

The Alpha.

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Human Rights before all Laws and Constitutions.—Gerrit Smith.
The Divine Right of Every Child to be Well Born.

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"WHAT WE HAVE TO DO."

BY ELIZABETH KINGSBURY.

CONTINUED.

What has to be done can be done. There seems scarcely any limit to human capacity for meeting emergencies and overcoming difficulties. The tired mother of a large family often proves this. From sunrise to sunset there is scarcely a minute she can call her own, her time is constantly taken up with serving one member of her household or another, she is weary with that inexpressible weariness that is perhaps only known to mothers of large families, yet when some new and unlooked for demand is made upon her time and strength she simply says, "What must be done will be done." And she proves her words true. But the converse of this cannot be said. Nature has given us no power to do that which is not demanded of us. Moral reformers must bear this in mind. If we have a given duty to perform and insist upon turning our attention to something else, when we ought to be occupied with the assigned task, the chances are that the imposed duty will be entirely neglected or badly performed. Nature has assigned to human beings the task of conforming to her laws, so that they may become healthy parents of strong children, under penalty of race degeneration and final extinction. Man, instead of concentrating his attention on this nature—assigned task, makes for himself certain social regulations and throws all his energy into getting these regulations obeyed, at whatever cost, till he often loses sight altogether of the duty nature has imposed. It may be that originally there was a close connection between natural and human law, but, if so, mental inertia has caused the connection to drop out of sight, and led to a blind adherence to customs that, little by little, have diverged from the original form till all trace of the line that united them to nature, and consequently to human well being, has been lost. This mental inertia affects us all in a greater or less degree and not till disaster has awakened us do we start from custom-worship and inquire where the constant but never ceasing, the unconscious, because so gradual, divergence of social institutions from natural law is leading.

Reform comes only when evils have become sufficiently intolerable to rouse the intellect from its chronic state of stupor. The mind once awakened begins to compare existing habits with human needs. Custom is referred back to its origin, and men are startled to find that that which was founded on reason has fallen into

senseless superstition. What has society substituted for nature's great law of chastity? What but the separation of the sexes? The imperative duty of living in conformity with the physical law of our being is lost sight of; it is not taught in our schools; it is not preached in the pulpits; it is not expected in the home; and it is not considered in the arrangements of society. But instead of this vital matter being seen to we have the *separation of the sexes*. This, at least, is practically enforced in the schools; the pulpit throws its powerful influence into the same scale, and does what is in its power to widen the breach between "those whom God hath joined" by ignoring the whole spirit of Christ's teaching and example, and substituting the Jewish teaching of Saul of Tarsus; the home follows suit, rejoicing over the birth of a boy, regretfully receiving the baby girl, thus awakening the sense of injustice and wrong, in the minds of the girl members of families, that often bears such bitter fruits in after life, and renders woman the bane rather than the blessing of man's life. Society, too, carries on the work begun at school, enforced at church, continued at home, and denies to women those rights that are only refused to idiots and the worst of criminals of the other sex. What wonder that in heart, in mind, in aspiration for earth, and hopes for heaven, the separation of the men and women is complete. Yet that which nature does not want done she gives us no power to do. We cannot fly like birds, we cannot swim like fishes, and we cannot live a human life while division in the human family exists that is contrary to the Divine order of creation which has made men and women individually weak and helpless, but when perfected by union but little lower than the angels. The separation of the sexes during childhood and youth which custom enforces, in Europe, at least, if not in freer America, puts a burden upon young people that they are not fitted to carry. Their weaknesses are doubled, their strength is halved. The moral force that would suffice to govern the passions, even in their present abnormal condition, cannot control the natural and legitimate desire of youths and maidens to enjoy the companionship of members of the opposite sex. It is an impulse altogether irrepressible, an instinct so deeply implanted, and the gratification of which is so essential, that the Guardian Mother herself seems to have taken measures to prevent its extinction by any social arrangements whatever. Certainly systems that would succeed in making the sexes antagonistic to each other, if any contrivance

of man's could counteract the designs of Nature, which would render the presence of the sexes burdensome each to the other, from unfamiliarity and strangeness, have only contrived to bring mischief and misery from that which should be a source of health and strength to each succeeding generation.

Jean Paul says "To insure modesty, I would advise the education of the sexes together; for two boys will preserve twelve girls, or two girls twelve boys, innocent amidst winks, jokes, and improprieties, merely by that instinctive sense which is the forerunner of matured modesty. But I will guarantee nothing in a school where girls are alone together, and still less where boys are." Now the world is a larger school and men and women only children of larger growth whose education it is our business to promote as best we may. As in the early days of childhood the influence of girls upon boys and boys upon girls is productive of nothing but mutual benefit, so, if custom did not step in and forbid all free companionship between youths and maidens, men and women, or poison such intercourse by injurious suggestions, the friendships of later life, which would be the natural result of the attraction of sex, would preserve the virtue of the men, and save them from the loss of the highest attribute of manhood, namely reverence for woman, while it would save women from the narrowness that comes upon those whose interests are confined to a limited sphere. Unfortunately that which if sanctioned and encouraged as an invaluable educational power would go far towards removing many of the worse features of our civilization, is frowned upon, and the possibility of it existing in honor and purity, treated as chimerical by European nations. Yet what lesson does contemporary history teach us in this grave matter? Do we not see France, where the sexes are most strictly separated, where a couple contemplating life-long union are not permitted to exchange the most formal visit without the presence of a parent or guardian, given up to "Lubricity," to use Mr. Matthew Arnold's now famous term, while Ireland, where the greatest freedom of intercourse is permitted to the sexes, is without dispute the home of the most moral nation in the world, if we use the word moral in its narrow and conventional sense.

The business of life cannot be carried on by men alone, or by women alone, sooner or later the one must and will seek the others' aid, and it should be recognized as an important branch of education to prepare the sexes for the duties each has to fulfil towards the other. But it is rare to meet with instructors who take this important and inevitable destiny of their charges into account; the anxiety of educators appears to be entirely directed to keeping apart the beings, whose success or failure, whose happiness or misery, depends, to a great degree, on the understanding they can attain of their respective modes of thought and feeling. If we had learned of this strange conduct as being practiced by some semi-civilized people of remote antiquity we should not cease to marvel at the mental darkness and strange infatuation that produced an error so fatal to human progress and social well-being, but because we have grown up in the midst of this dangerous system, even though its evil results are never absent from our

eyes, we scarcely take the trouble to raise our voice in protest. Yet who that has any knowledge of girls and boys, of men and women, can doubt that many of their most serious mistakes, many of their most fatal errors, errors that life-long repentance cannot blot out and make the future as though they had not been, arise from this utter ignorance of the similarities and divergences that mark out the different characteristics of the male and female mind. Each sex inherits an instinctive feeling that one of its chief duties is to please the other sex. If Nature herself had not taken precautions to have it so it is difficult to imagine how the business of creation would have gone on, so many and such legitimate causes of complaint have men against women and women against men. These causes of complaint have arisen chiefly from mutual ignorance. Each sex judging from superficial observation and hasty generalization undervalues the moral qualities of its opposite. To women speaking broadly all men appear selfish and somewhat sensual, to men all women appear vain and unreliable. Women think there is small use in appealing to the chivalrous forbearance, the noble generosity of men, men think that women care for dress and social standing more than for loving reverence without these accessories.

People will not as a class rise very much above the level assigned to them by those whose esteem they most desire. If women are dissatisfied with the moral qualifications of men they seek to hide their dissatisfaction from those who cause it, and solace themselves as well as they can, for the disappointment by attributing the fault to the sex that they are loth to blame in the individual. The tactics of men are much the same. The faults they see in the loved ones they do not seek to root out. "Women are all so," they say, and go on their way with a sigh, feeling the world a little drearier, a little more unsatisfactory, than even their low estimate had led them to expect. How can things be better while those destined to guide and aid each other through the wilderness of life remain strangers? How can we hope for moral progress, for increase of domestic or social happiness, while there is so little confidence, so little friendship between the sexes? Men are free from the restraints imposed by society upon women, and will have the companionship of girls at any cost, if they cannot enjoy the companionship of women of their own class they will get the society of women of other classes. If the companionship of the refined is denied then they will have the unrefined. Any girl is better than no girl they seem to think. And we cannot feel that the instinct is an unhealthy one. Has not "The Luck of Roaring Camp" immortalized the humanizing influence of even indifferent specimens of the gentle sex. We have lately heard a great deal about the duty of treating with stern equality the erring man and the erring woman, and doubtless the suggestion is wise and just, but have we done all that can be done to lessen the temptation of men and women to seek illegitimate companionship. Does not the forbidding of honorable friendship between men and women encourage intercourse which is not honorable. Is there not something essentially base in the current doctrine that intimate ac-

quaintance between a man and a woman implies criminal intentions?

I remember being startled when quite a girl by hearing a man of the world give it as his opinion that the guilt of a wife whose case was at that time before the divorce courts, was clear enough, for it had been proved that she had driven about alone in a cab with the co-respondent. I was startled to find with what ease a woman might lay herself open to suspicion while doing, what then appeared to me, the most innocent action in the world. But what depth of corruption is shown in a state of society that feels itself compelled to frown upon harmless acts in order to secure the observance of its still lax code of morality. And how helpful to the lustful is a public opinion, that while shutting its eyes to cruelty and wrong, if inflicted on girls of the lower ranks of life, guards the good reputation of its more fortunate daughters by forbidding innocent actions merely because they might possibly result in evil. I am not arguing that, things being as they are, it is wise of a woman to put herself in a position which may be considered suspicious by her fellow-countrymen: "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion," and every good husband, father or brother is Caesar to his female relatives. The confusion of thought brought about by the condemnation of innocent acts is fatal to hosts of young people. That which, on the face of it, is harmless is frowned upon and treated as criminal, till the impression is made that morality is merely a conventional matter, having no foundation in reason. The guidance of reason being thus set aside what is left for the youthful mind to trust in. It is not to be expected that ignorant boys and girls will have studied the constitution of the social organism, or that their unassisted intelligence will teach them that their personal happiness, the peace of families, the stability of society and national greatness are bound up in the question of the relations of the sexes. Yet when a walk after dark, a visit to a place of amusement, casual meetings of frequent occurrence, or ordinary friendship with one of the opposite sex brings condemnation in its train what wonder that thousands of young people, by no means lightminded or frivolously disposed, throw prudence to the winds and learn too late that beneath the treacherous ice, spread by custom and ignorance, lies hidden deep and deadly waters ready to engulf them. Would it not be better far to leave the cold dark waters, exposed to view, than to hide them from sight till no one knows their depth and coldness till he has tasted their black bitterness. Does it follow that because few have the strength to bear man's yoke of isolation all could not obey nature's law of chastity and universal brotherhood. Depend upon it that the social evil does not yield to treatment because the treatment is unscientific, because the diagnosis is at fault.

Thousands of men who would scorn to take advantage of a girl's innocence, a woman's fondness, were free and honourable intercourse permitted between the sexes, now injure those they would cherish from sheer ignorance of their own and woman's noblest needs. They are fond, and they desire to show their fondness, but they are for the most part ignorant of the spiritual resources of the human being. They are just un-

trained animals coming into possession of forces and potentialities they do not understand, and they use their power like animals. Who is to blame? Thrown, through the undeveloped condition of woman's mental powers, into the company of their own sex exclusively, when desirous of intellectual pleasures, they learn to look upon girls as suited only for frivolous amusement, and the natural companions of idle hours, when serious thoughts are thrown aside and physical attraction comes into full play. Now flirting, though amusing enough for a short time, becomes intolerably hard work when carried on for weeks together, and love making, whether there is love in the case or not, takes its place merely for the sake of a change. Would it not be miraculous if mischief did not result? How many unhappy engagements, how many fatal marriages are to be traced to this cause of mingled ignorance and idleness. The very fact that men look to men, instead of to women, for their code of honor in matters pertaining to sex would alone account for disastrous failure. Woman only can judge truly in matters concerning sexual morality. She alone is capable of estimating the wrong done to a woman in robbing her of the venerable title of honored motherhood. She alone can form some faint estimate of the injury done to the child of shame by the depressing influence at work on the mother during the period of gestation. But is it probable that men will take women as their guides in the region of ethics so long as they esteem them only as companions for their lighter hours, as the ministers to their creature comforts, more revered than the cook when more skilled, better than a housekeeper because more economical and more trustworthy.

Let women remember that their willingness to take a lower place than that assigned them by nature, works incalculable mischief to the higher interests of the men for whose sake they are false to their womanly instincts and false to their sex. Men taught while mere boys, both by father and mother, to hold women in small respect as a class, come to esteem the character of women of small account, except as it regards some man to whom the woman may happen to belong, and feel no shame in consorting with girls of less than reputable renown. When this step on the downward course is taken it is not hard to prophesy the result. The young man probably means no harm. The evil began when a little toddling infant he discovered that he was of more importance to father and mother (to his world) than his little sister. Shall not his pleasure be of more importance than the good name of this woman, already of small account. And after all what is a woman's good name but the estimation in which she is held by men? Will his action make her less acceptable to other men? Certainly not; then he will follow his good pleasure, and as to making her an outcast from the society of other women what matters that? And so the fatal lie runs its corrupting course. When society is built up on the theory of man supremacy would it not be illogical to remember that the estimate of woman seals the fate of women, and that proud man does not care for a wife that women will not visit; that woman's verdict is final even with the master, and that he would be loth to

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have his sister seen where that sad fair one haunts who has been cursed by too much of man's attention.

Whether we owe it or not the judgment of women determines the punishment that is meted out to those whose crime attacks the foundations of individual, of family, of social honor. Whether we are willing to have it so or not women inflict the social punishment, that attaches itself to sexual immorality, and women are therefore guilty if they use less than their utmost efforts to lessen the widespread and destructive vice that is blighting our homes and bringing disgrace upon our cities. Their efforts must be directed, as we have endeavored to show, not only to dealing righteous judgment and equal punishment to the offenders of both sexes, but more especially to raising the whole tone of woman's mind so as to enable her to take her rightful place in social life as the companion, friend, and guide of man. It is here that her influence is especially needed. Let her, by precept and example, inspire her sisters to make the effort that is necessary for them to become the chosen friends of men; then the woman's ideal of noble life will be unconsciously adopted in the region of sexual morality, as it is already adopted in other walks of life. Men and women have tried to live apart from each other, without mutual understanding, without love, without sympathy, making sexual attraction of the lowest kind do duty in their stead, and the experiment has proved a monstrous failure. It is union, not division, that the Great Mother wants. Not separation of the brothers and sisters of the human family but mutual understanding that would produce mutual trust. Mothers do not strive to keep your young daughters apart from the companionship of men but strive to make your boys worthy of all trust and honor, so that not alone your girls but all girls are safe with them, then will you have built a wall of defence about the hearts of your sons and daughters for which future generations shall call you blessed.

YES OR NO.

The estate which we to-day call *matrimony* has been a slow evolution from the several antecedent conditions which have marked the progress of mankind hitherto.

When physical might was the only right, and bodily strength alone meant power, woman was made subject to himself by man, and deprived of the liberty of sexual choice, which is the privilege of the females of all the lower orders of creation; the "*disability*" consequent upon her maternity only becoming apparent with the dawn of human intelligence!

If not, for this reason, destroyed in her infancy, she was, when mature, either taken a captive in war or forcibly abducted by one of her own tribe, and the man who thus secured a woman for himself did with her as he pleased. He loaned her to other men as an act of friendship or hospitality; shared her permanently with several when the emergencies of war, or the chase, demanded the absence of many men for long periods; multiplied her when his estate or prowess permitted him so to do; possessed her, defrauded her, divorced her, secluded her, imposed the heaviest tasks upon her, willed her to his heirs with his other chattels when he died, or burned her upon his funeral pyre.

The serfdom thus instituted has disguised itself in more seemly and attractive garbs, as the amenities of advancing civilization have demanded concessions from man; but a survey of present prevailing laws and customs—customs extant among the most enlightened peoples—will result in the conviction that although our women are not abducted, captured, or made wives by physical violence, nevertheless, the stronger of the two sexes still "confines the other to the cares and pleasures of a domestic life," whose duties and burdens are defined by man, and in his supposed interest.

The not so distant, determined, and persistent opposition to giving women business advantages, professional educations, equal wages, a voice in the affairs of state, found its root in the desire of the majority of men to hold within their own hands those powers and purchasing agents which would give to them the vantage and enable them thus to bend woman, collectively and individually, to their will; and to-day, whenever and however equality of rights is denied, the animus is still the same.

"Wifehood is the crowning glory of woman," says the priest; "in it she is bound for all time. To her husband she owes the duty of unqualified obedience." "The laws of God are Salic." Plainly do those blind leaders of the blind fear lest, with the resources of the world at their equal command, women should gain the control of their own lives, and they tremble before a social revolution which must deprive them and all other men of many usurped prerogatives.

Fearing to admit the vicious circle whose initial are that male inscribed who in his ignorance defied the freedom of sexual choice, God-given to woman, men prefer to charge the social sins which threaten our peace solely to her desire for emancipation from what they please to call divinely appointed subjection to their baser selves. Has bird or beast no message to these devotees of nature?

The increase in the number of divorces when the marriage tie may easily be sundered; the prevalence of illegal unions wherever it has been tightened; the daily, hourly encroachments of prostitution, with the efforts to legalize it in so-called Christian lands; the protests of some medical men and some "advanced" women against the enforced chastity of unmarried women; the decreasing desire for children; the numerous abortions—at whose door shall they be laid?

It is true that in the past the subservience of woman to man has been to her a means of salvation, since she gradually acquired a habit of faithfulness towards the man who husbanded her, as he grew socially powerful enough to demand such allegiance and desired it, lest he be forced to care for children who were not his own. Daughters in time thus inherited from their mothers, and were forced to cultivate by their fathers, a tendency toward chastity, for without it as wives they might be refused by other men. But man reserved for himself, because he could, the right to corrupt women he found corruptible (measured by this standard) and at the same time so to stigmatize them that they should be a warning to the class from which he expected to select the mothers of the children who should inherit his name,

estates or gold. Through the chastity thus enjoined upon the majority of women by the conditions of almost all civilizations the greater number have acquired at some period in the national development a tendency toward virtue and a love of home upon which man has invariably reared his domestic and civic hopes for the future, ignoring the disintegrating tendencies of his own cherished immunities, and forgetting that in the past this product of his self-interest, so powerful of good to himself and to his race, has been uprooted time and time again by the back-door-creeping of his most secret vice.

Whether the lights of the civilizations of our age are to be thus extinguished by the whirlwinds of licentiousness and riot, gathering strength as ever with ease and luxury, man must decide. The morality of moral woman unaided by him is as powerless as hitherto to avert the storm, while we are justified in dreading the danger, which threatened and ruined Rome unheeded, the growing repugnance of good women to the marital relation.

It is true, as man contends, that so long as there was but one calling for a moral woman which entitled her to the honorable consideration of the men who made her world, and the women who echoed their sentiments, she did not stop to question the terms of the contract into which she entered on her wedding day, nor did she hesitate to embrace "a life-long relationship in which every resulting right and duty were fixed by law, without a thought given to that law; neither did she linger upon the threshold of matrimony to wonder if life held out no better hope. It is true that she does to-day, and as she pauses upon the brink of his once condoned necessities it is not strange that man would gladly blind and shackle her once more, failing to see that their highest interests are one.

Wide as the poles, distant as moon and sun, has he endeavored to separate the two classes of women which he has created in response to his behests—the free woman and the bond—but hand in hand they stand before him questioning.

"Wherefore! oh! man, should I, who am a necessary good, the guardian of your homes, the reply to your God-given propensities, be hounded to obloquy by you and by the virtuous women, who but for me could not exist, you say? Give me protection, grant me your honor, engrave my name upon your hearthstone, teach your children to whisper it with reverence and not with shame. You entreat me, you beseech me, you draft your laws to encompass my ruin, undone you spurn me. Wherefore?"

"And me, your honor, I have, and this is all forsooth. My personality, my individuality, my right to live, my control of my offspring are merged in you, you are indeed my lord and master, and have left me without the right of appeal to any civil authority for the redress of any wrong while I am yours, wherefore?"

If to-day the female prostitute be considered the more criminal because she earns her bread by her vice while the male is excusable because he but squanders his earnings upon her, the only possible explanation is that man has neither conceded to woman the right to earn

money or acknowledge her proprietorship in her own person. As she acquires one freedom she will, as he fears, demand the other, and she will then in some way, for evil or for good—which, is the question—equalize the social and civil laws which to-day make sensual crimes the sin of woman; the tribute to nature, of man. And moreover with her recognition of the indignities to womanhood marriage offers, of the murders which it legally justifies, of the cruelties it sanctions, and for which it offers no redress, will come an overturning for which man is responsible, since by him were made the laws and by him they are supported.

Upon the present basis how should men suppose the old sentiments will prove strong enough to induce proud, sensitive, intelligent, half-emancipated women to accept the bitterness with the sweet, to forego comparative freedom for a servitude which, beginning in love, may so soon be turned to hate? With half-opened eyes how should they suppose weak women would remain true to tyrannical masters who demand for themselves every freedom they deny their wives.

Is it naught that over the children whose maternity she may not refuse woman has no control; naught that her unborn babe may be willed to an alien by the man who fathered it; naught that she has no voice in its education, its religion, if her wishes and his do not coincide?

"There are some points," says Alice Stone Blackwell, "in which the law is more than just to women, but these do not offset the more important ones in which it is less. The few unfair advantages which they do give can almost all be traced to the idea that women are properly wards of their husbands or of the State, rather than citizens entitled to equal rights and equal responsibilities. The example most frequently quoted is that 'a husband is legally bound to support his wife, while a wife is not legally bound to support her husband.' There is another side to the case which is not so often mentioned. The law gives a husband a right to his wife's services." In any labor market, except a slave market, would they be valued at so little worth as the board and lodging with which they are recompensed?

When women are self-supporting must they not demand of the man who proposes to share their lives, "How will you recompense me, if I give up my life, work, my opportunity for self-advancement along my own lines of purpose and of being to undertake for you, with you, a task you cannot accomplish by yourself, and in so doing forego all means to gratify my personal aims?"

Sordid? Shockingly mercenary? In Europe, marriage settlements are not unknown, and in romance-loving America the candidate for matrimony sometimes makes a shrewd mental estimate and decision upon a gold basis; yet read by the light of the law "with all my worldly goods I thee endow" is so transparently a witticism that one regards with wonder the faith which accepts the vow unchallenged.

To force women to depend upon the generosity or justness of their husbands in pecuniary matters is right to neither and is not conducive to the highest happiness of either in the majority of instances. If

there are wives whose husbands concede their claim to an allowance, if there are others who expend without remonstrance far larger sums than the latter can afford to give—do these alter the fact that the greater number of married women never find themselves, *by consent*, the absolute possessors of one dollar to do with exactly as they desire from the day of their marriage till their death? And if some of these pensioners upon the bounty of their masters endanger their own honesty when they use money drawn from the family exchequer for any purpose unapproved of them, however dear to their own hearts, the rest too often openly defy both wishes and commands and live in a state of petty rebellion hardly conducive to domestic felicity, or to a high tone of parental influence, although apparently justifiable from the standpoint of a defrauded woman.

Within the bonds of matrimony, as without them, money is power. The woman who has in housewifely service lost her familiarity with the art which once supported her, who has no bank account on which to draw in case of need, whose very clothes may belong to the man she serves; what hope for her in rebellion, however she be wronged? And conversely, "it is more often the sense of his absolute power over the woman he has married that converts a man into a selfish tyrant, than any inherent desire he has to be unkind or unjust; and if, from the outset, a husband knew that his wife could not be forced to submit to his degrading exactions, his neglect, and contemptuous indifference to her comfort, he would from the instinct of self-defence be kind and considerate, and make his life a ministry to her happiness."—*Charles Reade*.

But, if marriage should come to imply the personal freedom of woman, if it should mean the equal and inalienable right in her children, if it should signify equally divided property and income, equally divided duties, the individuality of woman preserved to herself, the choice or not of motherhood, will not men universally prefer for themselves the untrammelled ease of bachelorhood?

To this question the following statements may be opposed; time and trial alone will answer it:

1st. Men do desire and will continue to desire children whom they are assured are their own—to whom they may bequeath their accumulations of honor and of wealth.

2d. The supposed necessity of license in the sexual relations of husbands and wives is founded upon a belief which would make equally imperative prostitution before marriage. With the denial of the necessity of the latter must come that of the former.

3d. When the State recognizes women as citizens who are entitled equally with men to its protection and to be given equal responsibilities, man individually will be more inclined to admit that the life and health of woman is not his to destroy, and hence a reprobation of the present sacrifices will arise.

4th. As it is perceived that a free people must have free mothers, man will regretfully acknowledge that in so far as woman has been denied the rights of a person, has he enslaved her children and his, that in pitching his household tents "in the thick green pastures of sen-

nal existence rather than upon the wind-swept heights of spiritual blessedness," he has been a traitor to his country and to his race; for if the advancement of mankind is the only legitimate, and is the divinely-inspired end of each man's earthly existence (and who can doubt it?), he sins who himself lives upon a lower plane of thought and action than that to which he might ascend, errs still more deeply if in his children he bar the progress of the race.

[To be continued.]

REQUIREMENTS OF A PERFECT DRESS.

The requirements of a perfect dress are: 1. Freedom of movement. 2. No pressure over any part of the body. 3. No more weight than is necessary for warmth, and both weight and warmth equally distributed. 4. Quick changeability. 5. Grace and beauty, combined with comfort and convenience. 6. Not departing too conspicuously from the ordinary dress of the time.

I am addressing the trade and my first words to them are: "Come over to us and help us." Women have been of great service to them; is it then too much to ask them to be of some service to us in return? The attitude of the trade to dress reformers and of dress reformers to the trade has hitherto been one of mutual hostility, the former looking upon dress reforms as an enemy to be routed, the latter considering the trade as a monster to be hated, dreaded and defied.

There is not the least cause for this mutual ill-feeling. We are beginning to see more clearly every day that we can make no appreciable progress without the concurrence and practical assistance of the trade. And my aim here is to show that although the trade can get on without dress reformers, they will get on much better with us and by assisting us. This point established, mutual hostility will be succeeded by mutual help.

Whichever nation can succeed first in modeling dress on really scientific and artistic principles will eventually lead the whole world of fashion. The French trade has led the world by its artistic appreciation of color. Of form, which is the higher branch of art, it knows nothing, and for beauty of form it substitutes distortion of form. Of the science of the subject also it knows nothing. Of physiology, of hygiene, of health, it knows nothing and cares nothing. And owing to this careless or willful ignorance, it is a fact that not a mother of any nation who follows this lead ever arrives at the full development of her normal structure or to the full and healthy exercise of her bodily and mental organs and functions. The French trade has led the world by its knowledge of but one branch of the subject, and that the lowest branch. What therefore shall that nation attain to, who, not indeed neglecting this one branch, is able to add to it a knowledge of the two higher branches?

The requirements of a perfect dress are now set before the trade, and if, or as far as, these are fulfilled a dress will be both scientific and artistic. By complying with these requirements in however small a degree a most valuable service will be rendered to woman and to humanity. While in following such a course the trade will lay the foundation of a lasting and world-

wide success. Meanwhile no *bouleversement* of trade is necessary, and no individual member of legitimate trade will be injured. I propose to enlarge on this part of the subject on subsequent occasions.

I have before me the report of the Rational Dress Society (President, the Viscountess Harberton; Secretary, Miss Carpenter). The list of subscribers for '84 and '85 are not very numerous, but as I know from my experience in the R. D. Association, the value or extent of the work done cannot be estimated by the number of subscribers.

The Society very wisely draws attention to the inconvenience of the ladies' riding habit, the strained, unhealthy and tiring position it forces a woman to sit in, as well as the injury to the horse which has to bear the weight of the rider on one side. The comfort and well-being of both horse and rider would be vastly increased if the weight of the body were equally balanced on both sides of the horse, the rider having a dress in which she could assume this position. In such a dress and position not only more comfort but more safety would be obtained, by greater security of seat and absence of encumbering and entangling drapery.

I append the following quotations from the report as *appropos* of my remarks to the trade: "If however, he (the artist) only drew faithfully what I saw a few days ago in Mayfair, he would portray a young girl who, between padding in some places and pinching in others, had come to resemble a stuffed pincushion. She could not walk. She literally tottered, owing to her pointed-toed and high-heeled shoes, her severe lacing, and cumbersome skirts." "I will try to make faithful picture in words of a lady, an earnest devotee of fashion, one who is a type of many women, and I ask you what inspiration can a painter draw from her and others of her kind? Her waist, which is down among her digestive organs—or physiology lies—measures 17, or at most 18 inches, whereas the waist of the little Medician Venus is 26. She wears a crinolette or dress improver, looking like what is known in architecture as a flying buttress. I involuntarily shudder lest she may snap at the narrowest point, but she does not, she does not even make a moan. She knows she is in the fashion. 'Il faut souffrir pour etre' not 'belle,' for no one with an eye for the beautiful could call her so, but 'a la mode.' Perhaps a painter of sardonic humor might give her grotesque outline a place in a new 'Dance of Death.' But what is there in her to gratify the artist's eye? Beauty of form? Rather deformity. Flowing drapery? Oh no, nothing but the solid edification (edifice?) of that wretched flying buttress. Grace of motion? Not so much as is possible to a Dutch doll."

The following passage is quoted from the *Pall Mall Gazette*: "If we can teach the right principles that underlie all good forms of dress, that is as much as we can aim at. Taste is an individual possession, and as rare as any other artistic gift. What above all things we desire is to preserve the proper proportions of the human figure while allowing as much freedom and ease of motion as possible."

In your REVIEW for August last you insert Miss Kate Field's dictum on dress reform. She informs the Amer-

ican public that I advocate Lady Harberton's "divided skirt." A more attentive perusal of my article in the *North American Review*, from which she quoted, might have shown her that she was mistaken in this. I wrote "Imposing any particular form of dress is unwise, because the taste of the day is so depraved that no good could result, and because women should choose for themselves, resisting all external imposition." I have insisted on this point in every lecture I have given, both here and in America. I object, and always have objected to any society attempting to reform dress by imposing "divided skirts" or any other special form of dress on its members. This difference of opinion was the remote cause of the separation between myself and the R. D. S., the immediate cause being an outburst of impatient rudeness on my part at the persistent continuance of this imposition. Personally, I quite agree with Miss Kate Field as to the merits, or rather demerits, of this particular garment, and do not wear it. I wear, and call what I wear—trousers.

In the beginning of our dress reform crusade, the name "divided skirt" was cleverly hit upon by Lady Harberton, and it served to familiarize the minds of timid conventional people to the idea that women might wear a two-legged garment for their own two legs without the world coming to an end, or society becoming demoralized. But it has done its work, and its being held on to as an article of faith by the Society, and even its definite width in inches insisted on, does not help on dress reform—but on the contrary retards it.

The arbitrary action of the authorities of Montana in suppressing by municipal decrees a garment worn by some women resembling the Mother Hubbard dress, was much talked of when we were in America, and lately I have seen it mentioned in some of the English papers as an instance of unwarrantable tyranny on the part of American men towards women in thus interfering with their dress. That this species of interference is an unwarrantable piece of tyranny, no one, I should think, outside of Montana, would for a moment question; nevertheless I quite agree with these gentlemen as to the indecency or suggestive indecency of such a style of dress. A lady, or woman, or female, which shall I call her? used to appear in the suppressed garment at the public rooms of an hotel in Philadelphia where we were staying, and the costume gave me a sensation of disgust. Why? Because it has the same suggestive effect as the petticoat, "only more so." The idea that the body is, or may be, unclothed underneath the loose drapery, and that this fact may be disclosed at any moment by some unforeseen accident. The costume is in fact a petticoat coming from the neck instead of from the waist. If these gentlemen of Montana could or would reason out their sensations, they would know that what I say is the truth, and if they were consistent they ought to become the strongest advocates of some sort of Bloomer costume, which, as it covers the body closely and conveniently, is the only really decent and modest style of dress—*E. M. King in Cloak, Suit and Ladies' Wear Review.*

If you would learn to control others, first learn to control yourself.

**IS NOT THIS PAPER NEEDED? WON'T YOU TAKE IT
AND CIRCULATE IT?**

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Letters consisting of personal opinions should be not more than half column in length. Letters containing important facts or interesting matter may sometimes be longer.

All communications, books for review, &c., should be addressed to Caroline B. Winslow, Editor of "The Alpha," No. 1 Grant Place, Washington, D. C.

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THE ALPHA.

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THE February number of THE ALPHA was delayed six days in its issue, which caused uneasiness to some of our subscribers. The delay was partly due to a crowding business in the printing office and partly to the severe snowstorm. It is the latest issue we have ever made.

TO ALPHA'S NUMEROUS FRIENDS: AN unusual overflow of kindly and sympathetic encouragement from old friends and new, some so very new as to present their own introduction, has reached us the past two months in words of cheer, invaluable thought, and in material aid, for all of which we return heartfelt thanks. In looking through a pile of accumulated letters we are filled with remorse that so many should still lie unanswered on our desk, when our heart has had an overflow of love and gratitude for the dear ones that have so kindly remembered THE ALPHA needs and its struggling editor. To one and all, we offer the meed of thanksgiving and love, with a prayer for rich blessing of fruition upon their tender hearts, and a pledge of love and reverence from our own while we faithfully struggle to be more faithful, more vigilant, and truthfully brave in utterance, and clean in heart and thought; giving freely as we receive, and trusting God and the judgment of friends on each monthly venture, knowing that the truth must be uttered, whether men and women will hear or whether they forbear. We have sowed in tears, may we reap with joy.—ED.

It is most refreshing and encouraging to note this number of women who devote their time and talent to journalism, not only as letter-writers, news gatherers and literary efforts, but as editors and proprietors of well-conducted and high-toned journals. These journals of women are increasing in number and for tasteful arrangement, neatness, and valuable contributions, are not equalled by many journals conducted by men.

What we want to see brought to the front prominently is a broad, catholic spirit towards all, especially towards their own sex. A spirit of fraternity, a loyalty to one another and to truth, with an abiding faith in the highest possibilities of our race and a strong desire to do our part well, earnestly and honestly in the world's work.

We want women to have the courage of their convictions, even if these convictions may reach out a span or more in advance of the popular recognition or estimation of them. We want to see an inflexible integrity that will scorn plagiarism as they would burglary or petit larceny; a frank, catholic spirit that will hold itself ready to correct errors and, if need be, retrace steps when mistakes have been made—by a frank acknowledgment and retraction that will be a pledge for future fealty. We like to see one woman more gifted or popular assist those less fortunate. If they see another struggling with an unpopular reform, which they secretly recognize and commend, not fear to stand openly for their convictions, even though they be not understood or are unpopular. This course will help the world's march towards better things.

All labor is honorable and blessed in proportion to our consecration and love of it, and our aim to *perfect* it in accordance with our highest ideal. Much of this labor is seed-sowing, sowing in tears, with a weary waiting for fruition and harvest; but it will come rich and satisfying at last. Let us cheer the time of waiting with faith and love.

ED.

HELEN WILMANS, editor of *The Woman's World*, has thrown down the gauntlet and fairly challenged the sensuous world and bearded it in its den, the marriage bed. She says she has held silence too long through her paper. *Now* she must speak; to hold silence longer in the face of daily testimony would be criminal. She has decided to publish a pamphlet for women, and calls upon all interested in this subject, besides the actual sufferers, to come forward with the means to pay for its publication.

Brave Helen Wilmans! All good men and women should sustain her, form a solid phalanx about her while she goes down into this hell and unearths the secret

wickedness that is defrauding wives of all that is holy in their nature and children of their birthright—the right to be well born.

Alas! poor woman; we know somewhat of this underground work by many experiences and confidences. She will suffer as others have for her chivalrous courage ostracism, secret slanders, misinterpretation, and many wounds and tortures. But if she sees the "pillar of fire" ahead and the inspiration is within her, and is true to it, God will sustain her, and she will eventually be delivered, soul-clean, without the smell of fire upon her garments. Is she prepared to lay upon this altar of humanity all she holds dear upon earth? If so, God speed and bless her and send hosts of angels to give her wisdom and grace, and guide and protect her. Here is one name to add to the list of those that will stand by her and defend her while she is in the crucible of public opinion, "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind"—CAROLINE B. WINSLOW.

In the February number of *Woman's World* Mrs. Wilmans publishes "An Awful Letter," which is an experience of a half-mad woman. But how came she to be in this intense, desperate condition? "That's the question."

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE CONVENTION.

February 17th the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Suffrage Association met in Washington, in the Church of "Our Father," and continued three days—morning hours to executive session, and afternoon and evening to addresses, Susan B. Anthony presiding; Mrs. Stanton, Miss Rachel Foster, and Mrs. Gage were not able to be present.

The meetings were all well attended by most earnest and intelligent men and women. The addresses were exceptionally fine; prominent among the whole was that of the Rev. Dr. Shippen, Clara B. Colby, Madam Clara Neyman, and Mrs. Gougar. The favorable report of the Senate committee, and the sanguine expectation announced of Senator Blair, that there was a prospect of a discussion of the suffrage question in the Senate, cheered all hearts and rendered the three days' meetings among the most memorable of all our meetings. We would like to reproduce some of the speeches, and at no distant day hope to give our readers most of Madam Neyman's admirable paper. The tone of loyalty, patriotism, and morality was a prominent characteristic.

The debates in executive session were unusually able, spirited, and interesting. The representation of three of the Southern States was a novel feature, of which the witty and properly-named Mrs. Meriwether was the

most prominent. At the close of her speech, Thursday evening, she requested the privilege of introducing her youngest son, a finely formed and featured young man of 22. He was well received, and addressed the Convention briefly, saying some very good things. Among others, he marvelled that men should object to strong-minded women, clearly inferring that they preferred weak-minded and silly women. "I am proud to acknowledge that my mother is strong minded, and as sweet and lovable as she is strong." It was a beautiful tribute from a son to his mother, and made more than one tear spring to the eye. So few enjoy such recognition and support from their dear ones when they dare to step outside the home and plead for justice for their sex. The rule is for family ties to be tightened and made to embarrass and pamper and hinder brave hearts by pulling in the opposite direction, which adds so much to the burden and pain of the effort that many a capable and good woman is deterred from public work, thus smothering influence and ability through the unsympathetic, if not open, opposition from the male members of their family.

The time will come when the parable of the ten talents will mean more to women than it now does, and an enlightened conscience will not suffer any one to wrap their talent in a napkin and bury it under the prejudices or illiberality of dominant forces. Lord, hasten the day when individuality and true freedom shall reign in the land irrespective of sex, race, or previous condition of servitude. The following resolutions were adopted by the Executive Committee, and presented to the Convention:

Whereas, women as well as men are citizens of the United States with an equal claim upon the National Government for protection in the rights of citizenship; and

Whereas the right to the ballot should be protected in all the women of the nation alike, and thus secured from reversal by State legislatures or limitation by State lines: therefore

Resolved, First, that we reaffirm our confidence in the national method of securing the ballot to women through an amendment to the Federal Constitution.

2d, That we call upon the Forty-ninth Congress, in the name of justice, to submit at once to the States the resolution, now pending, which provides that once and forever "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Resolved, That while the individual members of this Association, according to personal preference, sympathize with the various political parties, the National Woman's Suffrage Association, as an organization, declares itself to be non-partisan in politics.

Resolved, That we protest against the admission to the Union of any Territory the constitution of which shall

contain a provision excluding women from the exercise of the elective franchise.

Whereas, a bill now pending before Congress proposes, under the pretence of suppressing polygamy, to disfranchise all the women of Utah, Gentile as well as Mormon: therefore

Resolved, That while approving the action of Congress in making disfranchisement a penalty for the crime of polygamy, we indignantly protest against the injustice of punishing Gentile and non-polygamous Mormon women for crimes never committed, and that we call upon the national House of Representatives to strike out section 7 of of this bill.

Resolved, That we rejoice in the fact that the great reformatory movements, religious, social, and industrial, are becoming educated to the knowledge that the ballot in the hands of woman is the weapon needed to secure their success.

Resolved, That we hereby express the great loss to the Association of our co-workers in the death, during the year, of Mrs. Clarina I. H. Nichols, of California, one of the pioneers in this cause; of the mothers of our corresponding and recording secretaries, Mrs. Julia T. Foster, of Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Cornelia Sheldon, of New York, ever our firm and helpful friends; and of our young and brilliant vice-president for Arkansas, Mrs. Lizzie D. Tyler, and that we express to their families and friends our sympathy in their great sorrow.

Miss Anthony read a letter from Mrs. Stanton, in which she reiterated the sentiment of the much discussed resolution of last year, with regard to ecclesiastical hindrances of women towards liberty and self-respect.

The Convention closed amid general good feeling.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: Inclosed you will find one dollar as subscription for THE ALPHA. I do not know what the exact price of the paper is, and will send the rest if not enough.

If it will not trouble you too much, I would like to state to you the case of a friend of mine and to ask a few questions which it suggests.

My friend is a young woman of about twenty-five years of age; she is considerably below the average height of women, but her body is well-formed; her head, perhaps, is a little larger than it should be for her size; she cannot bear either a bodily or mental strain without nervous prostration; she has just lost a position as stenographer on this account and is now with me; she consulted a physician some two weeks ago, who told her that she needed complete rest for a month or two, and also advised her to get married; she is dependent entirely upon her work for a living and cannot afford to take the needed rest—as to getting married one cannot get married any day or to anybody.

A few days ago we consulted another physician with whom we had some acquaintance, and who professes to make a specialty of women's diseases. He also advised her to get married, saying she risked her life by not doing so.

Wishing to gain as much information as possible, we spoke very plainly on the subject, and he *tried* to con-

vince us that motherhood was natural and essential to a woman's health and happiness; that even where, from one cause or another, it was not advisable to become a mother it was best to repress any result that might be brought about by cohabitation.

Will you be so kind as to give us your opinion of the advice given us, and tell us whether a woman's life can be in any more danger because she is not married than it would be if she were; also, are married women, as a rule, healthier than unmarried women, and is the average life of an unmarried woman shorter than that of a married woman?

By favoring me with an early reply you will greatly oblige, yours, very respectfully,

DEAR MADAM: Your communication interests me, while it vexes my soul to know that medical men should be so wedded to that living lie (*viz*: the physical necessity for sexual indulgence) as to hinge their diagnoses and prognoses on that one function of the complex organization of the human body.

If the members of our profession would learn from their studies and professional experiences that most of the cases of nervous prostration and much chronic disease that comes under their observation is the direct result of perverted sexual instinct. Could an angel or archangel from the highest heavens reveal to their moral sense that all vital force should be *conserved* for good uses (not *suppressed* but *directed*) to the highest and best interests of the race, and consecrated to mental and moral or muscular efforts, and only when a new life is to be evoked, under the most favorable conditions, should it be expended in conjugal congress.

Health suffers from *wrong thinking* as from *wrong doing*. Any man or woman who has a real live interest in any of the objects of life, whether self-improvement or acquisitions or benefiting others—enjoying congenial companionship—will not suffer deterioration of body or mind from any amount of continence. If they do, they have a bad inheritance and are unfit for marriage or parentage.

Tell your friend to change her occupation, and it may be her locality, to a rural district. Let her be much in the open air and sunshine. Occupation in a garden or hayfield would be good exercise. If not able to labor let her wait on those that work till she is strong enough to work. Let her adopt a plain, easily digested, nutritious diet, and a rational style of dress; light, warm, well-fitting, without ligatures, whalebones, or useless draperies. Let her abandon corsets and *long* heavy skirts, garters, tight sleeves or bands about the waist, with a little medication to assist deficient nutritive powers, and she will soon rejoice in strength and power to endure.

Marriage is too vital and too sacred an institution to

be prescribed as readily as a dose of medicine. And all physicians know that under the physical necessity idea five years of such a married life, with the birth of three or four accidental or undesired children, breaks the health of nine-tenths of the wives in our land, and most childless wives are invalids, and husbands and wives who resort to wicked devices to prevent conception while they indulge in sensuality, suffer the consequences of their waste and desecration by dyspepsia, nervous prostration, and that most painful mental depression that so often terminates in insanity.

When physicians know that it is a part of their duty to their patients to dispel morbid mental conditions by truthful instructions that will put joy and hope into their hearts, by relegating this sex question to the right relations in life on a moral and physiological basis. Our profession will diminish in numbers and the world be the better for it.

When your friend's health is restored, and she meets a healthy, pure, manly man that she loves and who loves her, marry. But never lose her self-respect or womanly dignity, that will not allow any excess or perversion of any good uses, and she may have a reserve power in vigor of body and mind to be the mother of beautiful children that will rejoice in their own existence and bless the world by their oversoul of goodness. These rules will lead those that observe them into the upper walks of life and higher aspirations, purer joy, and a rapt vision of the Divine source of all life and joy. Then will her husband praise her, her friends repose in her strength, and her children will be blessed.

Sincerely yours, C. B. WINSLOW.

CONCUBINAGE.

The following very interesting and useful communication contains the same perplexing subject, so ably treated of by Elizabeth Kingsbury, in her continued articles in the current volume of THE ALPHA. We shall be much pleased to receive the thoughts of other correspondents on this painful subject, which is so difficult to treat fairly and with justice to all parties, since by common consent women are the guardians of social morals. Yet most women are so ignorant and thoughtless on these subjects, and so helplessly dependent on men for subsistence, as well as happiness, that they fall an easy prey to designing selfishness. But the English question of justice in establishing one code of morals for both sexes, must challenge the admiration of every one. It would be well for us on this side the Atlantic to inscribe this motto upon our banner, only ostracism is not as good as light and knowledge.—Ed.

PARIS, Jan., 1886.

MY DEAR DR. WINSLOW: Your kind letter of Nov.

12th was forwarded to me, and I am very glad to find that my letters, etc., have reached you duly. Your explanations and details concerning the woman's suffrage movement were very clear, and all that I needed. Very many thanks for letting me trouble you, and for responding so fully to my appeal for enlightenment. I have been very much interested in reading of the commemoration of the seventieth birth-day of Mrs. E. C. Stanton; I do admire her so very much. Her beautiful face would compel love, if her more beautiful character did not take our admiration into a higher plane. It is, indeed, a public blessing that there is such a paper as yours in which grave questions can be broached with certainty that nothing but thoughtful, earnest opinion will be elicited; and I esteem myself very fortunate in being permitted to contribute my mite to the discussions therein carried on. I can truly say that your work has thrown greater light on the mysteries of life, and done more to clear away the clouds of distrust at the government of the universe than that of any other thinker with whom I am acquainted. It is glorious to see the possibility of a day dawning, even in the distant future, when poverty, disease, and inherited wickedness, shall be things of the past. I say the possibility of such blessings it is great to see, for the realization of such a happy state as might result from general knowledge of the effects of right birth must be for coming ages; but to know that the muddle is man's, not God's, is immeasurable gain, and this knowledge it was hard to get, hard to believe, while the thought that man had little power over the reproductive faculty remained.

I find that many young men of the better educated and free-thinking classes, are getting terribly loose thoughts on the subject of concubinage; and, indeed, I am so perplexed myself to know how to temper mercy to the unfortunate, or wicked if you will, mothers of illegitimate children, with justice to children and to society, who certainly is in her proper place as guardian of morals and defender of her rights of the unborn, I am perplexed to know how to preserve the educative influence of the present customs without falling into hardness and cruelty in the treatment of certain cases, which seem to be growing very frequent, where the mistress is wife and honest mother in all but legal and social acceptance, and because I am so much perplexed myself, and find thoughts that I cannot endorse growing up, I long to get light from the students who have gathered around you in your noble effort to bring clearness of vision where thoughtlessness or muddle-headedness is the rule. We are at an epoch in our moral history now. The White Cross movement is spreading and educating our young men; vigilance societies are springing up everywhere, and it is proposed (perhaps rightly) to extend the social ostracism, hitherto exercised on women, to their partners in wrong doing. This is right as far as it goes, but will it help the children of the ostracised? Will it bring about a healthy public opinion, or will it hasten the day when a mistress is looked upon as a necessary prelude to settling in life, as it is with the French? Men make public opinion at present, and if they are treated justly as wrong-doers, will they create a public opinion for themselves that

shall lower even the low tone of opinion that already exists? Now, men at least uphold virtue for women, and a decent concealment, perhaps the remnant of conscious shame for themselves. Will they do this when the rein is pulled tighter? These are questions that should be met; indeed, the whole subject should be thrashed out while men's minds are ready for instruction, and their hearts seeking guidance. There are many hopeful signs that better things will come in the moral world, but the ignorance of men is appalling on the subjects touching sexual physiology. Did I tell you that a society has been formed for the discussion of questions relating to the mutual influences of the sexes in London. It numbers about sixty-two—fifty men and twelve women. This is really something extraordinary. Another good sign I must tell you of. At a vigilance meeting held in our neighborhood the other day, I noticed that the men were chiefly young men, most being between the ages of twenty-seven and forty; that I thought a hopeful sign, especially as they all belonged to the upper-middle class. I know you think nothing of the class, but here it is different, and if morality once gets to be thought "caddish," "bad form," and ungentle manly, it is more certainly doomed than if its cruel wickedness were thoroughly recognized, and we have to deal with human nature as it is. I must apologize for the length to which I have allowed this letter to run, but I know I am talking to an indulgent friend. I must just express a wish that your celebration party was a great success; I thought of it with great interest.

Yours, with affectionate regards, K. A.

THE WARNINGS OF HEREDITY.

It is hardly any longer necessary to take pains to prove the existence of a general law of heredity. Medical readers, at least, do not require to be convinced that children as a general rule, the exception to which is readily explicable, resemble their parents in physical characters, intellectual aptitudes, and moral propensities. The broad law of *similia ex similibus* is written upon the face of biology in plain and obvious characters, which no fine observation or nice discrimination is required to recognize. It is important, however, to be thoroughly convinced that heredity is not a mere vagrant principle, operative here and inoperative there, in an apparently uncertain and hap-hazard fashion; but a fixed law, always in action, yet liable to be frequently obscured, owing to the extreme complexity of its condition.

A distinguished man has a foolish son; and a careless observer sees a breach of the law of heredity. It is forgotten that the folly may have been inherited from the mother or from the grandfather, according to the well-recognized principle of atavism, or reversion. The fact that the tendencies of the two parents are always to some extent different, and may vary from close harmony to complete opposition, introduces an infinite variability into the result. If it be thought strange that children of the same parents should differ so much in appearance, and in mental and moral characters, it should be borne in mind, first, that family resemblance of feature and of disposition are rather the rule than the exception; secondly, that the parents differ at different

ages, and consequently transmit diverse qualities to their offspring; and thirdly, that each child inherits something, but usually a different thing, from previous generations, by the law of atavism, already mentioned.

It does not require much reflection to recognize how numerous and how vital are the inferences deducible from the law of heredity. We live in an age of education and culture, and we are apt to fall into the error of looking upon children as so much raw material, which can be moulded into any shape by means of training, like clay in the hands of the potter. This is a serious miscalculation, which may be fruitful in vast mischief. Education can do much, but the limits of its power are inexorably fixed by heredity. If a child possesses a brain small in size and poor in convolutions, all the culture in the world will not enable him to achieve results comparable with those which the naturally gifted can attain almost without effort. The diversity of natural talent is enormous, although the attempt to educate all our youth up to some arbitrarily fixed standard may serve to obscure this obvious fact.

It is in the realm of disease that the warnings of heredity become most numerous and most solemn. We know that most constitutional diseases which permanently modify the structure of the body are hereditary. Phthisis, scrofula, cancer, syphilis—these are merely the most terrible instances of a widespread phenomenon. In nearly one-half of the recorded cases of gout, there is evidence of hereditary taint. In phthisis, the proportion has been put down at one-third, but in many cases the absence of proof affords no assurance that heredity was inactive. The extent of the hereditary character of cancer is one of the disputed points of pathology; yet but few doubt that predisposition to the disease frequently exists, however much it may have been fostered by local irritations. That syphilis, in certain of its stages, is almost inevitably transmitted, does not admit of any doubt or dispute.

The deductions from such facts are sufficiently obvious. The subject of phthisis should be earnestly dissuaded from marriage. If a predisposition to this disease exists on the side of either parent, the children should, as far as possible, enjoy abundant fresh air, sunshine, nutritious food, and the hygienic conditions which experience has shown to be most efficient in checking the development of phthisis. In the case of syphilis, the surgeon will often be consulted, and his advice, if based on adequate knowledge, will be the means of averting evils which are terrible to contemplate.

The principle of heredity will often afford valuable aid in the formation of a correct prognosis. A lingering bronchitis, or a slow-resolving pneumonia, excites widely different feelings of apprehension, according as the patient comes of a healthy stock, or of one tainted with phthisis. An enlargement of joint or bone has a widely different significance in a healthy and in a strumous subject. A doubtful tumor becomes much more grave if there be a clear record of cancer in the patient's family.

In the department of therapeutics, heredity may often give valuable guidance. A morbid condition which we are at first disposed to regard as purely symptomatic and

trivial, may stand revealed in the light of heredity as a radical vice of constitution, demanding widely different treatment. The tendency to obesity may admit of ready counteraction; but if it be clearly hereditary, it will probably resist our most patient endeavors. A little persistent oozing of blood from the gums may seem trifling, but it will tax our best efforts if the patient have inherited a tendency to hæmophilia.

Many facts are on record showing that curious morbid tendencies run in families. Darwin relates the case of a woman who died of apoplexy at the age of sixty-three. Her two daughters succumbed to the same disease. One of these had a family of twelve children, who all died of tubercular meningitis. Esquirol records a case of father, son, and grandson, who all became insane at the age of fifty. Sir Henry Holland records the cases of three brothers who had hemiplegia at the same age; of three sisters who each became epileptic at the age of twenty-four; of three cases of diabetes in brothers under the age of ten; and a number of similar instances. The important deductions which the medical practitioner must draw from such facts, hardly require to be shown at length.

One caution must be added in conclusion: *Heredity is a tendency, not an unalterable fate. The strongest family tendency, say to phthisis, can often, under favorable circumstances, be averted, but only on condition that it is early recognized and vigorously combated by all the means at our disposal.* By the early recognition of morbid tendencies in families, and the resolute adoption of preventive measures, the medical practitioner will enormously benefit his patients, and win for medicine another claim upon the respect and gratitude of mankind.—*British Medical Journal.*

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR YOUNG GIRLS.

BY AARON M. POWELL.

The true function of government is the protection of the weak against the strong. Among those mostly in need of safeguards are young girls, especially of the poor and dependent, and therefore greatly exposed, class. It is very largely from this class, particularly in large cities, that the supply is furnished for well-to-do debauchees, who demand, and are able to pay for, victims of their lust. The daughters of the wealthy and those of good and comfortable home environments, are sometimes, though rarely, ensnared. The children of poverty or misfortune are the ones chiefly preyed upon.

The time is at hand for a more careful and searching examination of this subject than it has hitherto received. The moral sense of the civilized world was greatly shocked a few months ago on being made aware that, until the recent adoption by Parliament of the criminal law amendment bill, young girls of thirteen in Great Britain were legally capable of giving "consent" to their own debauchery, and that there was no legal redress against their despoilers. By the adoption of that bill the "age of consent" was, under the irresistible pressure of an aroused, indignant public opinion, raised to sixteen years, though the age of eighteen was recommended by Mr. Gladstone, and strongly urged by others.

Even under French and other Continental common law the minor, under the age of twenty-one, cannot legally consent to her own corruption, and the adult who debauches her cannot plead "consent" in defense, and is subject to punishment. The property of minors here, under the age of twenty-one, is surrounded with legal safeguards. Is the person less sacred?

What is the legal protection extended to young girls in the State of New York? It will doubtless astonish many of our readers, who have hitherto avoided the subject as indelicate, or painful, to be told that the young girl of the Empire State is held, by its criminal laws, to be legally capable of giving "consent" to her own corruption at the tender age of TEN YEARS! That, if assaulted and overpowered, if it be shown in court that she did not resist to the uttermost limit of exhaustion, the man (?) who assaulted her may still successfully plead "consent." This is, indeed, protection with a vengeance—the protection which the wolf extends to the lamb! Seduction of young girls is made a punishable offense only for breach of promise of marriage. Nor is New York alone, or singular, among the several States in fixing the legal "age of consent" at ten years. In New Jersey, Maryland and many other States of the Union, and in the national capital, the age of consent is held to be ten years! With such a legal status for young girls, and the comparative impunity with which vicious and designing men may pursue their evil ways, the flagrant exhibitions of vice in our large cities, the abandoned girls in their teens in the streets, though deplorable in the extreme, are in nowise surprising. It is the young, ignorant, and inexperienced, who are most easily led astray, especially the children of pinching poverty and want.

The New York Committee for the Prevention of State Regulation of Vice have addressed a petition to the New York Legislature asking that body to provide, by appropriate legislation, exemplary penalties for seduction, with or without the promise of marriage, and for the defilement of the persons of young girls, without or with consent, under the age of at least eighteen years. The Committee have addressed a similar petition to Congress asking for kindred legislation for the better protection of young girls in the national capital. It is greatly to be desired that the friends of social purity in other States should at once take similar action, and thus endeavor to remove one of the most prolific causes of the crying social evil which imperils the home, and begets so much suffering and ruin. Mr. Gladstone's maxim that "it is the province of government to make it easy to do right and difficult to do wrong," is exactly reversed by the unjust laws which render young girls of ten or twelve years the easy prey of bad and viciously inclined men. It is a striking illustration of the wretched work men alone have done in legislating upon a subject wherein the interests and welfare of both sexes are so vitally involved. Women and true, high-minded, honorable men should everywhere join, heartily and resolutely, in a common effort to abolish, promptly and forever, the great wrong, and to surround the persons of young girls, as well as property, with adequate legal safeguards.—*The Philanthropist.*

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD SPEAK RIGHT.

In the twenty-seventh chapter of Numbers we read a very interesting record of the time of Moses, which reveals the spiritual status of mankind at that period, and also shows the close similarity between the women of that day and this. The woman element seems a decided fixture for the past, and the present show the same characteristics, with but little variation if any. The reason of which the reader of the book of nature can readily see. The poetical phase of woman, however, has been very aptly accorded her by a far-seeing poet when he says :

‘As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto man is woman.
Though she bends him she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows.’

This seems a riddle, but to woman herself is easy of solution; yet to man it is a puzzle, as woman has to him always been. The symbol of which has been beautifully illustrated in ancient and modern times by the use of the bridal veil in marriage apparel. To man the greatest study is woman’s conscious individuality and seeming eccentricity; and on reading the chapter referred to one can imagine that even Moses was perplexed with what is now termed the “woman question.” He could not decide for or against the proposition of the daughters of Zelophehad. He had first to consult the Oracle, or divine authority.

In that day the women could not inherit property, or at least they could not fall heir to the lands divided in lots according to the male members in the line of Zelophehad. So when it came to pass that all the men in his line perished in crossing the wilderness (except Joshua and Caleb), there were none left to inherit the lands and hold them for the benefit of the families left; consequently the lots were to fall back to the original division, leaving the women with their families homeless. This was, indeed, a severe trial—a trial sufficient to test their powers of originality or their gift of intuition. It was an occasion to bring to the comprehension of all the latent energies of the will, and to open up the avenues of the soul to sense, divine direction and guidance.

They thought of the welfare of their fatherless families about to be turned out of their homes, of the depressing, demoralizing effect of poverty. Their hearts were sore and aching under the cloud that so heavily overcast them. They talked with each other and mingled their tears, while deep down in their soul as their sorrows sought relief—silent prayer—hope whispered, “be of good cheer,” and their prayers were those of thankfulness without knowing why. The air to them seemed sweeter, and indeed the plains of Moab were illuminated by a broader smile than ever before. Nature seemed to out-do her usual joyousness. The beams from the setting sun flashed deeper shades of roseate and purple tints, till the twilight drew her dark curtain and shut them out, leaving those troubled children of God to take their rest; but they were not alone, the air was balmy with the breath of angels that all night long fanned the tents of these sleeping women. A calm rest lulled them in the arms of thankfulness and the spirit of prayer; and in their waking moments they felt that

they were overshadowed by the dawn of a new dispensation; they felt that their individuality had grown through the night; that something had loosed the shell that had seemed to cramp and fetter them. With all their grief the day before, they could not feel sad if they wanted to brood over their trouble. And a new light dawned upon them—the light of the mental atmosphere—and one original thought flashed across their mental vision, so simple they wondered they had not known it before. They talked it over and loved it over; it was like a new child born to them, and every one its own mother; but what could they do with the mere thought? could they tell it? They feared to do so lest it fall like a thunderbolt on the time-worn custom, and they be derided to scorn; but the more they thought of it, and talked of it to each other, the more confirmed were they that they were right; but how to manage the subject was difficult. They knew the power of the law and the tyranny of the custom surrounding it.

The golden opportunity of holding the lands in their own right and name was not to be lost, and it must be a work of their own. The world was then old enough to have its character, and these Jewish women well understood its stern ways. They knew to gain their point they must take the matter in their own hands. They knew, too, the knight-errantry of that day could not afford to cast their crowns at the feet of these women and proclaim their right to owning lands. Pride and ambition shut out their love for humanity, and held the power of rule firm in its grasp; so that these enterprising women might well doubt the chivalry of the times; but true to the voice of the law of Providence, these daughters of Zelophehad assembled in council and stood before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Strengthened by the revelation of a new truth that had come to them, they said unto Moses: “Why should the name of our fathers be done away from among his family because he hath no son? Give us, therefore, a possession among the brethren of our fathers.” Moses did not answer himself, but took the proposition to the Lord, and the verdict was prompt, clear, and decided—like a bell that strikes the note of time: “*The daughters of Zelophehad speak right; thou shalt surely give them a possession among their fathers’ brethren!*”

Woman’s true inspiration to sustain the law of progress lives for all time; and her divine approval is a beacon-light to guide her feet to paths yet untrodden, in ways that will happily and bless the race.

The living example of these earnest women who trod the earth thousands of years since on the plains of Moab comes to us at the present with the same authority claiming divine right to speak when human welfare suffers and justice is trampled upon.

When intemperance, with its train of evils, and its twin-brother, immorality, is sapping the vitality like a gnawing-worm, may not woman speak? Yes, woman must speak! For we know that her plane of thought and will, leads upward though the weight from below draws heavily, or the vista through which she sees may be small and dimmed by the dust and smoke which almost blinds; yet she hopefully looks for an inflowing of spiritual baptism that will announce the world’s regenera-

tion that she may rest. Her prophetic dreams startle her, and she hesitates to work out her destiny; yet she knows how "the tabernacle of God is with men," and that she must build from the creative impulses of her own being, gladly welcoming the conditions for the Kingdom of Heaven within, that the whole race may grow heavenward till the disposition of woman have its reign. All her inheritance then will be hers by divine right, without crowding around the doors of the tabernacle to clamor for it. The world will be at peace and woman will then rest. But till then the daughters of England and America cannot rest. Their sympathies impel them to see that the family prosperity and happiness be increased. The strong, deep, sympathetic chords in her heart forbid that imprudence, negligence, want and crime should come to her household; her loved human flowers are precious to her, and she puts forth her hand to protect them and draw them to the sanctuary of her heart; here they may catch the throbbings of her inspiration, through which comes the light to eternal life.

The love of Providence directs woman in all ages through the susceptibilities that exist in her organization. She is keenly alive to the influences that reach her, and as her surroundings so is the plane of human elevation. The water, pure and limpid as it may be, cannot rise any higher than the fountain. Woman's sensibility grasps the correspondence of this truth in these days, and so did the Egyptian women in their day. The probability of their being at the mercy of dependence was a dark outlook for them, for they had at heart the happiness and elevation of the children of Moab. Thou shalt surely give the daughters an inheritance was joyful news in that day, and in this it will be none the less joyful. When the daughters assemble together, to be sure that they speak right, as did the daughters of Zephaniah to Moses, and their suggestion was approved by the Most High, so at the present, if the daughters of America speak to the Government on behalf of all that is humane, just, and noble, in promoting the welfare of the nation, the Most High will approve, and the verdict will be, the daughters of America speak right.

RIVERSIDE, CAL.

D. S. H.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW YORK CITY, February 10, 1886.

MY DEAR MRS. WINSLOW:—Your very valuable journal is before me. I have welcomed it long as one of our most interesting exchanges; well filled with matter of vital importance to the human family, and calculated to touch the heart of every woman, and to inspire her to take an active part in the disenfranchisement of her sex, from the unholy passions too often inflated upon her by law.

The letter furnished in a previous number by Rita Belle tells the story of thousands of suffering women. I cannot imagine what the subject of dress can possibly have to do with this condition of things, it seems to me too simple. Let us begin to teach the people from the inside, "to the pure in spirit all things are pure." Until human beings are properly generated and properly educated, we shall have the licentious element to fight against. Man's spiritual and intellectual faculties are too often neglected, while the animal predominates, even at the sacrifice of his wife's health and happiness, independent of the degradation that the consequences may bring forth in the shape of a human being, to be surrounded throughout a mortal existence with unquenchable passions to be transmitted in like manner.

The minds of all intelligent men are prepared to listen to the

truths that will better the condition of our people, and every mother should place your paper in her home, that the young men and women in her family should aid through their intelligence this great reform, so sadly neglected.

Yours for the progression of the human race, M. E. W.

LEICESTER, MASS., Feb. 7, '86.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: The February ALPHA comes and reminds me that I have not yet paid my dues for 1886, a fact, indeed, I had not forgotten. I enclose two dollars as my subscription for 1886. Your perseverance is admirable, and your labors cannot fail to be effective in many quarters. It is mostly, I believe, in implanting sound ideas and principles in young people, and especially young mothers and fathers, and in opening the eyes of some older ones, to their errors and danger, that your work will be, and is, that effective.

I am, very truly yours,

S. M.

CLIFTON SPRINGS, N. Y., Feb. 9, 1886.

MY DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: It seems almost wrong to take a moment of your time, yet I have been so strengthened by the perusal of the February ALPHA that it has seemed to bring me to your side. Truly as you say, generally those who receive the impetus forward fail to acknowledge it. I often think they scarcely realize it. One really inspired with a desire for uses must generally be prepared to die, that the truth might live. Too often forgetful of this, we become discouraged. We will have reached a high state of perfection when we are ready to let others be praised for the work we have done. But there are those who do not forget, and cease not to ask for you continued wisdom and strength. I am looking forward to the time, not very far off, when we may meet, and perhaps you will allow me to attend one of your Wednesday meetings, the announcement of which I see in the ALPHA. Please let me have one copy of "New Theory of the Origin of Evil," by Prof. A. J. Swartz, one copy of "Vital Force," by E. P. Miller, "Tokology," by Alice Stockham, in cloth binding, price \$2.00. Not knowing how better to do, I send P. O. Order for \$2.50; anything over, only a few cents, may pay your stamps. Hoping we shall meet ere months,

Your sister in the one hope,

M. H.

NEBRASKA, Feb. 10th, 1886.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: Permit me to say how interested I am in THE ALPHA. It came to me a few years ago like an inspiration, and I believe if its teachings could be practiced the millennium would dawn.

Please find enclosed one dollar to pay for THE ALPHA for one year, commencing January 1st, 1886, to be sent to my daughter, Mrs. H. A. H., Nebraska

Yours, truly,

H. B. P.

PENNSYLVANIA, Jan. 8, 1886.

DR. WINSLOW, DEAR FRIEND OF ALL WOMAN KIND: At the suggestion of Dr. Stockham I enclose a short exposition of my notions in regard to the limitation of families for THE ALPHA. She thought you would be willing to send me it for the coming year. I have never seen but one copy, but was much pleased with its obvious objects, and would probably often feel moved to write a scrap if I read it regularly. I am thirty-nine years of age; was married before I was twenty. On the day after my eighteenth wedding anniversary my fourteenth child was born—eleven are living. I have the same one hired girl I began house-keeping with; have had young girls to raise, as nurse-maid and chamber-maid, but now my own daughters are able to aid me in that direction. I have for several years written regularly for the *Household* published at Brattleboro', Vt. (Sig. Rosamond E.,) so earning our reading matter. We are in very limited circumstances; renters on a farm, and am anxious to get some sort of literary work to do that would pay me, yet not interfere with my duties to my family. I feel keenly upon home life as a topic, and know from experience all the joys and sorrows, and cares and labors of a mother's life. I would like so much to help on in the labor of reforming the minds of the boys and girls of the coming generation—the fathers and mothers who shall succeed us—the wives for my boys, the husbands for my girls and yours. I wrote an article for *Good Housekeeping* in reply to one that appeared in its columns W. F. F. W., (women fit for wives,) mine is M. F. F. M., (men fit for marriage.)

I am obliged to confess I am not very familiar with your methods, but hoped to be,

(Mrs.) R. E. G.

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