

faces Germany. Unable to advance in the west, she finds herself, at the end of 1916, in actual military occupation of Austria-Hungary and most of the Balkan Peninsula. The question for Hindenburg, therefore, is how so to use his tactical superiority as to make lasting a state of affairs, as fortunate as it was unplanned, which was originally not only not of Germany's choice but against her choice, and which dates from the days when Germans openly said that Austria was less of a help than a hindrance. For an unexpected German empire has come into being, not a willing hegemony but a *de facto* military autocracy, which can be made the foundation of a supremacy in Central Europe, Asia Minor and Persia brilliant beyond parallel in European history. It is the business of Hindenburg so to use the tactical superiority of the German military machine (over enemies and allies alike) on the various eastern fronts, as to force a conclusion of the war on the basis of that supremacy.

Now it has become a truism in this war that troops used defensively and properly entrenched can stand their ground against an enemy of superior tactical value (granted, of course, a satisfactory morale) although if used offensively, or in the open, these same troops be almost helpless. The British at Ypres, the Russians in front of Warsaw, stood off for weeks the best that Germany could bring against them. But these same British not long afterwards, at Neuve Chapelle, showed that they did not comprehend offensive problems at all; while the Russians were as children in German hands wherever there was a campaign of movement.

In the open fighting of the future Hindenburg is almost certain to defeat Russia, if not England. He can, if he chooses, first smash Cadorna and Sarraïl, but such victories would in their very nature be indecisive. It is well known that Hindenburg and his faction believe that in the Riga campaign of 1915 they were near to dealing Russia her vital blow, and that Hindenburg's encircling movement at Vilna failed because Falkenhayn preferred to send the German reinforcements elsewhere. To win the war outright in the east, however, Russian resistance must be broken by the destruction of her armies. A separate peace with Russia is no part of the program of Hindenburg and the German eastern faction. The Russian armies are to be crushed by German tactical and technical superiority, and the terms of peace those of the victor to the vanquished. Unless forcibly imposed, those terms would not be acceptable even to the Black Hundreds of Petrograd. The Russian reactionaries desire neither victory nor defeat in this war. In victory they see the triumph of

the democratic ideas of the west, in defeat the threat of a certain revolution in Russia. True standpatters, they want nothing changed; they are dangerous to Russia only when she is winning. Hindenburg's victories, therefore, must be not diplomatic, but decisive military victories. In order to achieve the objects of the German eastern faction he must break Russia's military resistance. Whether or not this is possible remains the great question of 1917.

GERALD MORGAN.

## American "Society"

### II

OF the gynocratic caste we call American "Society" we are apt to speak as if it were a stable feature of American life—unstable in its group composition, yes, but of an enduring framework. It is of the nature of caste to appear enduring. And yet, despite appearance, together with other bits of an archaic social system the American society life is being scrapped—scrapped by women for themselves just as long since men began to scrap it for themselves.

In a growing democracy it becomes more and more difficult to make yourself count through keeping others from counting, to work the principle of exclusiveness. In this country exclusiveness based on family lingers on only in isolated New England or Pennsylvania or southern communities, in certain Boston or Philadelphia or Baltimore circles. Exclusiveness based on wealth or rather on its expenditure, remains a more workable principle. And yet given such opportunities for acquiring wealth as we possess and no sumptuary laws on expending it, caste exclusiveness through consumption is but a flimsy principle. The would-be exclusive economic caste becomes inevitably a mere economic class whose boundaries are too readily crossed to be thought of as boundaries at all. Nor is it any easier for our gynocratic caste to keep to itself non-economic distinctions in language, in bearing, in dressing, in ways of living in general; American habits of imitation make such caste distinctions short-lived. A caste which fails to exclude and which can not keep to itself any cultural monopoly is certainly in danger of its life.

Imitation and economic elasticity—these are the enemies of our gynocratic caste from without. Within its organization are other perils. It faces a shortage of leaders. Increasing outlets for feminine energy and ambition operate upon our gynocratic caste as increasing social opportunities for the will to power among men have been seen to operate from time to time on politics or upon the church or upon the army. Other jobs prove more attractive. Moreover once a leisure-class woman has become a producer or inventor, consumption ceases to be her supreme concern. Spending becomes simplified because its elaboration is too great a drain on her energy and attention. Moreover, spending no longer appears to her as a kind of maker of values, the curious pseudo-production it appears to the "born shopper." Her sense of achievement through proprietorship is lessened. Nor does a woman interested in her work prize the kind of prestige elaborate consumption brings her. She does not care to make that particular appeal to women nor does she like the relationship to men

it involves. She is likely to want something more in a man than a backer or a retainer. She wants a companion. She soon finds that there are no "interesting" men in "Society," as we say, or that if they are met there from time to time for fortuitous reasons the "society" background is not favorable to acquaintance. If she has once belonged to the caste she does not of course deliberately cut loose from it. Somewhat like an irresponsible man she drifts in and out of it, naturally from a caste point of view a demoralizing factor. Demoralizing, disintegrating or not, at least to the organization of the society life she contributes nothing. Her talents are lost to it. Above a certain economic class level every thoroughly converted feminist is to the extent of her vitality a loss in vitality to the gynocratic caste.

If the feminist bent is taken in youth the circumstance may not only deprive the gynocratic caste of a potential leader, it tends to depress its value as a marriage market. Not only is the girl not prepared at a finishing school to take her proper place in society, in another type of school or in college she begins to acquire the seeds of revolution against the gynocracy in so far as it is a gerontocracy, a control by the elders, and particularly a control of her through her sex or her sex relations. She begins to make up her mind to mate to please herself, not to please her seniors. Among the many ways this decision is disintegrating to the rule of the elders is its effect upon the desire of the young to go into society. It means that girls will not feel so "crazy about society" because there only can they meet men—such as they are. Youthful feminists like older feminists want to meet all kinds of men, not only the men admitted into society by their mothers, but the men who never think of applying for admittance. These men girls will meet in their work and in their social intercourse at large. As for those young men who go into society but who go only from time to time and reluctantly at that, they will go still more sporadically when the bait that attracts them, the girls they cannot meet anywhere else, is withdrawn. And so the circle revolves. The fewer the young men in society, the less attracted are the girls, even the old-fashioned girls. The more aberrant the girls, the more unwilling the men to "go out." Given a few more such revolvings and "Society" as a place for making marriages will be quite neglected, the last vestige of marriage by service, so to speak, subservience to the fashionable dowager having disappeared. This escape from "Society's" match-making machinery is, I need hardly say, part of that general escape of the young from the old which is the most important, if but little noticed, social fact of our times.

The gynocratic caste suffers in its human composition from the revolution of youth and from the social development in general of women. It suffers in its institutional framework from another development peculiar to modern culture. I refer to the modern change of attitude towards what we may call life's crises. In early societies changes in life are met with ceremonials—with maternity, birth, adolescence, mating and death rites. In modern life this crisis ceremonialism is passing, much of it has passed. Upon it the gynocratic caste has depended for part of its significance, i.e., it has put these ancient social ceremonies to its credit. Coming-out parties are "society events," weddings are described as "fashionable," funerals as "representative." During the last few years, however, *débutante* entertainments have been considered rather ridiculous affairs, and fashionable weddings, a little vulgar. Funeral rings and scarfs and gloves are no longer presented

to the mourners, mourners are even asked not to send flowers. It will not be long before a wedding breakfast will be as bourgeois as throwing rice in a railway station or as a funeral feast, and standing up all afternoon with a "bud" as antiquated as sitting up all night with a corpse. In other words the occasions upon which the gynocratic caste can make both a public justification of its existence and attract attention to itself, these occasions are diminishing.

Within the caste itself too there is rebellion now and again or pseudo rebellion against self-manifestations. "Functions" are derided by the fashionable. To be seen at a "tea" is an *affichement* that you are not to be seen anywhere else. To be asked to women's lunch parties, the most characteristic form of entertainment American "Society" has produced, has come to mean in certain circles that you are not asked to dinner parties. A really smart woman not only never leaves dinner cards, only as an act of condescension does she go to a "real dinner party." As for seeing her name in the society columns of a newspaper or her picture in the Sunday supplement she greatly resents such newspaper impertinence. It is a blow to her social prestige, she feels, to be made so common. A social leader cannot afford to be inspected at the option of others. This attitude of safeguarding prestige through safeguarding privacy, through objecting to newspaper notoriety, may be expected to spread. Like other fashionable attitudes it will be imitated. Then the wretched society reporter will not only feel himself more of a detective than ever, but more of a fakir. His accounts of the outermost circles of society, of its fringes, of life for example at fashionable hotels, will be less and less heeded and more and more curtailed until one day the society column will find itself among the historic curiosities of journalism.

Without boundaries, without leaders, without matrimonial baits, without means of accrediting or advertising itself through crisis ceremonials or through newspaper notoriety what hope of a future existence is there, we may well ask, for the gynocratic caste?

But surely along one line at least there lies hope or vitality for the society life, the conservative may urge. However undemocratic and anti-feminist it may be, however unworthily it gratifies the will to power of idle women and irretrievable snobs, however neglectful it is of other primary desires, does it not meet after all one of the most urgent of human impulses, the gregarious impulse, the desire for company? The society life does satisfy the desire for mere company—among women. Perhaps men have less of this desire, perhaps they care more for the companionship which is more than mere company. But even women's desire for company the society life satisfies only in a timid, half-hearted way. A degree of segregation, as we have noted, the privacy of exclusiveness, is so necessary to a prestigious position. Besides as women acquire other forms of human association, association with fellow workers, with professional colleagues, with *bona fide* playmates, the various forms of association men have, women too will be bored, much as men are, by those less personal ways of being together characteristic of the society life. Small sets of men and women with common interests and sympathies will form spontaneously to work and play together—a grouping that occurs already in Europe and appears to be on the eve of occurring in New York. There it may be said to await only the disposal of what for lack of a less flippant term we must call the tagger-on spouse problem, a problem that humorously enough even

the gynocratic caste cannot keep from trying to solve although solution will contribute so importantly to its own undoing.

But outside of "sets," of intimate groups of fellow-workers and playmates, salt of life as they are to many, is there no need of other forms of social intercourse, of more general meeting places, of opportunities for the chance encounter? Certainly there is, and here at length is a definite and concrete opportunity for the constructive humanist. All kinds of general meeting places are in order—for all kinds of persons—city and country club-houses, gardens, parks, beaches, boat-houses, skating-rinks, outdoor and indoor dancing floors, lobbies in concert-hall and playhouse—in short the very meeting places that are springing up everywhere under our eyes. These places are increasing rapidly. They will increase more rapidly and they will gain distinction once the need of them begins to appeal to the imagination of the social artist, of the lover of pleasant backgrounds and quiet outlooks. Even to-day places of assembly are becoming more decent and more beautiful in form, although they are dominated as yet both by commercialism and by the old spirit of group exclusiveness and of group apprehensiveness. A new democratization, a new fearlessness and a new freedom will pervade them in time, however, and then they will properly fulfil their social functions alike for the adventurous individual who seeks in them a setting for the chance encounter, and for the gregarious lover of his kind to whom the sense of the herd is comforting.

ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Fox on a Secure Peace

SIR: The scorn with which the more chauvinistic of British journalists and politicians are flouting the German proposal to discuss peace lends new point and interest to one of the best chapters in the recent volume called "Towards a Lasting Settlement." In the chapter referred to, Miss Irene Cooper Willis draws a telling parallel between the present conflict and the great French war, when England was allied with Prussia in the defense of European civilization against France (as a half century or so later she was allied with Turkey in the defense of European civilization against Russia). "We are in a war of a peculiar nature. . . . It is with an *armed doctrine* that we are at war. . . . This new system . . . in France cannot be rendered safe by any art . . . it must be destroyed or it will destroy all Europe." So wrote Burke in 1796; and so, with the change of a single word, writes and speaks official Britain to-day. In vain Fox urged, as many sane Englishmen are to-day urging, that "a war to exterminate principles will mean a war to all eternity. . . . Impotent are the men who think opinions can be so encountered." French offers of peace in the early stages of conflict were uniformly rejected as not providing, in Mr. Bonar Law's phrase, "indemnity for the past and security for the future."

But as the years of bloody and indecisive struggle went on the popular longing for peace became too manifest to be any longer officially ignored. Then it was that Burke, fanning the ashes of his once-splendid intellect to a last fiery flame of hatred against France, published his "Letters on a Regicide Peace" in 1796. "What, you would

treat with regicides and assassins!" he cried. "Assuredly we should treat with them," replied Fox. "If we treat with France only when she has a government of which we approve, good God! we shall fight eternally." "The question was not what degree of abhorrence ought to be felt of French cruelty, but what line of conduct ought to be pursued consistent with British policy, which had hitherto accepted the theory that every independent nation had a right to regulate its own government." Was it to be henceforth a British maxim that you should "make peace with no man of whose good conduct you are not satisfied, but make an alliance with any man no matter how profligate or faithless he may be"? "Hatred of vice is no just cause of war between nations. If it were, good God! with which of those Powers with whom we are now combined should we be at peace? Security? Are we never to have peace because that peace may be insecure? A state of peace immediately after a war of such violence must in some respect be a state of insecurity. We must be satisfied with the best security we can get: it will, at any rate, be not less secure than a state of war. To go on fighting as a speculation, that perchance we may gain a better peace some time hence—what can this do but add to the sum of human horrors?" These words of one of the greatest of English statesmen are as pertinent to-day as when they were first spoken, one hundred and twenty years ago.

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### Defending Divorce Lawyers

SIR: I have read with interest the article in your issue of December 2nd, entitled "The Middleman in Divorce," and I agree with the authors of the article that the case of Anton and his wife, in common with other cases of the same character, represent great social waste.

However, it is not fair to the profession nor in accord with the facts to let the inference be so readily drawn from the article referred to, that lawyers are the chief or one of the chief causes of the divorce evil. Thirty per cent of the divorce cases filed in Cleveland in the last three years were dismissed, usually by the voluntary act of the parties. From this statement one would conclude that the lawyers of Cleveland were not only not obstructing reconciliations, but were very busy indeed effecting them. The conclusion is just as logical that the reconciliations were effected by the lawyers in spite of the efforts of the clients to "get" divorces, as the contrary conclusion expressed in the article.

We all agree that divorces are all too frequent and all too easy to obtain, but experience will teach that while the wise lawyer does endeavor to bring about an adjustment of differences before filing suit his success is bound to be quite limited. He can often effect a settlement better as the final climax of trial approaches than he can before.

The divorce question is one which has its roots deeper down in our social system than the courts. If we want to curb divorces and all the undesirable consequences we must look deeper than the litigation affecting them. I do not mean that the methods of handling these cases through the courts need no change—on the contrary changes are needed—but any change will not affect materially the causes or frequency of divorce complaints.

ALANSON A. HULL.

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