

WOMAN UNDER SOCIALISM

By AUGUST BEBEL

Translated from the Original German of the Thirty-Third Edition

By DANIEL DE LEON

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PART I.

WOMEN IN THE PAST.—CONTINUED.

But not commerce alone was at a standstill. Traffic and industry had been extensively ruined during this protracted period; they could recover only by little and little. A large part of the population had become wild and demoralized, disused to all orderly occupations.

Compelled, since the Reformation, ever more to bend before the might of the Princes, and rendered ever more dependent upon these through court offices and military posts, the nobility now sought to recoup itself double and threefold with the robbery of peasant estates for the injury it had sustained at the hand of the Princes.

In the cities matters lay no better than in the country districts. Before then, women were active in very many trades in the capacity of working women as well as of employers. There were, for instance, female furriers in Frankfurt and in the cities of Sleswig; bakers, in the cities of the middle Rhine; embroiderers of coats of arms and belt-makers, in Cologne and Strassburg; strap-cutters, in Bremen; clothing-cutters in Frankfurt; tanners in Nuremberg; gold spinners and beater in Cologne.

Not until the eighteenth century did a slow improvement of matters set in. The absolute Princes had the liveliest interest, with the view of raising the standard abroad of their rule, to increase the population of their territories. They needed this, partly in order to obtain soldiers for their wars, partly also to gain taxpayers, who were to raise the sums needed either for the army, or for the extravagant indulgences of the court, or for both.

As bad as the worst stood matters in the two German capitals, Vienna and Berlin. In the Capua of Germany, Vienna, true enough, the strict Maria Theresa reigned through a large portion of the century, but she was impotent against the doings of a rich nobility, steeped in sensuous pleasures, and of the citizen circles that emulated the nobility.

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about the affair, instead of now causing half Berlin and all the world to talk about him. Moreover, such a natural thing should not be taken so ill, all the more when, like the Mark-Graf, one is not so waterproof himself. Mutual repulsion, we all know, is unavoidable in married life: all husbands and wives are perforce unfaithful, due to their illusions concerning other estimable persons. How can that be punished that one is forced to?

Things were at their worst in Berlin under Frederick II, who reigned from 1762 to 1796. He led with the worst example; and his court chaplain, Zoellner, even lowered himself to the point of marrying the King to the latter's mistress, Julie von Boss, as a second wife, and as she soon thereupon died in childbed, Zoellner again consented to marry the King to the Duchess Sophie of Doehhoff as a second wife by the side of the Queen.

More soldiers and more taxpayers was the leading desire of the Princes. Louis XIV, after whose death France was entirely impoverished in money and men, set up pensions for parents who had ten children, and the pension was raised when they reached twelve children.

The German multiplicity of States, that was in fullest bloom in the eighteenth century, presented a piebald map of the most different social conditions and legislative codes. While in the minority of the States efforts were made to improve the economic situation by promoting new industries, by making settlement easier and by changing the marriage laws in the direction of facilitating wedlock, the majority of the States and statelets remained true to their backward views, and intensified the unfavorable conditions of marriage and settlement for both men and women.

The married woman of citizen rank lived in strict seclusion. The number of her tasks and occupations was so large that, as a conscientious housewife, she had to be at her post early and late in order to fulfill her duties, and even that was possible to her only with the aid of her daughters. Not only were there to be filled those daily household duties which to-day, too, the small middle class housewife has to attend to, but a number of other also, which the housewife of to-day is freed from through modern development.

Gradually, however, an economic change took place, that first seized Western Europe and then reached into Germany also. The discovery of America, the doubling of the Cape of Good Hope, the opening of the sea route of the East Indies, the further discoveries that hinged on these, and finally, the circumnavigation of the earth, revolutionized the life and views of the most advanced nations of Europe. The unthought-of rapid expansion of the world's commerce, called to life through the opening of ever newer markets for European industry and products, revolutionized the old system of handicraft. Manufacture arose, and thence flowed large production.

The rise of machinery, the application of the natural sciences to the process of production, the new roads of commerce and traffic burst asunder the last vestiges of the old system. The guild privileges, the personal restrictions, the mark and jurisdictional rights, together with all that thereby hung, walked into the lumber room. The strongly increased need of labor-power did not rest content with the men, it demanded woman also as a cheaper article.

The circumstance, on the one hand, that the new naturally more numerous marriages effected a rapid increase of population, and, on the other, that the gigantically developing industry of the new era brought on many ills, never known before, caused the spectre of "overpopulation" to rise anew. Conservative and liberal economists pull since then the same string. We shall show what this fear of so-called overpopulation means; we shall trace the feared phenomenon back to its legitimate source.

Joachim Scherr: "Geschichte der Deutschen Frauenwelt." Johann Kautsky: "Ueber den Einfluss der Volksvermehrung auf den Fortschritt der Gesellschaft." Vienna, 1880.

PART II.

WOMAN IN THE PRESENT.

CHAPTER I.

SEXUAL INSTINCTS, WEDLOCK, CHECKS AND OBSTRUCTIONS TO MARRIAGE.

Plato thanked the gods for eight favors bestowed upon him. As the first, he took it that they had granted him to be born a freeman, and not a slave; the second was that he was created a man, and not a woman. A similar thought finds utterance in the morning prayer of the Jews. They pray: "Blessed be Thou, our God and Lord of Hosts, who hast not created me a woman; the Jewish women, on the other hand, pray at the corresponding place: 'who hast created me after thy will.'

Wholly irrespective of the question whether woman is oppressed as a female proletarian, as sex she is oppressed in the modern world of private property. A number of checks and obstructions, unknown to man, exist for her, and hem her in at every step.

Of all the natural impulses human beings are instinet with, along with that of eating and drinking, the sexual impulse is the strongest. The impulse to procreate the species is the most powerful expression of the "Will to Live." It is implanted most strongly in every normally developed human being. Upon maturity, its satisfaction is an actual necessity for man's physical and mental health.

It is a commandment of the human being to itself—a commandment that it must obey if it wishes to develop normally and in health—that it neglect the exercise of no member of its body, deny gratification to no natural impulse. Each member must fill the function, that it is intended for by Nature, on penalty of atrophy and disease.

It follows that, the knowledge of the properties of the sexual organs is just as useful as that of the organs which generate mental activity; and that man should bestow upon the cultivation of both an equal share of care. He should realize that organs and impulses, found implanted in every human being, and that constitute a very essential part of his nature, are, that at certain periods of his life control him absolutely, must not be objects of secrecy, of false shame, and utter ignorance.

Kant says: "Man and woman only jointly constitute the complete being: one sex supplements the other." Schopenhauer declares: "The sexual impulse is the fullest utterance of the will to live, hence it is the concentration of all will-power;" again: "The affirmative declaration of the will in favor of life is concentrated in the act of generation, and that is its most decisive expression."

Such being the intensity of the sexual impulse, it is no wonder that sexual abstinence at the age of maturity affects the nervous system and the whole organism of man, with one sex as well as the other, in such a manner that it often leads to serious disturbances and manias; under certain conditions even to insanity and death. True enough, the sexual instinct does not assert itself with equal violence in all natures, and much can be done towards curbing it by education and self-control, especially by avoiding the excitation resulting upon certain conversations and reading.

It may, accordingly, be said that man—the being male or female—is complete in the measure in which, both as to organic and spiritual culture, the impulses and manifestations of life utter themselves in the sexes, and in the measure that they assume character and expression. Each sex of itself reached its highest development.

1. Mainländer. "Philosophie der Erlösung." Frankfurt-on-the-Main, 1886. E. Koeltzer. "D. A. Debay, "Hygiene et Physiologie du Mariage." Paris, 1884. Quoted in "Im Freien Reich" by Ioma v. Troll-Borostany, Zurich, 1884. 2. "Das Geschlechtsleben des Weibes, in physiologischer, pathologischer und aberärztlicher Hinsicht dargestellt."

finally, brought on—through nervous distempers—diseased inclinations and conditions both of body and of mind. The man becomes feminine, the woman masculine in shape and character. The sexual contrast not having reached realization in the plan of Nature, each human being remained one-sided, never reached its complement, never touched the acme of its existence."

Science agrees, accordingly, with the opinion of the philosophers, and with Luther's healthy common sense. It follows that every human being has, not merely the right, but also the duty to satisfy the instincts, that are intimately connected with its inmost being, that, in fact, imply existence itself. Hindered therein, rendered impossible to him through social institutions or prejudices, the consequence is that man is checked in the development of his being, is left to a stunted life and retrogression.

The opinion finds wide acceptance among physicians and physiologists that even a defectively equipped marriage is better than celibacy. Experience agrees therewith. In Bavaria there were, in 1858, not less than 4,899 lunatics, 2,576 (53 per cent.) of them men, 2,323 (47 per cent.) women. The men were, accordingly, more strongly represented than the women. Of the whole number, however, the unmarried of both sexes ran up to 81 per cent., the married only to 17 per cent., while of 2 per cent. the conjugal status was unknown.

England from 1872-76.....2,861 men
Sweden " 1870-74.....3,310 "
France " 1871-76.....3,695 "
Italy " 1872-77.....4,000 "
Prussia " 1871-78.....4,239 "
Austria " 1873-78.....4,586 "

But between the ages of 21 and 30, the figures for female suicides in all European countries higher than for males, due, as Oettingen assumes, to sexual causes. In Prussia the percentages of suicides between the ages of 21 to 30 were on an average:

Table with columns: Years, Males, Females. 1869-72: 15.8 Males, 21.4 Females. 1873-78: 13.7 Males, 21.5 Females.

In Saxony there were to every 1,000 suicides between the ages of 21 to 30 these averages:

Table with columns: Years, Males, Females. 1854: 14.95 Males, 18.64 Females. 1868: 14.71 Males, 18.70 Females.

For widowed and divorced people also the percentage of suicides is larger than the average. In Saxony there are seven times as many suicides among divorced males, and three times as many among divorced females, as the average of suicides for males and females respectively.

Taking into further consideration that, among the unmarried women, who are driven to suicide between the ages of 21 and 30, many a one is to be found, who takes her life by reason of being betrayed, or because she can not bear the consequences of a "slip," the fact remains that sexual reasons play a decided role in suicide at this age. Among female suicides, the figure is large also for those between the ages of 18 to 20, and the fact is probably likewise traceable to unsatisfied sexual instinct, disappointment in love, secret pregnancy, or betrayal.

"It certainly is no accident that, hand in hand with increasing celibacy, the question of the emancipation of woman has come ever more on the order of the day. I would have the question looked upon as a danger signal, set up by the social position of woman in modern society—a position that grows ever more unbearable, due to increasing celibacy; I would have it looked upon as the danger signal of a justified demand, made upon modern society, to furnish woman some equivalent for that to which she is assigned by Nature, and which modern social conditions partly deny her."

And Dr. H. Plotz, in his work, "Woman in Nature and Ethnography," says in the course of his explanation of the results of ungratified sexual instincts upon unmarried women: "It is in the highest degree noteworthy, not for the physician only, but also for the anthropologist, that there is an effective and never-failing means to check this process of decay (with old maids); but even to cause the lost bloom to return, if not in all its former splendor yet in a not insignificant degree—only only in rare instances, or make its application possible only in rare instances. The means consist in regular and systematic sexual intercourse. The slight is not infrequent with girls, who lost their bloom, or were not far from the withering point, yet, the opportunity to marry having been offered them, that, shortly after marriage, their shape began to round up again, the roses to return to their cheeks, and their eyes to recover their one-time brightness. Marriage is, accordingly, the true fountain of youth for the female sex. Thus Nature has her firm laws, that implacably demand their dues. No 'vita precater naturam,' no unnatural life, no attempt at accommodation to incompatible conditions of life, passes without leaving noticeable traces of degeneration, upon the animal, as well as upon the human organism."

1. "Die Prostitution vor dem Gesetz," by Veritas. Leipzig, 1862. 2. Y. Oettingen, "Moralstatistik." Erlangen, 1882. 3. "Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie," Vol. I, Stuttgart, 1883. 4. Vol. II, Leipzig, 1887.

(To be continued.)

The publication of "Woman Under Socialism" began on Sunday, May 24, in The Sunday People, and in The Weekly People of May 30. It will appear in serial form in The Sunday and Weekly until completed, when it will be published in book form.

