

## THE WIDOW.

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GHOSTS! Whose imagination is so lacking that even in the twentieth century he has never felt a shiver at an unexplained noise or a shadow? But how far back in the history of the human race must we go to find the origin of such fears?

Much farther back than well-established ancestor-worship. Such fears then were constant fears, and the belief so firm that one's soul—the male soul—must be secured by the prayers of a son, the placation of the ancestral spirits by prayers being the safety valve, that the absolute integrity of the wife was the corner-stone upon which the husband's salvation and that of his ancestors and descendants rested. When her integrity failed—death to the guilty woman! This was the real foundation for the double moral standard, not that adultery *per se* was condemned, but the belief that the imposition of a spurious son incapable of performing the sacred family rites through which the spirits remained benevolent, the confusion engendered by the imposition of a false heir, caused these spirits to become malignant demons. If this seems far away, we must remember that India, China, and Japan are the great representatives of ancestor-worship even to-day, and that upon it their domestic, social, and political as well as religious beliefs and customs are founded.

And the widow? How did she become involved with ghosts? Before fear-forming ideas became well defined, before the jealousy of possession was formed, the widow, as among the Yahgans,<sup>1</sup> almost immediately found a husband. The widow among the Pidhircanes, a Ruthenian people on the line of the Carpathians, indicates that she wishes to marry soon by untying the knots in her dead husband's clothes before the coffin is shut down, thus not only symbolically but literally, in their eyes, loosening the ties and removing all impediments to her future marriage.<sup>2</sup> This implies a form of freedom—when the conditions of life are hard and perhaps

<sup>1</sup> E. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, p. 135: "As regards the Yahgans, none but mutes and imbeciles remained single. . . . No woman remained unmarried, and on the death of her husband almost immediately found another."

<sup>2</sup> R. F. Kaindl, "Volksüberlieferungen der Pidhircane," *Globus*, Volume LXXIII, p. 251, quoted by J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: Taboo, or the Perils of the Soul*, Part II, p. 310 (1914).

hardest upon the widow—in which public opinion does not frown upon an openly expressed wish which we would not only consider naive but immodest. The belief in the virtues of asceticism as a continuous practice was of much later growth. Besides, the widow of this lower culture was prohibited from marrying only for a certain specified time. After fixed, stereotyped ceremonies, incumbent upon each woman, had been complied with she was free to marry again.

We can almost trace the steps by which the widow has made her way as an instrument in the "great plan" toward the attainment of monogamy. The superstitious and freakish ideas which gave rise to the sacrifice of the widow, were conducive both to the attainment of this end and to the forming of public opinion often hostile to her individual happiness. The widow is one of the great adventitious characters among women, moulded as she has been to her proper attitude by the active agent in society, her preceptor, if not exemplar, the male of the species. No human career is perhaps more curious, with the possible exception of that of the old maid. But at least before the different gradations of superstition had hardened into a conservative religious and social custom, she was sometimes led into the prohibitions of her new state by sympathetic and kindly friends, being followed from the grave by a person who kindly flaps a handful of twigs around her in order to drive away her husband's ghost. Or, like the Matambe widow, in order that she may remarry she is ducked in a river or pond to drown the soul of her loving lord, who appears to be clinging indiscriminately to his best-beloved wives.

Mourners in general are more or less taboo, and we find that sometimes the widower undergoes practically the same rules as the widow, though in time these die out. That he was under restrictions among early peoples is also shown by the fact that in India at the present time, danger appears to attach to a man if he marries for the third time. For about thirty days a Koyak widow and widower go into retirement, we may believe, principally on account of the death infection;<sup>3</sup> but these people, too, seem to regard the widow as a particularly dangerous medium for her husband's spirit, and she has to seclude herself in a special hut. During this entire period she is considered unclean, her food, which she must not touch with her naked hands, being given to her in the minutest fragments. A Shuswap widow and widower appear to undergo the same pre-

<sup>3</sup> E. Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, pp. 67-68.

liminary regulations.<sup>4</sup> In the Mekeo district of British New Guinea, for some unexplained reason it appears to be the widower rather than the widow who is an object of fear.<sup>5</sup> Among the Thompson River Indians the rules were similar, but differed inasmuch as the widower might not fish at another man's fishing place or with his net, as he would render both useless for the season. The widow was overtaken by a special punishment, for if she broke sticks or boughs her hands and arms would break also.<sup>6</sup>

Among the Minas on the Slave Coast a widow is shut up for six months in a room where the husband's body is buried. Among the Kukis the widow is compelled to remain by the grave for a year, her family furnishing her with food. The Patagonian widow seems to inspire the greatest horror, for she must remain in the strictest privacy for an entire year, is required to cover herself with soot, and is positively forbidden to show herself without absolute necessity. The meat of several animals is forbidden to her, and should she fail in any of the specified obligations to her husband's memory she would be instantly killed by his relatives. An Australian widow who fails to keep her husband's grave in order would also be punished with death. It is probable that the widow is in some danger herself, especially if she is light-minded, for the widows in some tribes speak only in a whisper, some, as in Central Australia, not at all.

The position of man has always been difficult at marriage, filled with fear. The groom was subject to the danger attendant upon the escape of a demon if his bride was a virgin, and of the ghost of the departed husband, if he was foolhardy enough to be a suitor for such an uncanny creature as a widow. The dangers attendant upon the catamenia are constant and wherever women are at large, as shown by the prohibitions of the Parsees, Hindus, Chinese, etc.<sup>7</sup>

A Bantu Yao or a Lilloat Indian married a widow at the peril of his life so long as the property rights of the deceased were invaded, for the wrathful ghost could cause illness to the presumptuous second husband and has been known even to burn down the house of a frivolous widow, while the ghost of the Ama-Zulu<sup>8</sup> husband can cause his widow, pregnant by another, to miscarry. Central Australians believe that if the widow does not smear herself properly with mourning ashes, the conjugal ghost will kill and strip her to the bone. The Australian widow's veil is made up of small bones,

<sup>4</sup> Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 142.    <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.    <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142, note 2.

<sup>7</sup> See *The Sacred Books of the East*.

<sup>8</sup> Emily C. Parsons, *The Old-fashioned Woman*, p. 102.

hair, and feathers, hanging over her face. When discarded it is buried in the grave. The Aqutainos, who inhabit Palawan, one of the Phillipine Islands, consider it fatal to meet a widow within a certain specified time, so poisonous is the atmosphere of death to which the ghost of the departed is thought to adhere.<sup>9</sup> In some places the widow is disinfected or purified. Recalcitrant widows are badly off, being beaten, abused, and sometimes strangled.

Interwoven with these ideas is the question of property. On the death of a woman after her marriage, a part of the money received for her is returned to the husband as compensation for the loss on his investment.<sup>10</sup> The widow of the Solomon Islands is absolutely at the disposal of the husband's relatives if the marriage price is not refunded.<sup>11</sup> The Athenian widow during what is considered the most glorious period of Athens could be willed away by her husband, if he wished. The widow as a chattel among some peoples was the property of the husband's son, sometimes of the husband's relatives, as among the Smoos of Central Africa, and in order to free her from the claims of the latter, her relatives had to pay what was known as "widow money," or if owned by the uterine kin, the bridegroom had to pay a fine in order to release their claims. The care of the widow sometimes devolves on a man's heirs.<sup>12</sup> Letourneau speaks of Du Chaillu's description of a festival celebrating the end of the mourning of seven widows, the property of one man:

"The wives of the deceased were radiant; they were going to quit their widow's clothes and join the festival like brides. The heir had the right to marry them all, but to show his generosity, he had ceded two to a younger brother and one to a cousin. They drank bumper after bumper of palm-wine, and then began to dance. The wives danced. But what a dance! The most modest step was immodest."

Here we find, however, symptoms of social control, the enactment and carrying out of a taboo among a people many would think have no regulations whatever to be regarded. Why was this taboo kept? *Because it was the business of every person in the community to see that it was obeyed.*

The dead man's widow and saddle-horse are led around the tomb among the Ossetes of the Caucasus and both are taboo hence-

<sup>9</sup> Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. R. H. Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa*, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>12</sup> W. I. Thomas, *The Source Book of Social Origins*, pp. 454, 829.

forth; let no one marry the one or mount the other!<sup>13</sup> An Arawak widow must cut her hair. There are various deep-grounded beliefs regarding the hair.<sup>14</sup> One, that it is the seat of strength, another, that there is danger in disturbing it as it is the seat of a proud and hearty spirit. Besides these there is the widespread conviction that sympathetic communion exists between the body and any severed portions, which may fall into the possession of the maliciously inclined, and probably everywhere the hair is considered one of the greatest adornments. These may be some of the reasons why men require less mourning of themselves and sacrifice but a lock or two, but a woman's hair is either plucked out, cropped, or shaved. A cap is sometimes worn to cover the bald head, which also becomes a badge. Chippewa widows are obliged to fast and must not comb their hair for a year or more, nor may they wear any ornaments. The Comanche women in addition to the customary wailing scarify their arms and legs with sharp flints until the blood trickles from a thousand pores. The mourning of a West African widow is so vehement that even an inattentive ghost, if there is such a thing, must hear her bawls.<sup>15</sup> Bawling is a part of the education of the maiden, the emotions of women having been cultivated in certain lines, sometimes by outward requirements, though severely repressed by the same process in others.

Women of Asiatic Turkey do not attend the funeral but must remain in their tents, wail incessantly and scratch their cheeks to mar their beauty, while the widow must sing dirges for a whole year. Bancroft states that among the Mosquito Indians the widow had to keep her husband's grave supplied with provisions for a year, after which she dug up the bones and carried them with her another year before she could put them on the roof of the house, and not until then was she allowed to remarry. A Melanesian widow wore the mummied skull of her departed husband.<sup>16</sup> The widow of the Tolkotin Indians in Oregon was subjected to such maltreatment that some of them committed suicide. For nine days the widow must sleep by the corpse and follow certain rules in regard to eating and dressing. If she neglected any of them, on the tenth day she was thrown on the funeral pyre and scorched until she lost consciousness. The widow of other tribes is expected to mourn night and day, after the friends and relatives of the deceased have stopped howling.

In the higher stages of barbarism the widow-sacrifice either

<sup>13</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, p. 463.

<sup>14</sup> Frazer, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> Nassau, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

dies out or increases until it reaches its maximum, as with the Hindus. In the former case, the cutting off of a finger is the substituted sacrifice to avert calamity, ghosts being placated by the shedding of blood which they are also said to drink, or, if the woman is unwilling to give this, the sacrifice becomes symbolic, and a notch is made in a post. With the Quakeoloths,<sup>17</sup> she is made to lay her head on the funeral pile until she reaches the point of suffocation; if she survives she collects the ashes and carries them about with her three years, during which time any levity or deficiency in the proper amount of grief displayed would make her an outcast. Among some Indians the widow sets fire to the pile and anoints her breast with the fat which oozes from the body. When, owing to the heat, she attempts to draw back, she is thrust forward by her husband's relatives at the point of their spears until the body is consumed or she herself almost scorched to death. Her relatives are present to preserve her life, and when she is no longer able to stand, they drag her away. Such intervention often leads to bloody quarrels, but as soon as another member dies the widow, of course, has to go through the same ordeal. When allowed to remarry as with the Bedouin Arabs, her remarriage is not thought of sufficient importance to warrant a ceremony. In Cambodia widows retire perforce to a nunnery for three years and cannot marry for that time.

The Roman widow was ordered by law into solemn mourning for ten months and to observe various restrictions, such as refraining from wearing jewels, attending banquets, or wearing crimson and white garments. If she did not comply she lost civil status. There was a reflection upon the Roman widow, as only a *pronuba*, a matron who had married but once or whose husband was still living, could clasp the hands of the bride and the groom at the wedding-ceremony and attend the bride to her husband's home on the nuptial evening. There was a lingering on of the objection to remarriage, as a woman married the second time could not be a *pronuba* or touch the statue of Pudicitia or Fortuna Muliebris or Mater Mutata. On the second marriage, also, there were external forms less full of honor than the first, and only after the whole period of mourning had expired could the widow again become a wife. All of these restrictions go to show that many, if not all, widows had no desire to mourn for a husband to whom they had been given in a religious utilitarian marriage, but such regulations tended to cultivate certain moral qualities which in time bore fruit.

<sup>17</sup> Tylor, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 461.

The Hebrew sages decreed that a widow had less monetary value than a maiden. She was married without music and dancing. Under the levirate the dead man's brother, if the deceased was childless, or his nearest kinsman married the widow to raise up seed in order to prevent his name being blotted out in Israel. This custom, of course, worked a hardship upon both. Of the widow who did not marry, Judith is the Jewish ideal:

"So Judith was a widow in her house three years and four months. And she made her a tent on the top of her house, and put on sackcloth upon her loins, and wore her widow's apparel. And she fasted all the days of her widowhood, save the eves of the sabbaths, and the sabbaths, and the eves of the new moons, and the new moons, and the feasts and solemn days of the house of Israel. . . . But she increased more and more in honour, and waxed old in her husband's house, being an hundred and five years old. . . . so she died in Bethulia."<sup>18</sup>

She was the ultra-conservative type complying with the stilted forms of public opinion, even when society is unable to explain its demands. That remarriage in itself *alone* was not reprehensible is shown by the remarriage of widows with public approval under certain specified circumstances.

Several reasons are advanced for widow-sacrifice among uncultured peoples. One is that the dead might have a companion on the path to the new life, a god lying in wait on the road to the other world implacable to the unmarried; a second is that the deceased might have a servant to perform the same tasks as rendered in his lifetime. This is the reason why the Indian woman was buried with the implements she used in her heavily burdened daily life. A Mongol widow found no second husband because she had to serve the first in the life to come.<sup>19</sup> A more modern reason as given by some is that it is a punishment inflicted because a widow had not cared better for the preservation of her husband's life. Widow-sacrifice is an expression for the sex-importance of the male, for the principle never worked the other way. The idea of sacrifice for the salvation of the souls of many is best exemplified among the Hindus, and it follows that among them a widow's marriage is considered ill-omened and unworthy the participation of honorable men. The Hindu husband owes nothing to his wife.

On the Fiji Islands the wife or wives were much bedecked for death; it was as if they were going to a second wedding with their

<sup>18</sup> Judith, viii. 4-6; xvi. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Nassau, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

lord. In this much lower stage of culture we find a forerunner of some of the ideas which actuated the highly civilized Hindus, and while no hint is given it may be that they too believed a widow's death brought blessings upon the relatives of him for whom she died. In Fiji, as in India, the woman who was not strangled or buried alive was considered an adulteress, and was cut off from all hope of heaven. She was hounded to her grave with every persuasion and menace, and the eagerness to die manifested by some showed a full realization of the neglect, disgrace, and destitution which would be theirs as widows.<sup>20</sup>

Caste plays a tremendously important part in the social life of a people, and we are apt at certain levels, as in higher barbarism, to find extreme manifestations of it. So strong is it in fact that it will even include women, for caste alone will save her life if, through inadvertence, there happens to be no one present of sufficiently high rank to despatch her at her husband's obsequies. Slaves and women, horses and their trappings add to the display and solemnity of such occasions. On the burial of a Warua chief the course of a stream is diverted and an enormous pit dug, the bottom of which is covered with living women. At one end a woman is placed on her hands and knees, and upon her back the dead chief, covered with beads and other treasures, is seated, being supported on either side by a wife, while his second wife sits at his feet. The earth is then shoveled in upon them and all the women but the second wife are buried alive, it being her privilege to be killed before the grave is filled up. No less than one hundred women were buried alive when Bambarré, a particularly great chief, was interred. When Ra Mbithi, the pride of Somosomo, was lost at sea, seventeen of his wives were killed, and after the news of the massacre of the Namena people, in 1839, eighty women were strangled.<sup>21</sup> In the cases of men of important rank not women alone were sacrificed, but subordinates were despatched too, to continue the same duties in the hereafter that they had performed here. When the ancient Scythians buried a king they strangled one of his concubines, his cook, groom, waiting man, messenger, and favorite horse.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes men have committed suicide on the death of their chief, to attend him, and doubtless to make an imposing entry into the next world.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> T. Williams and J. Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians*.

<sup>21</sup> Tylor, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 459-460.

<sup>22</sup> J. W. Wheeler, *History of India*, Vol. I, p. 69.

<sup>23</sup> Tylor, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 463.



When there is no pressure the widow like the widower does not choose a horrible death. When the brother of Ching Yang, a disciple of Confucius, died, his widow and steward wished to bury some living persons with him. On consulting the sage he suggested that they were the proper persons; the matter dropped.<sup>24</sup> Injunctions contained in religious tracts and dissertations in moral books warned any one in China from acting as a go-between for the marriage of a widow. The *Shih-King* gives the ideal widow in her peculiar inconsolability. Her thoughts will not go beyond the grave, nor will she do aught but weep.

"With his two tufts of hair falling over his forehead, he was my mate, and I swear that till death I will have no other. O mother! O heaven! why will you not understand me? . . . He was my only one. And I swear that till death I will not do this evil thing." (Book IV, Ode I.)

To show, however, that persuasion in holy books was not the only weapon used to make the Chinese lady assume the proper attitude, she who married again exposed herself to the penalty of eighty blows. Nor is there any doubt that the public regarded the widow with something of the contempt and horror bestowed upon her by the Hindu, for the *Lî-Kî* lays down the rule that no one should associate with the son of a widow unless he was of acknowledged distinction. In modern China the suicide of widows is a recognized custom, and is sometimes performed in public.<sup>25</sup> And yet the persistent will of women eventually wins, for the modern widow quite frequently remarries, but she is not allowed to use the red sedan chair, reserved only for respectable brides. However, the outward praise of men, including the remarried, is reserved for those widows who conduct themselves according to the ancient precepts as told by a portal raised to the memory of Madame Ping:

"Her virtue was pure, and her heart as cold as ice, for though left a widow at an early age, she declined matrimony a second time."<sup>26</sup>

In the remarriage of the pagan Arab widow we find a hint of the levirate. Mohammed attempted to lighten the burden of widows somewhat, even while he placed restrictions upon them: "Such of you as die and leave wives, their wives must wait concerning themselves four months and ten days," the widow remarrying shortly or being married by her nearest male relative with or without her

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 464.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> W. A. P. Martin, *A Cycle of Cathay*, pp. 209, 273.

consent. Mohammed provided they were to have a year's maintenance "without putting them out of your houses," and that under all circumstances they were to receive one-eighth of the property left by the husband. His own bitter experience as a small orphan probably made a lasting impression, for his father's property went to Mohammed's uncles, involving him and his mother, Amena, in dire poverty and distress. That the position of the widow was an unenviable one was evidently recognized by people who made an effort to lighten the harshness of custom, as shown by the boast of some of the Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom, that they had protected the widow.

Of all the pathetic figures of history there is, with the exception of the illegitimate child, none more pitiable than the Hindu widow. Widow-burning in retrospect seems almost an impossibility, and yet it was and is, in the majority of cases, almost as great a horror for widows to live—for they die daily. Widow-sacrifice in India became, under perhaps the most unscrupulous of all priesthoods, a religious utilitarian institution. What has been proved to be a falsification of the Vedic texts,<sup>27</sup> taken in conjunction with the most fanatical of all combinations, religion and custom, was authority for what is the apex of the patriarchy. Even in the *Laws of Manu*, that most extreme of all misogynists, there is no authority for putting the widow to death, while in the *Institutes of Vishnu*, a later sacred writing, an alternative is offered the widow, "after the death of her husband, to preserve her chastity, or to ascend the pile after him." And, "Neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband; such we know the law to be, which the Lord of creatures (Pragâpati) made of old."<sup>28</sup>

Manu, however, promises heaven to a virtuous wife, who constantly remains chaste after the death of her husband, even though she have no son. He thereby practically places her on the same footing with the thousands of Brahmanees who were chaste from their youth, and entered heaven without having continued their race while on earth.

The widow who flew into the face of society and ignored the behests of the priests was considered only one degree above the wanton woman, though this word was originally also used in the sense of "self-willed," suggesting an offense unpardonable from the

<sup>27</sup> *Rig-Veda*, Vol. VI, p. 48; H. H. Wilson, *Essays*, Vol. II, pp. 60-61, 293-305, etc.

<sup>28</sup> *The Laws of Manu*, p. 335.

age in which the African god, Mumbo Jumbo,<sup>29</sup> manifested himself in person to punish recalcitrant women, especially wives, up to those followers of precedent established they know not when. The great weapon used was ostracism, always the most effective, and with an ingenuity worthy of a better cause the Brahmans involved the members of the woman's household, thus succeeding in casting partly upon them also the odium of her second marriage, this second marriage giving her the opportunity of personal choice. It must be remembered that a marriage from choice was condemned by the priests as one of the four degraded rites.

Among those forbidden to attend a Srâddha<sup>30</sup> is the son of a remarried woman, her husband, he in whose house a paramour of his wife resides, the son of an adulteress, and the son of a widow. Manu states that a present given to a Brahmanee born of a remarried woman resembles an oblation thrown into the ashes, and that the remarriage of a widow is reprehended by the learned of the twice-born castes as fit only for cattle. In the full-moon sacrifice described in the *Sapatha-Brahmana*, the Brahman conducting the ceremonies tells the son of a remarried woman, "Avaunt! unholy one, *daidhis hazya* [literally, 'son of a remarried woman']." So that a woman who was brave enough to marry to suit herself, placed herself in the position of having her son rise up and curse her for having made his life a burden to him and condemned him even before he was born. And yet the average Hindu is unable to offer any better reason for the forbidding of marriage to the Hindu widow, except that "it has never been."

The development of races has differed in details, but we can scarcely doubt that they started out with very much the same fundamental ideas, ideas founded on fear. The Parsees, however, are franker as to the personal motive, a psychological opposition evolving slowly out of the original ghost-fear. According to their belief (*Pahlavi Texts*, Part IV, pp. 55, 58) a girl who has been given to a man with her parents' consent, never even having been betrothed to another, belonged with her children to her husband in both worlds. In one of the "Minor Law Books" remarriage appears to have been allowed, but this allowance is ignored, whereby history repeats itself regarding sacred tenets conducive to the happiness of women.

And what is the foundation of this custom in civilization? The Hindus believe that a girl married by the rite having the special

<sup>29</sup> H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>30</sup> *The Laws of Manu*, pp. 103-108.

sanction of the priesthood, enters the kin of the husband for seven generations, and it is irreligious to change this relationship again because of consequences entailed which run seven generations into the future. This does not even depend upon the consummation of the marriage but upon the betrothal and wedding.<sup>31</sup> Even, in fact, a baby-girl can be born a widow!<sup>32</sup>

In 1881 in British India alone there were 20,930,000 widows, 669,000 under nineteen years of age, 78,976 under nine years of age.<sup>33</sup> Any woman who survives her husband is a hissing and a reproach to the community in which she lives, lower even than the pariah to whose scorn she is subject, yet whose very shadow as long as her husband lived would have defiled her. The *sati* is a "good woman," as opposed to the *rand* who survives and who is ranked with the female harlot. Incomprehensible as it may seem to us, it is the child-widow or the childless young widow upon whom the hatred of a community falls as upon the greatest criminal under the sun. The mother of sons, though a sinner, is a lesser one because she is the mother of males; the aged widow, having resisted numberless provocations and temptations, through her strength of character receives an involuntary respect; the widowed mother of daughters is a matter of indifference, and sometimes of genuine hatred, especially if the daughters have not been given in marriage during her husband's lifetime.

The widow who died knew for once the sweets of adulation. Her path to the pyre was an ovation, a public festival. The sick and sorrowful prayed to touch her, criminals were loosed if she but looked upon them, the horse she rode was never used again for earthly service. She was regarded as a divinity. Every appeal was made to urge her to death. She had before her one of her few chances of entering the paradise of Vishnu.

And why should the widow be sacrificed? The reason among the Hindus to-day is that widowhood is regarded as a punishment for some horrible crime or crimes committed in a former existence, such as disobedience or disloyalty to a husband or murdering him. And why should the community as well as her relatives be interested in her death? Because the relatives on both sides even unto the seventh generation, be they ever so sinful, would be saved. No wonder the surviving *rand* or "bad woman" is hated, when they could be received in paradise without an effort of their own by

<sup>31</sup> W. G. Sumner, *Folkways*, p. 389.

<sup>32</sup> Cornelia Sorabji, *Between the Twilights*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>33</sup> H. T. Finck, *Primitive Love and Love Stories*, p. 660.

her death. And furthermore, she played with her own soul, showing the evil desire which was in her, for according to popular belief in India, there is no other heaven for a woman than the seat or mansion of her husband where she shares the heavenly bliss<sup>34</sup> with him, if she has been faithful to him in thought, word, and deed. A Hindu woman is independent of her husband in hell alone! Vishnu forbids the sacrifice of a kinsman; his wife alone may follow him on the path of Yama.

Not only religious tenets but dramatic and literary illustrations as well have been used to train women into conformity with specified conduct. As women, owing to their uncleanness, were excluded from the men's houses, temples, and holy ground in early society, so were they prohibited from participating in the drama, which is considered to have been of sacerdotal origin. The Tatu Indians have a secret society which gives periodic dramatic performances with the object of keeping the women in order. In this instance it is the devil that awes the squaws. The Guatala and Patwin Indians have dances performed by the assembled men to show the women the necessity of obedience. Numerous Sanskrit stories and dramas instil the same lessons, and that of the man who went to Yama and saw suttee widows sitting in bliss, conveys its own moral.<sup>35</sup>

And what happens to the surviving *rand* freed by the British government? Her husband's elaborate funeral may last all day in the broiling sun. Of all present she is the one denied food and drink. She is the viper who has done him to death, no matter how youthful she may be, and he decrepit, diseased, insane, a drunkard, the lowest of the low in the moral world.

The great majority of Hindu girls, regardless of caste, are reared in the most profound ignorance. In a Hindu woman's life there are three honors or privileges to which she is entitled, ornaments, dainty food, and an occasional bow from the lord of all the earth. The widow, regardless of youth or age, is stripped of her ornaments and wears but one garment, red, brown, or white. Her great pride is her luxuriant hair, which, among the Brahmans of Deccan, is shaved once every two weeks. For a woman to have to part with her hair is one of the greatest degradations among the Hindus.<sup>36</sup> She is made unsightly so that she may be unattractive to every man who may see her. Her vanity and her pride are crucified daily. She has no part in family feasts or festivals. On auspicious occasions she must not show herself. A man will post-

<sup>34</sup> Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, Chap. V

<sup>35</sup> Tylor, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 53-54.

<sup>36</sup> Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 457.

pone his journey if his path is crossed by a widow at the time of his departure. Her life is made intolerable by hide-bound customs, the superstitions of her own family, and the hatred of her husband's relatives. Ease should on no occasion be hers. For a year she should sleep on the ground. Constant labor is her portion, with the fault-finding and abuse incidental to those whose lives and interests are confined and given up to pettinesses. She is allowed to eat but one meal in the twenty-four hours, and should fast frequently. She is forced to mortify her flesh. Her thoughts must dwell solely upon her departed lord, whom she has been taught to worship as a god-man and who has now become a man-god. As long as she lives she must never mention the name of another man; she must annihilate her instincts! The young widow is an object of suspicion to be closely guarded lest she bring disgrace upon her family. It is not uncommon for the widow to throw aside the restraint cast around her by superstition and to verify the teachings of Manu:

"It is the nature of women to seduce men in this world; for that reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of females."

Part of the ethical teachings of the Hindus deal with the widow: "What is cruel? The heart of a viper. What is the most cruel of all? The heart of a sonless, penniless widow." When the widow dies her corpse is disposed of with hardly any ceremony. The Hindu widow who marries is chased out of society. What is required of the Hindu widow? Absolute self-control in thought, word, and deed.

In a lower stage of society, when the esthetic taste is less well-developed but male importance is well understood, the wife suffers death under her husband's vanity, displeasure, or hunger and is eaten, as on the Fiji Islands:

"Vanity and love of human flesh will sometimes cause a man to kill and eat his wife; he accomplishes two things by this process, satisfying his appetite and establishing his reputation, he desiring to be known as a terrible fellow."<sup>37</sup>

The crudity of the belief in a haunting ghost was obliged to wane as men advanced intellectually and religiously. It is true that the Chinese to this day often attribute a man's illness to the spirit of a former wife, as the widower as well as the widow in early times were accused of being the cause of the spouse's death. Broadly speaking, fear of the bride and fears for the groom developed

<sup>37</sup> Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165.

marriage ceremonies into elaborate rituals, and as the religious importance of the husband increased under well-defined ancestor-worship, the wife became more and more absorbed into the husband's body. At a marriage in Issim, where the religious idea is not yet paramount, the bride and groom eat a fetish together as a token of friendship and as an assurance of the woman's fidelity to her husband.<sup>38</sup> Taking Rome as an example, however, we find the marriage by *confarreatio* fully developed, the most essential feature of which was the eating by bride and groom of a sacred cake, which established the unity of the man and the woman to such an extent that in life and death the wife was only part of her husband. This is the Japanese idea, the Chinese belief, and the Hindu sages leaving no doubt in the minds of their readers of the oneness of husband and wife, the historian teaches us that it is to the Aryan we must look for the reconstruction of our past and the foundations for our own beliefs.<sup>39</sup> It is also no stretch of the imagination which convinces us that the legal absorption of the Christian wife, as stated by Blackstone, found its rise in the total exclusion of women from inheritance as set forth in early Roman law, ecclesiasticism bringing to pass the legal as well as religious subjection of the wife.

Through this religious absorption of the wife we reach the doctrine of spiritual affinity.

There is perhaps but one other subject which so exercised the Fathers of the early Church as the widow. She not only wanted to marry, but men wanted to marry her, and the synods fairly bristle with threats against her unhaloed head. While it is apparent that remarriage is condemned in every one, yet it is the *sanctimoniales* against whom many of the canons are directed.<sup>40</sup> Such widows, if they remarried, according to Canon 104, Fourth Carthaginian Synod, were to be entirely shut out from the communion of Christians; those who, after once adopting the religious habit, refused to return to it, were to be shut up in a convent (Canon 5, Synod at Toledo, A. D. 656), and those who were negligent of their chastity (Canon 13, Synod of Burgundy, A. D. 671) were to have the same fate.<sup>41</sup> Occasionally a less arbitrary spirit was exhibited, and at the Third Synod at Toledo, A. D. 589, *capitulum* 10, no widow is to be compelled to marry, yet on the other hand "they are at liberty to marry him whom they themselves freely choose," but any one who hin-

<sup>38</sup> Lubbock, *Uncivilized Races*, pp. 304, 364.

<sup>39</sup> Z. A. Ragozin, *Vedic India*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>40</sup> Rt. Rev. Chas. Jos. Hefele, *A History of the Christian Councils, from the Original Documents*. (Trans. W. B. Clark), Vol. IV, p. 456.

<sup>41</sup> Hefele, *op. cit.*, II, p. 418; Vol. IV, pp. 474-475, 480.

dered a virgin or widow from remaining unmarried, was to be excommunicated!<sup>42</sup> It is evident that the idea of affinity was not universally accepted even by the orthodox, though on the other hand it was carried to an extreme, partly due to the teaching that marriage was a lower state than virginity, owing both to the belief in the uncleanness of women and that marriage was inherently impure. It was held that marriage between those having spiritual relationship was more repulsive even than a close blood-tie, so that a man who acted as sponsor to children could not marry their mother, nor could a girl marry her godfather.<sup>43</sup> The idea of the close bond of the formally betrothed as held by the Hebrews and others is also carried out, for matrimonial contracts could not, e. g., on account of illness, be given up at the will of the parties, while a man who married the betrothed of another during his lifetime, could be punished as an adulterer.<sup>44</sup> The old levirate marriage became incestuous under the new teaching, and every man was forbidden to marry the widow of his brother. It was spiritual affinity which gave rise to the famous law regarding the "deceased wife's sister," whereby every Englishman was forbidden to marry his sister-in-law, the repeal of which caused such lively if not learned discussions in Parliament a few years ago. Canon 61, Synod of Elvira, forbids the marriage of the deceased wife's sister, this prohibition, however, appearing to have been first promulgated at Cæsarea, while another canon makes it appear that to break this rule and to have a concubine besides a wife are only equally offensive.<sup>45</sup> It may be that such was the case, for the same canon (53) which forbids the marriage of a sponsor and his godchildren's mother, states that the "spiritual relationship is higher than the bodily."<sup>46</sup> It appears also that the widow of a sub-deacon, exorcist, or acolyte, whether she was a *sanctimonialis* or not, was forbidden to remarry under penalty of being imprisoned in a convent, and at the Council of Auxerre A. D. 578, the widow of a priest was specified in like manner (Canon 22). Penalties also attached to the clergy who espoused this relict, and those clerics who ventured to do so were to have the lowest place in clerical service. To marry a widow killed advancement, and the preliminaries to the enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy in the Latin Church is sounded when it was decreed that those

<sup>42</sup> Hefele, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 419.

<sup>43</sup> Hefele, Canon 53, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 231. Crawley, pp. 117-118.

<sup>44</sup> Hefele, Canon 11, Second Synod at Orleans, A. D. 533, *op. cit.* Vol. IV, 187. Canon 98, Trullan Synod, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 236.

<sup>45</sup> Hefele, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 164; Vol. II, p. 429; Vol. IV, pp. 91, 378.

<sup>46</sup> Hefele, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 231.



who received higher orders were not to continue in married intercourse with a widow, priest or deacon who remarried being excluded from communion until they separated. One canon condemned the widow of a bishop, priest, or deacon who married a second time, to be shut out from the church and to be denied communion until she lay upon her deathbed, while discriminations made against a cleric who married one who was not a virgin, a deserted woman, or a prostitute, show that public opinion was not yet formed as to the unfitness of the immoral woman for matrimony.<sup>47</sup> A bishop who knowingly married any to whom marriage was forbidden was to be punished, while those so married were considered in *bigamia successiva*, and no priest was to eat at such a marriage feast. We get another glimpse of affinity in Canon 72, Synod of Elvira, in the fate decreed upon a widow who, having sinned with one man, married another; she was never to be admitted to communion even at death, and excommunication was meant to ostracize sinners in this world and to damn them in the next. Her husband, if baptized, was subject to a penance of ten years for having married a woman who, properly speaking, was no longer free.<sup>48</sup> Tertullian forbids second marriage for both men and women, nor were widows twice married admitted to an order, as, in the words of Tertullian, "it behooves God's altar to be set forth pure." St. Jerome gives reluctant permission for any widow to remarry lest she do worse, while under Theodosius and his successors such prohibitions became so stringent that they entailed the forfeiture of the dower of children of the first marriage.<sup>49</sup>

The result of such teaching was not only that the order of deaconesses was composed principally of pious widows, once married, and that the vowesses as a class continued to exist in England until the conclusion of the sixteenth century,<sup>50</sup> but that in the Middle Ages all men saw in any widow a naughty woman or a hypocrite, who was recommended to frequent none but deserted churches and to contemplate the crucifix during the night. During the Renaissance the widow who remarried was scarcely tolerated,<sup>51</sup> but this probably applied especially to women of the Latin races.

<sup>47</sup> Hefele, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 5, 10, 15, 113, 408, 413, 454; Vol. II, pp. 386, 387, 419-420, 421.

<sup>48</sup> Hefele. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 415; Vol. I, pp. 224-225, 226-227; *ibid.*, 167-168, note 1.

<sup>49</sup> Goodsell, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160 (Muirhead, *Historical Introduction to the Private Law of Rome*, p. 388).

<sup>50</sup> F. J. Snell, *The Customs of Old England*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>51</sup> R. de M. la Claviere, *Women of the Renaissance*, pp. 129, 133-134.

A Spanish widow rarely married. She was a marked object and must comply with certain petty regulations. Marriage among the early Saxons was allowed the widower at the end of one month, but by law the widow who married within a year forfeited her dower, and after the Norman conquest the Church seized the land of erring widows who married before the end of the first year. Late in England, if either of the contracting parties had been married before, sacramental benediction was not accorded their union, nor was the care-cloth held over the bride and groom as was customary in first marriages.<sup>52</sup> The care-cloth is said to have been used to hide the blushes of the unsophisticated, if conscious, bride, but in the case of the widow, a hardened creature, it was useless. This was, however, assuredly not the origin of the use of the care-cloth, which doubtless had its source in one or more fears connected with marriage and the opposition and danger arising from the powers of evil, averse to the propagation of those taught to worship the powers of good. At Lübeck in the Middle Ages even if a young widow married, the occasion was made an excuse for an uproar before the house, and the groom was forced to stand at show on a certain four-cornered stone in the midst of noisy music, to "establish a good name for himself and his wife."<sup>53</sup> Homilies as to conduct and bearing of widows were written by prudish gentlemen, desirous of enhancing the decorous behavior of the much-bereaved widow:

"When God takes away the mate of your Bosome, and reduces you to Solitariness, he sounds you a Retreat from the gayeties and and lighter jollities of the World, that with your closer Mourning, you may put on a more retired Temper, stricter and soberer Behavior, not to be cast off with your Veil, but to be the constant Adornment of your Widowhood."<sup>54</sup>

We also find spiritual affinity troubling the Mormons, for while *The Book of Mormon* forbids a man to have more than one wife, Joseph Smith had a revelation on July 12, 1843, permitting polygamy, and in the celestial marriages thereafter celebrated the wife became joined for all eternity to one husband.

Remarriage was probably regarded, especially for a woman, by

<sup>52</sup> Goodsell, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195. E. J. Wood, *The Wedding-Day in All Ages and Countries*, pp. 245-246. J. C. Jeaffreson, *Brides and Bridals*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted by Sumner, *Folkways*, p. 370, from Barthold, *Hansa*, Vol. III, p. 178.

<sup>54</sup> Emily C. Parsons, *The Old-Fashioned Woman*, p. 102, note 1, from *The Whole Duty of Woman*, p. 93.

those so desperately in earnest to prevent it, with something of the fear with which a savage dreads the breaking of a taboo. It is to be noted that good works for the benefit of others was not the main idea in the founding of the various orders, nor did the idea that an elderly woman should wish to spend her life with a special companion to whom she could confide her joys and sorrows, appear to be comprehended. Under ancestor-worship the necessity of children had been so strenuously cultivated that women were regarded merely as a necessary vessel to people the world. Religious utilitarian marriages to produce heirs to keep the souls of the departed in bliss, and civic utilitarian marriages to produce citizens for the State, did not take conjugal affection into consideration, and utilitarian marriages of all kinds prevented the growth of romantic love everywhere. Marriage in the religious sense was followed by marriage in the civic, and woman was the field whereby offspring should be reared for those two purposes. Both of these precepts were somewhat lost sight of in the course of time, but we can find the lingering on of the idea that marriage is for the production of children solely, in the fact that many people to-day do not appear to understand that two people should marry for their own personal happiness when there is some reason to believe the marriage may prove childless. The idea of marriage as a source of happiness and the completion of the lives of two beings did not occur to our ancestors. While the sexual license accorded men has been detrimental to the race and the curtailment of the sexual liberty of women has been of unintentional benefit to it, yet it is scarcely possible that the racial instinct would be as powerful as it is in the normal person if the individual were intended to have no rights. Children fulfil a marriage and keep the selfish element from attaining the ascendancy, but children alone will not make a marriage happy. As we lose our false shame of the body, marriage will reach a status not yet attained or attained by very few only in opposition to current uninvestigated beliefs accepted by the conventional who are often unconscious hypocrites. Women have everywhere been considered the evil principle in society, this belief by no means being dead in Christian countries, and in the early Church and well through the Middle Ages it was strongly current. In desiring to marry again only what was considered the lowest motive was imputed to the widow—for there is nothing to be ashamed of in the racial instinct in itself but only in its abuse.

The prohibitions placed upon the widow to-day among the more advanced of the Christian nations have ceased to be religious and

legal hindrances and have become social formalities. It is bad taste to marry within a certain specified number of months. She is still a slightly marked figure in the social world, less free than a widower, whose comparative license allows him to act more naturally. To develop naturally is taboo to women.

## AN OLD-FASHIONED LIBERAL.

BY ROLAND HUGINS.

### I.

A FEW days ago I was wandering about a Washington Club in search of a chair and a good reading light. In my hand I carried Volume I of Lord Morley's autobiography.<sup>1</sup> Here I ran into one of the ablest men I know in America, now working for the government on problems of reconstruction after the war. He is a man who reads everything worth while. So I asked him if he had read Morley's Life.

Yes, he had read it. We agreed that it was refreshing and stimulating. Then he made the following comment:

"I confess I prefer this sort of thing to most of the writing of the younger generation. Intellectually it is more honest. In fact during the last year I have oriented myself afresh. I find that I am really a Mid-Victorian."

Precisely what my friend meant by that last remark I do not know; but I think I can surmise the essence. I think he meant that the world must go back to the older Liberalism before it can go forward.

Morley remarks: "Critics to-day are wont to speak contemptuously of the Mid-Victorian age. They should now and then pause to bethink themselves." Morley was reared on the "unadulterated milk" of the Benthamite and Cobdenite word. And he is still orthodox in his political faith.

### II.

Morley's idea of Liberalism is comprehensive. It is to him more than a creed. It is bigger than the party cry "Free Trade, Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform." He says, "Respect for the dignity and worth of the individual is its root. It stands for pursuit of social good against class interest or dynastic interest. . . . Treitschke, the greatest of modern absolutists, lays it down that everything new that the nineteenth century has erected is the work of Liberalism."

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections* by John, Viscount Morley, Macmillan Co., 2 vols., \$7.50.