

her time to civic affairs or to berating officers of the law; in myself here on this platform instead of being at home, as a good and contemptuous man said to me once, "making soup."

To my mind there are several things which point to the conclusion that this amusing person, who is called the New Woman, is to be reckoned with as a reality which is not entirely amusing; but I shall mention only two of them: the first is a *prevailing discontent among women*; and the second, a *change in what we might call the "feminine ideal."* Once grant these two things, the discontent and the change, and we find ourselves face to face, not only with the lady herself, but with certain sobering possibilities which accompany her. For that discontent and change are in themselves sobering, is as certain as that they are in themselves hopeful. There is always a threat where there is a promise. That the condition of women is full of hope, is obvious enough to any open-minded person, so obvious that we need not dwell upon it here. We are all of us, I think, conscious of a certain lifting up of the heart when we see what the women of to-day have achieved, and what their influence has accomplished. We believe in the New Woman, and we are proud of her; indeed, the last thing that is needed is to give us a good opinion of ourselves! And that is why I am going to attempt the ungracious task of speaking only of the threat which her existence expresses;—the hope may be taken for granted.

All the privileges of life hold this union of a threat and a promise. The opportunity of wealth implies the opportunity of meanness; the happiness of parentage walks side by side with the temptation to be selfishly indulgent; if we have the chance to be faithful, there is always the corresponding chance to be unfaithful; if woman has, as she asserts, the power to make hu-

man society over, she has at the same time the opportunity to wreck it. A hope always implies a menace. It is neither cowardice nor pessimism then which makes serious-minded men and women say that with the promises and privileges of life, as they are revealing themselves to woman in her discontent and in her changing ideals, there is also a danger.

## II

Of the *prevailing discontent among women* I shall speak very briefly, and I must not go into certain industrial and economic conditions which have forced stern and inevitable discontents upon us all; nor shall I refer to the discontents of foolish or second-rate minds,—those vacant minds that are discontented unless they *dope* themselves with amusement—novel-reading, bridge-playing, theatre-going. It is women with minds of this quality who have put their sex to shame in the last year or two by the wild vulgarity of their silly, and hideous, and selfish hats (these adjectives will, I think, bear analysis); but happily such women are generally too indolent or too ridiculous to do much harm to the community—their example being really a warning, and their precepts too uninteresting to be listened to. It is the discontents of the woman of privilege, the woman of sane and sheltered life, which have real significance.

I am sometimes amused to have the response made by some mild-eyed, domestic creature, in her comfortable home, with her little children about her knees, "Why, I don't believe women are discontented. I'm not discontented!" and so ending the subject; for women must, it seems, always be personal. It is recorded that a husband, discussing this tendency with his wife, said oracularly, "You women make everything personal." And the lady, aggrieved,

responded, "*I don't.*" Yet even this satisfied and sheltered woman can hardly venture outside the warm and narrow circle of her own content, without hearing a shrill feminine chatter and clamor, a more or less petulant criticism of life as it is lived; a demand, — often intelligent but sometimes extremely silly and devoid of any economic basis, — a loud demand for the reconstruction of many things: government, business, the laws of property, the education of children. This contented woman (who has to be told by her husband whether she is a Republican or a Democrat), whose property never troubles her because her dear and honest men-creatures take such affairs from her shoulders, whose children are admirably well and good, — even this happy and contented woman must know that all women are not so satisfied as she. Even while she thanks God that her girls are not as other mothers' girls, she is aware of her neighbor's daughter's discontent.

This young person — a wholesome, lovable creature with surprisingly bad manners — has gone to college, and when she graduates she is going to earn her own living. She declines to be dependent upon a father and mother amply able to support her. She will do settlement work; she won't go to church; she has views upon marriage and the birth-rate, and she utters them calmly, while her mother blushes with embarrassment; she occupies herself, passionately, with everything except the things that used to occupy the minds of girls.

Restlessness! Restlessness! And as it is with the young woman, so it is with the older woman. Countless Woman's Clubs, largely composed of middle-aged women, have sprung into eager existence in the last twenty years: they are admirable and helpful organizations, but they all express in one way or another the restlessness of growth,

a restlessness infinitely removed from the old content of a generation ago. The "club-woman," as she likes to call herself, has none of her mother's placid content with things as they are, any more than she has the pretty little accomplishments of her mother's youth, or her small conventional charities, or her sweet and gracious and dutiful living.

### III

But it is not the various discontents, it is the changing ideals of women, which seem to me most significant, — because the ideals are responsible for the discontents. The feminine ideal has changed, and is still changing; changing, indeed, with a rapidity extremely jarring to those of us who have reached complacent, and too often narrow-minded, middle age. We need only compare the women of to-day with our mothers (for it is not necessary to go very far back) to realize how great the change is. Of course there were women a generation ago, as in all the generations, who asserted themselves; but they were practically "sports." Now, the simple, honest woman; the shy, respectable, commonplace, dear woman; the woman of ringlets (as it used to be) and many babies, or of pompadours and fewer babies; the good housekeeper, the good wife, the good mother — is evolving ideals that are changing her life, and the lives of those people about her.

As for the difference between us and our mothers, of course we all begin by protesting that if we can ever hope to do our duty as well as they did, our consciences will acquit us. Who of us women, in our comfortable living, dare compare ourselves to our mothers? They did not talk about their "rights"; they fulfilled them — in taking care of their families. They did not talk about "reforms"; they would have thought interference in municipal questions,

and agitation for legislation, most unbecoming and unfeminine. They had, bless their dear hearts! a gentle and ladylike irresponsibility in regard to the world lying in darkness in city halls or legislative chambers — though they gave their pennies toward the saving of souls in dark Africa, with a true, even tender emotion, to which most of us are strangers. No; the mothers of forty or fifty years ago had no theories about improving the world (except the heathen) outside their own respectable doors; but they had strength, and patience, and tenderness, and courage, and *selflessness*. (That, I think, would be the name of their ideal — selflessness.) Can we remember that selflessness, and see no difference between it and the present feminine individualism?

We, or at any rate our daughters, have begun to say that the old selflessness — dear and admirable beyond a doubt to those who were made comfortable by it — was often demoralizing to an appalling degree. Their own individual welfare and happiness was the last thing our mothers thought of. Instead, they gave all their power, moral, intellectual, physical, to their households; and in so doing practiced, sometimes, a curiously immoral unselfishness, which, because it absorbed the chances of sacrifice, turned well-meaning husbands into brutes, and children into disagreeable tyrants. Our mothers had a monopoly of unselfishness: they gave, instead of received; they grew in grace, but it was at the expense of their families. Such virtue wrote upon their tombstones, "Here lies a saint, who never thought of self"; and it helped to make us the selfish men and women that some of us are to-day.

There is another point of conspicuous difference, and of tremendous social significance, between the woman of yesterday and the woman of to-day. We have

come to appreciate the fact that our mothers were unconscientious concerning the right of children *not* to be born. We are beginning — alas, only just beginning — to say that when parents, unable to support a child in physical and moral and intellectual well-being, bring such a child into the world, for the state, or for their unfortunate relations, to support, they are socially criminal. Contrast our mothers' ideas of large families with that! Quantity, not quality, marked the good mother of fifty or sixty years ago. And there are folk to-day — some of them in high places — who still cling to that tradition; but one would like to ask such persons whether the state would have been benefited if, for instance, in a recent notorious murder trial in New York, the principal had been twins? No; maternal instinct, that exquisite blossom of pure animalism, is now striking its roots into spiritual responsibilities, and is becoming divine enough to forbid an undesirable existence.

It is such contrasts as these between the past and the present, that show what a change there is in the ideals of women; but the contrasts — generally so favorable to the present — are so many and so obvious, that it is not necessary to point them out. The really important thing is to recognize what it is which is creating the change. There are, it seems to me, two forces at work: one is the sense of individualism, and the other is the sense of social responsibility. Both seem to have been evolved in women in our generation; and at first sight, both seem only hopeful. Each in itself is good. We do not have the sobering misgiving which comes with a recognition of the prevailing discontent among women. But here again the hope implies a menace: for these two forces, — a woman's sense of her right to her own life, which we call individualism, and her sense of her abil-

ity to help others, which we call social responsibility, — both so noble and so full of promise, sometimes threaten the very springs of life. For the fact is, with all its hopefulness, individualism may be selfish; and with all its nobility, social responsibility may be shallow: and selfishness is a threat to the family; and shallowness is a threat to the state. And when we recognize these two threats, some of us are beginning to tremble for the hope.

Let us consider first the impulse of individualism as we see it in the home life. The sudden and very general expansion of the girl's horizon is manifest to everybody. She apes the independence of the boys, and often emphasizes it with an affected and ludicrous swagger (which the boys, at any rate, see through, and do not really like); but with that independence, she has grasped at the splendid possibility of physical perfection, which implies a resulting mental strength heretofore classed as masculine. This is fine, and apart from its occasionally æsthetic objectionableness, we all rejoice in it. The day of the interesting feminine invalid is gone, thank Heaven! There was a rhyme of our childhood which ran, —

The bride, of course, fainted,  
For, being acquainted  
With manners, she knew what was right.

But nowadays brides hardly blush, much less faint. Instead, our girls are approaching Walt Whitman's ideal woman. He begins with the vigorous egotism of the healthy animal: —

I see that they are worthy of me — I will be the  
robust husband of these women.  
They are not one jot less than I am,  
They are tanned in the face by shining suns and  
blowing winds;  
Their flesh has the old divine suppleness and  
strength;  
They know how to swim, row, ride, wrestle, shoot,  
run, strike, retreat, advance, resist, defend  
themselves;  
They are ultimate in their own right, they are  
calm, clear, well-possessed of themselves.

Themselves! The young woman of to-day is supplementing a certain old-fashioned word, *duty*, by two other words, "to myself." Sometimes just being happy, just enjoying herself, seems to be a duty, — but for the most part, our girls are not so trivial as that. They feel that education and the grasping of opportunity are duties; the cultivation of the mind, or, for that matter, cultivation of the soul; the finding a vocation, the joining a sisterhood, the going off to take care of lepers. Noble impulses, all of them; but contrast them with the old ideal, and you will notice one thing: in all such expressions of individualism, the family is secondary. The new ideal attacks the old.

This is especially striking in what we call the higher education, which has become so general since the days when I went to a school kept by English ladies, where we celebrated the Queen's birthday and were instructed in deportment and religion. I do not mean education merely in regard to school-books; so far as that goes, I doubt whether we are much more deeply educated than those of our mothers who happened to be studiously inclined, though we may be more widely educated. I mean the spirit of the higher education.

Now there is a certain regal word, the only word that can finally compel the soul, the word *ought*. Our girls know how to say, "I want," and "I will," or sometimes, "I must"; but they are not learning to say, "I ought." Instead, the education of to-day too often cries out to them in their colleges: "Look! The heavens and earth and waters that are under the earth are yours! The song that the morning stars sing is for your ears. The eternal tides of life await your adventurous prow. The very winds of God are blowing for your sails!" "You — *you* — you —" the higher education cries; "never mind other people; make the most of

your own life. Never mind marriage: it is an incident; men have proved it so for themselves; it is just the same for women. Never mind social laws; do what your temperament dictates — art, affairs, enjoyment even. But do your duty to yourself!"

"And," remarks the observer of an older generation, grimly, "*the Devil take the hindermost!*" Then he adds, — the observer is generally he, — he adds, with the candor peculiar to his engaging sex, that, according to his poor way of thinking, he would call the state of mind of the girl who acts on this advice, just plain garden selfishness.

Of course, he is only a man; but certainly some thoughtful women wonder whether these gracious opportunities of learning which are flooding in upon women, are not translated in terms of *self* in the minds of many girls?

Hannah Kimball sums up this passion for growth that is so characteristic of the New Woman, in four subtle lines: —

Shall I seek Heaven that I may find a place  
Where with *my* soul 't is well?  
If I seek thus, though I may strive for Heaven,  
My face is turned towards Hell.

And there is another scripture which saith, "He that saveth his life shall lose it."

A very striking instance of individualism occurs in the life of Sister Dora. We all remember how she left her home and went into hospital service. She did an immense amount of good; she relieved suffering, she comforted, and strengthened, and ennobled. And she was deaf to the pitiful, unsensational, homely need of her in the little English rectory she had left. She was a saint, and the poor, and sick, and outcast, named her sister; but in the station of life where it had pleased God to call her, she was not a sister. Was she wrong? Was she right? Far be it from

us to say! But there is a question here that the new woman has raised, which vitally affects the family: what is the relative value to society of individual development, which comes at the cost of family life?

But, somebody says, "Is n't one to seek for goodness, or culture, for one's self?" Surely yes! But is there any culture, of mind or soul, to equal that which comes from the simple doing of one's duty? Of course, the puzzle is, what is duty? It may be to go away and live one's own life and exploit one's own soul; that is certainly possible. But I wonder if it is frequent? For my part, I should say that it was only safe when it was done for love, not of self, but of humanity.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all  
the chords with might;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd  
in music out of sight!

The desire to save one's soul is full of dreadful risks. The pursuit of personal salvation and team-play are rarely found together. Indeed, that wicked old Calvinistic theology stated a profound truth when it bade a man be willing to be damned for the glory of God! There is one touchstone, it seems to me, that may be applied to culture, either material or spiritual, to see if it may be taken honestly; it is this: "Is this culture for myself, or for others? Do I live to myself, or even save my soul to myself?" Do you remember certain deep words spoken by One who, being the supreme Aristocrat of the world, yet said, "I am among you as one who serveth"? "For their sakes," He said, "for their sakes, I sanctify myself." For their sakes! Surely no individual prosperity, no realized ambition of soul or body, can hurt one who can say for "their sakes" I am rich, I am learned, I am comfortable; yes, even for "their sakes" *I am religious!* But how many individualists can say that?

## IV

The sense of individualism, as it expresses itself in the occupations of women, is one of the most interesting economic facts of our generation, — but it is too large and involved a subject to take up here. I must only say that individualism has taken advantage of certain grim industrial necessities to create the business woman — not the occasional and shrinking figure of a generation or so ago, the “woman in business,” who was pitied and smiled at and helped; but an eager, hard-headed, strenuous person, ready to give and take, neither asking nor granting favors; she is, generally speaking, a fine, wholesome, sound person. But, however clearly we may see the necessity that has created, and the hope that accompanies her, some of us see, also, a menace to family life.

There is another threat in the promise of individualism, and to my mind it is the most serious of all. I mean the matter of divorce, — for divorce is supreme individualism.

Somehow or other, after we “began to stand on our hind legs,” we hammered out of bitter experience one hard fact, namely: that because of what we may call “property,” the matter of descent must be kept clear. The cave-dweller wanted his stone axe to descend to *his* son, by *his* woman, and not to another man’s son by the same woman. Here, in the evolution of the idea of property, is, curiously enough, in its naked crudity, the beginning of the *sense of honor* governing the relations of a man with another man’s wife. But out of this idea of property came the belief that the relationship of the man and the woman, once entered into, must be permanent; thus the family was created. The process does not seem a very lofty stepping-stone to a divine and spiritual ideal of marriage; but

with the race, as with the man, it apparently must be first that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. So in all these painful ages of evolution, body and soul have wrestled together, until, at last, Occidental civilization began to say, one husband and one wife till death us do part!

Man is imperfectly monogamous still (or, at any rate, *men* are); but man builds his civilization on the indestructibility of the family. One traces it down: the state, the tribe, the family, a series of concentric rings, as Sir Henry Maine expressed it, in *Ancient Law*. And in the centre of the rings is marriage. Civilization, in other words a highly differentiated idea of property, is like a pyramid standing on an apex that rests on the permanence of marriage. Any one who tampers with the stability of that base, tampers with civilization. “But,” says the author of *The Secret Life*, “how bitter, slow, and toilsome, has been the upward struggle to subdue, for the good of the mass, the lusts of the individual!” For this idea of marriage asserts that the individual’s happiness is a secondary consideration. But all the same, the individual, crushed by that impersonal, delicately-balanced apex, suffers; and now the individual is beginning to protest; and he voices that protest in the divorce courts. The fact is, this matter of divorce, the most intensely social question in the world, is almost invariably treated as an individual question; for it is not for the sake of society that a man and woman are divorced; it is not, as it well might be, to avoid the sin and shame of bringing children who are spiritually illegitimate into the world; it is for their own selves, it is that they may have another fling of the dice, another chance to be happy!

See how this desire — this poor pathetic human desire of us all — is presented to us: “It is base for a man and

woman who hate each other to live together." To that we, looking on, aching with sympathy, and knowing too well that the condition of the unhappily married man or woman is the nearest approach to Hell on this earth, to that we must agree, — it *is* base, — unless sanctified by a very lofty sense of duty. "So we will part!" the frantic voice goes on. And we must sometimes agree to that, too; indeed, some of us would do more than merely agree, we would protest that bad marriages were not dissolved nearly often enough for the good of the state. For if the state depends for its existence on the preservation of the family, the family for its existence depends upon the preservation of its own unity. To imprison hatred within the little circle of a wedding-ring does not often make a family, it generally merely destroys a home. Divorce is sometimes the only way to safeguard the family idea which has been put in jeopardy by our careless liberty in the matter of marrying. But the individual morality, which recognizes the baseness of a marriage without respect, goes, often, a step further than mere parting, mere legal separation; it is not content with that, which would answer every purpose of safety, honor, and decency. Following the assertion that marriage must be dissolved for the sake of morality, comes the admission that it is really for the sake of the individual's future happiness: "I will get a divorce, and marry A, B, or C, whom I love (for the time being), and who will make *me* happy."

Here, surely, is the heart of the whole matter: the demand for personal happiness. And in that perfectly natural demand we touch what seems to be the fatal defect in our present attitude towards marriage. The individualist believes that happiness is the purpose of marriage, — whereas happiness is only an incident of marriage.

The purpose of marriage is the protection of the family idea. Happiness and marriage may go together; God send they do! But if the incident of happiness is lost, duty remains! the obligation of contract remains; marriage remains — it remains, even though, for profoundly righteous reasons, the principals have seen fit to separate by the width of the world. Marriage is civilization's method of remaining civilized. It is deep with the elemental human impulses of life for generations which are to come; it is solemn with its opportunities of spiritual insight through suffering; it is dreadful with its sense of responsibility for the ideal of permanence, which makes us men and women and not beasts; an ideal which we are to hand on, like a torch, from heart to heart, from soul to soul! hand on through the heaven of happy love, if it may be, — or through hell, if it must be, — but never losing our hold upon it, because if we do, if we let the flame of idealism be quenched in the darkness of the senses, our civilization must go upon the rocks!

Over and over we see this belief — that happiness is the purpose of marriage — leading to the divorce court, and almost always (alas, that we must say so!) woman leads the way. Man apparently is better able to stand by his failure, to play the game through, so to speak; but woman, who can bear physical suffering better than he can, has apparently less endurance when it comes to spiritual suffering. And so she cries out for escape from the consequences of her own blunder, and freedom to try and find happiness in a new experiment. And how logical and how pitiful her cry is! "Why should a wronged and innocent person, who has made a mistake in marriage once, be compelled to renounce the chance of happiness in remarrying? What can be wrong in that?" demands the

individualist ardently. Nothing! nothing,—if every man and woman of us lived or died or married to ourselves alone. But if meat cause my brother to offend . . . Oh, what a sense of social responsibility St. Paul had—if my happiness in remarrying lessens in my brother's eyes the *racial* importance of the permanence of marriage, then will I give up my happiness.

The advocate of the remarriage of divorced persons replies to this, that to forbid remarriage would be to encourage sin. Perhaps. Yes, alas, perhaps; but it would discourage divorce, because it would make the matter of getting married far more serious; there would be, perforce, more soberness, discretion, and fear of consequences, if possible blunders could not be so lightly rectified by the divorce courts. Not that we should make it harder to get a divorce,—perhaps it is too hard now; but we should make marriage a far more solemn and difficult matter. And as for the increased sin which might follow legislation forbidding the remarriage of divorced persons, what shall we say? That sometimes the integrity of the greatest number is paid for by the wrong-doing of the few? That is a hard saying, but perhaps, when we say it, we are finding a deeper depth of truth in still another scripture: "It is expedient that one man should die for the people." But the individual does not wish to die for the people, he wishes to live—for himself; he does not wish to endure, so that the foundations of society may not be weakened by his search for happiness.

If only this pathetic creature, clamoring for personal happiness at any cost to the race,—if only he could realize that when individual happiness conflicts with any great human ideal, the right to claim such happiness is as nothing compared to the privilege of resigning it!

v

While this strident voice is crying in the wilderness for self-culture, self-advancement, self-satisfaction,—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,—it is crying, on the other side, for power to act for the public good; and that we call the sense of social responsibility. Women are taking part in many public matters in which a generation ago they were not in the least interested. They are making themselves heard in municipal affairs with no uncertain voice; city housekeeping seems to them a duty; they want clean streets, and decent markets; they see that penal institutions ought to be improved, and that the conditions of labor need investigation and legislation; and they say so, often with an impetuosity so nearly childish that it antagonizes legislators,—or amuses them, which is even worse. But how strenuous, and fine, and courageous it all is! Every one feels that; every one appreciates its obvious hopefulness; but it is the danger which accompanies the hope, it is *shallowness*, which is too apt to be overlooked.

This sense of social responsibility is expressing itself, first and foremost, in the determination of women to exercise the suffrage. Out of that determination spring, of course, many fine and noble purposes, which would contribute to the general well-being of the race. In the excitement of her high aims, and her dogged intention to have the ballot (even if she upsets the whole kettle of fish, so to speak) a curious thing has happened: she does not apparently realize that she has secured by intelligent influence, and plain unsensational common sense, a large number of rights and privileges without the ballot. But, all the same, she is eager to try her "'prentice han'" in a government,

whose most complicated machinery is the ballot.

Incidentally, she proposes to force upon men the feminine view of morality: "Let me get the reins in my hands," she says, "and I will make men temperate; I will make them pure; I will cut corruption out of their politics. In fact, my vote shall make human nature cease to be human nature!" What the outside, gaping, anxious world thinks of us when we make such statements, we do not stop to hear, — perhaps we would not like it if we did! Curiously enough, however, even while the new woman insists upon the civil equality of men and women which will be secured by woman suffrage, there has come, upon her part, an insistence on their essential difference, which is most unlovely. She has her "Woman's Building" at the World's Fair, her "Woman's Editions" of newspapers, and the exploitation of "Woman's Inventions." Heretofore the work of women in the arts has been simply work, good or bad, as the case may be, and considered irrespective of sex; now, it is classified as "feminine," and loses immeasurably in consequence.

I hope I shall not be thought too dogmatic if I say that I believe there was very general regret among thoughtful women that there should have been a Woman's Building at Chicago in 1893, and that it was on the whole a mortifying and humiliating display. How much better if the few great things — the noble pictures, the valuable inventions, the dignified expressions of any art or science — had been placed among their peers, and not put aside as noticeable because women did them. Such insistence upon sex in work is an insult to the work, and to the sex, too. In fact, all this emphasis on the difference between women and men is too apt to remind one of what Dr. Johnson said of a woman in the pulpit: she

was like a dog standing on his hind legs, — the wonder was, not that she did not do it well, but that she could do it at all!

This sense of social responsibility which has, at least to some extent, dictated woman's demand for the ballot, is perhaps the most delicate spiritual possession of the human creature; and into eager, unused woman's hands has come this priceless toy — for indeed, in our dilettante charities, in our passionate reforms, in our light-hearted disrespect for law, in our sentimental cocksureness, can we honestly deny an excited, conceited, inconsequent empiricism which is saturated with self-consciousness, and treats this divine and spiritual instinct as a new plaything?

Yes, surely, the danger in the promise is *shallowness*.

Look at this very matter of suffrage, which the New Woman demands so that she may right the wrongs of time, — does she stop to reflect with what terrible elements she is playing? She is reaching out, panting for, insisting upon — power! True, it is power to make for righteousness. "Am not I," she cries, reproachfully, "I, an intelligent and educated woman, better qualified to vote than my ashman?" "True," replies public opinion, "but shall the suffrage therefore be given to your cook?" But to gratify that desire for power, the New Woman is willing to include her cook; she is willing to multiply by two the present ignorant and unconscientious vote, a vote which many thoughtful persons, anxiously doubting democracy, believe is already threatening our national existence. Universal man suffrage (saving your presence, gentlemen!) has certainly not yet proved itself a success; it is still in the experimental stage; but that does not discourage the New Woman, in the midst of the most critical experiment in government

which the world has seen, from asking for the further complication of universal woman suffrage. She has never, so far as I know, suggested for women an educational qualification far, far stricter than that which has accomplished so little for men; she does not even propose suffrage for widows and unmarried property-owning women, which would go a little way toward eliminating the irresponsible vote. Her cry is, "All of us — or none of us!" — just because many men, absolutely unqualified to do so, vote, let many absolutely unqualified women do the same! Could there be wilder (alas, that I must say so), more feminine logic than that?

We have suffered many things at the hands of Patrick; the New Woman would add Bridget also. And — graver danger — to the vote of that fierce, silly, amiable creature, the uneducated Negro, she would add (if logical) the vote of his sillier, baser female.

I hope I am not understood as being opposed to woman suffrage. I am only protesting against suffrage for all women; just as I would protest (if there was any use in doing so) against suffrage for all men. In other words, I protest against any extension of the suffrage. And my protest is not at all because of any traditional sentimentality as to woman's inherent unfitness. The objection of the Antis that the majority of women do not wish to assume the responsibilities of the suffrage, is, of course, entitled to respect; but the assertion that women cannot take time from their households, their bridge-playing, or their shops, to go to the polls, would be irritating, if it were not ridiculous; and that cant phrase (which is almost enough to make the hearer a suffragist on the spot!) to the effect that the hand that rocks the cradle is unfit or unable to cast a ballot, is as silly as it is unconvincing. If the hand is so foolish or so incapable as

that, it is more dangerous to the state to trust a cradle to it than to trust a ballot. No; my objection is only on the ground of expediency: all things are lawful, — to go back to St. Paul, — but all things are not expedient. If there could be a qualified suffrage for men *and* women, the case might be different. But the unqualified men won't give up what they have got, and the unqualified women are trying to get what they don't deserve; — so there you are!

In their passionate desire for the public good, women seem to have more heart, and less head, than men; they seem to be more single-minded, but with all their earnestness, there is a sentimentality, a lawlessness, an emotional shallowness, a lack of thoroughness, in the way in which they approach public questions, which, quite apart from the question of doubling the irresponsible vote, makes the matter of their exercising the suffrage alarming. And in nothing is their shallowness more alarming than in their indifference to law. The most majestic thing humanity has evolved is surely the abstraction called *law*. That the administration of law is defective is neither here nor there. Of course it is defective; but the idea itself, law itself, terrible and glorious, is the wonder of time. That we, poor "agglutinations of dust," as Stevenson calls us, that we should have evolved law, surely shows us to be part of the Eternal Law that is named God.

And how does the New Woman regard this majestic thing? She flouts it; she makes merry with it; she treats it as something to be used for her well-being, or her amusement, or else — down with it! Of course, this disrespect for law is at present an American, not merely a feminine, characteristic; but in the past, women, if they have not respected the abstraction, have at

least had a wholesome fear of the reality. And in so far as they were *afraid*, they were a balance to that spirit which bids the American man "make the law he flouts, and bids him flout the law he makes." But now woman's disrespect for law, as regards her own conduct, is especially alarming because of what her example means to the children.

Nevertheless women are ready enough to use the law for their emotional ends. As an instance of this, look at the way women have sprung up like mushrooms, in a night, to declare that they are capable of solving the riddle of the painful world, that riddle which is tangled up with the very fibres of human nature, which is full of mystery and misery, and which yet, in some strange, dark way, is built upon everlasting law. I mean prostitution. The New Woman, whose *métier* at this moment happens to be reform, says, lightly: "We'll close disreputable houses by law," and feels that all is settled. When man, sad enough, puzzled enough, and humble enough, too, if he is the right kind of man, says tentatively, "But may we not perhaps scatter the poison by that process?" see how the New Woman scorns him for his cowardice, or his baseness!

In this connection I recall a grim illustration of the effect of a shallow sense of social responsibility, mixed with sentimentalism. A company of good and earnest women took steps to secure the enforcement of a certain law in regard to disreputable houses; as a result a whole street full of these hideous places was closed, and the inmates went flocking out upon the town, like evil birds of prey. A young woman who had once lived in one of these houses was at that time in my care, and I asked her what would become of these poor creatures, whom the *good* women had sent out into the world —

each one of them a microbe of sin! I can never forget her reply: "Oh, they do a very good business on the street." Then she added, casually, four sinister words, "a better business, really." So, in one instance at least, did the new feminine sense of social responsibility, decking the law with sentimentality, do its part to retard righteousness in a community. The New Woman tried to reform details, to check symptoms. She would cut off the branches of evil, overlooking the root deep down in human nature; she would, in fact, produce spirituality by legislation, forgetting that the Kingdom of God is within us, — must be within us! But the process with which Nature works to build that kingdom is too slow for her fury of impatience for goodness.

Hot with her new sense of social responsibility, she says drunkenness is of the Devil; and the advocates of high license are procurers to the lords of Hell. She is going to shut up the saloon — just as the pressure of her influence has already abolished the canteen in the army, with a corresponding and awful increase of drunkenness. The education of self-restraint has no part in the New Woman's scheme of reform. She does not take into account the slow and painful process of evolution which has, in a hundred years, brought about a finer temperance than our forbears could have dreamed of, in the days when it was gentlemanly to roll under the table after dinner. Yet think what it means to character to be temperate, rather than to be carried about, whither one would not, in the strait-jacket of legally enforced total abstinence! — to say nothing of the criminals that such enforcement would inevitably create out of decent folk.

With the ballot in her hand, the New Woman would make laws to prevent drunkenness. In other words, she seems to confuse a purely individual

issue with a social issue. She would bend society to the needs of the individual, for her conviction of the necessity of legislative interference springs so often from personal experience. Women suffer from the curse of liquor as men do not. The drunkard suffers in his own person, as he deserves to do; but his wife or mother suffers because he suffers. Stinging, then, with her personal misery, the New Woman says, "I will close the saloons so that temptation shall be removed," — with never a thought for the education it would be to some other woman's son to learn to pass that saloon without going in; still less does she reflect upon that nobler education of moderation which means the sane use of liquor. Yet which is better, — to remove temptation, or to teach people to overcome temptation? To prevent badness is to prevent goodness, for an unwilling action has no moral significance. And certainly the highest righteousness includes the highest power of being bad if you want to be.

One cannot but think what it might mean in character to the race to have this passionate and noble New Woman, who would reform things, recognize the right of the individual (where society is not directly menaced) to choose between righteousness and baseness; and that implies his right to work out his own salvation, by suffering, yes, and by sinning, if it is necessary. Ah, but regeneration on those lines takes so long! We are so eager to make people good that we forget that the consequences of wrong-doing — suffering, pain, failure, and even death — may be the angels of God, those angels who are given charge over us, to keep us in all our ways. The thousand years of the Lord, we would put into one day! Our day — not His.

Indeed, the New Woman's intemperate temperance betrays her small

honor for human nature; her small belief in time, but her very large confidence in her own judgment. Archbishop Whateley said, with flippant but humorous discourtesy: "Women never reason; or if they do, they either draw correct inferences from wrong premises, or wrong inferences from correct premises — *and they always poke the fire from the top.*"

This new element in reform which seems to be poking the fire from the top, this New Woman, does not know how to wait. Haste! That is surely the danger which walks at the elbow of our most noble instinct of social responsibility. It is this haste which has lately driven some of us into ludicrous and wicked disrespect for law; it has made us, with mistaken kindness, seek to interfere with individual development which comes by wrong-doing and pain; it has robbed us of patience with differing opinions; it has created a god in its own image, and cries out that he shall be worshiped only in ways of which it approves. Oh, let us learn to wait; it does not follow that we must be idle because we refuse to be precipitate; it may only mean that we have a faith that is large in Time, and that which shapes it to some perfect end. Indeed, there seems to me a certain unhumorous arrogance in this bustling, feminine haste to make over the world — it is as if we thought ourselves so important that nothing could go right without us. It is the same sort of hurrying "anxiety to do" which every housekeeper of us knows so well in her little daily affairs, an anxiety that adds so successfully to the discomfort of our families. Yet, when you come to think of it, — it may not be flattering, — but when an illness sweeps us off our feet or some duty calls us upon a journey, how well our families do get along without us! I have often been struck by it in my own household.

It is this same fretting impatience that shows itself in the attitude of women toward reforms. But our sense of humor is surely in the eclipse when we take ourselves so seriously, for, after all, God has drawn this earth along its path among the everlasting stars, suns have burned and cooled, nations have lived and died, and human life has drawn nearer and nearer that "far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves," — without us.

And fear not lest Existence, closing your  
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;  
The Eternal Saké from that Bowl has pour'd  
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour

When You and I behind the Veil are past; —  
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last,  
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds  
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble cast.

Beautiful, dark, true words; a lofty fatalism which declares that the Judge of all the Earth does right. But not the final words for us, who have come to know that we are workers together with the Eternal.

I suppose the plea for time is really a plea for *law*, and that always seems to me a statement of the faith that is in us: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth —" Yes, of the new heavens and the new earth, which we hurrying, worrying, experimenting little human creatures would usher in — day after to-morrow!

Of course, if this high reminder that God will take care of His own business is meant for those of us who hurry and clamor to push on the processes of evolution, it is meant just as much for those who shrink and hold back, lest in all the shallowness of living, and all the selfishness of life, we should, like certain animals in the New Testament, rush violently down a steep place into the sea. Take courage to wait, one cries to the younger generation; take courage to go forward — to those who, fearfully, lag behind.

## VI

But after all, in spite of their dangers, are not individualism and the sense of social responsibility the two working hands of one central heart, — a heart that we call Duty? Surely neither can be cut off from that life-giving source and live, and neither can work against the other without the destruction of the whole. It is, of course, Kant's categorical imperative, expanded into the homely terms of duty: *No one may do that which, if done by all, would destroy society.* In other words, the individual must see that when the gaining of his own poor little happiness involves an injury to a great human ideal, it is better to cut that happiness off and cast it from him, than to do his part to bring the body politic to hell-fire. When social responsibility conflicts with individualism, as exemplified by the removal of the chance to choose between good and evil, then society must wait and let the individual soul learn its own bitter lesson of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.

One is impelled to cry out to the older woman and the new, "Oh, see largely, see widely! Realize that this flash and minute of existence is but a line, a dot, in the horizon of time. Do not think that law is to be pushed on, just because we are in a hurry. Do not think that God will loiter, just because we are slow. This small, glittering fragment of time here under our eyes, blinded as we are by the dazzle of eternity, is almost nothing to the sum of the whole! Do not haste. Do not hold back.

Youth shows but half —

and she is still so young, this woman of our new and solemn and glorious day —

Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!

# THE SUPPRESSION OF IMPORTANT NEWS

BY EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS

## I

Most of the criticism launched at our daily newspapers hits the wrong party. Granted they sensationalize vice and crime, "play up" trivialities, exploit the private affairs of prominent people, embroider facts, and offend good taste with screech, blare, and color. But all this may be only the means of meeting the demand, of "giving the public what it wants." The newspaper cannot be expected to remain dignified and serious now that it caters to the common millions, instead of, as formerly, to the professional and business classes. To interest errand-boy and factory-girl and raw immigrant, it had to become spicy, amusing, emotional, and chromatic. For these, blame, then, the American people.

There is just one deadly, damning count against the daily newspaper as it is coming to be, namely, *It does not give the news.*

For all its pretensions, many a daily newspaper is not "giving the public what it wants." In spite of these widely trumpeted prodigies of costly journalistic "enterprise," these ferreting reporters and hurrying correspondents, these leased cables and special trains, news, good "live" news, "red-hot stuff," is deliberately being suppressed or distorted. This occurs oftener now than formerly, and bids fair to occur yet oftener in the future.

And this in spite of the fact that the aspiration of the press has been upward. Venality has waned. Better and

better men have been drawn into journalism, and they have wrought under more self-restraint. The time when it could be said, as it was said of the Reverend Dr. Dodd, that one had "descended so low as to become editor of a newspaper," seems as remote as the Ice Age. The editor who uses his paper to air his prejudices, satisfy his grudges, and serve his private ambitions, is going out. Sobered by a growing realization of their social function, newspaper men have come under a sense of responsibility. Not long ago it seemed as if a professional spirit and a professional ethics were about to inspire the newspaper world; and to this end courses and schools of journalism were established, with high hopes. The arrest of this promising movement explains why nine out of ten newspaper men of fifteen years' experience are cynics.

As usual, no one is to blame. The apostasy of the daily press is caused by three economic developments in the field of newspaper publishing.

## II

In the first place, the great city daily has become a blanket sheet with elaborate presswork, printed in mammoth editions that must be turned out in the least time. The necessary plant is so costly, and the Associated Press franchise is so expensive, that the daily newspaper in the big city has become a capitalistic enterprise. To-day a million dollars will not begin to outfit a metropolitan newspaper. The editor