

Women As Sex Vendors

BY

R. B. TOBIAS and MARY E. MARCY

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WOMEN AS SEX VENDORS



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WOMEN AS SEX VENDORS

OR

WHY WOMEN ARE CONSERVATIVE

(Being a View of the Economic Status of Woman)

By

R. B. TOBIAS and MARY E. MARCY

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WOMEN AS SEX VENDORS

WHY WOMEN ARE CONSERVATIVE

WE have often heard discussions of the reason we do not find women, as a sex, in the vanguard of world affairs; why the great educators, strong figures in progressive or revolutionary movements, are men rather than women; why these movements, themselves, are made up almost entirely of men rather than women. People have asked over and over again why, in the fields of the arts, the sciences, in the world of "practical affairs," men, rather than women, generally excel.

We believe the answer lies in the fact that women, as a sex, are the owners of a commodity vitally necessary to the health and well-being of man. Women occupy a more fortunate biologic, and in

many countries, a more fortunate economic position, in the increasingly intensified struggle for existence. And the preferred class, the biologically and economically favored class, or sex, has rarely been efficient-to-do, has never been revolutionary to attack a social system that accords advantage to it.

As a sex, women have rarely been rebels or revolutionists. We do not see how they can ever be as long as there exists any system of exploitation to revolt against. Revolt comes from the submerged, never from the group occupying a favored place. Today the revolutionist is he who has nothing to sell but his labor power.

The skilled trade union group is least revolutionary among the workers. The best paid unions are not the most militant in acts calculated to improve the conditions of even their own group, and are least aggressive in conduct for improving the

conditions of the whole working class. So long as they occupy a more favorable position in the industrial world, the trade unions will have something to conserve. They become conservative.

We see the small, struggling farmers, who have probably very little to lose in this world save their debts and their mortgages, counting themselves in a class of possible property owners and small exploiters, and generally throwing their support into movements promising petty reforms, when nothing but the abolition, or downfall of the system of private ownership in the means of production and distribution, can possibly help them.

The petty shop-keepers rail more against the "outrageously" high wages and the short hours of the skilled workers than against the large business organizations, like the packing interests, or the great monopolies, that hold them constantly on the edge of failure. Desper-

ately and consistently, as they behold their competitors forced out in the irresistible march of centralization, they cling to their sinking ships, their small deceits and petty ideology in the hope of one day winning out against the terrific odds opposed to them, and landing high and dry in the capitalist class.

No shoe dealer in the darkest side street of the smallest village but hopes some day to leave his dingy shop behind and to climb into the class economically above him. He counts himself a man of business, and thinks and acts and goes down to failure, individualistically. He hates and fears his competitors, ascribes most of his wrongs to them or to the highly paid skilled workers, and apes and envies the men whom he sees rising to wealth in the economic conflict.

As a sex, women occupy a position similar to the petty shop-keeper, because they possess a commodity to sell or to

barter. Men, as a sex, are buyers of, or barterers for, this commodity. The general attitude on this question of sex may be, and in fact usually is, wholly unconscious; but the fact remains that men and women meet each other, in the capitalist system, as buyers and sellers of, or barterers for, a commodity.

Scarcely anybody recognizes this fact, and those who sense it fail to understand the inevitable result upon society and upon women themselves. There is no office or saloon scrub-woman so displeasing and decrepit, no stenographer so old and so unattractive, no dish-washer so sodden, that she does not know, tucked far away in her inner consciousness, perhaps, that, if the very worst comes and she loses her job, there is the truck driver or the office clerk, the shaky-legged bar patron on the road to early locomotor ataxia, or the squint-eyed out-of-town salesman, who can be counted on to tide

her over an emergency—usually for goods delivered.

When a man is out of a job and broke, he is flat on his back. His appetites, his desires cry out for satisfaction exactly as they did when he had money in his pockets to pay for the satisfaction of these appetites and these desires.

When a woman loses a job, she has always the sale of her sex to fall back upon as a last resort.

Please understand that this is in no way a criticism of the conduct of women. We desire to lay no stigma upon them. We lay no stigma upon any class or sex or group, for down at bottom, men and women do what they do because they have to do it. The more we understand the economic and biological status of any group, the more we see they are compelled to act, under the circumstances, and in the environment they occupy, precisely as they do act. In the struggle for ex-

istence today the laurels are only to those who use any and all methods to save themselves.

We only want to point out that women are able to save themselves because of their "favored" position in the biological world. Since economic interest and economic control are at the basis of all social institutions, we want to show some of the results of this sex monopoly possessed by women, and required by men.

Every group which possesses anything which is necessary to the health and well-being of any other group, is bound to be pursued, wooed, bribed, paid. The monopolistic class, or sex, in turn, learns to withhold, to barter, to become "uncertain, coy and hard to please," to enhance and raise the price of her commodity, even though the economic basis of the transaction be utterly concealed or disguised. All this is exactly as natural and inevitable as a group of wage workers demanding all

they can get in payment for their labor power, or the land-owner holding up the farm renters for all the tenants will bear, or the broker selling to the highest bidder. No one is to be blamed.

The private possession of a commodity necessary to man, the lower cost of living for women, are the natural causes of lower wages for women than for men, and explains why women are actually able to live on lower wages, as a sex, than men.

Few people speak frankly about sex matters today. And still fewer understand them and their economic basis. The subject of sex is clothed in pretense. We discuss women philosophically, idealistically, sometimes from the viewpoint of biology, but never from an economic and a biological standpoint, which is the only scientific basis from which to regard them.

Everywhere in the animal world except among humankind, the male possesses the gay and attractive plumage, the color and

form to please the eye. Naturally he should possess them. But this is not so in the world of man. Here we find the woman decorating herself in the colorful garb. Woman has ceased to ask, "Is he beautiful?" She asks "What does he own?" or, "How much can he pay?"

Men love to dress their women in expensive clothes, to provide them with luxurious surroundings, because this advertises to the world the fact that they are able to purchase a superior, i. e., a higher priced commodity. Women give much time and spend money extravagantly in articles of conspicuous waste for the simple reason that by so doing they announce the fact that **they** are finer than other women, higher priced, of a fancier brand, possessed of better wares.

Everybody knows that the office clerk who aspires to the affections of an artistically gowned, jewel decked young woman, often spends most of his wages upon

her in the hope of winning her attention. His office associates may describe her as "fancy," or speak of her as "an expensive package." And so the twenty dollar-a-week clerk magnifies his "income" in order to bribe the young lady into "giving herself" to him in exchange for his name and some sort of life-long support, provided he can produce it.

How many young wives have learned, to their chagrin, of the deceits thus practiced upon them by their husbands! Alas! The scenes that are enacted when it is discovered, after the ceremony, that the diamond engagement ring is not yet paid for, and that the mahogany furniture in the new flat so joyously selected by the young bride-elect, was bought upon the installment plan! That John earns only twenty dollars a week in the shipping room instead of the fifty a week he had declared, as assistant manager! Here the man has not paid as promised and every one

feels that the woman has made a "bad bargain."

On the other hand, women disguise the economic basis of the deal in every possible way; lie, cheat and compete in a life and death struggle with others of their sex. A thousand illusions, tricks, subtleties; hypocrisies are employed to cover the bald fact that wares are being displayed, are being bidden for by other men. The deal is smothered in chivalrous urbanities and sentimental verbiage. Unnumbered circumlocutions are resorted to to conceal the salesmanship of one who has a commodity to sell.

MONOGAMY FOR WIVES

When certain strong men found themselves able to garner a larger share of property than their fellows, they rebelled against the communistic ownership of property, and the state, with the system of **private** ownership, was evolved, came into being to protect the private owners in their

private ownership **against** the community, or the mass, which possessed no private property. Wealthy men then began to desire to leave their fortunes to their own children and so the marriage system, with theoretical monogamy for both sexes and practical monogamy for wives, arose. Men of property then felt tolerably certain that their wealth would descend to their own sons and to the sons of no others.

We are not inclined to believe this was due to the prevalence of any so-called **paternal** instinct. Paternal instinct is, we suspect, a minus, rather than a plus, quantity. It seems to us that fathers more often learn to love their children through following the conduct prescribed by good form and pretending to love them, or through love of display, pride or by **association**, than through any "natural tendency."

The almost universality of the maternal instinct is proven by the peoples in the

world today, for scarcely anybody would have a chance for existence if it were not for the care of the mothers.

Generally the coming of children is a handicap to a woman in the market in which Nature and the present system have placed her. Where this is the case, it is here that society, customs and laws speak for the family, in ways built up, sometimes blindly, sometimes consciously, to preserve the species, and upon the old biological and economic foundations.

It is generally granted that women with children are more conservative than women without children. We believe this is true only when they and their children are provided for. When a mother is left with no one to support her children, she becomes more predatory than other women in the pursuit of a new provider. Our jails and workhouses are full of unsuccessful mothers of this class, convicted of crimes against property.

Mothers are conservative when their children are secure; more predatory when they are in want. Mothers often compete successfully in making their wares attractive and in binding the male by habits and associations that hold him and induce him to continue to pay.

Among men, the possession of, and ability to support a woman in perpetuity, whom no other may touch, is honorific, a high sign of display. It announces to the world that such a man is able to hold a trophy in the struggle for existence. A monogamous wife is, in fact, an emblem of well-off-ness, and greatly to be desired.

A man does not wish to be one among a corporation of men owning a woman any more than he desires to be owner of a sixth part of an automobile. Not because there is anything more intrinsically wrong in purchasing one-sixth than six-sixths, but because, in a world where the ownership of private property is the greatest of

all good things, individual ownership denotes respectability, comfort, ability to buy outright. Hence we have monogamy for wives and mistresses in general, and polygamy for men.

For if it is honorific to possess one woman, it is still more proof of one's buying power to support half a dozen different establishments. Besides, biologically, a man may require many women for the satisfaction of his desires.

CHASTITY

Why do young girls remain chaste before the importunities of their lovers and, perhaps, against their own desires, if not for the purpose of forcing or inducing them to offer the sure and permanent price of matrimony?

Do not all respectable and well-meaning parents (and others not so respectable) seek gently to guide their daughters into safe matrimonial harbors where they

barter themselves for a respectable meal-ticket, or an income, presumably, for life? They would be shocked beyond measure if you told them that back of all their exalted mummeries, they desired to see their daughters barter their sex for the highest and most enduring stake rather than to see them selling their labor or brain power for wages, or selling their sex on the installment, or retail plan, to the chance purchaser. Yet these are the facts.

And it is this hope of bartering their sex privileges for permanent support and the title of "wife" that keeps the girls of the working class in the same category as the small shop-keeper. Nearly every ordinary woman under ninety, hopes some day to find a man who will marry her and support her for the rest of her days. Instead of fitting herself for a trade or a profession, young women, and old women, devote their time to schemes for prevailing upon

some man, to pay the ultimate price and marry them.

And so women, not every individual, but as a **sex**, are ever individualistic, ever competing among themselves, ever displaying their wares, ever looking for a possible purchaser of the commodity they have to sell, ever endeavoring to keep the purchaser satisfied and willing to pay more.

Human beings are human **animals** however much we may pretend to the contrary. In the rest of the animal world the fact of the mating season is frankly acknowledged. It has never been recognized among humankind within the period of written history. Is it possible that when women are released from economic and social coercion, this periodic mating instinct in the woman of the species may assert, or reassert, itself?

Wives and mistresses often submit to their husbands or lovers only through fear

of losing economic security to the ever alert competitor. It is certain that when all men and all women have gained individual economic opportunity and security, social institutions will change also. May it not be possible that the jealousies now prevalent, because of the economic import or the social standing that the private claim on the individual brings, may vanish also?

WHICH IS SUPERIOR?

But do not imagine for a single moment that women are inferior to men. Biology has long since proven that daughters inherit the same natural tendencies from their fathers and their grandfathers, their mothers and their grandmothers that sons do. In the case of the girls it is only as it would be if the sons in a family all inherited a share in the monopoly of a commodity that half the human race requires.

The son of your butcher may have all the nervous and intellectual capacities of

Thomas Edison, or Dr. E. L. Thorndyke. Perhaps he has. But the economic environment in which he is born will give him small opportunity to so prove himself.

Women are intellectually capable of all that men can do. They always will be because the paternal branch of the family bequeathes to its daughters the same natural tendencies and capacities that are the heritage of its sons. It is biologically impossible for sons to inherit the cumulative capacities of their fathers **alone** just as it is biologically impossible for the daughters to inherit from their mothers alone. So that, at birth, it appears that both sexes must remain on an equal footing so far as heredity is concerned. But the social and economic environment differentiates. Boys and girls **learn** to differ more than they differ physically at birth.

We believe it is due to the fact that woman, biologically possessed of a neces-

sary commodity, something to sell besides her labor power, leans and reckons upon this ownership, which prevents her, not individually, but as a sex, from taking an active and permanent part in the affairs and workshops of the world today. There are exceptions to the rule, of course. And often, unconsciously, perhaps, she seeks to excel in the fields occupied by the men who surround her, for the purpose of enhancing her wares.

It is to be remembered that in nearly all phases of the relations between men and women, both are almost always at least partially unconscious of the economic basis of the bargain they make, although, legally, marriage is a contract. Here society and social institutions protect the possible future mothers of the race.

We are in no way denying the existence of affection between the sexes. We see undoubted instances of self-sacrifice (in the economic sense) on the part of women

everywhere. We are not gainsaying these. We only claim that the root of the relation of the sexes in America is today the economic basis of buyers and sellers of a commodity and that this basis of sex, sold as a commodity, affects every phase of our social life, and all of our social institutions, and that we fail to recognize these economic roots because of the leaves upon the social tree.

Why, do you imagine, the woman who brings to a penniless husband, not only herself but a fortune as well, is looked down upon in many countries? Why is the woman of the streets, who spends her sex earnings upon her lover, scorned universally? Is it not because both are, unconsciously violating the **code**, or the trade "understandings," in **giving** not only of themselves, but their substance as well? These women are selling below the market, or scabbing on the job.

YOUTH AND MAID

IT is customary to speak of Youth as the period of rebellion or revolt. But to us it seems to be the normal age of conquest. Youth is the world's eternal and undaunted conqueror. No matter what the odds, no matter how slim the chances of success in any undertaking, Youth dares. Experience and wisdom **know**, fear and hesitate. Youth rushes in and—sometimes—finds a way.

People speak of the colossal egotism of Youth. It is not egotism; it is unfathomable ignorance. The youth knows neither himself, the world nor his adversaries. He is unafraid because he does not know the strength of the forces he would conquer. But society learns from the threshings about of its individuals. And it is the

young who thresh about. Mailed in their own ignorance, and propelled by their own marvelous energy, the young go forth to conquer. And so the world learns many things.

Youth rebels only when it is thwarted in entering the lists and may then turn the flood of its activities into channels of rebellion or revolt against authority. The boy revolts when his father declines to permit him to accomplish the impossible, to invent, discover, explore, to overwhelm. It seems to him that if he received encouragement and help instead of censure at home, the son of the house would soon be recognized by the world as one of the Great Ones of the Earth.

When he finds his talents unappreciated, he usually decides to write a book that will influence the whole future course of human events, or a novel that will alter dynasties and change social systems; or he decides to become a powerful political

leader, or the silver-tongued orator of the times. Thwarted youth may aspire to become the world's greatest rebel, or the most heroic victim of despotic authority. Even in rebellion youth aspires to conquer the heights, though it be through the depths. A boy finds consolation in planning to become the world's greatest hero or martyr when he is thwarted in becoming an epoch-making inventor, or discoverer. This on the male side of the house.

The daughter aspires to beauty, lovely clothes, charm, or to stardom on the theatrical or operatic stage, achievements and characteristics which mean popularity and the ultimate disposal of her wares to the highest available bidder.

Listen to a group of boys talking among themselves. You will probably add some useful knowledge to your mental equipment, for you will hear them discussing feats in civil engineering, problems in

electricity, mechanics, physics, chemistry, surgery, as well as events in the world of sports. On the other hand, the conversations among girls are almost entirely on the subject of boys, men, clothes and the theatre.

The psychology of the sexes in youth is totally different. The ideas of the average young man are those of one who expects to become some day a **producer** or at least a **worker**; the ideas of the average young woman are those of one who **expects** and **intends** (for here, too, Youth sees only personal victory) to rise into the leisure, non-producing or **supported** class.

The small boy sent forth to play with his comrades with his hair done up in curls by a fond mama, would encounter the jeers of the whole neighborhood. From babyhood, the ribbons, curls, frills and silks are for the girls, who are thereby rendered deeply conscious of their appear-

ance and taught above all things to keep themselves clean and "looking nice."

Nothing is sacred from the invasion of small boys, who climb in, and under and over all obstacles to discover what makes the wheels go around, while the small girls sit about and take care of their clothes and learn to count them of supreme importance.

And the matter of clothes is a vital one to the woman of today. Clothes are the frame that enhances the picture as well as its price tag; they are the carton wrapping the package in the show window, the case that best displays the jewel for sale within.

All our social institutions encourage girls and young women, and all women up to the age of ninety, or more, in believing that it is the supreme good for a woman to make the best possible matrimonial bargain. On the stage, in our press, and pulpit, in the books and maga-

zines produced for the consumption of the young people in this country, marriage is nearly always represented as the safe, ultimate and greatly-to-be-desired haven for a woman.

Hence, young women, intent upon securing the best the world has to offer, rarely take any sort of work seriously. They regard jobs as merely temporary conveniences, or inconveniences.

The wise employer hires ugly women stenographers, when he cannot afford to engage men, because he knows they usually possess more brains than their lovely sisters, and because they remain longer. The beautiful woman sees no need for intelligence nor for understanding because she has always been able to outstrip her less attractive competitors in making the best match and securing the rich husbands. And so her neurones rarely "connect," or react, except to stimuli pertaining to things that will en-

hance her charms and increase her selling price.

The young man expects to accomplish something in the world, to earn much money, or "high position," in order to be able to marry the most charming girl. The "most charming girl," if she be temporarily forced to earn her own living, **expects** to find somebody who will marry her, give her more luxuries than she has been accustomed to, and lift her far above her companions. She hopes to become a member of the leisure class even if she never attains it.

Arnold Bennett says that men usually marry through the desire to mate, while women marry for economic reasons. It seems to us that this is often true.

Women are **potential** parasites even if they never become real ones, and this is the gist of the matter we are discussing. Why are nearly all small farmers reactionary, individualistic, distrustful, competi-

tive? Because they hope some day to become gentleman farmers. Why are most small business men narrow, egoistic, conservative? For the reason that they hope one day to become men of Big Business. The young woman in America today possesses the same psychology. Being young, she not only **hopes**, she **expects**, to rise into the leisure class when some young man asks her for the privilege of supporting her through life.

We are making no claim that the lot of millions of housekeeping mothers, married to workingmen, is more enviable than is the condition of their husbands. We merely wish to point out that millions of women, potentially, actually, or psychologically, are "of the leisure class," and that **fact** and **expectation** keep women, as a sex, allied to the forces of reaction. When a woman is competing in a life and death struggle among a score of other young women, to make a permanent legal

bargain which entails the promise of an income or support for life, she has little leisure or energy to spare in making over, or revolutionizing the present social system.

The mind of the average woman today is that of the petty shop-keeper. Entertaining, oftentimes, impossible dreams, these dreams, are, nevertheless, productive of a conservative and bourgeois ideology of a life of leisure and non-productiveness.

It was the machine process in production that permitted the rise of a parasitical, or leisure, class. As long as both men and women were forced to produce things in order to live, an exploiting class, that lives off the labor of others, was impossible. But as spinning, weaving, canning, soap-making, butter, bread, candle, clothes-making and a hundred other functions formerly performed by women in the home, were absorbed into the factories, the young girls often followed the old task

into the new plant. This was also true of the boys on the farms, who turned toward the cities and entered factories, where hogs were slaughtered, farm machines manufactured, or where shoes were made.

But the farm youths expected to become permanent producers in the shops and mills; they sought to become able to support a woman, and, perhaps, children. The girls entering the factories, on the other hand, did so to earn money to help pay their expenses at home until they married, or in order to buy gay and expensive clothes, unconsciously, perhaps, for advertising as well as decorative purposes.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE FAMILY

UNDOUBTEDLY the early savages drew together for self-protection against their forest enemies. And out of this necessity grew the love of society. Man became a gregarious animal.

Promiscuity in sexual intercourse among these herds was another factor for holding the tribes, or groups together.

In his "Origin of the Family," Frederick Engels says:

"The development of the family is founded on the continual contraction of the circle, originally comprising the whole tribe, within which marital intercourse between both sexes was general. By the continual exclusion, first of near, then of ever remoter relatives, including finally even those who were simply related

legally, all group marriage becomes practically impossible. At last only one couple, temporarily and loosely united, remains . . . even from this we may infer how little the sexual love of the individual in the modern sense of the word had to do with the origin of monogamy."

Any casual student of sociology can prove that marriage and the family have not always been what they are today. Lewis J. Morgan, in his well-known work, "Ancient Society," says:

"When the fact is accepted that the family has passed through four successive forms, and is now in a fifth, the question at once arises whether this form can be permanent in the future. The only answer that can be given is that it must advance as society advances, and change as society changes, even as it has done in the past. It is the creature of the social system and will reflect its culture."

Engels says:

“We have three main forms of the family, corresponding in general to the three main stages of human development. For savagery group marriage, for barbarism the pairing family, for civilization, monogamy supplemented by adultery and prostitution.”

THE PAIRING FAMILY

“A certain pairing for a longer or shorter term took place even during the group marriage or still earlier. A man had his principal wife among other women, and he was to her the principal husband among others. . . . Such a habitual pairing would gain ground the more the gens developed and the more numerous the classes of “brothers” and “sisters” became who were not permitted to marry one another. . . .

“By this increasing complication of marriage restrictions, group marriage became more and more impossible; it was displaced by the pairing family.

“The communistic household, in which most or all the women belong to one and the same gens, while the husbands come from different gentes, is the cause and foundation of the general and widespread supremacy of women in primeval times.

“It is one of the most absurd notions derived from eighteenth century enlightenment that in the beginning of society woman was the slave of man. Among all savages and barbarians of the lower and middle stages, sometimes even of the higher stage, women not only have freedom but are held in high esteem.”

In writing of the pairing family among the Iroquois, Arthur Wright says:

“As to their families, at a time when they still lived in their old long houses (communistic households of several families) . . . a certain clan (gens) always reigned so that the women chose their husbands from other clans. The female part generally ruled the house;

the provisions were held in common; but woe to the luckless husband or lover who was too indolent or too clumsy to contribute his share to the common stock. No matter how many children or how much private property he had in the house, he was liable at any moment to receive a hint to gather up his belongings and get out. And he could not dare to venture any resistance; the house was made too hot for him and he had no other choice but to return to his own clan or, as was mostly the case, to look for another wife in some other clan. The women were the dominating power in the clans and everywhere else."

Bachofen discovered that in the communistic household, the supremacy of woman was caused by the fact that the women all belonged to the same gens while the men came from different gentes.

During this period the children belonged to the same gens as the mother and took

her name. At this time man's tools and weapons were yet crude and they were his only possession. The woman owned the household goods and utensils, the value of which for the preservation and preparation of food was very great.

Bachofen has shown how women were strong factors in the demand for monogamy through this and the earlier periods.

Man learned to till the soil and to domesticate animals; he captured enemies from neighboring tribes and learned to make slaves instead of food of them. And the conqueror became a master, and the slave an instrument of production. It was the men who were lucky enough to be first to enslave the enemy, to acquire more precious metals and larger flocks, who evolved the state, to protect them against the commune, or the mass, in their ownership of private property.

At the death of the father his own

children were disinherited, in the matriarchy. As increasing wealth strengthened the position of man, he began to desire to overthrow the old maternal law and to establish a new one that would permit inheritance in favor of his children. And so monogamy became the law, and descent was traced by male instead of female lineage. Engels says that "the downfall of maternal law was the historic defeat of the female sex."

In order to insure the faithfulness of the wife, and the reliability of paternal lineage, the women were given absolutely into the power of the men. Husbands had power of life and death over their wives. In certain countries today it is only the man who can dissolve the marriage bonds and cast off his wife.

But gradually the old standards which were applied to men and women are changing. New laws are written on our statute books. Civil laws protecting

male rule apply only to the wealthy classes and their intercourse with the working class. In sex relations the sentiment, in America particularly, has swung around in favor of woman.

Undoubtedly her growing economic independence, arising from her ability to support herself in shop and factory, has had some influence on this social attitude. Also, one can imagine the feelings of the tax-payers of a small community when the father of several small children deserted his wife and the expenses of supporting his family devolved upon them. It would call for little imagination to picture these respectable members of society scrambling to pass laws for the punishment of the errant one and to force him back to his wife and support-producing labor. But, basically, the legal favoritism which has arisen in the past thirty years in America, is probably due to a desire on the part of the employing class to

protect and make secure the mothers of children for the sake of the future labor supply. Only recently a great national reform body, dedicated to child welfare, declared frankly that there are "no illegitimate" children; that the misdeeds of parents can remove nothing from the legality of birth and that unmarried mothers must be granted some legal status and a measure of economic security for the sake of the future supply of labor.

It is evident, whether due to one cause or to many, that the law, which usually protects those who possess bestowable favors, has gradually built up strong protective measures for women. Among the rich, men and women find protection for their property in the laws, according to the measure of their economic power, but among the wage working and middle classes, woman occupies a privileged legal position.

As long as a husband possesses any-

thing, his wife may be certain of support or an "adequate" income at least. The husband may be punished for his lack of possessions, or his failure to produce an income.

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Of course, every one knows that marriage is a legal contract; but whom does it bind? Certainly not the woman, nor any woman in America. For she may easily free herself and even divorce and penalize her husband if she is dissatisfied either with him or his earnings; or she may evade all the obligations she is supposed to meet, almost always with absolute impunity.

Whatever she may do or leave undone in the marriage relation, if it but be with sufficient pretense and discretion, in America, at least, the world and the courts absolve her from all blame.

If she be discreet, she may entertain lovers galore; she may refuse to perform

any of the theoretical duties of the home; she may refuse to bear children or to surrender to her husband, without censure, and often without the knowledge of the world. If she be addicted to drunkenness, people will divine that her husband must have treated her brutally; if she be seen with other men, folks suspect that he neglects her.

If her husband seeks satisfaction for his desires elsewhere, she may divorce him and secure alimony; if he deserts her the law will return him to her side, if it can find him. If he fails to bring home the wherewithall to provide for her, she may have him sent to jail. If she discovers that he is getting the affection and the sex life which she has denied him, outside of his home, and if she buys a revolver and murders him in cold blood, the jury will exonerate her.

If a wife deserts her husband and her children, the law does not make her a

criminal; for wife abandonment, the husband is held criminally liable.

No matter what the offense of the woman, custom and public opinion demand that every "decent" man permit his wife to accuse him on "just grounds" and to secure the divorce and call on the law to force him to pay her alimony for the rest of their natural lives.

No matter what the provocation, legally or sentimentally, no man can be exonerated for killing a woman. No matter how little the provocation, legally or sentimentally, any woman may kill almost any man, and the jury will render a verdict of Not Guilty. She has only to say that he "deceived her."

A husband may become crippled or invalided and there is no law even suggesting that it is the duty of his wife to support him; most communities would lynch a man who neglected a sick or helpless wife, and the law would certainly deal

most harshly with him. The law throws no safeguards about the man, to protect him against his wife's failure to live up to her theoretical marital obligations, to protect him when he is ill, or in the enjoyment of separate maintenance, alimony, or against non-support or abandonment.

The laws today protect the owners of property and the economically powerful. The more economic power a group, or a class, or a sex possesses, the more the state throws the mantle of its protective laws about it. Women are owners of a commodity for which men are buyers or barterers, and our modern laws protect woman at the expense of man.

In his "Origin of the Family," Engels says:

"The supremacy of man in marriage is simply the consequence of his economic superiority and will fall with the abolition of the latter."

In a large per cent of the American

homes, man no longer possesses any economic superiority. He has four vital needs to satisfy while woman has only three, and woman possesses, for barter, for sale, or for gift, the wherewithall to satisfy one of these.

Few men any longer possess any property worthy of the name; hence, they are forced to sell their labor power for wages to keep from starving. And men are not always able to secure jobs.

The propertyless woman today is rarely reduced to starvation. If the price (or wages) offered for the sale of her laboring power are unsatisfactory, she may always supplement them through the barter or sale of her sex. That there are no women hoboes in the civilized world today is incontestable proof of the superiority of the economic status of woman over man.

THE FUTURE

WE still hear people talk about the relations of the sexes, the family and marriage, as though these human and social relationships had always been and were bound to remain what they are today, whereas they have undergone far-reaching modifications within the period of our own lives.

Every change taking place in industry is always bound to send out infinite ramifications through every branch of our social institutions. The increasing specialization in industry, drawing more and more of the household arts out of the home and into factory, mill and shops, and the following of the jobs by women into the mills and factories, thus freeing woman from economic dependence on man, has already

colored every branch of our social fabric. Having become more independent, woman has grown more exacting. She demands a better bargain when she marries, or, refusing to barter, she chooses a mate.

In the early days of America, when the home was the economic unit, and almost all industry was performed in the home and on the farm, women were economically dependent on men. Then woman's place was undoubtedly in the home, since there was no place else where she could earn a living. Modern industry has changed all that.

Women compete for jobs with men today, force down wages to a lower level and demand more from men before they will marry. And yet we see \$25.00 a week stenographers giving up their positions to barter themselves, presumably for life, to \$35.00 a week clerks or salesmen, rarely because of the mating instinct, but usually because of the personal triumph

this means in the competition between members of the sex, and the social approbation which marriage brings.

The only certain thing the wisest man may say about our social institutions is that they have changed in the past and that they will continue to change, or be modified, or to pass away, in the future. In one short year, the war has altered some of our old institutions beyond recall. We believe that a continuation of the war for a considerable period will mean economic and social changes that will rock the world. And out of the storm and stress of things we doubt very much whether any of our existing social institutions will emerge intact—if it emerge at all.

The family as it is known in America today, the marriage contract, the relations of the sexes are bound to alter as they reflect changed economic conditions. Some of the old "pillars of the social structure" in Russia have already crumbled away.

Women are becoming ever more necessary and important in the role they play in industry. With this growing economic importance, and with the increasing need of capitalism for more children to augment the labor and military supply, the power of women will probably increase marvelously during the next few years. Governments will reward the surrender of woman to man, while employers compete among themselves for her labor power. Much will be offered to women.

This, we believe, for only a brief period, for we cannot but think that the final results of this war—the fruit of the present system of production and distribution—will be the utter collapse of the system itself—making way for a New Society wherein the only aristocracy shall be that of Labor and of Merit.

Undoubtedly, in the New Society, conditions will be very much changed for women. But they will also be greatly

changed for men. What the future sex relations will be, we do not pretend to know. Perhaps the statement by Frederick Engels in his "Origin of the Family," is as good a forecast as any. He says:

"What we may anticipate about the adjustment of sexual relations after the impending downfall of capitalist production is mainly of a negative nature and mostly confined to elements that will disappear. But what will be added? That will be decided after a new generation has come to maturity: a race of men who never in their lives have had any occasion for buying with money or other economic means of power the surrender of a woman; a race of women who have never had any occasion for surrendering to any man for any other reason but love, or for refusing to surrender to their lover from fear of economic consequences. Once such people are in the world, they will not give a moment's thought to what we today

believe should be their course. They will follow their own practice and fashion their own public opinion about the individual practice of every person—only this and nothing more.”

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