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THE KREUTZER SONATA.*

BY P. K. ROSEGGER.

THERE is a book much spoken of called the "Kreutzer Sonata," and written by the Russian, Count Tolstoï. The authorities of various countries have done their part to advertise the book by prohibiting it. Afterwards the injunctions were removed and thus officially everything was done to promote a work unrivaled in revolutionary spirit.

Well, then, what is written in this Kreutzer Sonata? The Kreutzer Sonata has the form of a novel; it teaches that man should live as chaste a life as woman, and that she has the same right as he to expect purity of him at the day of marriage. And that is right! Secondly it teaches that husband and wife should live their married life in chastity, that according to Christ, it is adultery even for the husband to look on his wife to lust after her. Married people should live like brother and sister. Lastly it is written in the Kreutzer Sonata that sexual love is not necessary by nature, it can and must be suppressed; and that in this way the human race will have to be discontinued. These being the main ideas, Tolstoï tells us the story of an unhappy marriage such as has often been told and represented on the stage.

There is danger of ridicule, should we take an author seriously who says something in jest. Yet Tolstoï is bitterly in earnest with his doctrines, as can be readily felt by the feverish excitement that pervades the whole book.

Tolstoï is a naturalistic poet; he does not write a work of art in the old sense of the word. The naturalistic poet proposes problems without solving them. He brings conflicts to a climax without explaining them. He complains and finds no comfort; he accuses and knows no remedy. You say, we all of us can do that; for that we need no poets. And in addition, if a naturalist makes a proposition, it is impractical and unrealisable.

It is strange that the naturalist Tolstoï ventures upon an idealism which is scarcely, if ever, found in fairy-tales. He proposes to abolish the natural relation between man and woman because it sometimes causes mischief. It is right to pour away the dirty

water, but it is not right to pour out the child together with the bath, and still less to do away with marriage and children together. The abolition of love is something new. The Russian has outdone Oriental and Romance imagination. But he claims Schopenhauer's authority in his favor. And that settles it!

The poet declares that sensual love is contrary to humanity and marriage to Christianity. A Christian should not marry.

It little behoves a critic to say of a poet he has grown old. Yet we can boldly tell the Count Tolstoï to his face that he has grown old, the more so as we can remind him of his younger years. He has praised love and founded a happy family life. What he says in his Kreutzer Sonata is only an ingenious whim of the theorising old man. I see no chance of a milder condemnation of the book.

The book, however, has another side which is not so harmless as his philosophical speculation on love. Tolstoï describes the married life of a couple, the husband being coarse and sensuous and the wife without a heart. Their marriage naturally is in the highest degree unhappy and ends in murder. Such things happen. Yet if the poet thinks that it is the typical marriage, the rule, and a common occurrence, he insults humanity.

It is a most significant error of our present conception of marriage, that we suppose that two people of different sex marry in order to satisfy in a legal way their sexual instincts. If that were the end to be attained, it could be accomplished without marriage. There are weightier reasons for marriage. There is the sympathy between two people, the harmonious communion of souls, the wants of the heart to confide in another with whom it will be easier to bear life's joys and tribulations; with whom there are common interests for a whole long life—these are the real and decisive reasons for marriage.

It may be maliciously objected, if that were so, two men or two women might marry and marriage would be friendship only. But this objection will not in the least disturb me; for certainly marriage must be friendship. If marriage is not a bond of friendship, it is immoral in the highest degree. Yet in order to be a bond of friendship for the whole life until death doth part it, it must be so intimate as to make of two

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spheres of interest one world with all joys and tribulations in common, including the satisfaction of all wants and also those of the sexual instinct. It must be a partner from whom you can expect posterity, so as to continue to live through him or her beyond the grave. The sexual side of marriage, in itself the basis of it, becomes, when humanly and socially considered, a subordinate feature; the most important part will always remain the moral relation, the bond of friendship, the exchange of souls between husband and wife.

What is fidelity? Is it only a faithful preservation of the body? A friend is false who betrays me, who misuses my confidence, who injures me, whose goodwill is not reliable. Thus a woman can be false without committing herself otherwise, and this lack of fidelity can be extremely grave.

The Kreutzer Sonata has been read by one-half of the civilised world. But the book cannot make a lasting impression, for its ideas are impractical and do not take into consideration the human and moral side of the question.

It is almost coarse for a poet if he entirely overlooks—as Tolstoi does in his Kreutzer Sonata—the moral feature and the moral strength of man. Between the two people whom he introduces as an example of modern marriage, there is no other communion than animal sensuality and diabolical hatred. They are brutal, hypocritical without heart, without soul, without goodwill, without sympathy, without intellectual interests, without almost anything human or humane—such are the heroes of his novel, and with such characters he attempts his demonstration.

Had Tolstoi not generalised, had he presented the story as one special case, the effect would have been great. For these two people are represented most admirably and true to life. The husband's jealousy and its tragic result cannot be described with more psychological truth and thrilling vigor. The heart of the reader is overcome as though by a thunderstorm.

But then he is told: Look to it dear reader, you also are of this kind; you also have been in your youth a coarse roué; you also have married your wife as one buys a slave; you keep her as one keeps a chattel for pleasure's sake; you torture her with senseless jealousy and some day you will kill her. Will the reader not throw the book into the author's face and shout: What right do you have to insult me in this way—me as well as the great majority of my fellow-men?

Or, perhaps, are matters really as bad as that?

I ask, are matters really as bad as Tolstoi makes us believe? Does marriage instead of elevating man degrade him below the animal? If that be so, I beg

the poet's pardon and ask him the next time to be much severer with that infernal race whose malignity is without bounds. Would it then not be advisable to turn the evolution of mankind backward?

Among the peasantry there are scoundrels also, but they are—as Tolstoi himself confesses—exceptions, for the peasantry are too hard oppressed to be bad. An aged peasant once said to me: "The old woman there is my best comrade," and this simple word expresses a truth which has not found room in Tolstoi's world-despising novel. It is a truth which criticises the opinion of and should be regarded by those married people of the modern fashion or the author of the Kreutzer Sonata himself.

THE KREUTZER SONATA.

BY CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

IN THE *Forum* for August, Mrs. Stuart Phelps has an article entitled "The *Décolleté* in Modern Life." Her object is to call public attention to a vicious practice common among ladies in fashionable life, the tendency of which is to corrupt both sexes in that class, and thus indirectly the whole of the community in which they live. Mrs. Phelps seems to have written this article from a strong conviction of the pernicious character of the practice in question, and from a sense of duty in confronting the unpleasant conspicuousness of taking the first step toward its removal. Her desire was to call attention to public indecencies which have become common and popular, and to do this in decent language. But an embarrassing difficulty soon occurred. She was about to give an actual instance of the fault in question, that no mistake might be made about her meaning, but paused, saying, "My pen shrinks from *writing* what this high-bred lady *does*." A lady, too, whom she describes as "otherwise immaculate," and as belonging to one of the best families.

I am reminded here of two cases in which my own attempts to call attention to notorious public indecencies, with the hope of inciting efforts for their removal, were counteracted by that false delicacy which leaves enormous evils to run their course triumphantly, to avoid the unpleasantness of plainly describing them. One of these cases was the refusal of six of the most respectable papers in Boston to publish an article in which I had called attention to the corrupting influence of the *ballet*, and of the accompanying dances by single female performers in the Boston theatres. These newspapers habitually praised the performers, but thought it indecent to describe exactly what they did, even for the purpose of checking their evil influences upon the community.

The other case I had in mind was my competition, more than half-a-century ago, for a prize offered by a

pious and worthy gentleman for the best tract of twelve pages on "The Family Relation as affected by Slavery." My tract was accepted, but with an objection that portions of it were "too naked," and a requisition that those portions should be omitted. Thus it happened that in a work, the express object of which was to expose some vicious characteristics of slavery, a specification of the very worst of those features was suppressed, because the would-be reformer shrank from putting into words, even words of condemnation, a description of the things habitually done by respectable and pious people, and known to be so done, and known to be expressly authorised by existing State laws and Church customs, showing both State and Church to be participants in the guilt of those abominable practices. Was it really better to leave those worst abuses to flourish undisturbed than to shock prudish sensibilities by such open declaration of them as was the needful preliminary to their suppression?

To return to Mrs. Phelps's article. That the prudishness above hinted at dominates that estimable lady, is shown by her attack upon Tolstoï at the close of her article. She testifies respecting his last published work (evidently "The Kreutzer Sonata") that it is "true" and "well-meant," and that its author "has certainly moral motives of a very high and noble order." After such characterisation of the book and the author as that, how strange is it to hear Mrs. Phelps rebuke him, call on him henceforth to keep silence, and say, "His unpardonable fault is one of literary taste." She admits the existence of the gross immorality which Tolstoï describes as habitual and permitted in Russia, but seems to assume that to suffer its continuance without protest is better than to shock the delicacy of the pure minority by such plain description as shall compel attention to the vices in question, and prompt to active efforts for their removal. Is not this a specimen of preference for mere outside cleansing of the cup and platter?

The *vices* in question, I have said. For although Tolstoï begins with condemnation of the very fault which Mrs. Phelps attacks in this country, moved obviously by feelings and motives like her own, he goes on to describe and rebuke other vicious customs in Russia. These evil practices exist also here, and need to be pointed out and stigmatised here, as the indispensable means of arousing opposition to them. The very reason why well-known abuses in the sexual department prevail and continue here is because so many of the better sort "shrink" from open speech and action against them. Here, as in Russia, gross and shameful ill-treatment of women is habitually practiced by men accounted not only respectable but cultured, refined, and pious. This fact, no doubt,

increases the difficulty of effective remonstrance. All the more ought we to recognise and be grateful for the benefit which Tolstoï has conferred on the half-civilised world by disregarding "literary taste" in comparison with moral, religious and social reform. New England not less than Russia or ancient Palestine needs the voice of one crying in the wilderness against abuses which long custom and a vicious theology have seemed to sanctify. Very many of the men ranked among "our best classes" may see themselves, as in a glass, in the Kreutzer Sonata; and they ought not only to read it, but to mark, learn, and inwardly digest it.

Tolstoï's book, called "The Kreutzer Sonata," is very much spoken against, and indeed it has great faults.

In the first place, it is very strange that an author who holds intense and peculiar ideas about moral and social reform should choose to present them to the public through a character so extravagant and fantastic as that of Posdnicheff. Tolstoï evidently recognises much defect and much error in the popular ideas of civilisation, and religion, and considers it his duty to attempt their rectification. Judging for himself what is right, according to the precept of Jesus, and penetrated with the conviction that he is bound to diffuse the truth he has received, he attacks, unreservedly and fearlessly, some of the vicious practices which he asserts to be common and permitted in Russian society, the highest as well as the lowest. To attempt a work of reform is not a rare thing; but this man's work is especially noteworthy in that some of the customs there represented as unjustifiable and pernicious are such as the male half of the community everywhere assume to be not only lawful but right, falling within their masculine prerogative, and fortified by such antiquity of respectable usage that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Nay, the pious people who indulge in the practices here condemned will quote scripture in their defense as confidently as our Mormons do for their peculiarities. Under such circumstances, an author who feels obliged to condemn customs sanctioned by the popular religion as well as by respectable social custom has a hard task before him, and should present his case in a cautious and prudent manner, taking special care to avoid overstatement. It is strange then, I say, that Tolstoï should have presented his reformatory ideas through the mouth of a person like Posdnicheff, not only headstrong, extravagant and ill-balanced, but maddened by jealousy. He has however chosen this method; and our part is, first to judge which of his accusations is well grounded, and then so to examine ourselves as to find whether we lie under the same condemnation.

The chief aim of "The Kreutzer Sonata" is to compel men to consider the rights and duties of husbands and wives in marriage. The subjects of marriage and divorce have of late been very prominent in periodical literature, both in England and in this country. But Tolstōi goes beyond all the magazines and reviews in the extent and the boldness of his criticism. His peculiarity, theologically, is an attempt to show that the teaching of Jesus, in its plain and obvious meaning, should be our rule of life, both for individuals and societies.

In previous books Tolstōi had enjoined non-resistance to injury, the return of good for evil in all cases, indiscriminate almsgiving, and abstinence from the taking of oaths and the accumulation of property; claiming that the obvious meaning of Jesus in regard to these matters should be accepted as law by those who call him Lord and Master. But in "The Kreutzer Sonata" he makes a special plea for the duty of chastity, not only urging its observance upon both sexes but claiming for it a significance not generally recognised. He insists that the gospel prohibition to men of sexual desire towards women was intended to apply "notably and especially" to their own wives, and that sexual intercourse, after pregnancy is established, is a wrong and an outrage, injurious to both mother and child. He might have gone further, and represented that the passage in question forbids also the sexual desire which precedes marriage, and is one of the incitements to it. It is certain that the words of Jesus on that subject, taken in connection with his example, and the language of Paul and of the author of the book of Revelation give the impression, on the whole, that though marriage is permissible, permanent continence and celibacy are purer and more holy.

The ideas above-mentioned are those upon which special stress is laid in "The Kreutzer Sonata." But many other statements are confidently made by the narrator, Posdnicheff, some of which are not only questionable, but better suited to his character and circumstances than to those of the author. It remains true, however, that Tolstōi here as in his previous books, has written from a strong conviction of duty, with an elevated moral purpose, and on a subject which needs plain and urgent speech, in the interest alike of civilisation, morality, and religion. The reformer who, for these purposes, braves such reproach as has been thrown upon the author of "The Kreutzer Sonata," deserves a candid hearing from other reformers, especially from those who claim to be followers of the same Lord and Master. The books of Tolstōi are far more accurate representations of what Jesus taught and enjoined than the sermons and commentaries of those who claim officially to represent him.

THE NEW ETHIC OF THE SEXES.

BY SUSAN CHANNING.

"From curb'd licence pluck
The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog
Shall flesh his tooth in every innocent."
—*King Henry IV.*

IN the case of Sir Charles Dilke, who was compelled to abandon his political career because of alleged sexual immorality, and now in the attitude of Mr. Gladstone and his English and Irish coadjutors towards their fallen colleague, Mr. Parnell, we catch a breath of the new ethic of the sexes, equality of virtue. The days of high aims and Pompadorism are no more. It may be said of the great men of to-day in morals what John Fiske says of the men of the day who have fully kept pace with scientific movements: "They are separated from the men of the past by an immeasurably wider gulf than ever before divided one progressive generation of men from their predecessors." Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton did their country eminent service, but, great as they were, their private immorality would at the present day prevent their crowding their drawing rooms with the wit and fashion of London. It is owing to virtue that we exist. In primeval times the tribes deficient in conjugal fidelity and addicted to polyandry, reared no children and were soon blotted out of the book of nature.

Although a high standard of virtue gives but a slight advantage to each individual over others, still the increase in the number of virtuous men and women gives an immense advantage to a nation, since at all times and throughout the world the tribes or nations which supplanted others, the one element in their success was their standard of morality. The Irish owe their indomitable courage and seven hundred years of struggle against foreign foes, who have never completely subjugated them, to their respect for virtue and chastity, and the fact that early marriages is the rule among them. Ireland, as Lord Macaulay said in the House of Commons in 1844, is the home and perpetual nursery of heroes. Her men, as John Stuart Mill maintained, are Princes among men in every country but their own. And why? Because heroes are, as history has shown, only begotten by virtuous men and women. Turkish rule began to totter the moment she was deprived of her Janizaries. These men who had fought her battles so bravely were the tribute children of Christians. Polygamy depresses mind, heart, and body, while the union of one man to one woman cemented by love flushes the whole organism with color, gives a higher pitch to our lives, and is imparted to our offspring.

The northern barbarians, as the Romans called the Germanic races, when they first appeared on the historic stage had, according to Mommsen and Taine, the most exalted ideas of woman and the sex relations; premature unions were forbidden and were prevented by infibulation. The Cimbrî who first made the western world feel that Rome's Empire had begun to totter, when they first touched the orbit of ancient civilisation, marriage was pure among them, chastity instinctive; the adulterer was punished by death, and the adulteress obliged to hang herself.

When Gaius Marius defeated the Cimbrîans 103 B. C., their women showed as much courage as the men; in size and strength they were little inferior; tall and stately, with flaxen hair and blue eyes, they excited the admiration of the Romans, and when they fell into the hands of their enemies and could not obtain from Marius assurance of their chastity, they slew themselves with their own hands.

Lecky in his "History of European Morals," says, "It is one of the most remarkable and to some writers one of the most perplexing facts in the moral history of Greece that, in the former and ruder period, woman had undoubtedly the highest place and their type exhibited the highest perfection. The female figures stand out on the canvas almost as prominently as the

"male ones, and are surrounded by an almost equal reverence. . . The whole history of the 'Siege of Troy' is a history of the "catastrophes that followed a violation of the nuptial tie."

But as some animals under domestication lose the instinct of pairing with a single mate, so does man whenever and wherever luxury and magnificence abound. Ease and luxury have the identical blighting effect on the intellect and morals as extreme poverty. When Greece and Rome had to be either anvil or hammer, and when men to live had to fight there was little personal immorality. But when Greece had conquered her great enemy Persia and the Greek began to build himself fine houses and fill them with works of art, and when Rome was mistress of the world and had not an enemy whom she feared, then did their men seek the intoxication of vice and forgot the thrill of emotion which great achievements and great men inspire.

Culture, in its broadest sense, reached a height in Greece in the fifth century before Christ, and in Italy in the fifteenth century after Christ, never before or since paralleled. The young man of talent and ambition who visited Athens in the time of Pericles, listened to a political speech from that great man, then a lecture from Anaxagoras, after which he visited the studio of Phidias, then to see a new play of either Sophocles or Euripides, and he finished up his night at the establishment of Aspasia, where he heard Pericles and Thucydides discuss whether the latter had better devote his genius to poetry or history, or listened to music and the ballads of Sappho and Anacreon sung by the most beautiful and accomplished women in Athens, who were not the wives or daughters of the great men present, but women who had enrolled themselves in the ranks of the *heterae*.

We discover the same culture and magnificence in Italy in the closing days of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Italy, which had restored intellectual light to Europe, reconciled order with liberty, recalled youth to the study of laws and of philosophy, created the taste for poetry and the fine arts, revived the science and literature of antiquity, given prosperity to commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, fell like her ancient prototype Greece, an easy prey into the hands of the very barbarians whom she was leading to civilisation because all her republican energy and virtue had been crushed out by luxury and vice. Roderick Borgia, then Pope, was a fair type of the Florentine nobility. He was a man of immense wealth, utterly depraved in character and a most perfidious politician. His whole aim in life was personal power and to settle well his illegitimate children, of whom he had many.

Up to the present day the sexual immorality of man has been due to a bankrupt public opinion. As John Stuart Mill points out in his "Utility of Religion," illicit sexual intercourse, which in both sexes stands in the very highest rank of religious sins, yet not being severely censured by public opinion in the male sex, they have in general very little scruple in committing it, while in the case of women, though the religious obligation is no stronger, yet being backed in real earnest by public opinion, is commonly effective.

Some people suppose that no effective authority can be obtained over mankind without a belief in a supernatural religion, but the reflecting and well informed know better. As Mill said after reading Comte's "Positive Philosophy," which recognises no religion except that of Humanity, "this book leaves an irresistible conviction on your mind that any moral belief concurred in by the community generally may be brought to bear upon the whole conduct and lives of its individual members with an energy and potency truly alarming."

We all know that we cannot be happy if we are despised and detested by our fellows. Society may not have the power to make us very happy but it certainly has the power of making us very miserable.

As Bryce points out in his "American Commonwealth," the

force of public opinion creates the views of individuals as well on political as on moral questions. In Vol. II, p. 211, he says, "In examining the process by which public opinion is formed, we cannot fail to note how small a part of the views which the average man entertains when he goes to vote is really of his own making; although he supposes his views to be his own, he holds them because his acquaintances, his newspaper, and his party leader holds them."

That men are commonly governed not by religious belief, but by the law of honor which is nothing more than the opinion of their equals, is seen in the fact that a breach of this law even when the breach is in accordance with true morality, has caused many a man more agony than a real crime. George the Second adored his wife, Queen Caroline, he thought her, in mind and person the most attractive of her sex, but he thought that conjugal fidelity was an unprincipled virtue and in order to be like Henry IV and the Regent of Orleans he affected, as Macaulay says, a libertinism for which he had no taste, and frequently quitted the only woman he really loved for ugly and disagreeable mistresses.

The struggle for virtue like the struggle for existence must now be used in a wide sense including the dependence of one being upon another, and as in the animal world the struggle for life is most severe between individuals of the same species who frequent the same districts and require the same food, and are exposed to the same dangers, so in the case of man and woman, having the same appetites and passions, frequenting the same places and exposed to the same temptations, they should afford each other mutual protection.

Paradoxical as it may seem, it is owing to man's selfishness and compulsion that woman owes her more highly developed virtue. As Winwood Reade has shown in his "Martyrdom of Man," women from their earliest childhood are subject by the selfishness of men to severe but salutary laws, and chastity becomes the rule of female life. At first it was preserved by force alone, but, after a time women became the guardians of their own honor, and regarded and treated the woman as a traitor to her sex who betrayed her trust. It is certainly, as he says, an extraordinary fact that women should be subject to a severe social discipline, from which men are almost exempt. But it is not the women who are to be pitied; it is they alone who are free, for by that discipline they are prevented from the tyranny of vice. The passions are always foes, but it is only when they are encouraged that they are able to become masters, and no calculus can integrate the number of intellects that have been paralyzed, innocent hearts that have been broken asunder, lives that have been poisoned, and young corpses that have been carried to the tomb by their having become masters. That man should be subject to the same discipline and held to the same standard of virtue as woman is the doctrine of the new ethic of the sexes, and the day has evidently dawned in which public sentiment will rigorously enforce the doctrine. For good men have begun to realise with Goethe: "That the unit that makes a self-sacrifice only injures himself, unless all endeavor the whole to accomplish."

CURRENT TOPICS.

THE battle flags of Germany, draped with funeral colors, mourn for the great Field Marshal who carried them triumphantly to Paris, and saw them wave above the Pont d'Jena, and by the Arc de Triomphe in the Champs Elysées. Although a soldier all his life, it may be justly said that Von Moltke's victories have done much to abolish war. Unlike all other conquerors there was nothing spectacular or theatrical about him. We never see him pictured on a fiery steed, prancing about in the midst of his

legions, frantically waving his hat, and charging upon clouds of smoke. He was the genius of military mathematics, and he won battles by calculation as Paul Morphy won in chess. France declared war against Prussia on the 15th of July, 1870, and by the 1st of August the Emperor Napoleon had played the opening moves of his game; these Moltke answered by counter moves which placed the German army on the French frontier, and there is no doubt that had he met the Emperor at any time after the 1st of August, he could have warned him of the inevitable by announcing "Checkmate in five moves." It is often said that a liberal discount must be allowed on his victories, and credited to the blunders of his enemy; but this abatement will not apply to Moltke because whether his enemy would do the right thing or the wrong thing, was thought out, and allowed for in his calculations. He was the martial spirit of his country in its intellectual activity, he was Germany's "battle thinker" and by the very logic of his combinations he forced the moves of his adversary, and made the strategy not only for his own army but for that of his enemy also.

* * *

"Learn to condense," is a bit of commonplace advice often given to students of literary composition, but the lesson of the great Field Marshal's life shows the value of the admonition in every form of work, from the management of an army to the writing of a letter. There was no waste in Moltke, not even a waste of words; and men said of him that he could be silent in many languages. The reason was that he had learned to combine his faculties and direct them all in harmony to the purpose of the hour. He needed all his energies for action, and because even talk must draw for sustenance upon the nervous forces, he said little. He had brought his own faculties under drill and discipline, and in like manner he could condense the energies of a kingdom into a cannon ball, compact and irresistible. He drew eight corps of the Prussian army from divergent points and converged them upon Sadowa in the critical moment of battle, as a lens concentrates the sunbeams. The centre of the Austrian army melted under the heat, and when the sun went down upon the field, Austria had no longer either voice or vote in the politics of Germany. By his infallible mathematics he worked out the doom of the French empire long before the challenge of Napoleon came, so that when the proclamation of war was made, he had nothing to do but touch the little button that set in motion all the complex machinery of the German army, and move it like the sweep of a sword across France to the field of destiny by the ramparts of Sedan.

* * *

Every great man's life is an example from which instruction may be drawn; and that of Moltke shows the value of temperance and exercise; not the exercise of pleasure, but the exercise of work. He started in life with ninety years capital in the bank, and his account was never overdrawn. His allowance for a day sufficed him for a day, he did not by over-indulgence and excess consume his capital, and so he lived his ninety years, a healthy, vigorous man. He worked hard but he slept easy; and the reason why he did not die at three score years and ten, or even at four score years, was because he had something to do, a potent element of long life. When a man at sixty-five, or seventy, says that his work in this world is done, it is a charity for nature to take him at his word, and give him his eternal rest. Many men, perhaps most men, start in life with ninety years capital in the bank, but they overdraw, and find themselves vitally bankrupt at sixty, or sixty-five. Few of them reach an end so happy and desirable as Moltke's last day. Work in the line of public duty in the morning, dinner at home in the evening, a quiet game of whist, and then, "a stoppage of the heart"; no days of pain and fever, no

vigils of the night; only a stoppage of the heart; and in the morning Berlin wakes up to learn that Father Moltke is dead:

"For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
In sombre harness mailed,
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
The rampart wall had scaled."

Moltke was old enough to remember how the French tore Germany to pieces after the battle of Jena, as the lion tears his prey. He lived to see Germany united, and through his own industry and genius, the greatest military power in the world.

* * *

I have often wondered why it is that wholesale state socialism is nauseous and disagreeable to so many people who have a greedy appetite for it when they can get it in retail quantities. There is a practice in England, and a very good practice too of "heckling" a candidate for Parliament, by which is meant, not assault and battery, or any other form of bodily torture, but a searching of the inner soul of him by questions concerning definite measures of public policy. It is not enough in that country for a candidate to proclaim in clarion tones that he is devoted to "the time-honored principles of the party," but he must declare whether or not he will vote for this, that, or the other specific thing. At the recent election for Hartlepool, the opposing candidates were Sir W. Gray, Unionist, and Mr. C. Furness, Liberal, both excellent and very popular men. One of the "hecklers" put eighteen straightforward questions to each candidate, and amongst them this, "Are you in favor of free education, and the supply of a free dinner to scholars who would otherwise be compelled to remain in school all day without any food?" Now, here was state socialism of high quality, but in retail quantity, and Mr. Furness promptly answered, "Yes"; but Sir W. Gray could not swallow it without a little Worcestershire sauce, and so he flavored it thus: "I would favorably consider such a proposal, but I think the free dinner would require great care to prevent imposition." This answer was not satisfactory, as it left the electors in doubt whether Sir W. Gray meant great care in the cooking of the dinner, or in the giving of it, and Mr. Furness was elected.

* * *

A great deal of sarcastic humor has been showered upon the various incongruities which have grown out of the Pension imposture; as for instance, the ridicule cast upon the old patriot who applied for a pension because he broke his leg in "jumping the bounty," and upon the other, who did not go to war himself, but caught the rheumatism owing to "the overstrain of mental anguish" which he suffered on account of those who did. All that kind of amusing banter is laughed at as the rollicking mockery of the journalistic funny man, who enlivens the dull corners of the newspapers; but here is an actual case which will make the professional jester serious. In the *Review of Reviews* for February appears a letter from Walt Whitman, dated January 6, 1891, in which he says: "I am totally paralysed from the old secession war time overstrain." This was not written in irony, but in sober earnest, and it will probably silence the critics who sneer at Walt Whitman's pension. At the time he received his injury, the poet was about forty years old, and although he did not overstrain himself enough to go to the war, he did not escape its calamities, for now at the age of seventy he finds himself paralysed by "the old secession war time overstrain." It is not necessary to pretend like that for sympathy, because all men will sorrow for a poet in distress; and if his poems entitle him to a pension, let him have it, for poetry, and not for a "war time overstrain."

M. M. TRUMBULL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF SEX.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

Possessor of rather more than ordinary interest in the sex question, and agreeing with Professor Cope that any proposition for the amelioration of the condition of women should be discussed and decided by women, I am moved to certain remarks suggested by his article on "The Material Relations of Sex" in the first number of *The Monist*.

All through its perusal I was impressed by his unconscious recognition of an underlying question, which, apart from woman's inferiority, determines the relations of the sexes. This is plainly apparent in the paragraph alluding to the communistic system of wealth production and distribution, in which he admits the possibility of promiscuous sex-relations. While I agree with Professor Cope that to institute communism would be a decided blow at progress, since progress consists in a constant widening of individual liberty while communism invokes authoritarian direction, nevertheless, I hold that in acknowledging the possibility of variety in sex relations under the communistic regime, he has admitted that the present social arrangement of sex is the necessary outgrowth of our economic conditions.

Postulating the fact of woman's mental and physical inferiority, our writer sees no possible ultimatum for her but the service of maternity and child-bearing in return for "protection and support" from some man, or set of men called a "state." This brings us at once to two vital questions:

Is woman's inferiority the cause, or the effect, of her economic subjection?

Is economic independence for woman a possible ideal?

I think it can be clearly proven that the mental constitution of woman, like that of man, has never failed to rise where restrictions upon equal freedom have been torn down. Whenever woman has had the same opportunity as man, results have proven that her capacities for development are as unlimited as his. It may be objected that I am instancing exceptional cases instead of dealing with types. My reply is that only in exceptional cases have women enjoyed the same opportunities as men. Yet these cases are sufficiently numerous to warrant the conclusion that nature affords no insuperable obstacle to sex-equality in brain; and that inferiority in the typical woman must be regarded as the result of her dependent economic condition, created by the artificial restrictions of man.*

Concerning the physical disability of the sex, it is more difficult to show the beneficent results of liberty, since even the most advanced of women are so hampered by body-dwarfing, dress, and custom that we have scarcely sufficient data for opinion concerning her possibilities of physical development. Such as we have would indicate that much of her present incompetence during periods of gestation and nursing, is incidental to the present defective social arrangement which condemns woman to the wasteful drudgery of individual housekeeping, and all the slavish work of the much lauded family-life.

However, even physical inferiority need not prove the eternal barrier to economic independence which Professor Cope would make of it. To-day industrial progress demands not so much physical strength as skill. Undoubtedly the elephant has physical strength superior to man, yet that he is no competitor against man I need waste no space to prove. Likewise the Hercules of ages past would have no place in competitive industry to-day simply because he would not be adapted to his environment. Granting the present physical disability of woman, it by no means follows that, with equal opportunity, she would be unable to compete with man in the fields of productive industry. Indeed one general com-

plaint of the workingmen is that they *are* competing, and, by the law of the survival of the fittest, have already driven men out of several branches of employment, such as textile fabrics, shoe-making, etc. No great amount of strength is required, but skill and patience; and it is the universal testimony of the overseers that women are equally skillful and more reliable.

There is a class of economic reformers called anarchists, who contend that with opportunity to exploit nature thrown free to the human race, the hours of labor would be so reduced as to enable one to produce sufficient to satisfy all his needs by three hours work per day. This with our present machinery, the possibilities of further reduction being left to further developments. They also contend that such freedom must necessarily result in constant labor-demand, thus securing the laborer against the present nightmare of involuntary idleness. Under such conditions, bearing in mind that the ever increasing displacement of physical strength by machinery, keeps reducing the physical burden of productive labor, woman's economic independence becomes a realisable ideal, and the whole matter of sex association changes. When woman comprehends her independence, marriage will no longer be a matter of "protection and support," which Professor Cope declares is the basis of monogamic wifehood. It will become a matter of mutual co-operation, based, let us hope on something higher than the sale of the powers of motherhood, and demanding the same standard for man as for woman.

Whether monogamy or variety will then obtain depends on which of these systems produces the higher type of humanity. At present it is impossible to decide, since without the independence of woman there can be no equality, and without equality no true adjustment of sex relations.

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

To the Editor of The Open Court:—

AS THE preceding notice of my article by Miss de Cleyre repeats the usual formula of a class of social reformers, I must again emphasise the foundation facts of the situation, as they appear from a physiological standpoint. These are somewhat opposed to our ideals, I freely admit; but it is the history of every human mind that is not incurably imaginative rather than exact, to learn the lesson which a bondage to material conditions imposes on us all alike.

Miss de Cleyre asks, "Is woman's inferiority the cause or the effect of her economic subjection?" She then expresses the opinion that it is the effect and not the cause of such subjection, as well as of "body dwarfing dress and custom." This is the fundamental error of a large class of women doctrinaires, and it needs but a superficial knowledge of Natural History to comprehend it. The inferior physical strength of the female sex is general (though not entirely universal) in the animal kingdom; and as mentality is one of the functions of human mechanism, it extends to the mental organism in man as well. It is a simple corollary of the law of the conservation of energy that where a large amount of energy is devoted to one function, less remains for expenditure in performing another. The large part of the female organism devoted to the functions of gestation, lactation, and maternal care of children, simply puts her out of the race as a competitor with man, on anything like equal terms. Even if those functions are not active, the machinery for the performance of other functions is not thereby increased in quantity or improved in quality, except in such small degree as one woman may accomplish in a life-time. And this small accomplishment she does not transmit, since the unmarried woman has no children. I call attention to the fact that although woman has had the advantage of the inheritance of male accomplishments and capacities since the origin of the species, the relation between her and man still remains about as it ever has remained. The one sex progresses about as rapidly as the other, and they maintain about the same relative position.

This fact is so fundamental that it is unreasonable to expect any change in the future. What can be done is to improve both sexes as much as possible in all their powers, and to acquaint each with their limitations. In this way the greatest amount of happiness may be attained with a minimum of conflict and waste.

It is evident that marriage is the destiny of both sexes, and the question which I have considered in the article in *The Monist* is the nature of its conditions.

In the first place monogamic marriage is no more a slavery to women than the support of a family is to a man. Man is, to use this common, but inexact expression, in a state of "slavery" to the conditions of his environment, and no socialistic scheme can relieve him of the difficulty, though some mitigations can be doubtless introduced. Man is an essential part of this environment, and contributes to the "slavery" to which he is subject. Woman's environment differs from that of man, in the difference in the relation in which she stands to man, as compared with that which subsists between man and man. That she should escape the consequences of this environment is no more to be anticipated than is the case with man himself. She has the advantage of man however in having for her "master" a being who is naturally inclined to admire, aid, and support her; while, to man the environment is mostly controlled by grim necessity imposed by unfeeling forces. When man rebels against this environment, and makes reprisals on society by appropriating the property of others, he makes a serious mistake, and he finds it out, generally soon. So some women, discontented with their relations to a husband, are dishonest to him. They also have trouble. Community of wives is as impossible as community of property, unless wives surrender all claims to more than temporary consideration. There are both men and women who think this the better system, and who act on it. But the men generally abandon it ultimately and marry. It would be interesting to know what becomes of the women. More information is needed, but the general impression is that such women have not chosen wisely.

It is true that woman like "any animal" can bear children; but it is also true that man like "any animal" must make a living. The two occupations are on a par. But neither should neglect to develop their "self-hood" in such leisure time as they can command from these necessary occupations. Every girl should have a good education, especially in biology and housekeeping, and the more she knows of the science of life, the better will she be prepared to know and to fulfil her part in human society.

Another aspect of the question of woman's entrance into the industrial field as a competitor to man, requires more space than I can give to it here. It is the fact, that woman, not being responsible for the support of her husband and family, can afford to work at some occupations for much lower wages than man can accept. This is one of the reasons for the lower rate of women's wages; and it is not due, as many thoughtless agitators assume, to the parsimony of severe task-masters. The advent of this cheap labor into some fields has driven men out of them, and if the range of such work is to be much extended, a larger number of men will be thrown out of employment. This state of affairs is said to exist in some departments of iron manufactures in Pittsburgh, and in some other industry in Scotland. Under such circumstances men must emigrate, or cease to marry, since they can support themselves alone on their reduced wages. Any thoughtful person may follow this state of affairs to its logical consequences. One of these would be the diminution in the number of marriages and the substitution thereof of a system in which women would be the chief sufferers. So that their success in some of the lighter fields of industry does not redound to the benefit of women at large.

I do not wish to be understood however to deny *in toto* the advantage of more or less industrial occupation for women. For

temporary purposes and under peculiar conditions, it is often not only desirable but necessary that women should have remunerative occupation. But I merely wish to point out that this state of affairs does not represent the fundamental organisation of society, and cannot alter it in the least. It is only necessary where there is a surplus of female population.

* * *

It has occurred to me that, in order to escape further discussion on my part, it would be well to reinforce the fundamental fact on which my position rests, viz. the disadvantageous relation to man occupied by woman in an unprotected and unaided "struggle for existence." Some women do not appear to realise this fact, and some men support them in this mistaken opinion. Nevertheless the real state of the case is known to, or suspected by, the majority of mankind. To such as do not perceive it, it may be a help to refer to the fact that every pursuit apart from those connected with maternity, and the teaching of children, may be as well done by men as by women, and a majority of the pursuits of men cannot be followed by women at all. The fact that a number of women succeed for a time in occupations usually filled by men, does not alter the general principle. Indeed it is often entirely proper and necessary that they should do so, provided that they understand the general law of social equilibrium and act accordingly when occasion arises. But of this law they sometimes do not hear, but are taught by alleged reformers in the press and on the lecture platform, doctrines that falsely assert that in the nature of things the world is as open for an independent career to a young woman as to a young man. If I shall have prevented a single young woman from spending the best years of her life in learning the truth in this matter, my purpose will have been served.

E. D. COPE.

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