that several women have been mute inglorious Miltons. We do not know. But in the matter of talent, notably in the arts, I submit that woman can be hopeful, particularly because most of the names I give are those of women of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century was better for woman than the eighteenth, the eighteenth better than the seventeenth: what could be more significant? In the arts I feel that woman has never had her opportunity. She has been hailed as an executive artist, actress, singer, pianist; but as a creator, novelist, poet, painter, she has been steadfastly discounted, – told that what she did was very pretty, until she grew unable to do anything but the pretty-pretty. She has grown up in an atmosphere of patronage and roses, deferential, subservient. She

has persistently been told that certain subjects were "not fit for nice young ladies"; she has been shut away from the expression of life.

Here is a typical masculine attitude, that of Mr. George Moore, in *A Modern Lover*. Mr. George Moore, who seems to know a great deal about females but less about women, causes in this book Harding, the novelist, who generally expresses him, to criticize George Sand, George Eliot, and Rosa Bonheur: "If they have created anything new, how is it that their art is exactly like our own? I defy any one to say that George Eliot's novels are a woman's writing, or that The Horse Fair was not painted by a man. I defy you to show me a trace of feminality in anything they ever did; that is the point I raise. I say that women as yet have not been able to transfuse into art a trace of their sex; in other words, unable to assume a point of view of their own, they have adopted ours."

This is cool! I have read a great deal of Mr. George Moore's art criticism: when it deals with the work of a man he never seeks the *masculine* touch. He judges a man's work as art; he will not judge a woman's work as art. He starts from the assumption that man's art is art, while woman's art is – well, woman's art. That is the sort of thing which has discouraged woman; that is the atmosphere of tolerance and good-conduct prizes which she has breathed, and that is the stifling stupidity through which she is breaking. She will break through, for I believe that she loves the arts better than does man. She is better ground for the development of a great

artist, for she approaches art with sympathy, while the great bulk of men approach it with fear and dislike, shrinking from the idea that it may disturb their self-complacency. The prejudice goes so far that, while women are attracted to artists as lovers, men are generally afraid of women who practice the arts, or they dislike them. It is not a question of sex; it is a question of art. All that is part of sexual heredity, of which I must say a few words.

But, before doing so, let me waste a few lines on the male conception of love, which has influenced woman because love is still her chief business. To this day, though it dies slowly, the male attitude is still the attitude to a toy. It is the attitude of Nietzsche when saying, "Man is for war, woman for the recreation of the warrior." This idea is so prevalent that Great Britain, in its alleged struggle against Nietzschean ideas, is making abundant use of the Nietzschean point of view. No wonder, for the idea runs not only through men but through Englishmen: "woman is the reward of war," – that is a prevalent idea, notably among men who make war in the neighborhood of waste-paper baskets. It has been exemplified by the British war propaganda in every newspaper and in every music hall, begging women to refuse to be seen with a man unless he is in khaki. It has had government recognition in the shape of recruiting posters, asking women "whether their best boy is in khaki." It has been popularly formulated on picture postcards touchingly inscribed, "No gun, no girl."

All that – woman as the prize (a theory repudiated in the case of Belgian atrocities) – is an idea deeply rooted in man. In

the eighteen-sixties the customary proposal was, "Will you be mine?" Very faintly signs are showing that men will yet say, "May I be yours?" It will take time, for the possessive, the dominating instinct in man, is still strong; and long may it live, for that is the vigor of the race. Only we do not want that instinct to carry man away, any more than we want a well-bred horse to clench its teeth upon the bit and bolt.

We want to do everything we can to get rid of what may be called the creed of the man of the world, which is suggested as repulsively as anywhere in Mr. Rudyard Kipling's *Departmental Ditties*:

> "My Son, if a maiden deny thee and scufflingly bid thee give o'er,
> Yet lip meets with lip at the lastward – get out! She has been there before.
> They are pecked on the ear and the chin and the nose who are lacking in lore.
>
> "Pleasant the snaffle of Courtship, improving the manners and carriage;
> But the colt who is wise will abstain from the terrible thornbit of Marriage.
> Blister we not for *bursati*? So when the heart is vext,
> The pain of one maiden's refusal is drowned in the pain of the next."

There is a great deal of this sort of thing in Molière, in

Thackeray, in Casanova. The old idea of woman eluding and lying; of woman stigmatized if she has "been there before", while man may brag of having "been there before" as often as possible; of man lovelacing for his credit's sake and woman adventuring at her peril.

8

I submit that each man and woman has two heredities: one the ordinary heredity from two parents and their forbears, the other more complex and purely mental – the tradition of sex. Heredity through sex may be defined as the resultant of consecutive environments. I mean that a woman, for instance, is considerably influenced by the ideas and attitudes of her mother, grandmothers, and all female ascendants. They had a tradition, and it is the basis of her outlook. Any boy born in a slum can, as he grows educated, realize that the world lies before him; literature and history soon show him that many as lowly as he have risen to fame, as artists, scientists, statesmen; he may even dream of becoming a king, like Bonaparte. To the boy nothing is impossible; if he is brave, there is nothing he may not tear from the world. He knows it, and it strengthens him; it gives him confidence. What his fathers did, he may do; the male sexual heredity is a proud heritage, and only yesterday a man said to me, "Thank God, I am a man." Contrast with this the corresponding type of heredity in woman. Woman carries in her the slave tradition of her maternal forbears, of people who never did anything because they were never allowed to; who were told that they could do nothing but please, until they at last believed it, until by believing they lost the power of action; who were never taught, and because uneducated were ashamed; who were never

helped to understand the work of the world, political, financial, scientific, and, therefore, grew to believe that such realms were not for them. I need not labor the comparison: obviously any woman, inspired by centuries of dependence, instinctively feels that, while everything is open to man, very little is open to her. She comes into the arena with a leaden sword; in most cases she hardly has energy to struggle.

A little while ago, when Britain was floating a large war loan, one woman told me that she could not understand its terms. We went into them together, and she found that she understood perfectly. *She was surprised.* She had always assumed that she did not understand finance, and the assumption had kept her down, prevented her from understanding it. Likewise, and until they try, many women think they cannot read maps and time-tables.

With that heredity environment has coalesced, and I think no one will deny that a continuous suggestion of helplessness and mental inferiority must affect woman. It means most during youth, when one is easily snubbed, when one looks up to one's elders. By the time one has found out one's elders, it is generally too late; the imprint is made, and woman, looking upon herself as inferior, hands on to her daughters the old slavery that was in her forbears' blood. To me this seems foolish, and during the past thirty or forty years a great many have come to think so too; they have shown it by opening wide to woman the doors of colleges, many occupations and professions. Many are to-day impatient because woman has not done enough, has not

justified this new freedom. I think they are unjust; they do not understand that a generation of training and of relative liberty is not enough to undo evils neolithic in origin. All that we are doing to-day by opening gates to women is to counter-influence the old tradition, to implant in the woman of to-morrow the new faith that nothing is beyond her powers. It lies with the woman of to-day to make that faith so strong as to move mountains. I think she will succeed, for I doubt whether any mental power is inherent in sex. There are differences of degree, differences of quality; but I suspect that they are mainly due to sexual heredity, to environment, to suggestion, and that indeed, if I may trench upon biology, human creatures are never entirely male or entirely female; there are no men, there are no women, but only sexual majorities.

The evolution of woman toward mental assimilation with man, though particularly swift in the past half-century, has been steady since the Renaissance. Roughly, one might say that the woman of the year 1450 had no education at all; in this she was more like man than she ever was later, for the knights could not read, and learning existed only among the priests. The time had not yet come for the learned nobleman; Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Surrey, the Euphuists, had not yet dispelled the mediæval fogs, and few among the laymen, save Cheke and Ascham, had any learning at all. In those days woman sang songs and brought up babies. Two hundred and fifty years later the well-to-do woman had become somebody; she could even read,

though she mainly read tales such as *The Miraculous Love of Prince Alzamore*. She was growing significant in the backstairs of politics. Sometimes she took a bath. Round about 1850 she turned into the "perfect lady" who kept an album bound in morocco leather. She wrote verses that embodied yearnings. Often she had a Turkish parlor, and usually as many babies as she could. But already the Brontës and George Eliot had come to knock at the door; Miss Braddon was promising to be, if not a glory, at least a power, and before twenty years were out, John Stuart Mill was to lead the first suffragettes to the House of Commons.

To-day it is another picture: woman in every trade except those in which she intends to be; woman demanding and using political power; woman governing her own property; woman senior to man in the civil service. She has not yet her charter, and still suffers much from the tradition of inferiority, from her lack of confidence in herself. But many women are all ambition, and within the last year two young women novelists have convinced me that the thing they most desire is to be great in their art. Whether they will succeed does not matter much; what does matter is that they should harbor such a wish. Whether woman's physical disabilities, her present bias toward unduly moral and inadequately intellectual judgments, will forever hamper her, I do not know; but I do not think so. Whether the influence of woman, more inherently lawless, more anarchic than man, will result in the breaking down of conventions and the despising of

the law, I do not know either. But if the world is to be remoulded, I think it much more likely to be remoulded by woman than by man, simply because that as a sex he is in power, and the people who are in power never want to alter anything.

Woman's rebellion is everywhere indicated: her brilliance, her failings, her unreasonableness, all these are excellent signs of her revolt. She is even revolting against her own beauty; often she neglects her clothes, her hair, her complexion, her teeth. This is a pity, but it must not be taken too seriously: men on active service grow beards, and woman in her emancipation campaign is still too busy to think of the art of charming. I suspect that as time passes and she suffers less intolerably from a sense of injustice, she will revert to the old graces. The art of charming was a response to convention; and of late years unconventionality, a great deal of which is ridiculous, has grown much more among women than among men. That is not wonderful, for there were so many things woman might not do. Almost any movement would bring her up against a barrier; that is why it seems that she does nothing in the world except break barriers. How genuine woman's rebellion is, no man can say. It may be that woman's impulse toward male occupations and rights is only a reaction against the growing difficulty of gaining a mate, children, and a home. But I very much more believe that woman is straining toward a new order, that the swift evolution of her mind is leading her to contest more and more violently the assumption that there are ineradicable differences between the male and the female

mind. As she grows more capable of grasping at education, she will become more worthy of it; her intellect will harden, tend to resemble that of man; and so, having escaped from the emptiness of the past into the special fields which have been conceded her, she will make for broader fields, fields so vast that they will embrace the world.

II
FEMINIST INTENTIONS

1

The Feminist propaganda – which should not be confounded with the Suffrage agitation – rests upon a revolutionary biological principle. Substantially, the Feminists argue that there are no men and that there are no women; there are only sexual majorities. To put the matter less obscurely, the Feminists base themselves on Weininger's theory, according to which the male principle may be found in woman, and the female principle in man. It follows that they recognize no masculine or feminine "*spheres*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, купив полную легальную версию на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.