

CHAPTER XII

WOMAN AND THE FUTURE

I saw a woman sleeping In her sleep she dreamed
Life stood before her and held in each hand a gift—
in the one Love in the other Freedom And she said to
the woman Choose!

And the woman waited long and she said Freedom!

And Life said Thou has well chosen If thou
hadst said Love I would have given thee that thou
didst ask for and I would have gone from thee and
returned to thee no more Now the day will come
when I shall return In that day I shall bear both gifts
in one hand

I heard the woman laugh in her sleep

—Olwe Schreiner

By no means is it necessary to look forward
to some vague and distant date of the future
to test the benefits which the human race de-
rives from the program I have suggested in
the preceding pages The results to the in-
dividual woman, to the family and to the
State, particularly in the case of Holland,

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have already been investigated and recorded. Our philosophy is no doctrine of escape from the immediate and pressing realities of life. On the contrary, we say to men and women and particularly to the latter: face the realities of your own soul and body—know thyself! And in this last admonition we mean that this knowledge should not consist of some vague shopworn generalities about the nature of woman—woman as created in the minds of men—nor woman putting herself on a romantic pedestal above the harsh facts of this workaday world. Women can attain freedom only by concrete, definite knowledge of themselves—a knowledge based on biology, physiology and psychology.

Nevertheless it would be wrong to shut our eyes to the vision of a world of free men and women, a world which would more closely resemble a garden than the present jungle of chaotic conflicts and fears. One of the greatest dangers of social idealists, to all of us who hope to make a better world, is to seek refuge in highly colored fantasies of the future rather than to face and combat the bitter and evil realities which to day on all sides confront us.

I believe that the reader of my preceding chapters will not accuse me of shirking these realities, indeed, he may think that I have overemphasized the great biological problems of defect delinquency and bad breeding. It is in the hope that others too may glimpse my vision of a world regenerated that I submit the following suggestions. They are based on the belief that we must seek individual and racial health not by great political or social reconstruction, but turning to a recognition of our own inherent powers and development by the release of our inner energies. It is thus that all of us can best aid in making of this world, instead of a vale of tears, a garden.

Let us first of all consider merely from the viewpoint of business and efficiency the biological or racial problems which confront us. As Americans we have of late made much of 'efficiency and business organization. Yet would any corporation for one moment conduct its affairs as we conduct the infinitely more important affairs of our civilization? Would any modern stockbreeder permit the deterioration of his livestock as we not only permit but positively encourage the destruction and de

terioration of the most precious, the most essential elements in our world community—the mothers and children. With the mothers and children thus cheapened, the next generation of men and women is inevitably below par. The tendency of the human elements, under present conditions is constantly downward.

Turn to Robert M. Yerkes's *Psychological Examining in the United States Army* ¹ in which we are informed that the psychological examination of the drafted men indicated that nearly half—47.3 per cent—of the population had the mentality of twelve year-old children or less—in other words that they are morons. Professor Conklin in his recently published volume *The Direction of Human Evolution* ² is led on the findings of Mr. Yerkes's report to assert: Assuming that these drafted men are a fair sample of the entire population

¹ *Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences* Volume XV

² Conklin *The Direction of Human Evolution*. When it is remembered that mental capacity is inherited that parents of low intelligence generally produce children of low intelligence and that on the average they have more children than persons of high intelligence and furthermore when we consider that the intellectual capacity or mental age can be changed very little by education we are in a position to appreciate the very serious condition which confronts us as a nation. p. 108

of approximately 100 000 000, this means that 45 000,000 or nearly one half the entire population will never develop mental capacity beyond the stage represented by a normal twelve year old child and that only 13,500 000 will ever show superior intelligence

Making all due allowances for the errors and discrepancies of the psychological examination we are nevertheless face to face with a serious and destructive practice. Our overhead—expense in segregating the delinquent the defective and the dependent in prisons asylums and permanent homes our failure to segregate morons who are increasing and multiplying—I have sufficiently indicated though in truth I have merely scratched the surface of this international menace—demonstrate our foolhardy and extravagant sentimentalism. No industrial corporation could maintain its existence upon such a foundation. Yet hard headed captains of industry financiers who pride themselves upon their cool headed and keen sighted business ability are dropping millions into rosewater philanthropies and charities that are silly at best and vicious at worst. In our dealings with such elements there is a

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bland maladministration and misuse of huge sums that should in all righteousness be used for the development and education of the healthy elements of the community

At the present time civilized nations are penalizing talent and genius the bearers of the torch of civilization, to coddle and perpetuate the choking human undergrowth, which as all authorities tell us, is escaping control and threatens to overrun the whole garden of humanity Yet men continue to drug themselves

with the opiate of optimism or sink back upon the cushions of Christian resignation their intellectual powers anaesthetized by cheerful platitudes Or else, even those who are fully cognizant of the chaos and conflict seek an escape in those pretentious but fundamentally fallacious social philosophies which place the blame for contemporary world misery upon anybody or anything except the indomitable but uncontrolled instincts of living organisms

These men fight with shadows and forget the realities of existence Too many centuries have we sought to hide from the inevitable which confronts us at every step throughout life

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Let us conceive for the moment at least, a world not burdened by the weight of dependent and delinquent classes, a total population of mature, intelligent critical and expressive men and women. Instead of the inert, exploitable, mentally passive class which now forms the barren substratum of our civilization, try to imagine a population active, resistant passing individual and social lives of the most contented and healthy sort. Would such men and women liberated from our endless unceasing struggle against mass prejudice and inertia, be deprived in any way of the stimulating zest of life? Would they sink into a slough of complacency and fatuity?

No! Life for them would be enriched intensified and ennobled in a fashion it is difficult for us in our spiritual and physical squalor even to imagine. There would be a new renaissance of the arts and sciences. Awakened at last to the proximity of the treasures of life lying all about them the children of that age would be inspired by a spirit of adventure and romance that would indeed produce a terrestrial paradise.

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Let us look forward to this great release of creative and constructive energy, not as an idle, vacuous mirage but as a promise which we as the whole human race have it in our power, in the very conduct of our lives from day to day, to transmute into a glorious reality. Let us look forward to that era, perhaps not so distant as we believe when the great adventures in the enchanted realm of the arts and sciences may no longer be the privilege of a gifted few, but the rightful heritage of a race of genius. In such a world men and women would no longer seek escape from themselves by the fantastic and the faraway. They would be awakened to the realization that the source of life, of happiness is to be found not outside themselves but within in the healthful exercise of their God given functions. The treasures of life are not hidden, they are close at hand so close that we overlook them. We cheat ourselves with a pitiful fear of ourselves. Men and women of the future will not seek happiness they will have gone beyond it. Mere happiness would produce monotony. And their lives shall be lives of change and

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variety with the thrills produced by experiment and research

Fear will have been abolished first of all the fear of outside things and other people finally the fear of oneself And with these fears must disappear forever all those poisons of hatreds individual and international For the realization would come that there would be no reason for no value in encroaching upon the freedom of one another To day we are living in a world which is like a forest of trees too thickly planted Hence the ferocious, unending struggle for existence Like in numerable ages past, the present age is one of mutual destruction Our aim is to substitute cooperation equity and amity for antagonism and conflict If the aim of our country or our civilization is to attain a hollow, meaningless superiority over others in aggregate wealth and population it may be sound policy to shut our eyes to the sacrifice of human life, —unregarded life and suffering—and to stimulate rapid procreation But even so, such a policy is bound in the long run to defeat itself as the decline and fall of great civilizations of the past emphatically indicate Even the bit

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erest opponent of our ideals would refuse to subscribe to a philosophy of mere quantity, of wealth and population lacking in spiritual direction or significance. All of us hope for and look forward to the fine flowering of human genius—of genius not expending and dissipating its energy in the bitter struggle for mere existence, but developing to a fine maturity sustained and nourished by the soil of active appreciation, criticism, and recognition.

Not by denying the central and basic biological facts of our nature, not by subscribing to the glittering but false values of any philosophy or program of escape, not by wild Utopian dreams of the brotherhood of men, not by any sanctimonious debauch of sentimentality or religiosity, may we accomplish the first feeble step toward liberation. On the contrary, only by firmly planting our feet on the solid ground of scientific fact, may we even stand erect—may we even rise from the servile stooping posture of the slave borne down by the weight of age-old oppression.

In looking forward to this radiant release of the inner energies of a regenerated human-

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ity I am not thinking merely of inventions and discoveries and the application of these to the perfecting of the external and mechanical details of social life. This external and scientific perfecting of the mechanism of external life is a phenomenon we are to a great extent witnessing today. But in a deeper sense this tendency can be of no true or lasting value if it cannot be made to subserve the biological and spiritual development of the human organism individual and collective. Our great problem is not merely to perfect machinery, to produce superb ships, motor cars or great buildings, but to remodel the race so that it may equal the amazing progress we see now making in the externals of life. We must first free our bodies from disease and predisposition to disease. We must perfect these bodies and make them fine instruments of the mind and the spirit. Only thus when the body becomes an aid instead of a hindrance to human expression may we attain any civilization worthy of the name. Only thus may we create of our bodies a fitting temple for the soul, which is nothing but a vague unreality except insofar as it is able to mani-

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fest itself in the beauty of the concrete

Once we have accomplished the first tentative steps toward the creation of a real civilization, the task of freeing the spirit of mankind from the bondage of ignorance prejudice and mental passivity which is more fettering now than ever in the history of humanity will be facilitated a thousand fold. The great central problem and one which must be taken first is the abolition of the shame and fear of sex. We must teach men the overwhelming power of this radiant force. We must make them understand that uncontrolled it is a cruel tyrant but that controlled and directed it may be used to transmute and sublimate the everyday world into a realm of beauty and joy. Through sex mankind may attain the great spiritual illumination which will transform the world which will light up the only path to an earthly paradise. So must we necessarily and inevitably conceive of sex expression. The instinct is here. None of us can avoid it. It is in our power to make it a thing of beauty and a joy forever or to deny it as have the ascetics of the past to revile this expression and then to pay the penalty

the bitter penalty that Society to day is paying in innumerable ways

If I am criticized for the seeming selfishness of this conception it will be through a misunderstanding. The individual is fulfilling his duty to society as a whole not by self sacrifice but by self development. He does his best for the world not by dying for it not by increasing the sum total of misery, disease and unhappiness but by increasing his own stature by releasing a greater energy, by being active instead of passive creative instead of destructive. This is fundamentally the greatest truth to be discovered by womankind at large. And until women are awakened to their pivotal function in the creation of a new civilization, that new era will remain an impossible and fantastic dream. The new civilization can become a glorious reality only with the awakening of woman's now dormant qualities of strength, courage, and vigor. As a great thinker of the last century pointed out not only to her own health and happiness is the physical degeneracy of woman destructive but to our whole race. The physical and psychic power of woman is more indispensable

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to the well being and power of the human race than that even of man, for the strength and happiness of the child is more organically united with that of the mother

Parallel with the awakening of woman's interest in her own fundamental nature, in her realization that her greatest duty to society lies in self realization, will come a greater and deeper love for all of humanity. For in attaining a true individuality of her own she will understand that we are all individuals, that each human being is essentially implicated in every question or problem which involves the well being of the humblest of us. So today we are not to meet the great problems of defect and delinquency in any merely sentimental or superficial manner but with the firmest and most unflinching attitude toward the true interests of our fellow beings. It is from no mere feeling of brotherly love or sentimental philanthropy that we women must insist upon enhancing the value of child life. It is because we know that if our children are to develop to their full capabilities, all children must be assured a similar opportunity. Every single case of inherited defect, every

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malformed child, every congenitally tainted human being brought into this world is of infinite importance to that poor individual but it is of scarcely less importance to the rest of us and to all of our children who must pay in one way or another for these biological and racial mistakes. We look forward in our vision of the future to children brought into the world because they are desired called from the unknown by a fearless and conscious passion because women and men need children to complete the symmetry of their own development, no less than to perpetuate the race. They shall be called into a world enhanced and made beautiful by the spirit of freedom and romance—into a world wherein the creatures of our new day unhampered and unbound by the sinister forces of prejudice and immovable habit may work out their own destinies. Perhaps we may catch fragmentary glimpses of this new life in certain societies of the past in Greece perhaps but in all of these past civilizations these happy groups formed but a small exclusive section of the population. To day our task is greater for we realize that no section of humanity can be reclaimed

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without the regeneration of the whole

I look therefore, into a Future when men and women will not dissipate their energy in the vain and fruitless search for content outside of themselves in far away places or people

Perfect masters of their own inherent powers, controlled with a fine understanding of the art of life and of love, adapting themselves with pliancy and intelligence to the milieu in which they find themselves they will unafraid enjoy life to the utmost. Women will for the first time in the unhappy history of this globe establish a true equilibrium and balance of power in the relation of the sexes. The old antagonism will have disappeared, the old ill-concealed warfare between men and women. For the men themselves will comprehend that in this cultivation of the human garden they will be rewarded a thousand times. Interest in the vague sentimental fantasies of extramundane existence in pathological or hysterical flights from the realities of our earthliness, will have through atrophy disappeared, for in that dawn men and women will have come to the realization, already suggested that here close at hand is our paradise, our everlasting

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abode, our Heaven and our eternity Not by leaving it and our essential humanity behind us, nor by sighing to be anything but what we are shall we ever become ennobled or immortal Not for woman only, but for all of humanity is this the field where we must seek the secret of eternal life