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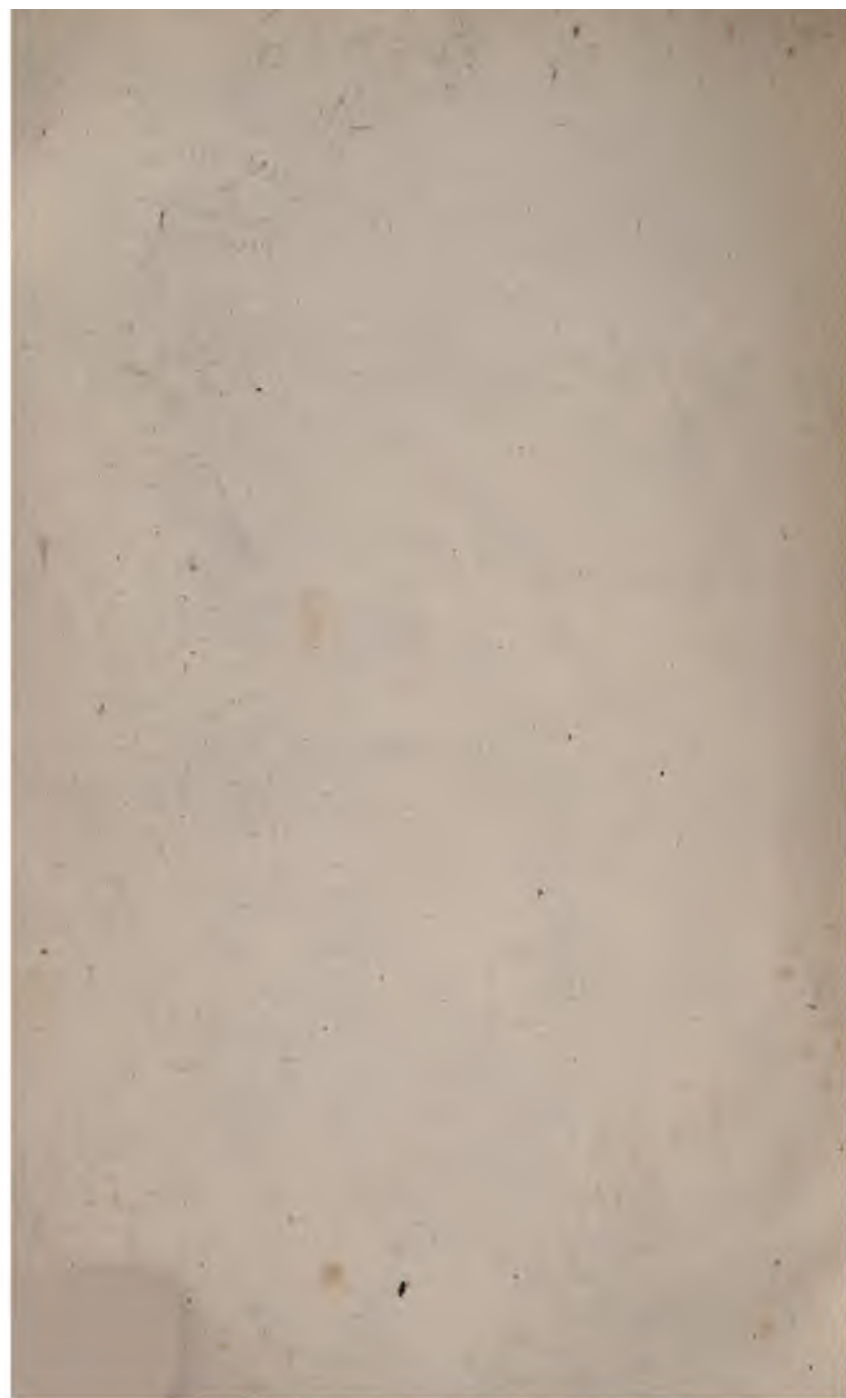
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WHY ARE
WOMEN REDUNDANT?

W. R. GREG.



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BY W. R. GREG.
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WHY ARE WOMEN REDUNDANT?

A STATE of society so mature, so elaborate, so highly organized as ours cannot fail to abound in painful and complicated problems. One after another these excite attention. The philosopher seeks to solve them; the philanthropist endeavours to relieve the suffering, and the moralist to cure the evil, they involve or imply. There is enough, alas, in the various forms of wrong, of error, and of wretchedness which multiply around us, not only to make our hearts bleed, but to bewilder our understanding, to disturb our conscience, to shame our indolence and ignorance, and almost to stagger and to strain our faith; and enough also to afford ample occupation to that vast amount of restless, prying, energetic, impatient benevolence, which is perhaps the most remarkable, as it is certainly the most hopeful, feature of this age. It would seem as if, in this respect, 'our strength was equal to our day,' and our resources to the work which lies before us: all that appears necessary is, that the diagnosis should be complete before the medicine is administered, and that the physician should be sure of his prescription before the surgeon begins to operate. For ourselves, we can say that we never 'despaired of the Republic;' we have never done the Creator the wrong of doubting (to use an expression we once heard from Dr Chalmers) 'that the world is so constituted that if we were morally right, we should

be socially and physically happy;’ we are profoundly convinced that, of all the evils which oppress civilization and all the dangers which menace it, none lie beyond the reach of human sagacity to analyze, or of human resolve and compassion to avert and cure. If we thought otherwise, there would be little joy in living, and little comfort in looking forth on life. The sensualist might revel in the pleasures which wealth or toil placed within his reach, till repetition brought early satiety and disgust; the lover might bask in his brief spring and sunshine of fruition; the human mill-horse might tread his weary rounds in the dull gray apathy of selfishness; the ambitious man might stun his nobler thoughts in the fierce struggle for power that could then be wielded for no hallowing end;—but the statesman worthy of his grand vocation, and the thinker capable of rising to the height of the great argument before him, would find both their occupation and their inspiration gone.

The British world—philanthropic as well as poetical—takes up only one thing at a time; or rather, and usually, only a fragment of a thing. It discovers an island, and proceeds to reason on it and deal with it as such; and it is long before it learns that the supposed island is only the promontory of a vast continent. WOMAN is the subject which for some time back our benevolence has been disposed to take in hand, fitfully and piecemeal. We have been grieved, startled, shocked, perplexed, baffled; still, with our usual activity, we have been long at work; beating about the bush; flying at this symptom; attacking that fragment; relieving this distress; denouncing that abomination. First it was the factory girls; then the distressed needlewomen; then aged and decayed governesses; latterly Magdalens, *in esse* or *in futurum*. The cry of ‘Woman’s Rights’ reached us chiefly from America, and created only a faint echo here. *We* have occupied ourselves more with ‘Woman’s Mission,’ and ‘Woman’s Employment;’ and, as usual, have been both more practical and

more superficial than our neighbours across the Channel and across the Atlantic: but the 'condition of women,' in one form or another—their wants, their woes, their difficulties—have taken possession of our thoughts, and seem likely to occupy us busily and painfully enough for some time to come. And well they may; for not only do the mischiefs, anomalies, and falsities in that condition unveil themselves more and more as we study the subject, but they are, we believe, every day actually on the increase.

The problem, which is so generally though so dimly perceived, and which so many are spasmodically and ambitiously bent on solving, when looked at with a certain degree of completeness,—with an endeavour, that is, to bring together all the scattered phenomena which are usually only seen separately and in detail,—appears to resolve itself into this: that there is an enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation, a number quite disproportionate and quite abnormal; a number which, positively and relatively, is indicative of an unwholesome social state, and is both productive and prognostic of much wretchedness and wrong. There are hundreds of thousands of women—not to speak more largely still—scattered through all ranks, but proportionally most numerous in the middle and upper classes,—who have to earn their own living, instead of spending and husbanding the earnings of men; who, not having the natural duties and labours of wives and mothers, have to carve out artificial and painfully-sought occupations for themselves; who, in place of completing, sweetening, and embellishing the existence of others, are compelled to lead an independent and incomplete existence of their own. In the manufacturing districts thousands of girls are working in mills and earning ample wages, instead of performing, or preparing and learning to perform, the functions and labours of domestic life. In great cities, thousands, again, are toiling in the ill-paid *metier* of sempstresses and needlewomen,

wasting life and soul, gathering the scantiest subsistence, and surrounded by the most overpowering and insidious temptations. As we go a few steps higher in the social scale, we find two classes of similar abnormal existences; women, more or less well educated, spending youth and middle life as governesses, living laboriously, yet perhaps not uncomfortably, but laying by nothing, and retiring to a lonely and destitute old age: and old maids, with just enough income to live upon, but wretched and deteriorating, their minds narrowing, and their hearts withering, because they have nothing to do, and none to love, cherish, and obey. A little further upwards, how many do we daily see, how many have we all known, who are raised by fortune above the necessity of caring for their own subsistence, but to whom employment is a necessity as imperious as to the milliner or the husbandman, because only employment can fill the dreary void of an unshared existence;—beautiful lay nuns, involuntary takers of the veil,—who pine for work, who beg for occupation, who pant for interest in life, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, and dig for it more earnestly than for hid treasures. With most women, probably, this phase comes at some epoch in their course; with numbers, alas, it never passes into any other. Some rush to charity, and do partial good or much mischief; some find solace in literary interests and work, and these, though the fewest, are perhaps the most fortunate of all; some seek in the excessive development of the religious affections a pale ideal substitute for the denied human ones,—a substitute of which God forbid that we should speak slightly, but which is seldom wholly satisfactory or wholly safe. Lastly, as we ascend into the highest ranks of all, we come upon crowds of the same unfulfilled destinies—the same *existences manquées*,—women who have gay society, but no sacred or sufficing home, whose dreary round of pleasure is yet sadder, less remunerative, and less satisfying, than the dreary round

of toil trodden by their humble sisters. The very being of all these various classes is a standing proof of, and protest against, that 'something wrong,' on which we have a few words to say,—that besetting problem which, like the sphinx's, society must solve or die.

It is because we think there is a tendency in the public mind at this conjuncture to solve it in the wrong way, to call the malady by a wrong name, and to seek in a wrong direction for the cure, that we take up our pen. In all our perplexities and disorders,—in social perplexities and disorders more perhaps than in any others,—there is one golden rule; if we will but apply it, which will suit great things as well as small, which is equally sound for all ages and all climes:—*consult Nature*; question her honestly and boldly, with no foregone determination as to what answer she shall give, with no sneaking intention to listen only to a fragment of her oracle, or to put a forced construction on her words. Thus interrogated, be confident that she will give forth no mistaken or ambiguous reply. Nature, as soon as we have learned to love her and to trust her, and to understand her language, is always right, and most commonly speaks intelligibly enough. In our difficulties, then, let us consult her; in the remedies we apply let us study her, assist her operations, return to her paths. Let us search out the original causes of social evils and errors, so that we may not *counteract* them, but *undo* them and *retrace* them. The mischiefs wrought by one departure from the dictates and the laws of nature, do not endeavour to cure or compensate by another. Shun, as the most fatal of blunders, the notion that the first *égarement* can be rectified by a second. Above all, be very slow to accept any anomalies or sufferings as necessary or irremediable, and to treat them with the anodynes prescribed by hoplessness or incapacity. Palliatives and narcotics are for ineradicable and inevitable maladies: Nature knows few such in the physical, fewer still in the

political or the social world. When we have discovered wherein we have erred and why we are diseased, and have stepped back into the honest and the healthy way, and cut off the source of the disorder,—when the *fons et origo mali* has been thus dried up,—then, and not till then, may we proceed to relieve the symptoms, and mitigate the pain, and countervail the mischiefs produced by the wide-spread and long-fostered disease, with a hearty and enlightened zeal,—provided only we are sedulously watchful that the lenitives we administer shall not be of a character to interfere with the remedy we have discovered and prescribed.

Now, what does Nature say in reference to the* case before us? By dividing and proportioning the sexes, by the instincts which lie deepest, strongest, and most unanimously in the heart of humanity at large in all times and amid all people, by the sentiments which belong to all healthy and unsophisticated organizations even in our own complicated civilization, marriage, the union of one man with one woman, is unmistakably indicated as the despotic law of life. This is *the rule*. We need not waste words in justifying the assumption. As the French proverb says, ‘On ne cherche pas à prouver la lumière.’ But Nature does more than this: she not only proclaims the *rule*; she distinctly lays down the precise amount and limits of the *exception*. In all countries of which we have any accurate statistics, there are rather more women than men; the excess varying from two to five per cent. Wherever, from accidental or artificial causes, this proportion is much disturbed, the saddest results ensue. Whether this very moderate excess points towards polygamy or celibacy is a question which on these bare facts alone might be open to controversy. In either case, the *limit* of the divergence permissible from the general law is definitely fixed. In arguing before an English audience we need not discuss the former supposition; here, at least, we shall not be accused of going one step beyond the bound-

aries of safe and modest inference, when we assume that the numerical fact we have mentioned points out the precise percentage of women whom Nature designed for single life, and that wherever this percentage is materially exceeded, the dictates of Nature have been neglected, silenced, or set at nought.

No doubt there are exceptional organizations in both sexes; and these exceptions are likely to become more numerous in proportion as civilization grows more complex and artificial. There are men who, from defective instincts, or from abnormal cerebral development, or from engrossing devotion to some jealous and exclusive pursuit, pass through life alike undisturbed by the passion and unsoftened by the sentiment of love. To a few, celibacy is a necessity; to a few, probably, a natural and easy state; to yet fewer, a high vocation. There are women, though we believe they are more rare than any other natural anomalies, who seem utterly devoid of the *fibre féminin*, to whom Nature never speaks at all, or at least speaks not in her tenderest tones. There are others too passionately fond of a wild independence to be passionately fond of any mate; and to such single life may spare the endurance and the infliction of much misery. There are some who seem made for charitable uses; whose heart overflows with all benevolent emotions, but the character of whose affection is rather diffusive than concentrated—ideal old maids—old maids *ab ovo*. There are women again—and these are sometimes, though but seldom, of a very high order—in whom the spiritual so predominates over the other elements of their being, that human ties and feelings seem pale and poor by the side of the divine; and to such marriage would appear a profanation, and would assuredly be a mistake. But of those who fancy that this is their vocation, the vast majority commit a fearful and a fatal error, and awake at last to find it so; and to those who are really thus called, the voice, we suspect,

comes oftener from a narrow intelligence or a defective organization than from the loftier aspirings of the soul. Lastly, there are women who are really almost epicene; whose brains are so analogous to those of men that they run nearly in the same channels, are capable nearly of the same toil, and reach nearly to the same heights; women not merely of genius (for genius is often purely and intensely feminine), but of hard, sustained, effective *power*; women who live in and by their intelligence alone, and who are objects of admiration, but never of tenderness, to the other sex. Such are rightly and naturally single; but they are abnormal and not perfect natures.

The above classes—and it is impossible to say how few individuals they honestly comprise when all are added together—constitute the *natural celibates* among the female sex; to all others who go through life unmarried celibacy is unnatural, even though it may in one sense be voluntary. Hundreds of women remain single in our distorted civilization because they have never been asked at all. Thousands remain single because the offers they have received threatened to expose them to privations and sacrifices which they shrank from even more than from celibacy. Thousands more, because one abortive love in the past has closed their hearts to every other sentiment; or because they have waited long years in persistent faith and silent hope for that one special love which never came; or because ambition deluded them into setting their claims higher than fate or fortune was prepared to realize. But we are satisfied that no one whose experience of life has been large, whose insight into life has been deep, and whose questionings of life have been honest, will demur to our assertion that the women who adopt a single life from positive (not *relative*) choice,—we do not say from preference, but from love,—who deliberately resolve upon celibacy as that which they like for itself, and not as a mere escape from the *lottery* of mar-

riage,—will not in their combined numbers exceed, if they even reach, that three or four per cent., for whom, as statistics show us, Nature has provided no exclusive partners. The residue—the large excess over this proportion—who remain unmarried, *constitute the problem to be solved, the evil and anomaly to be cured.*

Without affecting an accuracy of detail which, where figures are concerned, is always ostentatious and usually perplexing, the law which determines the proportional numbers of the sexes may be thus succinctly stated: There are usually about 104 or 105 males born to every 100 females; but as mortality among males at all ages exceeds that of females, the number of the latter *actually living* is always greater than the number of the former. In countries where the natural proportion has not been materially disturbed by emigration, immigration, desolating or prolonged wars, or other artificial causes, the excess of females would appear to be about two per cent.*

In Great Britain, to which we shall in future confine our attention, the actual excess is above *three* per cent., there being 103·3 females actually living for every 100 males, a proportion, however, which has unquestionably been enhanced by emigration. But as in the earlier years of life the proportion is in the other direction, the excess of *grown* women over *grown* men is much more than three per cent. Between the ages of twenty and sixty years it is about five and a half per cent., and after that still larger: so that after

* The following table is given in the Supplement to the Report of the Statistical Congress which met in Paris, and may be regarded as approximately correct for five out of the seven cases:

England (1851)	. . . . .	103·29	females to 100 males.
France	„	101·08	„ „
Turkey (1844)	. . . . .	101·62	„ „
Austria (1840)	. . . . .	102·99	„ „
Prussia (1849)	. . . . .	100·07	„ „
Russia (1855)	. . . . .	101·60	„ „
United States (1850)	. . . . .	95·02	„ „

twenty years of age we may state broadly that about 106 women are to be found for every 100 men. Now, if we are correct in assuming (as we believe we are) that in a thoroughly natural, sound, and satisfactory state of society all women, as a rule, above twenty years of age—*except the redundant six per cent. for whom equivalent men do not exist here*—would be married,* then the number (over six per cent.) who are single may be taken as the measure of our departure from that healthy and prosperous condition. The proportion of women above twenty years of age, then, who *must and ought* to be single, being *six per cent.*, the actual proportion who *are* single is *thirty per cent.* According to the Registrar-General, ‘Out of every 100 females of twenty years of age and upwards, fifty-seven are wives, thirteen are widows, and thirty are spinsters.†

To reduce *proportions* to actual numbers, and thus bring the facts more clearly before our readers’ minds, we will quote another statement of the Registrar-General. There were in *England and Wales*, in 1851, 1,248,000 women in the prime of life, *i. e.* between the ages of twenty and forty years, who were unmarried, out of a total number of rather less than 3,000,000. According to our assumption there ought only to have been 150,000 (or five per cent.) in that condition, which would leave 1,100,000 women in the best and most attractive period of life, who must be classed as unnaturally, if not all unintentionally, single. There is no need, however, to place either figures or inferences in too strong a light; and as unquestionably many women do marry between the ages of twenty and thirty years, we may

* This is apparently a perfectly legitimate assumption; since the number of women who will marry before their twentieth year may be set off against those who voluntarily defer their marriage altogether. Even in England, the country *par excellence* of late marriages, two and a half per cent. of the females between fifteen and twenty years of age are married.

† Population Return, 1851, vol. ii. p. clxv.

perhaps reduce the number of those who are spinsters, in consequence of social disorders or anomalies of some sort, and not from choice, to about 750,000, or three-quarters of a million—a figure large enough in all conscience.

We have now to consider to what causes this startling anomaly is to be traced, and by what means it may be cured; for as we premised at the outset, we must search for remedies before we can safely begin to think of applying anodynes. The chief causes we shall find to be three in number: the first we shall notice is *EMIGRATION*.

I. In the last forty-five years, upwards of 5,000,000 persons have definitively left our shores to find new homes either in our various colonies or in the United States. Of this number we know that the vast majority were men, though the proportions of the sexes has, we believe, been nowhere published. A considerable amount of that excess of women, which we have recorded as prevailing in the mother country, is thus at once accounted for, and is shown to be artificial and not natural, apparent rather than real. Nature makes no mistakes; Nature has no redundancies; and, as we shall presently see, the excess here is counterbalanced by a corresponding deficiency elsewhere.

In the North-American colonies, the proportion is as follows:

	Males.	Females.	Total.	Excess of Males.
Canada (Census of 1851) ...	949,034	893,231	1,842,265	55,803
Newfoundland (Census of 1857)	64,268	58,370	122,638	5,898
New Brunswick (Census of 1851)	99,526	94,274	193,800	5,252
Nova Scotia (Census of 1861)	165,584	165,273	300,857	311
Prince Edward Island (Census of 1861) ...	40,880	39,977	80,857	903
	1,319,292	1,251,125	2,570,417	68,167

In the Australian colonies, the following is the proportion :

POPULATION OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

Year.	Colony.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Excess of Males.
1860	New South Wales ...	213,021	147,406	360,427	65,615
1861	Victoria	328,651	211,671	540,322	116,980
1860	South Australia	59,678	58,289	117,967	1,389
1861	Western Australia	9,843	5,750	15,593	4,093
1860	Queensland	16,817	11,239	28,056	5,578
1860	Tasmania	48,602	39,173	87,775	9,429
1860	New Zealand	45,341	34,284	79,625	11,057
	Total	721,953	507,812	1,229,765	214,141

In 1840 (we still depend on the Registrar-General) the *total* excess of males over females in the United States was 309,000; the excess, after the age of twenty, was 198,000. This disproportion has assuredly been largely aggravated since, and we shall be within the mark if we assume that at least 250,000 adult women are needed in America to redress the balance among the free white population of that country. The deficiency of female life there is, as nearly as possible, the same as the redundancy in England, *viz. five per cent.*

It will be observed that all we are able to give in these latter cases is the entire aggregate excess of males; but since nearly the same proportion between the total figures and the figures above twenty years of age may be assumed to prevail there as elsewhere, we shall be quite safe in the following table:—

Deficiency of women over 20 years—United States	...	...	250,003
" " " Canadian Colonies	...	...	45,000
" " " Australian Colonies	...	...	145,000
			440,000

Now the *excess* of women over twenty years of age in Great Britain in 1851, was 405,000. It appears, therefore, on the aggregate that more women are wanted in those new countries which took their rise hence than the mother

country could supply them with. If the redundant numbers *here* were transported thither, they would scarcely be filled, and we should be denuded. Further, such an exodus, such a natural rectification of disproportions, would reduce the unmarried adult women in England and Wales from 1,100,000 to 660,000, from more than a million to little over half a million. Nay, more, it would do this *at once and directly*; it would do much more secondarily and indirectly;—such a vast reduction in the redundant numbers could not fail to augment the value of, and the demand for, the remainder.

These figures, then, clearly indicate, and even loudly proclaim, the first remedy to be applied. We must redress the balance. We must restore by an emigration of women that natural proportion between the sexes in the old country and in the new ones, which was disturbed by an emigration of men, and the disturbance of which has wrought so much mischief in both lands. There are, however, two serious difficulties in the way; but difficulties are only obstacles to be overcome;—as soon as we see with sufficient clearness and feel with sufficient conviction the course that *ought to be* pursued, we cannot doubt that some practicable mode will be devised in which it *can* be pursued.

The first difficulty is chiefly mechanical. It is not easy to convey a multitude of women across the Atlantic, or to the antipodes, by any ordinary means of transit. To transport the half million from where they are redundant to where they are wanted, at an average rate of fifty passengers in each ship, would require 10,000 vessels, or at least 10,000 voyages. Still, as 350,000 emigrants *have* left our shores in a single year before now, and as we do not need and do not wish to expatriate the whole number at once, or with any great rapidity, the undertaking, though difficult, would seem to be quite possible. But far the greater portion of the 350,000 emigrants were bound for the shorter voyage to

America, and of the 440,000 women who should emigrate, the larger number are wanted for the longer voyage to Australia. Still it would be feasible enough to find passenger ships to take out 10,000, 20,000, or 40,000 every year, if they were men. But to contrive some plan of taking out such a number of women, especially on a three months' voyage, in comfort, in safety, and in honour, is a problem yet to be solved. We all may remember that the attempt was made by a Female Emigration Society, set on foot many years ago by the late excellent and benevolent Lord Herbert; but the results were such as effectually prevented a repetition of the experiment,—at least in the same manner and on the same scale. To send only a few women in each ship, and with adequate protectors, in no degree met the requirements of the case; and to send large numbers, over whom no such guardianship could be exercised, and among whom were certain to be found some who would set the example and smooth the way to evil, led to such deplorable disorders as discredited the whole scheme, and caused its prompt abandonment. One admirable and sagacious lady, however, was not to be thus discouraged. Discerning clearly what was wanted, and devoting her energies and personal superintendence to the task, Mrs Caroline Chisholm established herself in Sydney, made arrangements for receiving young female emigrants as they landed into a comfortable and well-ordered home, and forwarded them into the interior under the charge of respectable families, from whose roof they were married as fast as they chose. Occasionally she took them up the country herself, under proper escort, and in considerable numbers, and located them wherever she found that their services were required, and their position would be safe. Including families and single women, she is said to have comfortably settled eleven thousand souls. She afterwards came to England and organized 'The Family Colonization Society,' the object of which was to send out young

women of good character and suitable capacities and health, under the charge of married couples, or in extemporized 'family groups,'—thus affording them the protection and control often so sorely needed, both on the voyage, and on their arrival in the land of their adoption. The scheme was admirable, and its success has been very great;* the only drawback is, that the scale of the proceedings has been necessarily so limited that it is scarcely more than taking a drop out of an overflowing cistern to pour it on a thirsty desert. We want fifty Mrs Chisholms, with government aid, and government protection to whatever extent and in whatever form might be required, and this part of the problem would be solved. We are by no means blind to the practical impediments which must meet any *extensive* scheme of female emigration;—all we wish to point out is, that if the mind of Australia and the mind of England were both adequately impressed with the necessity of solving the problem in the natural way,—if the 250,000 unmatched men in the colonies were determined to have wives, and a proportionate number of unprotected women in the mother country were determined to have husbands,—means could and would be found of bringing the supply and the demand together. The subject has again been brought before the public by two ladies who are pursuing a most useful career of judicious benevolence, for the service and to the credit of their sex—Miss Emily Faithful and Miss Maria Rye. They find plenty of women of all ranks willing and anxious to go out; but as yet the funds are wanting and the organization is in its infancy.

The second difficulty is of a different character. There can be no doubt that three or four hundred thousand women who are condemned to celibacy, struggle, and privation here,

* Story of the Life of Mrs Caroline Chisholm : with the Rules of the Family Colonization Society. *Trelawney Saunders, Charing Cross, London.*

might, if transferred to the colonies or the United States, find in exchange a life, not indeed of ease, but of usefulness, happiness, domestic affection, reasonable comfort, and ultimate prosperity. But the *class* of women who are redundant here is not exactly the class wanted in the colonies, or specially adapted for colonial life. The women most largely wanted there would be found among the working classes, and in the lower ranks of the middle classes:—the women who are mostly redundant, the ‘involuntary celibates’ in England, are chiefly to be found in the upper and educated sections of society. Among the agricultural and manufacturing population, who earn their daily bread by daily labour, comparatively few women remain long or permanently single. It is those immediately and those far above them—who have a position to maintain and appearances to keep up, who are too proud to sink, too sensitive to contrive, too refined or too delicate to toil, or too spoiled to purchase love at the expense of luxury—that chiefly recruit the ranks of the old maids. The redundancy, in a word, is not in the emigrating class. This is true, no doubt; but we have two remarks to make in reference thereto. The first is, that a removal of superfluous numbers, in whatever rank, cannot fail gradually and indirectly to afford relief to the whole body corporate,—just as bleeding in the foot will relieve the head or the heart from distressing and perilous congestion. The second is, that we can see no reason, pride apart, why female emigration should not be proportionate from all ranks. Many gentlemen have gone to New Zealand and Australia, and many more to Canada, preferring a life of honourable industry and eventual abundance in a new country to hollow and pretentious penury at home:—why should not a relative number of ladies display similar good sense and sound appreciation of the *realities* of earthly felicity? The class of women, again, who perhaps are more extensively redundant in England than any other, are those *im-*

mediately above the labouring poor, those who swell the ranks of 'distressed needlewomen,' those who as milliners' apprentices so frequently fall victims to temptation or to toil, the daughters of unfortunate tradesmen, of poor clerks, or poorer curates. Now these, though neither as hardy nor as well trained for the severe labours of a colonial life as dairy-maids, have all been disciplined in the appropriate school of poverty and exertion, and if their superior instruction and refinement added to their difficulties in one way, it would certainly smooth them in another; for of all qualities which education surely and universally confers, that of *adaptability* is the most remarkable.

II. In female emigration, then, must be sought the rectification of that disturbance in the normal proportions between men and women which the excess of male emigration has created. But when this remedy has been applied as extensively as shall be found feasible, there will still remain a large 'residual phenomenon' to be dealt with. We have seen that the extensive annual exodus from Great Britain, which has now grown almost into a national habit, has only raised the excess of adult women to about *six* per cent., whereas the proportion of adult women who are unmarried is *thirty* per cent. The second cause for this vast amount of supernormal celibacy is undoubtedly to be found in the growing and morbid LUXURY of the age. The number of women who remain unmarried, because marriage—such marriage, that is, as is within their reach, or may be offered them—would entail a sacrifice of that 'position,' which they value more than the attractions of domestic life, is considerable in the middle ranks, and is enormous in the higher ranks. This word 'position' we use as one which includes all the various forms and disguises which the motive in question puts on. Sometimes it is luxury proper which is thus inordinately

valued,—dainty living, splendid dressing, large houses, carriages *ad libitum*, gay society, and exoneration from all useful exertion. Sometimes it is the more shadowy sentiment which values these things, not for themselves,—for to many they are wearisome even to nausea,—but for their appearance. Hundreds of women would be really *happier* in a simpler and less lazy life, and know it well; but to accept that life would be, or would be deemed to be, a derogation from their social status; a virtual ejection, to a greater or less degree, from that society, that mode of existence, which they do not enjoy, but cannot make up their minds to surrender. Hundreds again—probably thousands—forego the joys of married life, not because they really cling to unrelished luxuries or empty show, but because they shrink from the loss of those actual *comforts* which refined taste or delicate organizations render almost indispensable, and which it is supposed (often most erroneously) that a small income could not sufficiently procure. They would willingly give up carriages, expensive dresses, and laborious pleasure, but they must have tolerably ample and elegantly-furnished rooms, leisure for reading, occasional ‘outings,’ and intercourse with chosen friends. They don’t wish to be idle, but they are not prepared to become drudges—either mere nursemaids or mere housewives. To these must be added, as belonging in justice to the same category, those to whom men, who might otherwise love and choose them, abstain from offering marriage, under the impression that the sentiments we have described are the sentiments they entertain. Very often this impression is wholly erroneous; very often these women would thankfully surrender all those external advantages, to which they are supposed to be so wedded, for the sake of sharing a comparatively humble and unluxurious home with men whom they regard and esteem. But their own language, their own conduct, or the habitual *tone* of the society

to which they belong, has warranted and created the impression ; and therefore the fault as well as the penalty is theirs.

Quite as many men—probably far more—share these sentiments, form the same estimates, and come to the same conclusions. They are loth to resign the easy independence, the exceptional luxuries, the habitual indulgences of a bachelor's career, for the fetters of a wife, the burden and responsibility of children, and the decent monotony of the domestic hearth. They dread family ties more than they yearn for family joys. Possibly they do not care much about a carriage themselves, but they would not like their wife to be without it. They shrink from the additional exertion and the additional self-denial which marriage and its issues would demand ; and the visions of delicate children, and a sick or languid mother, to whom they could not give all the comforts and alleviations and advantages they would desire, mingle with the reflection of the club they must cease to frequent, the gay society in which they would no longer be sought, and the social rank which, in fancy at least, they must step out of, to deter them from an irremediable proceeding.

Now, with respect to those women who really and deliberately prefer the unsatisfying pleasures of luxury and splendour to the possible sacrifices of married life, we have no compassion for them, and need not waste much thought in endeavouring to avert the penalty of their unwholesome preference. Their hearts must be unusually cold, and their heads unusually astray. But numbers would make a wiser and a nobler choice, if they listened to the promptings of their better nature, and if it were not for the double error,—that the luxuries and social occupations and appliances around them really confer much enjoyment, and might not be easily foregone,—and that a very great amount, perhaps all that is really indispensable, of refinement and of comfort cannot

be secured with comparatively scanty means. Much nonsense has been written, on both sides, about 'love in a cottage,' and 'managing on £300 a year,' and 'keeping up appearances,' and the grave realities which those 'appearances' often imply;—and we have no intention of broaching any extravagances as to any of these theses. We fully admit that a position which would trample upon real refinement can afford no happiness to those in whose natures refinement is an ingrained element. We are only too well aware that defective health often renders that an absolute necessity to some which to hardier frames is a superfluity easily dispensed with. We quite agree that it is, for most persons, wise before entering on the married state to consider not only its obvious and probable, but many of its merely *possible*, contingencies, and to sit down carefully and count the cost, and their own means, both in purse and in character, of meeting it. We have not a word—at least, we are not going to say a word—against that facile, scented, and feather-bed existence which a complicated and elaborate civilization renders so common and so tempting. Material enjoyment, where it is neither coarse nor vicious, is a very good thing, which no sensible layman will waste breath in denouncing or depreciating. But what we wish to represent, and what we would entreat our countrymen and countrywomen to consider, is this:—that a very large proportion of those luxuries,—whether the lusts of the flesh or the lusts of the eye, or the hollow gauds of pride,—which so foster the mistake of female celibacy in the educated classes, are neither necessary to the enjoyment of life, nor really contribute to it; that those who have them are often much less happy than those who have them not;—they are factitious; they are unremunerative; and in remaining single in order to retain them, both men and women are sacrificing a reality for that which is, and is constantly felt to be, as very a shadow and simulacrum as ever mocked the desert traveller

thirsting for the substantial and refreshing waters of life. Let folks live for pleasure if they will ; let them place their happiness in earthen vessels, and their joy in empty pageants, if so their vicious training or their shallow natures shall delude them ; but at least let that, for which they forego what *we* hold to be far better, be something which they really relish and feel to be a treasure, not merely something which they fancy, and which others tell them, they *ought* to value and delight in.

People, moreover, are under a great delusion as to the incompatibility of a moderate income with most of the essential refinements, and even elegancies, as well as comforts, of life. There is *some* truth in the idea, but the extent to which they push it is the reverse of true. The reason why substantial elegancies and refinements are so often forfeited by those who marry upon small means is, that deceptive appearances are *not* surrendered. Many an income is amply sufficient to supply all that simple taste and a keen sense of comfort demand,—books and leisure for reading them, servants enough to spare the mistress of the house from becoming either a drudge, a slattern, or an invalid, and change of air and scene enough for health of mind and body,—which is quite inadequate to afford these things, and *show and style as well*,—a butler or a footman, costly and tedious dinner-parties, much visiting, or excursions in the height of the season to crowded and fashionable watering-places. No one who has seen the better side of French, or Swiss, or Italian family life, or who has been admitted to the intimacy of some of the well-regulated homes which are to be found among the more sensible, independent, and refined of our middle classes, will be at a loss to understand what we mean, or will hesitate to admit its accuracy.* Hundreds of families *do* contrive to combine the

* We have been at some pains (whenever an opportunity has presented itself) to analyze the reasons which make a very moderate income (say £400 or £500 a year) amply sufficient to maintain a family in elegance, comfort, and

highest culture and the most essential comfort, as well as all the loveliest and happiest affections, with means which, to those who submit to be the tame slaves and the ready echoes of the world's commands, would appear, and would be, scanty even for single life ;—and they effect this by the simple art of grasping at essentials instead of accidents, and substances instead of shows. We have not the faintest hesitation in affirming that one half of those of both sexes who now imagine themselves doomed to celibacy, on pain of squalor or derogation, might marry with perfect safety if only their epicureanism (without being in any degree diminished) were *rationalized* enough to induce them to insist merely upon such appliances as in sober verity constituted or enhanced the felicity and the luxury of existence.*

cultivated refinement, in other countries, and wholly inadequate in England ;—and when rigidly examined and *pursued home to ultimate facts*, it is astonishing to discover how little is to be attributed to difference of cost in the necessaries of life. The real difference lies, not in comfort, not in luxuries, not in social enjoyments, but in *style of living*, in things which either do not contribute to happiness, or which do so only because others *have* them and therefore we *want* them, or which, as far as really enjoyable or needed, *could be had in a far cheaper form*. Some day we hope to be able to go to the bottom of this matter.

* We may here notice, in passing, one not unfrequent cause of female celibacy among the humbler classes, viz. *education*. Many girls in rather humble life are now so well educated, and in the course of that education, and as a consequence of the intercourse it sometimes involves with those above them, acquire so strong a taste for refinement of mind and courtesy of manners, that the comparative roughness and coarseness of the men in their own rank of life, among whom they would naturally look for husbands, becomes repulsive to them ; while at the same time their own training and acquirements scarcely qualify them to match on fair terms with those above them. Their position thus becomes an essentially false and perilous one ; their very superiority even is more of a danger than a safeguard ; they are attractive to, and attracted by, men whose notice is sure to bring them mischief ; from among them come many of the most elegant of the *filles entretenues* ; and to their accession is in a great degree to be attributed the marked improvement observable in the character and manners of this class of late years. We do not see how this incidental evil is to be averted ; but its existence is indubitable, and should be noted. Anything which raises women above those whom alone, unless in

Connected with this part of the subject we must enumerate one more fruitful source of female celibacy—*domestic service*. The number of women servants in Great Britain, nearly all of whom are necessarily single, is astonishing. In 1851 it reached 905,165, and must now reach at least a million. Of these 905,165, 582,261 were twenty years of age and upwards. This is a social phenomenon in all civilized countries, though probably nowhere on so great a scale as with us; it would appear to be a permanent and a necessary one; and probably in its essence and within due limits is not to be found fault with or deplored. That there are some evils connected with it is indisputable. No doubt many of these girls are exposed to considerable hardships. More probably are exposed to great temptations. Thousands of them live in a degree of comfort, and even luxury, which they would forfeit if they married in their own rank and descended to a cottage or a garret of their own, and the unwillingness to forfeit which makes them cling to single servitude as preferable to conjugal and maternal cares and joys. Thousands of them also acquire that perception of, and taste for, refined manners and modes of life which are only to be found in the families of the upper ranks, which gradually become almost indispensable to them, and which we have just alluded to in a note as constituting one of the dangers of the better educated daughters of the poor. Lastly, all of them, or nearly all, from years spent in a state of dependence and of plenty, in which everything is supplied to them and arranged for them without trouble or forethought of their own, lose or never acquire that *managing* faculty and those provident habits which would fit them to conduct a household of their own. If girls usually entered domestic service, as the Lowell factory girls in America enter the cotton-mills, only for a

very exceptional cases, they can expect to marry, may be a good thing, but in the present state of the English community it is a dearly purchased one.

few years, to acquire practice and to lay up a dowry, it might only have the effect of postponing their marriage to a prudent age; but as it prevails among us, it is inimical to marriage altogether.

The special remark, however, which we have to make upon this matter, as bearing on our present subject, is that *female servants do not constitute any part* (or at least only a very small part) *of the problem we are endeavouring to solve.* They are in no sense redundant; we have not to cudgel our brains to find a niche or an occupation for *them*; they are fully and usefully employed; they discharge a most important and indispensable function in social life; they do not follow an obligatorily independent, and therefore for their sex an unnatural, career:—on the contrary, they are attached to others and are connected with other existences, which they embellish, facilitate, and serve. In a word, they fulfil both essentials of woman's being; *they are supported by, and they minister to, men.* We could not possibly do without them. Nature has not provided one too many. If society were in a perfectly healthy state, we should no doubt have to manage with fewer female servants than at present; they would earn higher wages; they would meet with more uniform consideration; and they would, as a rule, remain in service only for a few years, and not for life: but they must always be a numerous class, and scarcely any portion of their sex is more useful or more worthy.

III. We have now to treat of the third and last chief cause of the abnormal extent of female celibacy in our country,—a cause respecting which a speech is difficult, but respecting which silence would be undutiful and cowardly. We will be plain, because we wish both to be brief and to be true. So many women are single because so many men are profligate. Probably, among all the sources of the social anomaly in question, this, if fully analyzed, would be

found to be the most fertile, and to lie the deepest. The case lies in a nut-shell. Few men—incalculably few—are truly celibate by nature or by choice. There are few who would not purchase love, or the indulgences which are its coarse equivalents, by the surrender or the curtailment of nearly all other luxuries and fancies, if they could obtain them on no cheaper terms. In a word, few—comparatively very few—would not marry as soon as they could maintain a wife in anything like decency or comfort, if only through marriage they could satisfy their cravings and gratify their passions. If their sole choice lay between entire chastity,—a celibacy as strict and absolute as that of women,—or obedience to the natural dictates of the senses and the heart in the only legitimate mode, the decision of nine out of ten of those who now remain bachelors during the whole or a great portion of their lives would, there can be no doubt, be in favour of marriage. If, therefore, every man among the middle and higher ranks were compelled to lead a life of stainless abstinence till he married, and unless he married, we may be perfectly sure that every woman in those ranks would have so many offers, such earnest and such rationally eligible ones, that no one would remain single except those to whom nature dictated celibacy as a vocation, or those whose cold hearts, independent tempers, or indulgent selfishness, made them select it as a preferable and more luxurious career. Unhappily, as matters are managed now, thousands of men find it perfectly feasible to combine all the freedom, luxury, and self-indulgence of a bachelor's career with the pleasures of female society and the enjoyments they seek for there. As long as this is so, so long, we fear, a vast proportion of the best women in the educated classes—women especially who have no dowry beyond their goodness and their beauty—will be doomed to remain involuntarily single.

How this sore evil is to be remedied we cannot undertake to say. But what we have already said in an earlier

part of this Paper will suggest one or two palliatives and partial mitigations, which, together and in time—by a cumulative and very gradual process—may approach to something like a cure. When female emigration has done its work, and drained away the excess and the special *obviousness* of the redundancy; when women have thus become far fewer in proportion, men will have to bid higher for the possession of them, and will find it necessary to make them wives instead of mistresses. Again: when worthless appearances, and weary gaieties, and joyless luxuries, shall have lost something of their factitious fascination in women's eyes, in comparison with more solid and more enduring pleasures, they will be content with smaller worldly means in the men who ask their hands, and, as they become less costly articles of furniture, they will find more numerous and more eager purchasers. To speak broadly, as wives become less expensive and less *exigentes*, more men will learn to prefer them to mistresses. Ladies themselves are far from guiltless in this matter; and though this truth has been somewhat rudely told them lately, it *is* a truth, and it is one they would do well to lay to heart. Society—that is, the society of great cities and of cultivated life and high life—has for some years been growing at once more expensive and less remunerative; more difficult and more dull; it exacts much and repays little; its attractions are few, while its trouble and its *gêne* are great. All this time, while the *monde* has been deteriorating, the *demi-monde* has been improving; as the one has grown stupider and costlier, the other has grown more attractive, more decorous, and more easy. The ladies *there* are now often as clever and amusing, usually more beautiful, and not unfrequently (in external demeanour at least) as modest, as their rivals in more recognized society. Wanting the one essential female virtue, they often seek to atone for its absence by accomplishments and amiabilities which irrefragable

respectability does not invariably display. These may be unpalatable facts; it is sad that things should be so, but they are so. Now, as long as men are fond of female society, and yet hate to be bored, and shrink from profitless exertion and fatiguing *gêne*, and possess only a moderate competence, and above all things dread pecuniary embarrassment or ruin,—so long will those whose principles are not strict and whose moral taste is not fastidious, be prone to seek that society where they can have it on the easiest and cheapest terms. And the only way in which virtuous women and women of the world can meet and counteract this disposition, is the very opposite to that they have seemed inclined to adopt of late. They must imitate that rival circle in its attractive and not in its repellent features,—in its charms, not in its drawbacks, nor its blots; in its ease and simplicity, not in its boldness or its license of look and speech; in the comparative economy of style which covers so much of its wastefulness, and in the cheerfulness and kindness of demeanour which redeems or gilds so many of its sins.

Single life, to those to whom it comes naturally, is, like all natural states, a happy and a dignified one.* Single life,

* We are so anxious to preclude misconception of our views, that, at the risk of repetition, we may say again distinctly, that, where female celibacy is either necessary, natural, or voluntary, we would surround it with every honour and with every comfort and adornment. Maiden ladies are in hundreds of instances both more useful and more estimable and less selfish than the wives and mothers who are *engrossed* in conjugal and maternal interests. In thousands of instances they are, *after a time*, more happy. In our day, if a lady is possessed of a very moderate competence, and a well-stored and well-regulated mind, she may have infinitely less care and infinitely more enjoyment than if she had drawn any of the numerous blanks which beset the lottery of marriage. Recent disclosures have added alarming confirmation to this conclusion, and are producing considerable influence on the feelings of many women. All that we wish to lay down is, that God designed single life for only a few women, and that where he did not design it, it is a mistake, even though it be not a misery.

to those on whom it is forced by individual errors or by vicious social prejudices or arrangements, is unnatural, and therefore essentially unsound, unstable, and the source of immeasurable wretchedness and mischief. Celibacy, within the limits which Nature has prescribed, and through her statistical interpreters has clearly proclaimed, is a wholesome and not unlovely feature in the aspect of society. Celibacy, when it transcends these limits, and becomes anything but exceptional, is one of the surest and most menacing symptoms of something gravely and radically wrong. Therefore it is that all those efforts, on which chivalric or compassionate benevolence is now so intent, to render single life as easy, as attractive, and as lucrative to women, as unhappily other influences to which we have alluded have already made it to men, *are efforts in a wrong direction*,—spontaneous and natural, no doubt, to the tender heart of humanity, which always seeks first to relieve suffering, and only at a later date begins to think of curing disorder,—but not to be smiled upon or aided by wise prescribers for the maladies of states. We despise the shallow ignorance of the physician who administers an anodyne to allay pain arising from local inflammation or congestion, instead of resorting to the depletive measures which the cause of the pain unmistakably demands. But we have something more than contempt—we have abhorrence and disgust—for the menial complaisance of the quack who is ever ready with his appetite pills and his emetics to remedy the indigestion of yesterday, and to render possible the gormandizing of to-day; or who tasks his ingenuity and skill to save his dissolute patients from the penal and corrective consequences which nature had entailed on their excesses, and to enable them to continue those excesses with immoral and mischievous impunity. In like manner our philanthropy—that of many of us at least—is setting out on the wrong tack. To endeavour to make women independent of men; to multiply and facilitate their employ-

ments; to enable them to earn a separate and ample subsistence by competing with the hardier sex in those careers and occupations hitherto set apart for that sex alone; to induct them generally into avocations, not only as interesting and beneficent, and therefore *appropriate*, but specially and definitely as *lucrative*; to surround single life for them with so smooth an entrance, and such a pleasant, ornamented, comfortable path, that marriage shall almost come to be regarded, not as their most honourable function and especial calling, but merely as one of many ways open to them, competing on equal terms with other ways for their cold and philosophic choice:—this would appear to be the aim and theory of many female reformers, and of one man of real pre-eminence,—wise and farsighted in most questions, but here strangely and intrinsically at fault. Few more radical or more fatal errors, we are satisfied, philanthropy has ever made, though her course everywhere lies marked and strewn with wrecks, and failures, and astounding theories, and incredible assumptions. Till the line we have pointed out has been definitely taken, and the remedies we have enumerated have at least *begun* to be systematically and energetically applied, and the evil we have analyzed has been corrected at its source, and the social anomalies and distress arising therefrom have thus been brought within manageable compass, all such lenitives as are suggested will prove very questionable—to say no more. *Then*, however, when it has been fully recognized that they *are* lenitives, and not cures; that they are needed, not to render possible the continuance of an unhealthy social state, but to clear away and relieve the miseries which that state—now sentenced and discarded—has left behind it; when it is seen and admitted that what we have to do is to provide occupations, remunerative to themselves and to the society for which they live, not for a permanent and incurable excess of single women, but only for those whom our past errors have made single, and for those who are

single either for a time only, or from exceptional disaster, or from nature and vocation—our course will become very clear, and our work comparatively very simple. On the details of this matter we have but a few remarks to make. More experienced and more practical heads and hands than ours are busy at the task: our only desire has been to see that the true inspiring and directing conception should be discerned and grasped.

1. And, firstly, those wild schemers—principally to be found on the other side of the Atlantic, where a young community revels in every species of extravagant fantasies—who would throw open the professions to women, and teach them to become lawyers and physicians and professors, know little of life, and less of physiology. The brain and the frame of woman are formed with admirable suitability to their appropriate work, for which subtlety and sensitiveness, not strength and tenacity of fibre, are required. The cerebral organization of the female is far more delicate than that of man; the continuity and severity of application needed to acquire real *mastery* in any profession, or over any science, are denied to women, and can never with impunity be attempted by them; mind and health would almost invariably break down under the task. And wherever any exceptional women are to be found who seem to be abnormally endowed in this respect, and whose power and mental muscle are almost masculine, it may almost invariably, and we believe by a law of physiological necessity, be observed that they have purchased this questionable pre-eminence by a forfeiture of some of the distinctive and most invaluable charms and capabilities of their sex.

2. We are not at all disposed to echo the cry of those who object to women and girls engaging in this or that industrial career, on the ground that they thus reduce the wages and usurp the employment of the other sex. Against female compositors, tailors, telegraph-workers, and factory-hands,

this objection has been especially urged. We apprehend that it is founded on an obvious economical misconception. It is an objection to the principle of *competition* in the abstract. It is a bequest from the days—now happily passing away—of surplus population, inadequate employment, and Malthusian terrors. It is clearly a waste of strength, a superfluous extravagance, an economic blunder, to employ a powerful and costly machine to do work which can be as well done by a feebler and a cheaper one. Women and girls are less costly operatives than men: what they can do with equal efficiency, it is therefore wasteful and foolish (*economically considered*) to set a man to do. By employing the cheaper labour, the article is supplied to the public at a smaller cost, and therefore the demand for the article is increased. If, indeed, there were only a certain fixed and unaugmentable quantity of work to be done, and too many hands to do it,—so that some must unavoidably be idle,—then it *might* be wise to employ men to do it, and let the women, rather than the men, sit with their hands before them. But it could be wise only in a moral, not in an economical, view of the subject. Such a state of things, however, can never obtain in a healthy community, and rarely (if ever) *in reality* in any community at all. Certainly it is not the case with us. If women are employed as tailors or as printers, men are thereby set free for harder and more *productive* labour, which they can do, and which women cannot. If women are selected to manage electric telegraphs, not only are men not *wasted* over that work (wherein half their strength and capacity would be unused and in consequence unprofitable), but telegrams become cheaper, and more telegrams are sent, and the public is better served. The employment of women and children in factories, at labour which they can do not only as well, but actually better than grown men (since it requires watchfulness and nicety of touch rather than strength or skill), enabled our manufacturing industry to attain a devel-

opment to which half the wealth and progress of the nation may be traced. If only men had been employed in cotton mills, calicoes would have cost three times as much per yard as at present ; the population of England would have been smaller by some millions ; our ships and commerce would have been proportionally restricted ; and distant countries would have been far more inadequately clothed than they actually are. If there be any objection to the employment of women and children in manufacturing or other analogous sorts of labour, it must be based exclusively upon social or moral considerations ; and even then it will be found to be enormously over-estimated, to arise from a curable abuse or excess, and to be a separable accident, and not a mischief essential to the system. The employment of married women in factory labour is undoubtedly an evil ; but it is so because they continue it after they are mothers, when it does not pay, —and because it disables them from making their husbands' homes comfortable, and from laying out their earnings with economy and skill. The employment of young girls in factory labour, too, is attended with the serious drawback, that it usually leaves them utterly ignorant and inexperienced in household management ; but this is because they continue it too long, and give themselves to it so exclusively. *Abusus non tollit usum.*

3. The condition of that section of unmarried women who earn, or attempt to earn, their bread as governesses has attracted, and assuredly deserves to attract, an unusual amount of public attention. Few conditions in our stage of civilization want amending and rectifying more. But here, as in so many other of our benevolent efforts, we have been sailing on the wrong tack. Why has the function of a female educator—of a woman whose task it is, in the privacy and confidence of the domestic circle, not merely to *instruct*, but often actually to *form*, the mind and the character of our girls, and up to a certain age of our boys too,—why has the

position of those called to exercise this most responsible and momentous of all functions been so little honoured and so ill-remunerated? Mainly, we say it distinctly (where it *has* been little honoured and ill-remunerated), because it deserved no better; because such numbers of those who undertook it were wretchedly qualified to discharge it conscientiously or efficiently. It was ill-paid and ill-esteemed, because it was ill-done. Governesses were a depressed and despised class—where they were so—for the same reason that needlewomen were a distressed class; because as every woman could read and write and use a needle, as every woman could teach a little and sew a little, every uneducated woman who was destitute became a sempstress, and every educated (or half-educated) woman became a governess. If none but the really competent had undertaken the profession, the profession would have been highly valued and highly rewarded. If there had been any recognized and reliable test by which the competent could be distinguished from the incompetent, the former would have been honoured and engaged, and the latter would have been neglected and starved out. But as the majority were utterly unfit for their task (whatever their excellent morals and intentions), and as there was no means of distinguishing the minority from the mass, all were discredited alike, and the average rate of reward fell to the average rate of merit—perhaps even below it. The remedy seems to us clear. Let there be some institution authorized to examine ladies who desire to become teachers (if not also to prepare them for the work), and to confer upon them diplomas or certificates of qualification, as is the case in Germany, and we believe in other continental countries.* No one is allowed to practise medicine or surgery without proof of competence: why should any one be allowed to practise education? No one unqualified may un-

* Decided steps have of late begun to be taken in this direction.

dertake the management of the body : why should the mind be left more recklessly unprotected ? Surely as much mischief may be done by an incapable practitioner in the one case as in the other. But there would be no need to go as far as this. If all women who wished to become governesses could find a college in which to qualify themselves for the noble office ; and if all who were thus qualified could provide themselves with a certificate of qualification,—the unprovided and incompetent would be unable to find employment, and would cease to lower the character and drag down the remuneration of the entire class into which they now intrude themselves unwarrantably. You would, *at first*, have fewer following that calling ; but those who did follow it would hold their right position, and their numbers would be recruited as the need for them was felt.

4. There will still remain a large number of single women unprovided for, of such a class in life that they cannot sink to be servants, of such a character and capacity that they cannot rise to be governesses, who are yet under the necessity of finding some means of supporting themselves. They are very numerous now : they will probably always exist in moderate numbers, even when all the natural and healthy influences we have pointed out shall have wrought their remedial results. Some of these will be provided for by such occupations as those which Miss Maria Rye, Miss Emily Faithfull at the 'Victoria Press,' and other judicious friends of the sex, have endeavoured to open to them. But as redundant single women are removed by emigration and by marriage, the population out of which the class of superior female servants are recruited will be so much reduced, that that class will rise in value, in estimation, and in reward ; so that the position will be sought by and eligible for many to whom it would now seem a decided derogation to enter it.

5. Lastly, there are occupations for which single women are and always will be wanted,—occupations which none

other can discharge as well, or can discharge at all. There are the thousand ramifications of charity; nurses, matrons, *sœurs de charité*, 'missing links;'—functions of inestimable importance and of absolute necessity,—functions which if ill-performed or unperformed, society would languish or fall into disorder. In a healthy state of civilization these tasks would absorb only a moderate number of women, perhaps not more than the four or five per cent. whom Nature has provided *ad hoc*. In our disarranged and morbid state, the demand for their services is enormously enhanced,—enhanced, possibly, almost as much as the supply. Then there is a large and increasing call for a supply of literary food, such as many well-educated women find themselves fully able to furnish; and if only those who are really competent to this work were to undertake it, it would keep them in ample independence. Novels are now almost as indispensable a portion of the food of English life as beef or beer; and no producers are superior to women in this line, either as to delicate handling or abundant fertility.

To sum up the whole matter. Nature makes no mistakes and creates no redundancies. Nature, honestly and courageously interrogated, gives no erroneous or ambiguous replies. In the case before us, Nature cries out against the malady, and plainly indicates the remedy. The first point to fix firmly in our minds is, that in the excess of single women in Great Britain we have a curable evil to be mended, not an irreparable evil to be borne. The mischief is to be eradicated, not to be counterbalanced, mitigated, or accepted. To speak in round numbers, we have one million and a half adult unmarried women in Great Britain. Of these half a million are wanted in the colonies; half a million more are usefully, happily, and indispensably occupied in domestic service;—the evil, thus viewed, assumes manageable dimensions, and only a residual half million remain to be practi-

cally dealt with. As an immediate result of the removal of 500,000 women from the mother-country, where they are redundant, to the colonies, where they are sorely needed, all who remain at home will rise in value, will be more sought, will be better rewarded. The number who compete for the few functions and the limited work at the disposal of women being so much reduced, the competition will be less cruelly severe, and the pay less ruinously beaten down. As the redundancy at home diminishes, and the value is thereby increased, men will not be able to obtain women's companionship and women's care so cheaply on illicit terms. As soon as the ideas of both sexes in the middle and upper ranks, on the question of the income and the articles which refinement and elegance require, are rectified,—as soon, that is, as these exigencies are reduced from what is purely factitious to what is indisputably real,—thousands who now condemn themselves and those they love to single life will find that they can marry without foregoing any luxury or comfort which is *essential* to ladylike and cultivated and enjoyable existence. Finally, as soon as, owing to stricter principles, purer tastes, or improved social condition,—or such combination of all these as the previous movements spoken of must gradually tend to produce,—the vast majority of men find themselves compelled either to live without all that woman can bestow, or to purchase it in the recognized mode,—as soon, to speak plainly, as their sole choice lies between marriage and a life of real and not nominal celibacy, the apparent redundancy of women complained of now will vanish as by magic, if, indeed, it be not replaced by a deficiency. We are satisfied that IF the gulf could be practically bridged over, so that women went where they are clamoured for; and IF we were contented with the *actualities* instead of the empty and unreal and unrewarding shadows of luxury and refinement; and IF men were necessitated either to marry or be chaste, —*all of which things it is a discreditable incapacity in us not*

to be able to accomplish,—so far from there being too many women for the work that must be done, and that only women can do well, there would be too few. The work would be seeking for the women, instead of, as now, the women seeking for the work. We are disordered, we are suffering, we are astray, because we have *gone wrong*; and our philanthropists are labouring, not to make us go backward and go right, but to make it easier and smoother to persist in wrong.

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