Social evils

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SOCIAL EVILS: THEIR CAUSES AND CURE.

BEING A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE SOCIAL STATUS, WITH REFERENCE TO METHODS OF REFORM.

BY MRS. MARIA M. KING, AUTHORESS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURE, ETC. ETC.

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Diet—Its Influence upon Civilization.—Effects of certain Articles of Food in use among Civilized and Savage Nations; and of certain Beverages and Stimulates in common use among the American People.—“The Social Evil”—Remedies for it.—Woman's Rights.—Marriage and Divorce.—Charity Children—Suggestions relative to their Treatment, &c.—Prison Discipline—Female Prisoners.

To live in the present age, is to feel the burden of a great work, if the mind properly comprehends the responsibilities which attach to life in an age when all nature is instinct with progress, and the race of man is struggling to outgrow the barbarisms of the past and attain to that higher civilization to which the age is beckoning it. The work which confronts philanthropists in this age is such as the ages past have not presented; from the fact that civilization has opened new fields for philanthropic effort, as well as stimulated philanthropy.

Advancing civilization discovers to the perceptions of men the imperfections of human nature and the real wants of society, as they are not discovered when the social status is low; as in the semi-civilized ad lower states of society.
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To live in the present age, is to feel the burden of a great work, if the mind properly comprehends the responsibilities which attach to life in an age when all nature is instinct with progress, and the race of man is struggling to outgrow the barbarisms of the past and attain to that higher civilization to which the age is beckoning it. The work which confronts philanthropists in this age is such as the ages past have not presented; from the fact that civilization has opened new fields for philanthropic effort, as well as stimulated philanthropy.

Advancing civilization discovers to the perceptions of men the imperfections of human nature and the real wants of society, as they are not discovered when the social status is low; as in the semi-civilized and lower states of society. The so-called “vices of civilization” are greatly misnamed; as it is not the nature of civilization to propagate vices, but to discover and remove those of every kind. The evils which are the relics of the barbarians of the past, do not result from the progress of the race in the arts of civilized life, but from the lack of conformity on the part of the people to the requirements of progressive law.

The load of evils which burdens American society at present is in dark contrast with the progressive institutions which place this people in advance of all others, and serve as a light to guide the nations on to liberty and enlightenment. These evils appall philanthropists who would fain apply the remedies for their removal, and often discourage philanthropic effort, when a full view is taken of their wide spread influences. To undermine and destroy them appears like a more Herculean task than the cleansing of the Augean stables of old; and whoever lifts a hand to this work in earnest, needs, like Hercules, to be strong for the work—neither faint-hearted nor weak-handed.

The work of to-day confronts laborers in the moral vineyard as of a nature not to be ignored or postponed. Nature, in this age, casts heavy responsibilities upon her intelligent children, and will not allow of their being thrown back upon the mother's shoulders. The welfare of society is committed to those of its guardians who are sufficiently wise and far-seeing to devise means to advance its progress; and all thoughtful citizens should take it to heart that they are guardians of the welfare of society and the State; that they are to labor, not only for the good of the present generation, but
for future generations, who are to receive as a legacy from the present, either virtuous or immoral tendencies—blessing or cursing, according as the present decide by their acts.

The cries of “Lo here!” and “Lo there!” perpetually resounding in the ears of such as are anxiously studying the social problems with a view of discovering means to bring about real social reform, are distracting in the extreme, and calculated to mislead, unless the judgment is matured and the mind steadied by adherence to certain fixed principles adopted as a basis of action, and considered safe, whatever contingencies may arise. When the ship is in danger, it is manifested by cries of alarm on every hand; and the occasion is one that calls forth expedients in dangerous numbers; for wisdom can not always govern when the common interest demands a common effort. However, it is the wise, the cautious, who will prevail to save in a dangerous emergency, when such have the power to act. Such an emergency is the present; for the waves are rolling high and threatening destruction, although the ship is not disabled, and there are on board of her stout-hearted, efficient seamen, who are well qualified to guide her through the storm and into smooth waters.

The flood of sensuality which is oversweeping the land must be stayed; or civilization must cease its advance, and the nation retrograde. Such vice as flourishes in high and low places is altogether inconsistent with progress and the stability of good institutions. This fact must be apparent to all who seriously reflect upon the subject; and all such must tremble in view of the actual danger to our cherished institutions, from the degeneracy of the people to whom their welfare is committed. However, there is abundant grounds of hope, and confidence in the success of reformatory measures which may be adopted as the means of changing the tendencies of the people from immorality and sensuality toward virtue and high intellectuality. There is that true worth in the American character which is warrant for the perpetuation of American institutions and the advancement of American civilization. A people that can achieve what this people has within the last two centuries, can save itself from thraldom into which it has fallen from causes partly incident to its struggles to conquer its present position among the nations of the earth. But not without effort will salvation come: strong effort, akin to that which sufficed to throw the galling yoke of political oppression that threatened to destroy the energies of a rising people, but which could not so stifle these energies but that when the emergency came they could rise superior to all that opposed them and vindicate the cause of right and justice in the view of mankind.

To call attention to some of the most glaring evils in society, and suggest methods for their cure, is the object of these pages. Short space is allotted for the consideration of each subject discuss, and therefore, much is necessarily omitted which might with profit be added to the suggestions which will be offered. The author confesses to deep earnestness in the cause of moral reform; but will seek
to eschew prejudice in treating the subjects under consideration, and candidly state such principles and propose such methods of reform as present themselves as just and feasible.

To get at the roof of an evil and apply means to eradicate that, is the only sure way to destroy the evil. The branches may be plucked again and again, but they will be sure to re-appear, and new ones with them, when the root remains in the soil, which is well-spring of every variety of elements ever seeking to embody themselves. The origin of the propensity to evil in human, nature, can be traced back to the origin of the race; but it is not proposed to enter into a discussion of “original sin” in order to point out a way of reformation of the abuses in society at present. It is sufficient for my purpose to trace these alarming evils to causes which can be well understood as operating to stimulate any natural propensity to wrong doing which man may possess. Society is what it is from causes apparent to every one who seeks for a solution of the problem presented by the social status. The degeneracy of the present generation does by no means prove that the race is degenerating; although it shows, unmistakeably, that it has not yet overcome the propensity to evil which is natural to it in the lower stages of its growth, but which is outgrown as it progresses.

With natures unbalanced, many fall into erroneous habits and practices, and imbibe error instead of truth when temptations are thrown in their way. When the good and the evil are placed before such, they choose the evil, naturally, when there is an incentive to it; and oftentimes the good must be thrust upon them before they will accept of it; the unbalanced state of their minds causing them to misjudge of what is good and evil, or to love the evil more than the good.

Nature endows reasoning man with power to judge of what is good and evil by the effects of both; and therefore, civilization erects standards of justice and morality. These standards are guides for those whose natures are not a perfect law unto them, and must be respected as the safeguards of society until they are replaced by higher ones by higher civilization. Every individual possesses an instinct of justice; and although perverted minds often misjudge of what is right and what is wrong in their own acts and those of others, society in civilized communities is very apt to erect just standards as its safeguards—such as all the people can respect without doing violence to their consciences.

It is true that legislation in the most civilized communities falls short of providing justly for every want of society; and therefore, ills creep in which otherwise would be repelled. Progressive institutions admit of the remodeling of social forms to suit an advancing people, and legislation can be adapted to the wants of society.

The habits of a people, which are such a powerful influence in deciding its grade of civilization, can be, in a measure, regulated by legislation. That is to say: Legislators, whose duty it is to provide for the well-being of a people, have it in their power to enact laws to promote that well-being in every
respect. On the principle that the law interferes with the commission of crime by incarcerating the criminal, it can interfere with the propagation of institutions that foster crime, or the manufacture, production, or vending, of articles which, when taken into the systems of individuals, prompt them to the commission of crime or to the propagation of evil influences throughout society. It is no abuse of power on the part of the guardians of society to protect it from what depraves, and hence, curses it; but is its legitimate use. Laws are founded upon this principle, and hence their necessity.

However, with the individuals composing society rests the responsibility of creating its sentiment and thus influencing legislation. Social forms are what the people make them; and legislation, especially in a free country, will be what the people call for. It rests with individuals, in the present state of society, to consider what is to be done by each and all to change the condition of things. That there is something wanting somewhere—some lurking evil or evils that are a bane to the whole social body that must be removed before a higher state of society can be reached, is evident to all; and all are interested in discovering what they are, and how to remove them. Personal responsibility rests with every member of society in the matter of cleansing the filthy social pool, whose malarious influences spread themselves far and wide, poisoning the young of every class, even before they enter upon the active stage of life, and depressing all to some extent, for all are partaking, in some degree of its deadly effects.

Reformers are urging the masses of the people to escape from the Sodom which threatens with destruction every dweller within it; and they point out avenues which lead to the broad road to safety; but very few, as yet, have pointed out that road so clearly that it can not be mistaken. The danger has called forth an abundance of expedients; some of which are calculated rather to ensure swift destruction than escape; and others, carried out, would greatly facilitate the salvation of the people from the enormous burden of ills which oppress them.

The root of the evils which oppress society so severely at present, is in the natures of the people, implanted there by bad habits; or by such practices as degrade a civilized people, necessarily. Barbarism is outgrown as a people changes its mode of living—of eating and drinking, and associating. The diet of a people decides, in a great measure, its state of civilization; as the essences of food make up individuals, in connection with those spiritual elements which are attracted to coöperate with these to keep in operation the functions of life. The physical forces of individual man attract spiritual ones affinitized to them, and thus his whole nature is greatly affected by the aliment which supports his existence.

It is a preposterous notion that civilized and refined people may eat and drink whatever used as diet by any people without being affected in their mentality or morals by it. It is sentiment that is dangerous to the welfare of any people; for all experience teachers, that a people are like the
food they eat. The savage that feasts on raw flesh and blood, and on insects, reptiles, and the
lowest orders of quadrupeds, roots, herbs, &c., is cruel and besotted; having his lower passions
and propensities stimulated by his diet. The civilized man who eats of the higher fruits of the earth,
partaking sparingly of animal food, and eschewing all unnatural stimulants, exhibits a refinement
of nature that bespeaks the influence of this quality of diet upon the whole man. Savages remain
such until they, by cultivating the arts and industries of life, provide for themselves a diet consistent
with their progress into the civilized state. It is a thing unheard of for a civilized people to subsist
after the manner of savage and barbarous ones. Civilization comes as an effect of gradual change
in the habits of a people. Civilized man will no more habitually partake of raw flesh, dog meat,
grasshoppers, crickets, locusts, &c., &c., than the will flay his victims taken in war, and reject with
disdain every improvement suggested to him, that he may continue to grovel in ignorance and
sensuality. Bestiality is an effect of continually fostering the lowest propensities of human nature;
while physical, intellectual, and moral refinement is an effect of fostering the higher ones.

Wheat is an agent of civilization & well understood to be, as are also the other higher grains and
fruits. These correspond with man's nature on the civilized plane, and foster progress; as, entering
into man's physical constitution, they help to balance his whole nature. Improvements in the arts of
life which accompany the advancement of a people to the civilized and enlightened stages, signify
improvement of whatever serves as food, and in the manner of preparation of food, as well as in
the other things. Indeed, it is one of the chief employments of civilized man to study how he may
improve his food. Farmers' clubs, agricultural schools, and periodicals devoted to the discussion of
questions relating to the improvement of grains, fruits, vegetables, stock &c.; and also in the art of
preparing food for the human stomach, are common with every people who make pretensions to
enlightenment; and these bespeak the business of a civilized people, which is to devise, perpetually,
for the advancement of civilization and true refinement.

Civilization is progressive because it is ever discovering new modes of helping man on; ever devising
better means for developing the resources of nature and human beings. It transforms desert places
into blooming gardens; replaces wildness and inefficiency by such productions of art and labor as
bless man and prove his power over nature to bend it to his will and promote his highest good;
refines all things where it holds sway, and by gradually transforming man's nature, proves him to be,
what revelation declares, “in the image of God.”

In every state of society, in every condition where man can be placed, nature provides for his
support; but it does not follow from this that a people is to adhere to habits which are proved to
be detrimental to its highest interests. Experience is the great schoolmaster from whom nations,
communities, and individuals are to learn most effectually, the important lessons how nations and
races outgrow barbarous conditions. Observation will teach the great lesson to those who are wise in observing and studying natural phenomena. Carniverous animals, for instance, naturally fierce and bloodthirsty, can be trained to docility, and their propensity to kill and devour be tamed; but it must be by changing their habits and associations in part. The domesticated dog and cat, that for generations have been in man's care, are as different from those in the wild state as civilized man is from barbarous; and this difference has been the result of their manner of life. The domiciled Indian, who subsists like the white man on farm products, becomes civilized, and presents a strong contrast to the wild Indians of the pains, many of whom, by too long indulgence in savage habits, have passed the bounds beyond which salvation from total destruction is possible. Civilized men may learn a valuable lesson from some tribes of our western Indians, who have so corrupted their natures by eating every vile thing, and living and associating in the brutal manner incited by the nature of their food, that they are actually masses of corruption, every individual of them; and are subject to the most loathsome diseases; which, when they have once seized upon a victim, feed upon it as upon a congenial element, and speedily consign it to death. They live upon scrofulous animals; eat *trichina* with the vermin they devour; and why should they not die victims to horrid scrofula and kindred diseases? The sins of the fathers of these red men, perpetuated by their children, will depopulate the western wilds, at length; being more powerful to this end than the sword, the bullet, and the policy, of the white man.

Progress is the law with human nature; and it is not possible with tribes or nations of men to remain for generation after generation through centuries on the same plane mentally and physically. There will be progress or deterioration, according to the fixed law, that if men live after the promptings of unperverted nature, they must progress; and if contrary to these, they must degenerate.

The great truth is overlooked by most people, that as men advance in refinement their natures become unfitted to the gross elements of gross food. As civilization refines it unfit[s] people under its influence for the use of gross articles of diet. Persistence in their use by such, is sowing the seeds of physical and mental disease in the constitutions. This result cannot be avoided more than poisons can fail to derange healthy human systems. What is meat to the savage is poison to his refined brother; from the difference in the natures of the two. A physical system made up of low elements readily appropriates such; while one made up of the elements of high food is repellant to low essences, and disarrangement of the system results from the effort to assimilate such. Medical science proves this proposition; 12 although the people are generally ignorant or regardless of the principle.

“We may eat and drink as our fathers did,” is the language of most people; “for they were healthy and virtuous.” They have not learned the fact that successive generations are growing in refinement
of the physical nature in such a degree as forbids the children to indulge in some habits in which the fathers did without apparent detriment. Nevertheless, such is the truth, apparent from observation. The diseases which are most common at present are fostered, and often originate directly, by the use of article or articles of diet which the forefathers used with impunity. Swine's flesh, for instance, could be appropriated by the people generations ago without the serious detriment to health which follows its use now, and did in the immediate past. The fathers and mothers of the present generation of mature men and women laid up in store in their systems, by the use of swine's flesh and kindred elements, essences which were poisons; and these they transmitted to their offspring; thus harming them by their habits, ignorantly practiced, it is true, but entailing the curse, notwithstanding.

There is a law older than that which Moses promulgated from Sinai, and of which his is a transcript, that declares: “Ye shall eat no unclean thing;” and the curse is pronounced by nature upon such as disregard this law and upon their offspring. “Keep yourselves pure by the use of the pure, wholesome food and drink, supplied in abundance by the industry, care, and ingenuity of civilized man,” is the command of nature to civilized man; and the penalties affixed to the violation of this requirement are disease, physical and mental, not only to parents, but to offspring, later, often, than to the “third and fourth” generation. It is fearful to contemplate the penalties of this broken law which are now afflicting the people boasting the highest civilization the world has seen. The sins of the fathers are to-day being visited upon the American people in the form of vices loathsome to contemplate, as well as physical diseases which it may be said, all the people have heired to some extent.

“Whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not of your lusts?” was the language of an inspired Apostle. It may be asked with propriety in this day; whence come contentions and strifes, the evils of intemperance, licentiousness, and all sorts of criminality practiced among the people; and the physical diseases related to these mental ones, which, like cancers, eat out the life of so many? Come they not of the bad habits of the progenitors of the present generations as well as from their own? Science, philosophy, reasons, and revelation, proclaim that they do. The intelligence of the age declares that depravity of the mental and physical natures is inbred by habit, and transmitted from generation to generation with the blood. Ignorance may exclaim against the “fanaticism” of those who advocate reform in the diet of the people; but the truth yet remains which science had decided, that reform in this is imperatively demanded, being an absolute necessity to reformation of the characters of the people at large.

A whole people steeped in inebriety from the inordinate use of stimulants, are suffering the consequences of this inebriety in their own misguided actions. Inebriation from the use of
intoxicating drinks is not the only kind which curses society at the present day; for there are elements in tobacco, coffee, and tea, so commonly in use among all classes, that produce inebriation, acting directly upon the brain to prevent its natural action, and upon the nervous system to weaken it by over stimulations, thus inducing disease of mind and body. The poisons which make up alcoholic drinks to such an extent at the present day, are equalled by those of tobacco, coffee, tea, and swine's flesh, in the constitutions of the people; for the use of alcoholic stimulants is by no means to general as that of the others mentioned; they being as commonly used as bread, by the masses of the people. Americans subsist on stimulants, it may be said; for most of them can labor at nothing without the stimulation of tea, or coffee, or both; and very many of them add to these that of tobacco and alcoholic drinks. A people who have reached a stage where nature must be continually supported by stimulations from elements which are impregnated with actual poisons have surely departed from the natural mode of living, and thereby weakened their constitutions. The stimulation of healthy food and drink is sufficient for the healthy constitution, and what is added to this from unhealthy beverages is a harm, repeated habitually.

I am well aware that this people are so wedded to their idols—so educated into the notion that these table beverages are a necessity to them, that they regard one as an unreasonable innovator who speaks against their use; or at least pretend to; seeking to bolster themselves up in their disregard of natural law by thrusting from them disagreeable truths. It is too late in the day for the intelligent to cry “fanaticism,” at what science and observation prove to be reason and sound policy. The people have progressed in intelligence, notwithstanding their bad habits; and they know some things which were not known fifty years ago; and some of this acquired knowledge are the facts that man has a nervous system that can be stimulated to death, and that self-destruction is oftener perpetrated by the habitual partaking of stimulants than in any other way.

Opiates can not be habitually taken without serious detriment. Who does not know this who has lived and observed their effects? and yet, tea, coffee, and tobacco are opiates; containing elements kindred to those in the stronger ones which the druggist labels poisons. The reeling, staggering, crazed victim to intoxicating drinks imbibes, it is true, at each draught of this liquid, more poison than is imbibed in one of tea, or coffee, or from a quid or a pipe of tobacco; but he is no more surely planting the seeds of destruction in his system by his habit than those who use the latter stimulants. His life may be cut short in a few years, while they may linger for many; but slow poisons derange and kill nevertheless, when they are imbibed by those possessing constitutions not sufficiently akin to them to assimilate them.

The effect of poisons in the system are not confined to the physical nature, but they operate directly upon the mental by disarranging the organ through which the mind acts. The brain is disordered
in inebriation from any stimulant, and it cannot act in a healthy manner. With all the knowledge that abounds, it is not according to the philosophy of the present age to attribute to the habits of the people at large the false notions that so abound among all classes concerning the practical things of life; as religion, science, moral philosophy, &c.; yet a little thought and investigation must convince reasonable men and women, that false habits of living induce, necessarily, false habits of thinking. A brain disordered by alcoholic drinks is incapable of giving natural expression to the mind; insanity being induced by the unbalancing of the brain by the poisons of the liquor. A stimulation of certain organs of the brain produces certain effects upon the mind which do not follow when the whole brain is acted upon. Brains differently constituted are differently operated upon by the various stimulants which unbalance their action. In some inebriates one passion is excited, in some another; but in all, the lower propensities are stimulated to an excess above the higher ones. This will account for the low state of morals among the masses of the people; they being perpetually stimulating with one beverage or another—one article of diet or another, the lower organs of the brain. The universal tendency is to immorality of some kind. A nation of inebriates! the effects are seen in the evils which afflict society.

But, as already distinctly affirmed, all this load of evils does not result alone from the habits of the present generation; according to the principle that predelictions to vice and physical disease are transmitted from generation to generation. “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.” Former generations of fathers have used intoxicating drinks and tobacco to excess, and poisoned the fountains of their lives, and their children to-day are prone to follow in their fathers' footsteps; being, also, more disposed to the low vices than their fathers were. Having been begotten when the lower propensities of their sires were inflamed by the poisons of alcohol and tobacco, they inherited low propensities as naturally as they inherited life. They were born with unbalanced natures, and incapable of resisting temptation, and in many instances, incapable of abstaining from seeking gratification of their low passions when temptations are not thrown in their way.

The mothers seconded the sins of the fathers, and themselves sowed the seeds of vice in the natures of their children, having their own lower propensities over-stimulated by their common beverages. These mothers, thus ignorantly sinning against their offspring, may be said to have been patterns of good sense and propriety of conduct, inasmuch as they fulfilled their functions as wives and mothers, and gave to the world a generation of children whose constitutions were, in a measure, fitted for the wear and tear of life, by virtue of their habits of healthy exercise and abstinence from the killing practice of abortion, so common with the present generation of wives and mothers. The fathers were patterns of propriety of conduct in comparison to some of their sons, who, as the men—the husbands and fathers of the present, so many of them, disgrace the name
of manhood by their unchaste habits. But with all the natural virtue of these parents, their habits of stimulating counteracted the good in their natures to such a degree that their children inherited from them predilections to vice as well as to disease.

It cannot be believed that the multitudes of men and women of the present generation, deservedly branded as infamous, were born with well balanced natures, or free from hereditary mental disease; but reason points to antenatal conditions as productive of much of the disposition to vice which exists with the people of the present and also much of the tendency to disease so prevalent. A precocious and licentious race has succeeded to the generation that indulged in the habits of stimulating to excess, and through a lifetime. A short-lived and more licentious race must succeed to the generation that does the same besides indulging in unchaste practices. The lesson is for the American people to study, and on their proper application of it depends, in a great measure, the welfare of the generations to come.

Reformation in the habits of the people in the matter of 17 eating and drinking and indulging in the use of opiates and stimulants which are not considered of the diet, is of vital importance now, when it seems that the floodgates of sensuality have been flung wide open and multitudes are being swept to destruction by the torrent which sweeps through them. The flood of vice is rising and threatens to oversweep institutions founded in the virtue of the people in the past and present. The youth of the land exhibit tendencies to immorality which are alarming, threatening as they do the future welfare of the nation. Those who are to take the places of the present legislators and guardians of society bid fair to be even more degenerate than the latter, and what is the hope for the perpetuity of good institutions if more corruption is to sit in the high places? The “young Americas” of both sexes so universally distributed throughout the land, indeed, give small hopes of a glorious future for the country if their influence shall be predominant when they arrive at adult age.

Let the habits of this class of youths be scanned as an illustration of the principles affirmed in the foregoing pages, and of the necessity of reformation of the habits pointed out as so deleterious. The boys chew and smoke tobacco, use intoxicating drinks, habitually use tea and coffee, and are licentious and profligate; the girls use tea and coffee, and are licentious and profligate. Both sexes of this class of youths exhibit dispositions to vice from infancy, and these are perpetually strengthened by the surroundings and associations amid which they grow up. At the table, the infant is fed upon opiates and stimulants of the character that weaken the nervous system and debase the nature by stimulating the lower propensities. It grows up with an appetite for tea and coffee, and to this is added one for tobacco and intoxicating drinks as soon as the boy is of an age to copy after the habits of companions and men. The female child, perhaps, contents herself with table beverages; but she exhibits a predisposition to the lowest vice in common with the male, and deserves to have
the suggestive word “fast” applied to her equally with the boy. Both 18 are fast in their downward career; as both are mentally and morally diseased from infancy.

I know it is claimed that association ruins the children that thus grow up into vice; but facts prove that there is something behind association which makes the latter destructive to good morals. The tendency of the nature in the wrong directions is strengthened by association; but where there is no such tendency, bad influences are repelled, naturally. There is great danger from bad associations, always; because there is yet a greater or less tendency in every human being to wrong doing of one kind or another, and it should be the object to avoid strengthening these by any means. There are children who are not easily led astray by low associations into which they may be thrown. There are those that repel such association as naturally as others seek them; for the reason that there is not that in them which calls for this character of associations; while another class seeks for association with the vile to satisfy a debased nature.

It is said that “every flock has its black sheep;” and applying this trite saying to the families of the land, it may be said that few are without one or more who are predisposed to vicious indulgences of some sort. It is a melancholy fact to contemplate, that this is so; but is can not be denied; and it becomes philanthropists to study and understand why it is so. The father and mother being ever so virtuous and religious does not prevent the stain from resting upon the child or children; and sometimes the stain is so deep and widespread, that the best of training will not save the child from the destruction to which vice leads when persisted in.

The melancholy fact is established, that the ranks of the fallen and infamous of both sexes in large cities are yearly largely reinforced from the country, and from what are considered the virtuous and higher classes in society. How many are the parents among the virtuous and refined who mourn children lost to virtue and sunk in degradation and crime? They abound in city and country, and the problem is unsolved by them why their children should be vile: why 19 the wholesome influences thrown about them in childhood and youth at home would not suffice to save them. Fathers, mothers, mourning over the delinquencies of children, know that there is a cause for these delinquencies. You, or your parents, or forefathers have sinned in some respect, or the curse would not rest upon your children; as God is just, and law administered by Supreme Intelligence can not err in its application. Chance is a things unknown in nature's arrangements; therefore you and your children suffer from the violation of some law relating directly to the constitutions of the children. If they were formed for the practice of virtue, they could not follow vicious habits so easily; and if for that of vice, they can not practice virtue until their natures become changed by discipline. With more light on the effects of the habit of stimulating perpetually with unnatural stimulants, you will be able to account for the depraved natures of your children. You will know that the law of reproduction has
determined that vice has been fixed in the natures of your children, because their progenitors of some generation inflamed their lower passions by indulgence in some bad habit and so transmitted grossness with the life of offspring.

The third, fourth, and fifth generations inherit such grossness as well as the first; and oftentimes when the first appears exempt, it will crop out in later ones; showing that conditions not well understood operate to cause offspring to inherit qualities from ancestry. The present generation have no need to look back beyond their parents for the origin of the ills which afflict them; for, as before remarked, inebriety was widespread with the former generation.

Is evidence wanting to prove what has been said concerning the transmission of vicious propensities as a consequence of inebriety and the indulgence in the use of stimulants of the various kinds? It is to be found in abundance by those who seek for it. It is well understood that physical disease is transmitted from generation to generation and also mental deformities. Now, since stimulants disease the system and distort and deform the mental nature, it is plain that their effect upon offspring is what has been stated. A brutish 20 man can not transmit high qualities to his child; but the elements which he supplies to lay the foundation of the nature of that child will be of those which predominate in his own. So with those the mother supplies. The germ of every faculty which the parents possess is implanted in the nature of the child; but those faculties in most active exercise will be more largely represented in the child that those which are inactive. The father being addicted to one particular vice, the child will not, necessarily, exhibit the same; but it will, necessarily, possess some low prosperity or some predilection to one or more. If the predisposition in it is not sufficiently strong to lead it into the practice of vice, it may be transmitted to the next generation, and in that exhibit itself as a strong prosperity. These facts are proved by observation; besides, there is no other way for accounting for the phenomenon of transmitted diseases and propensities, and physical and mental qualities.

I dwell particularly on this principle of the transmission of the effects of bad habits to offspring, for I deem it of vital importance that it be understood. Reformation should begin at the foundation and be vital, that its effects may reach to future generations. Parents have it in their power to remould, in part, the constitutions of their young children by regulating their habits, strictly, according to the rules which science and nature prescribe as being necessary to insure mental and bodily health and strength. Mothers particularly, are responsible for the habits of eating and drinking formed by their children in early youth; and with them now rests the duty of reforming whatever is wrong in the habits of their children while they are yet under their influence. Fathers and mothers both, should seriously consider that they owe it to society as well as to themselves and their children,
that they regulate their own habits and those of their households as the health and good morals of community demand.

“They are joined to their idols, let them alone,” must not be said of the people; because too much is depending upon their thorough reformation to allow of their being let alone. It is “line upon line, and precept upon precept” 21 that will finally reach the understandings and consciences of men. It is very discouraging to reformers, it is true, to witness the carelessness of intelligent people upon the most important question of diet. Many preachers of reform need reforming in this respect as much as any others. It appears as though men and women can talk at the vices of others far more easily than they can contemplate their own. It generally appears that they will not own that they themselves follow any had practices; for they will commonly preach at every one but such as they themselves practice; allowing some of the most pernicious habits to go unrebuked. This is human nature in its low estate; but human nature should change itself, and half-way reformers should become thorough ones; not only by pointing out all the glaring evils in society, but by forsaking such practices, themselves as foster them. This is a time to test the genuineness of one’s principles, his love of the right and anxiety for the reformation of the people. He who cannot reform himself is unworthy to be an advocate of reform. He who loves better to indulge his appetites than to set a safe example for the people to follow for the sake of forwarding the work of reformation, is not a philanthropist; no matter what his pretensions may be.

It is inconvenient to dispense with the table luxuries of tea, coffee, swine's flesh, and pastry stiffened with lard; and equally as inconvenient to dispense with the everlasting quid, pipe, and segar; and with many, with the daily potations of strong drink; and so it is painful to have reformers broach the subject of the necessity of dispensing with these articles. A pig-sty is a very convenient receptacle for the leavings of the table, it is true; but it is also an equally convenient and natural one for the vilest elements that the surrounding atmosphere and surface matter contains. The swine feeds upon something its master does not supply for it. It fattens upon scrofulous elements if it can find them; and it will attract them to it if they are anywhere in its neighborhood. It is a scavenger by nature, attracting from the atmosphere, soil, vegetation, and water, the loathsome element which, in the human system, develops itself as scrofula, and generates 22 many other diseases. It wallows in the ditch, absorbing this element from the mire. It ranges the forests and fields in its wild state as nature's efficient agent for secreting this poison from earth, air, and vegetation. Man, in using it for food, eats what it is nature's effort to extract out of the substances designed for his food before he takes them. Thus he defeats her benevolent design in the production of the swine. Were he to eat the poisonous reptiles that crawl upon the surface of the soil, extracting from it, from vegetation, and from the lowest stratum of air, poisonous elements, he would be, in like manner, defeating nature's object in creating the serpent. Nature formed some animals and some plants as the receptacles of the poisons unfitted
for man's stomach, which lurk in the atmosphere, soil, vegetation, and waters, in great abundance until they are absorbed and secreted by animals and plants; and others were designed as fit food for man. Ignorant man has misjudged in the use of nature's products, and suffers the consequences; but civilized, intelligent man has no excuse for misjudging; and it is so arranged that he suffers far more severely than his uncivilized brother, when he trespasses upon this her provision.

Man has discovered that there is poison secreted in swine, even the most healthy of them; and he used them for food at the peril of health and in the face of the declarations of science, that their use engenders scrofulous diseases. It would seem to be better economy for people to preserve their health at the expense of this quality of food than to use it at the risk of health.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the whole catalogue of diseases which afflict the people at present are aggravated by the elements of disease in the swine's flesh which they consume. And not only this, hereditary diseases signify scrofula bred in parents and transmitted to children, as much as any thing else. This is certain; and whoever has a care for future generations should use the proper means to make them healthy.

The stimulants in such common use as table beverages, can be appropriately classed with tobacco and alcoholic drinks as deleterious, when used habitually. Being of a 23 nature to stimulate, they must be so; as habitual stimulations, keeping the system in an unnatural condition, wear upon it and tend to weaken and destroy the constitution. The nerves are overstrained when they are kept in action by the use of stimulants; their forces are sapped, artificial means being applied perpetually to keep them in energetic action. Tired nerves should rest, and depend upon natural forces to renew their energies, instead of being forced to action by stimulants which will arouse them for the time, but when their effects are gone leave them more prostrate than they were before, and less able to recuperate by natural means.

The tea-drinker is apt to strengthen his or her beverage as years roll on and the energies flag from being overstrained. On a cup of strong tea a woman will labor for hours when, perhaps, she will have little appetite for food. Her strength is stimulated by it instead of being supplied to the system by healthy food, whose action is to build up all the tissues of the body together, and create strength in this way instead of drawing it by artificial means from an exhausted body. The nervous system, the supporter of the life and strength of the body, being exhausted, the body fails, and debility and sickness follow. There is no other fountain of strength to rely upon; and unless there is latent energy yet left in the nervous system, death must ensue. It is very important, therefore, to guard carefully this center of life, avoiding every habit which shall overstrain the nerves or cause to be imposed upon them too much wear and tear. The American people do overtax their nerves and are precocious and short-lived in consequence. They “live too fast,” actually, and sink into the grave too
soon; and their habit of keeping their nerves in too constant action through habitual stimulations, is at the root of evil. Other causes aggravate this cause it is true, but remove this, and other causes will gradually disappear; for they are dependent, in a great measure, upon this for their existence.

This people are sensitive to influences which do not affect a more gross one; and what some can bear is poison to the refined natures of others, especially, the most refined portion of the American people. These cannot bear what their forefathers could; but they are bearing much more than the latter did, and sink under the load—alas! how many of them! Broken down nervous systems, impaired constitutions, are the rule among the best of the people. Noble statesmen, senators, representatives, military men in the prime of life, pass from among us victims of disease, with constitutions broken down by their severe labors; besides multitudes in all the walks of life who are needed to live out their days as good citizens, laborers in every department of life, fathers, mothers, and children. It is melancholy to reflect upon the fact, that so many die in their prime, of those who are the most needed in society to labor for its welfare through their prime. There is a cause for this which the people can learn and remedy. That generations should pass away immature, or before their prime, is altogether unnatural; and is the result of habits which cause degeneration of the masses in respect to physical health and strength.

Females in the present day, a vast majority of them, are unfit for the duties nature has imposed on the sex, as they are so “weakly” that they “break down” in the exercise of their natural functions before life’s purpose is half served. “Female weaknesses” paraded before the public in every advertising sheet throughout the land, is a severe comment on the habits of women of this generation; although very many believe themselves innocent of any practices which weaken their constitutions and render them incapable of bearing the burdens of life without suffering untold miseries. The sin is, nevertheless, at the doors of those who by following any pernicious habit weaken their constitutions, and develop diseases to which they must be susceptible, or such as they have no tendency to until it is developed by some sort of abuse.

_He is a spoiler_, in this age when the nervous energies are sufficiently active, with most people, without being stimulated more than they are by the natural, simple food and drink which is a necessity to existence.

A precocious race develops the animal passions and propensities soon enough without any artificial means being used to aid in their unfoldment, as the use of such stimulants as operate directly upon the lower organs of the brain. Coffee possesses elements which are poisons, as, like opium, it is a soporific. Its effects are kindred to those of opium, though, as it is used, it is not a concentrated
poison, but acts slowly upon the system, gradually undermining health and depraving the moral nature.

The Chinese Government found it necessary to interfered with the privilege of its people to use opium, it is such a depraver of the whole nature of those who use it habitually. The besotted opium eaters of China are a comment upon the use of like poisons, even though they may not be as condensed, and may lack some of the qualities of this poison. Poison is not good for the human system, however much men may learn to love it and depend upon its temporary effects to stimulate force and energy necessary to labor. Young people and old, in the present day, stimulate sensuality by the use of coffee, as naturally as the opium eater loses all sense of manhood by reason of his habit. The one follows as necessarily as the other. The coffee, from its gradual action, so unobserved and yet so seductive, is the serpent that charms warily, so adroitly drawing its victim within its deadly folds, that the letter believes himself almost in paradise while he is hastening on to his ruin. The manhood of the coffee drinker suffers by the habit; which is the greatest ruin that this wily serpent brings. And this is ruin enough; but the detriment to physical health which follows from it is an additional bane that marks its trail with weakened constitutions, male and female, diseased bodies, weakly children, and the prematurely old and dying.

Of tobacco, as an actual poison, nothing need here be said; for like the poisonous alcoholic liquors of the present day, it has fallen under the ban of medical science and the common intelligence of the age, which alike pronounce it to be as unfit to be used by human beings as any other virulent poison. Man divides the use of this weed with the vile worm that bears its name, and which fitly portrays 26 its nature; being loathsome beyond expression, and destructive. The worm can fatten on it, because it is exactly fitted to its nature; it having been formed for the purpose of coöperating with this weed in ridding the elements of the poisons which abound in them where they both flourish. The truth is apparent, that a whole people must degenerate among whom the use of this article is common.

The fact can not be denied, that the American people have rapidly degenerated since this poison, and poisonous alcoholic drinks, came into general use. The forefathers who peopleed this country and laid the foundations of our noble institutions by their exalted patriotism, their undaunted courage and zeal, and unflagging energy, were a more virtuous people than their descendants of the present time. They had not the vices which are so generally diffused now, neither the bad habits which disgrace society at present. There was a time when tobacco and intoxicating drinks came into general use in this country, and this time was subsequent to that which witnessed the struggle for independence, when the people were too poor to indulge in useless luxuries, and too patriotic; choosing rather to furnish their tables with food they could raise on their own farms, and the pure water from their own springs, than to use the taxed importations from the old country.
War inevitably brings its curses; and one of those which came of the Revolutionary war, and that 1812, was the habit of intemperance fostered among the soldiers by camp life. The use of tobacco, also, was during this period being introduced among the masses of the people, though it has taken until the present to make its use common with old and young. It could not be otherwise than that as soon as it came into use it operated as a powerful aid to intoxicating drinks to degrade the people. Inebriety produced from the combination of the elements of tobacco and strong drink became widespread, and the morals of the people degenerated rapidly, and offspring degenerated. Children were born with appetites for both these poisons, and also for vicious indulgences. It could not be otherwise. Vice aggravates itself more and more as generations succeed each other.

Who can hold his peace that beholds giant evils stalking abroad, and discovers the causes of these, and knows that these causes may be removed, and with them the evils be made to disappear? Who will not raise a voice and “spare not,” against the continuation of the habits which have been and still are the curse of nations and individuals? Because these habits are so generally practised that crying out against them is tracing the evil to every one's door, thereby exciting the cry of, “impracticable,” from all sides, and, “away with all interference with our private habits, especially the innocent ones of eating and drinking,” should not deter those who understand the source of the existing evils from pointing to it, and using every effort to draw public attention to it. Responsibility is with every one who retains sufficient sanity of mind to discover any means of remedying the evils.

Carelessness and thoughtlessness displayed by so many, in the face of the appalling conditions of society, are results of the manner of life of the people—the obscuration of their highest intelligence by their indulgences; and therefore they are the more dangerous. The stupor that is an effect of disease foreshadows a worse condition of the patient. An opiate will serve to deaden all the sensibilities of the man; and the reeling inebriate is as apt to laugh at the sight of his own house in flames as to use any means for the extinction of the fire. The danger can not be computed by the interest the people at large manifest in changing the present state of things. They do not realize the danger, because they have unfitted their natures to do so, by their indulgences. The finer capacities of mind of the masses have been blunted by their habits, and it requires time and energetic effort on the part of reformers to reach their understanding and convince them of the necessity of reform, and the true manner of inaugurating it.

The blighting effects of intemperance in the use of stimulants, as they are being felt by this people at the present 28 day, must reach far into the future; but they can be gradually ameliorated and caused to disappear, if the right means are applied in season. There is hope in the case; and earnest reformers may confidently labor; for there is that in the American character that will conquer the tendency to evil, great as it is at present. I make the latter affirmation in view of the inherent good
that is not so far overshadowed by the ills but that progress in the direction of correcting abuses is being made. This progress is too slow at present to excite attention from the unobserving, but it is nevertheless pushing on towards the point where it must take a new start and advance more rapidly. An impetus must be given to it by directing attention to changing the habits of the people; for, as has been shown, the evils hinge on these.

The habits already pointed out beget others, which cooperate with these to deepen the degradation of the people.

I now pass to the consideration of another branch of my subject, of equal importance with that already considered.

One means has been pointed out as being vitally necessary for creating different conditions in society in the future; others as important must be put in operation to cooperate with this for bettering the state of things.

The female portion of society suffers most from the universal degradation of morals; and it is due to this class that the most strenuous efforts be put forth for reformation, and for starting out on a new basis of reform. Woman, in common with man, has suffered and is suffering in her nature from the depressing influences in such active exercise in society in past years and at the present. She, who should be the personification of purity and virtue, is debased, in the sense that in the present age it is possible for multitudes of the sex to turn aside from the paths of virtue and innocence and sink to the lowest depths of infamy.

It matters not what causes operate to induce females to fall from virtue, the fact that they do fall is positive proof that there is that in their natures which inclines them in the direction of impurity of life. Multitudes of them, in 29 common with their brother man, incline to vice; or no circumstance, as want, starvation, or temptation, could lead them to sacrifice themselves upon the altar of unchastity. The tide of woes that has been created by the vices of the age are well calculated to plunge the people deeper into the mire of sensuality than they would be without them. These are the vermin brood that follows in he wake of vice as naturally as epidemics follow in the wake of winds charged with deadly malaria. Want, the offspring of intemperance and profligacy of every nature, drives multitudes into the practice of vices of various kinds, and is a prolific source of evil to woman. Her necessities drive her to prostitution, frequently.

That such a means of support should offer itself to woman is evidence that man is even more degenerate than she; since he finds it in his nature to avail himself of her necessities for the gratification of his base passions—he who is ordained of heaven her natural protector. When
woman receives from man the protection which the wolf accords to the lamb, there is surely radical evil in society, and such as can only be uprooted by the most vigilant care and effort for generations.

The “social evil” is rooted and grounded in the natures of the people—in the predisposition in men and women to over-indulgence of the sensual appetites. It is the rottenness which has resulted and is perpetually resulting from gross habits. The every babes of the present generation are infected with it, and are scarcely out of their nurses' arms before they display propensities in the direction of its. It is in vain to seek to extenuate the matter; it admits of no extenuation; as all who have their eyes open must admit. What shall be done? Shall there not be a first step taken in the direction of reform ere long? Is there not virtue enough in the land to induce legislation in favor of shutting up houses of prostitution, and of so destroying one means of poisoning the atmosphere of their localities and the natures of those who frequent them?

Just as sure as vice breeds vice, just so sure it is that depravity is bred by the existence of such dens in populous 30 cities. Who can abide the influences of such places, that is not already deeply defiled? Nature revolts against the magnetism of such localities as it does at the sight of the serpent, which is actual poison to the eye. Because all men do not understand what the promptings of nature signify, or feel its refined promptings, it is none the less true that the repulsion that many virtuous people feel when they enter streets or come in sight of places where the lowest vices are practiced, are the warnings nature gives that the conditions there are too low to be endure.

“A chimerical project this, of shutting up these houses!” exclaim the thoughtless multitude. “People will indulge in this habit, and there must be means for its gratification for the safety of the community.” But, my friends, when you attempt this one means of reform, you must accompany it by others which will serve to strengthen this and make it effective. Wrest from the people by force, if it must be, the poisons which inflame their gross appetites day by day, and make them as ravenous beasts of prey, who are utterly careless of their own well-being, that of their victims and society; only seeking to quench the raging fires within their systems, created there by poisons, and perpetually increased in intensity by perpetual indulgence, and destined, at length, to burn out the life. Law is for the protection of the people, for the advancement of their interests; and when it fails in these, its legitimate uses, so entirely as to uphold the most glaring wrongs and vices in society, it fails in most vital points.

But, “you must not coerce;” it is said, in this day when some people are going so fast in the road of progress that they overleap every thing that needs reforming, and land in a region unknown and unexplored by experience, science, and revelation. You must coerce the madman, or he will destroy, if his inclinations are to do so. You must coerce the raving drunkard whose brain is suffering from the effects of the poisons he has taken, or he may murder his wife and children. Would it not be
according to the dictates of justice to coerce the vender of poisons in such a manner that inebriates could not be made for want of the material of which to make them? Common sense dictates to most people who take the subject into serious consideration, that one species of city hells sustains another, and so there is that reciprocity between all species which cities afford that keeps them all in successful operation. But close the dram and tobacco shops for a short period, and there would be a sensible falling off of the frequenters of the house of prostitution. Murders and thieving would be far less frequent and prevalent, for many would be stimulated to industry and honesty, who were before victims of base passions in consequence of intemperance. Could lewd men and women be debarred of associating and indulging their passions for a period, a condition would be created within them that would favor their reformation, not only from this vice but from its associated ones.

Desperate circumstances require the application of desperate means to better them. The longer the true means or removing these desperate circumstances that environ the people, particularly of cities, are withheld, the more widespread and damning become the evils that now curse society, and especially the so-called social evil. If this generation fails to put in use the only means that can effective for the regeneration of society, there will be less chance for the next to do it, from the fact that there will be less disposition in the people to reform society.

The depraving influences of vice are yearly becoming more widespread. It is like a disease propagated from individual to individual and through the atmosphere. As above intimated, the atmosphere around houses of prostitution is pestiferous, and they actually defile whole cities. They favor the spread of pestilences, besides poisoning the morals of community. This is a law of nature recognized in all time. In the days of Noah there was a cleansing of the land by flood; which, as the record states, had been defiled by the loathsome vices of its inhabitants. The destruction of the people who had so curse themselves and the land was a necessity, that a pure race might be instituted in the place of that portion of mankind who were unfit to propagate such a race, or to live longer to further defile the land.

It is not fable that the progeny of Noah succeeded a people destroyed by the flood, which was unfit to live in consequence of their low status, morally and physically; neither is it improbable that the wisdom of God provided for the destruction of this people through natural law, that a better one might go on with the improvement of the country, which was not possible by the old inhabitants. God rules by law; but His intelligence perceives the necessity of law and administers it. If the antediluvian world and old Sodom, needed the cleansing they received, surely the great cities of not only America, but the world, need a cleansing; for they are defiled by the vileness of portions of their inhabitants. Their atmospheres reek with poison, and pestilences find abundant elements in them to attract them.
There is danger of more sweeping plagues than have yet occurred in American cities, or law must cease it operations. There is danger to the white race in America, if the vice of licentiousness is not stayed. The people will rapidly deteriorate from the effects of the profligacy which commences in early youth and increases to old age, or as long as human constitutions can withstand its effects.

The extent of the vice of licentiousness can not well be exaggerated, as all well informed people understand. The habits of children of this generation make many parents and philanthropists tremble for the future of society. The fountains of like and health of so many of the youth are being sapped by indulgence in the sexual vice that the reproductive forces of the people must rapidly wane in consequence. It can not be otherwise; and in this is the greatest danger to the perpetuity of the race. Vice begets vice; and women in this day, refuse to bear children; and murder themselves and their offspring by tens of thousands, yearly, to escape from the duty. This alarming evil is kindred to the “social evil”—fosters it, and is fostered by it. It is attracting much attention deservedly; for men of foresight can foresee its results in the future of the race.

Cleanse yourselves from your abominations; nature is 33 incessantly urging, and reason, experience, and revelation second her demand. Cleanse the atmosphere of your populous cities, and vice can not flourish as it now does. Remove the pest-houses and the dens which sustain them; supply to the people pure air and virtuous surroundings, and an important step is taken towards reforming the vicious and preventing people from falling into crime. Create conditions that favor virtue, and virtue will appear as naturally as the plant will spring up from the germ within the soil from the effects of moisture, the balmy air, and the sunshine. Withhold these latter, nature's agents for promoting growth, beauty, and utility, and the earth would be a desert. Withhold proper conditions from human society, families, and individuals, and human natures become desert places, where every unclean thing exhibits itself.

Thank heaven, there is a “stirring among the dry bones;“ and philanthropists are inquiring what shall be done, and are doing, in various ways, much which will tell for the ultimate removal of the evil. Magdalene asylums, and institutions of like character, whose object it is to save fallen women and shield others from the danger of falling, are multiplying; besides, temperance societies are in vogue, and good people understand the effects of the use of such stimulants as intoxicating drinks and tobacco, in a degree, and are striving to put means in operation to prevent their use. There is much hope in all this, for it presages more energetic action on the part of reformers, benevolent institutions, and the State, for bringing about radical reformation. However, the urgency of the case demands the most urgent efforts to hasten the work of reform. Delay is, indeed, dangerous, and legislative enactments are absolutely necessary to aid in the work of reform, and these should be urged by those who realize the true condition of things.
The “woman's rights” movement is destined to aid in the emancipation of society from this gravest of ills. As woman is elevated to the position she should occupy in society, becomes conscious of her true dignity, and, withal, has her sphere so enlarged that she may aspire after a greater variety of employments, and may claim better wages than are now given her, she will be less apt to fall into the pit society keeps open before her, and into which it is virtually beckoning indigent and dependent females. Her natural instincts in favor of virtue will cause multitudes of the sex to abstain from vice when they are presented with strong incentives to noble action. The mere knowledge that society is moving in the matter of giving women better chances of gaining an honest support, has restrained many from falling already, and will many more; and not only this, but there are those among the fallen who are stirred with strong desires and resolves to be something better if society will permit it—if they can emerge from their vile associations and escape from them so entirely as to be safe, and be permitted to do something honorable, and be so paid for it that they can live by their labor.

Woman can do nothing more honorable, more truly philanthropic, than to work for woman's elevation. Her voice raised in her own behalf does affect the hearts of fathers, brothers and husbands, to some extent already, and will yet more as she develops a more perfect understanding of what are her just rights and true needs. She must be a power to assist in demolishing the strongholds of vice and oppression which are so abundant in society, and which so depress the energies of every class—the oppressor as well as the oppressed, the virtuous as well as the vicious. Her power must lie in her ability to convince the other sex, and particularly law-makers, of the justice of her claims for herself as woman, and of the necessity of reform of the male sex as well as the female in respect to licentiousness. Woman owes it to herself to demand rights of society which she does not now possess; and to adhere to her demand until it is granted; never flinching at the shafts an ignorant conservatism may aim at her while she is striving to uproot worn-out customs and institute in their place such as are in consonance with the spirit of the age. She owes it to herself to be consistent in her demands and to keep her place as woman, without attempting to push herself into 35 man's peculiar sphere. There is no denying that the sexes each have a peculiar sphere, and that these so blend that both make a perfect whole; as man and woman conjoined constitute the perfect one, which God pronounced good, and an image of Himself. By coöperation with man in whatever work society has to do, and by stimulating him to proper action on all questions of reform, woman can be a power in the land for advancing every reformatory movement of the age. Her right to fit herself to so cooperate with man, is the chief one which she should insist upon; and this, indeed, comprehends all, or nearly all that intelligent, consistent advocates of woman's rights claim.

Intelligent woman is fit to coöperate with man in whatever he may undertake, and without intelligence, woman is a hindrance to the progress of schemes which intelligent men originate and carry on. Ignorance and incapacity, evinced by the persistency with which female reformers
urge some impracticable schemes, and also vanity and indecision of character exhibited in various ways, by many of the sex, are what are decried as dangerous in women if they are to exercise equal power with men in the state. These faults are urged as desqualifications for responsible positions, with much reason. Ignorance in woman or man is always dangerous to progress and good institutions; and want of judgment, founded on weakness of intellect or lack of knowledge to be attained by study and observation, is equally dangerous; and, therefore, woman should not aspire to responsible positions in society until she has qualified herself to fill them properly. There is enough of ignorance and incapacity in high places filled by men, without any being added by associating weak and ignorant women with these men, to be swayed by their positive natures, as such women always will be by men. Intelligence alone, can qualify woman to be a power in society; for without it her negative nature can not cope with man, in any respect, as a co-laborer. Knowledge is power; and particularly with woman; whose peculiar intuitiveness qualifies her to use it to the best advantage.

Woman has the same right to be intelligent, in the fullest sense of the word, that man has; and society has no right to deprive her of the means to become so. Neither God nor nature has conferred such a right upon any; and she is but asserting her humanity when she claims it to be her privilege to have equal advantages with men for education in all branches of knowledge. There is nothing that man needs to know of science, art, philosophy, literature, government and religion, which she does not need to understand as his helper, as God designed her to be in all things, and as her own helper as an intelligent responsible being, possessing an individuality in common with man, and liable to be dependent upon her own exertions and resources for support.

The elective franchise conferred upon woman will stimulate her ambition to learn what she needs to known, will give her the power to aid legislation as it is her right to do. She need not, necessarily, be invested with the office of a legislator or judge, or even exercise the right of franchise, to be able to wield a powerful influence upon legislation, and in moulding social forms; for, as intellectual and refined woman, she can legislate and govern through man effectually, as a moral force which he can not resist. But in this age she may not be able to exercise a sufficient moral force upon man to cause him to do her the justice she demands; and in this case she has no remedy but the ballot. Whether this is ever granted her or not, will not affect her power as woman when the masses of the sex avail themselves of the privilege of becoming intelligent and able to cope with man intellectually.

The masses of the women of the country are not yet educated up to the idea that they need more rights than they have, to confer upon them the dignity which attaches to them by nature; not particularly the right to vote, to hold office, to act as judge or jurors, and kindred privileges, which some women are claiming to belong to the sex equally with man; but the right to compete with man in whatever employments are fitted to the nature and intellect of woman, and which he peculiar
functions and duties as woman do not forbid her to fill; to work for fair wages, 37 and to have equal privileges of education with man. I insist upon it, that woman must claim and exercise this latter privilege, or the sex will never occupy its right position—achieve the natural equality with the other with which nature endows it.

Many women are crying out against the female agitators who claim too much for women—more than the most intelligent and far-seeing of the sex can consent to accept; and thus it appears that unreasonable enthusiasm is, for the time, hindering the progress of the cause of woman's rights.

However, the most exacting of the champions of this cause are noble workers and have done much already, and will do much more towards ameliorating the condition of women, and thus forwarding the cause of reform. The whole subject needs agitating thoroughly; for thus only can society be enlightened concerning all its details, and true modes be discovered whereby wrongs may be righted, and the two sexes be properly adjusted to each other, according to the demands of a high civilization.

Woman is naturally growing into a higher sphere than she has heretofore filled, for the demands of a higher civilization than has prevailed in the ages past are calling her into it. There is work for woman to do in a philanthropic age that a barbarous and semi-barbarous one does not offer; and moreover, women's tact and intelligence are needed in the fields of philosophy, science, art and literature, as well as in matters of government, social forms, and religion. Woman's influence is needed everywhere in an age when her intelligence fits her to exercise reason, and her spirituality is so far developed as to inspire her reason and make it even more powerful than man's to foresee and provide for emergencies. Philanthropy is more natural to woman than to man, as inspiration also is; and she is fitted by these high qualifications to lead man on to devise and legislate for the good of society.

What shall be said of the vanity and folly of a class of women, in this age, who make themselves such slaves to fashion and frivolity that they overshadow the good that is in them and put the sex to shame, as they by their habits 38 endanger not only the prosperity of the country, but the stability of the white race constituting the nation? With woman is awful responsibility regarding the social status, however much she may charge upon the male sex the whole responsibility of the degradation of the female, and the suffering in society which is a consequence of low wages, extravagance and profligacy. She is herself an oppressor, extravagant and profligate. Multitudes of the sex shine in costly apparel at the expense of virtue; and multitudes of others at the expense of the sufferings of the poor who are condemned to meagre crust as a compensation for labor, that the wives and
daughters of merchants, manufacturers, and others whom fortune has favored, may indulge in the luxury of extravagant dressing and idleness.

Women at the present day are blunting the finer sensibilities of their natures in the chase of fashion and popularity. The truth must be spoken, although it tells sadly against the intelligence of woman as well as of man who encourages this abuse, and fosters it in many ways. It is very common for women upon the rostrum to exclaim against the oppressions under which the laboring classes are suffering, and urge the danger to the perpetuity of American institutions, from the profligate habits of the people. Some of them might, with great propriety, point to their own garments as illustrative of the slavery of woman to fashion and frivolity, and her inclination to foster such extravagance as is calculated to undermine the prosperity of the nation, and keep up the distinctions between the rich and the poor. The costly trailing robe bespeaks the heartless custom which condemns one class of women to stitch their lives away for a mere pittance, which is scarcely sufficient to keep soul and body together, that another class may deck themselves as shows to attract curiosity and admiration. The spirit that fosters extravagance in dress is that which sends the poor sewing-woman to her miserable attic and her clamoring children, with the scanty reward which starvation prices give her for labor faithfully done. The toil which consumes the life-energies of tens of thousands of laboring women of large cities would be lessened, and the condition of these ameliorated, if women en masse were to stand up defenders of their sisters and protest, by deeds as well as by words, against the custom of allowing women to labor so many hours of the day and at such low wages. The gains of the husband and father gratify the spoiled tastes of the wives and daughters, and so women hold their peace, and themselves wring labor from the lower classes without fairly compensating for it, as heartlessly as men do.

There is a mighty work to be done to elevate woman to a comprehension of her duties in the present exigency, as well as to teach her how to fulfill them, and to exercise her rights as a philanthropist and co-laborer with man in all good works. Whoever stimulates the sex to sober thought on the important subject of reforming female extravagances, will do a good work towards reforming the profligacy of both sexes, and hastening the reign of justice and good will.

The basis for the new social system which must in time be built upon the ruins of the present one, must be the integrity of the people; upon this can be reared a durable structure—as durable as that bids fair to be which was founded upon the Bill of Rights of the American People; which was the product of the integrity of a former generation.

Men may know and feel that to act honestly and with integrity of purpose, is the best policy; but they will not act the sentiment, unless it is in their natures to do so. And thus we are ever led back to
the irresistible conclusion, that the people must begin and carry on the great reformation by living reform, and acting it in their own individual lives.

It is not the purpose to discuss here all the questions that have a bearing upon social reform; as the space allotted will not permit of it. It is only proposed to touch upon such as most immediately relate to the social evils so glaringly prevalent.

Much is being said at present upon the marriage question and divorce laws, and with propriety. Abuses of the marriage relation are, of course, common, when every other kind is so prevalent. It can not be expected that men and women, in an age like this, will be strictly continent as husbands and wives, if they partake of the licentious spirit of the times.

Many projects are conceived for suppressing adultery, and relieving women who are wives of the necessity of being the victims of base husbands, and both sexes from the consequences of ill assorted marriages. It is proposed by some to so qualify the divorce laws that divorce may be made easier than at present, thus affording opportunity for the disaffected or abused to find permanent relief from companions no longer congenial to them. Others advocate the abolition of permanent marriages and the freedom of men and women to choose new companions whenever fancy dictates. The entire abolition of marriage is advocated also, that both sexes may be as free as the birds of the air or beasts of the field to associate sexually according to the dictates of fancy or passion. These different theories bespeak the mental and moral status of different classes of society, and also the necessity of speedy action by law-abiding and order-loving people upon the absorbing question of social ills. The latter class can not afford to leave to any other the task of settling the question as to the true method of instituting reformation; as, if they do, our boasted civilization must perish, and the hope of mankind die with it.

Marriage is heaven-ordained to secure the perpetuity of the race and its advancement in all the graces that pertain to humanity. Monogamic marriage lies at the basis of the civilization of the present age, as is proved by all history and experience. Reverend divines and natural polygamists of every name and nature may assert the naturalness and necessity of promiscuity; yet, they do it in defiance of the law written in the nature of every well constituted individual, male or female, which confirms the declaration of the ancient prophet, that “God made man male and female,” and that “they twain shall be one flesh.” “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” or “defile thyself with variety,” are declarations of God to mankind as much as “Thou shalt not kill,” and others of equal consequences; and are of more importance than any other command can be; since sins against one's own nature, as those which pollute the blood and the very essences of life and intelligence, are the worst that can be committed.
If any doubt that promiscuity is more depraving than other sins, they have but to revert to history and observation for evidence of the fact. Such can find abundance of evidence by looking about them to establish the fact that nothing saps intelligence, health, and life itself, like overindulgence of the sexual propensity; and especially with a variety. Promiscuity, especially, develops the most depraved condition that it is possible for humanity to reach. Language is inadequate to express the depth of depravity to which this vice naturally conducts man and woman as the blood absorbs the poisons that came in contact with it. Elements within the human system that can not combine by the laws of affinity, create disorder that amounts to disease. The elements which are interchanged by the commerce of the sexes, are magnetic and vital, and consequently, must readily affect the vital forces, either for good or ill. Promiscuous interchange of elements of this sort produces disease of the foulest, deadliest nature, and it must be clear to observing minds that such violation of nature's evident law of monogamy is the violation of the laws of health and purity, and life also;—is such a deadly sin that its consequences are the most dreadful that can be visited upon a human being. To live virtuously, according to nature's arrangement, is to observe the laws of purity and health; for impurity of life, which creates impurity of the system, is utterly inconsistent with virtue and morality as it is with health.

Virtuous polygamists are as rare as “white blackbirds,” for nature has proclaimed that such cannot exist. There are doubtless many who confine their vile practices to the precincts of their own harems; but could their private practices be scanned and their bodies and souls be examined for evidences of the effects of their manner of life, they would appear, to the eye of the virtuous and refined, “like sepulchres full of all uncleanness.”

“Why should man abstain from promiscuity since the beast does not?” inquires one class. The answer is simply, because man is not a beast. God made him above the beast, in every respect. He does not pattern after the brute creation entirely, in any one particular, when he lives out his true nature. His instincts correspond with those of the brute, it is true, but are as much higher as reason and intelligence are above brute instinct.

The instinct of the true man, as of the true woman, is to cleave to one companion, and suffer long and endure much before seeking a separation. To be a wife or a husband is to sustain the most sacred relation to another of the opposite sex that nature has instituted; and such a one as it is really sacrilegious to sunder or otherwise interfere with, for the reason that the consequences of such interference are deplorable in every respect. Nature commands conjugal fidelity, and as a means of enforcing her command, she has established the instinct in woman's and man's being that will not abide conjugal infidelity; that will suffer death, often, sooner than the wrong of being shamed by a faithless companion. Besides this, as already indicated, there are penalties attached to the violation
of this command as grievous as any that can be visited upon human beings for disobedience to law. The fearful consequences of adultery and promiscuity are visited not only upon the criminals, but upon the innocent, and upon society, that must bear the burden and reproach its children impose upon it.

It is out of the question to endeavor, in this age, to change the instincts of humanity so far as to cause men and women to be satisfied with a state of society where license is the order. The race is too far advanced in genuine refinement, I mean the majority of enlightened people, to accept the idea of Communists of the order of the Oneida Community; or that other similar one which finds expression through some would-be-reformers, with is, that the married should be at perfect liberty to annul the marriage contract at any time and for any cause. There is something in these ideas at which the vast majority of humanity, in civilized communities revolts. The few who advocate them openly, represent a class that have imbibed the notion that the abuses of the marriage relation are to be done away with by abolishing permanent marriage, and permitting what they term “a natural mode of association of the sexes.”

*The homes of a civilized people are the bulwarks of its civilization; and whatever endangers the purity of the home, endangers that of the whole people.* How is purity possible when license prevails, even such as in advocated by those who would give a divorce for the slightest cause, or without cause, if a perverted fancy should prompt a desire for one? By the law reverted to, that promiscuity is depraving to the human system, it is no more allowable to change conjugal companions and so deprave the system than to do so by holding what is termed unlawful intercourse. If houses of prostitution are unlawful by nature, so is a variety of companions; no matter if human law may step in and pronounce a legal sanction to the change of companions with every change of the wind.

A principle can not be violated in the slightest particular without incurring some of the consequences of its violation. Since it is established, that the consequences of promiscuity are disease to the human system and mind, it is plain that every violation of the law of monogamy is deleterious, in a degree. It follows, that it is a gross wrong upon society to encourage, in any manner, infidelity to monogamic marriage. Shall the children of this generation be allowed to imbibe the notion that marriage is of so little importance that it may be set aside by a whim? Will this sort of education serve to make the unmarried careful in their selection of companions, or the next generation of husbands and wives true and loyal in their marital relations? Whoever considers private virtue of importance in securing public virtue, cannot fail of comprehending the baleful tendency of the doctrine that encourages discontent among the married, and prescribes as a remedy for it the putting away of the companion, and a repetition of this process whenever fancy or caprice prompts it. Occasion would be found oftener than the good of society *and children, especially,* demands, by
some; for some there are in every community that will be discontented in whatever circumstances they may be placed; and such would fail to find congeniality long in any companion they might choose, even if they could select from angels.

As degrading, as terrible, as are the effects of abuse by gross men of the privileges conferred by marriage, the consequences of their grossness would be even worse than they are if it were exercised without restraint, promiscuously. It needs no argument to establish this; it is proved by every day experience throughout the land. God forbid that this sort of abuse should be upheld or countenanced by any institution of civilized society, and woman condemned to be a victim, in consequence, to a fearful fate. Divorce laws should be so framed that wives abused by gross and brutish husbands can avail themselves of the remedy of divorce when “endurance ceases to be a virtue.” There is “need that the divorce laws of most of the States should be remodelled in the interests of woman, and at the same time, the principle of permanent marriage be kept in view. In an age of licentiousness like the present, it would be opening the floodgates of sensuality and misery still wider, to weaken the barrier which permanent marriage opposes to license. There would be no weakening of this, but rather a strengthening of it, if divorce were attainable upon proper grounds; such as the abuse above referred to, and kindred ones, which are calculated to deprive woman of natural rights and privileges.

A woman's right to her own person is the same as that of a man to his; the equality of the sexes in this respect can not be successfully denied. Yet, husband and wife, by taking upon themselves the marriage vow, do confer privileges upon each other which are sacred to each other, and should be sacred to the uses of unperverted nature. Thus nature teaches. When it is claimed that woman's freedom from oppression and slavery demands that she should refrain from taking upon herself the marriage vow, it is assumed that she is free to yield her person to whoever she pleases; and no bounds are set to her privilege of ranging where she chooses in search of congenial companions for the time being. Woman thus free, man is, of course, upon the same footing. It is unnecessary to trace the effects of this state of things farther than they have been already; but it is important to draw attention to the fact, that women at the present day are not to be entrusted with entire freedom of action in the sexual relations. That they err frequently and fatally, is as true as that man does; and they will, until the radical change is wrought which places both sexes on a higher level than that on which they are at present. Restraints will be necessary as long as there exists a predeliction for vice of any nature in any member of society. This is apparent, and proves the necessity of legal forms to uphold marriage. Until men and women become sufficiently perfected to be able to choose companions wisely, and live with them in harmony, legal marriage can not be dispensed with.
Civilization will develop a state of society wherein true marriages will be the other than they are now, and when it will be easier to decide who are adapted to each other and who are not sufficiently so to enter into the marriage state. As long as human nature is so deformed by all sorts of imperfections as it is at present, it will be very difficult for married people to harmonize perfectly, be they ever so well mated. It is very possible that many supposing themselves mismated are as well mated as they can be until some of the angularities of their dispositions are rounded off; and that when this desirable condition is reached, they may find that they are exactly matched, and their discords have been only the results of the imperfections of their natures.

Those who believe in the progress of human nature as the ages advance, can look forward in the great future to a period when harmonious conditions will exist throughout society, and restraining laws be a dead letter; but that time is not yet, and will never be in consequence of removing restraints upon the exercise of vicious propensities. The young are to be taught that marriage is not to be trifled with, if society ever gains that state when it will be safe to do away with legal forms of marriage. Man is to become a perfect “law unto himself” by being educated into the perfect law. Children now rush into the marriage state, thoughtlessly, being encouraged to do so by parents and guardians, apparently regardless of the consequences which are liable to follow. Men and women are only fit to marry, for they alone are capable of judging in the matter of choosing life companions; and even they often fail with the accumulated experience of years of aid them.

The law of temperamental adaptation of the sexes as a necessity for the propagation of healthy children, is now being discussed; and there is a prospect that much light will be elicited as to the true mode of mating the sexes. There can be no doubt that there is science involved in mating men and women, as well as the animal creation; and that offspring are affected for good or ill as nature's law is adhered to or violated in forming the matrimonial relation. Mismated parents are very apt to have wayward children, not only as a consequence of the ill feelings that exercise their minds toward each other, and because of their domestic misfortunes, but also as a result of incongeniality of temperaments, which affects the physical and mental natures of children materially. Unaffinitized natures in conjugal union, this incongeniality has been termed; and this expression is just; as the consequences of ill-assorted unions prove the want of proper affinity of all the elements combining in these unions. Diseased conditions of offspring, either mentally or physically, or both, show some fault of organization; and this, though it often results from the habits of parents, as already stated, may be produced through the union of uncongenial elements in their natures. The latter defect is aggravated, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, by bad habits of progenitors; and intensified still more by the habits of the children who inherit these evils.
This is not the place to discuss the law referred to, but attention is called to it as a subject of much importance, which demands attention. An accumulation of causes has produced an accumulation of ills in society, and each one 47 of these is to be considered in its bearing upon the social status, and every one to be removed by applying remedies that will reach the foundation of all. One vice aggravates others, as one bad habit aggravates others; and an efficient remedy for one will reach the foundation of the fabric of ills that is built upon the ignorance of the people, and their accumulated bad habits and vices.

The future welfare of society depends very much upon the disposition that is made of the charity children and criminals; who may be said to be public property. These belong to the whole people, in a peculiar sense. The State is charged with the duty of providing for them, and the people are the arm of the State for his purpose; therefore, to them belongs the duty of charging the State to deal justly by those victims of misfortune. Founding Hospitals and Orphan Asylums for the use of charity children have been established in abundance; and yet, there is a lack in most such institutions of what is imperatively needed to make of these children good citizens. Every variety of disposition and character are thrown together in these asylums without regard to the influence which depraved children exercise over the pure and innocent; and thus vice is propagated; and many, who, with proper surroundings, would have entered society as helpers in the cause of virtue, become sullied by improper associations, and continue burdensome while they live.

The children of the vicious are apt to partake of the natures of their parents; and provision should be made for such, that they may outgrow, as far as is possible, in their youth, their natural propensities to evil. This is can be done and no wrong result to the children of the virtuous poor who are so unfortunate as to be paupers. Vile children should not be allowed to associate together to the extent that virtuous ones do; for its utterly inconsistent with the idea of their outgrowing vice, to allow them to practice it as they will when they associate. Mothers and fathers may well weep in heaven when they behold the wrong done to their orphan children in public asylums by allowing them 48 to associate with the vicious who are there with them. "My children had better starve in the street," said a poor mother whom want had driven to consign her children to an asylum, after she had learned the character of their associations, "than to remain where they are and be poisoned by such influences. I shall petition heaven to take their lives away, for there is no other refuge for them but the grave." She but spoke what would be the sentiment of every true parent under the same circumstance who knows the effects of vicious associations. It is well that food, clothing and shelter, are provided for the hungry, the naked, and the homeless; but there is yet a greater want even than these to be considered in caring for such; and that is, their want of moral culture and proper moral surroundings. They, perhaps, come out of the streets the victims of vice, and shall they
be sheltered for a reason and sent forth again unreformed, to curse society, and propagate another race of foundlings and paupers?

Depraved persons emit an atmosphere of depravity which is deleterious to those who come within it; as a person who is physically diseased emits an unhealthy and a dangerous influence. Therefore, children, who can not be on their guard against such influences, should be separated from them by walls or courts, when all classes are thrown together in the same institution. Humane and careful attendants can devise many ways of securing the comfort and safety of the helpless ones under their charge, and only such should be allowed to have a place in public institutions of this character.

I have merely called attention to this most important subject, leaving it to others to propose means of remedying what needs to be remedied. Everything can not be done at once, and improvements in benevolent enterprises follow by effort as naturally as in any thing else. In view of the vast numbers of children that benevolent societies and the State yearly adopt, it is of vital importance that the best provisions be made for the proper rearing of these; as, by and by, when they come forth men and women, they must wield a vast influence either for good or ill.

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The public should interest itself more than it does in the children of the vicious who crowd the streets of populous cities begging or stealing, or living upon the wages of crime, and whose homes are hot-beds of vice. A people has no moral right to neglect such children or leave them to a fate like theirs. They have a right to a good bringing up in a civilized community, and the State, when benevolent societies can not, should see to it that they have this. Whence come the multitudes that rush in to fill the places of those that yearly perish and victims of the lowest vices? Many of them are the children of the depraved, who are uncared for by those who should be their guardians, and left to pursue the callings of their parents. This is criminal negligence, and dearly does it cost society. There is no more propriety in permitting beastly parents to have the care of children, even though they are their own, than there would be in allowing insane ones to exercise guardianship over children. In either case, the parents have not the use of their natural faculties and can not exercise reason. Brutal mothers who force their children to the employment of begging or stealing for the purpose of supplying means for gratifying their depraved tastes, should have their children wrested from them by the State; and women with true womanly instincts should be appointed the guardians of these suffering ones, and the State and society would be the better for it.

The subject of prison discipline is existing attention, and deservedly. There is a great lack of philanthropy exhibited in the treatment of criminals in this day when philanthropy is exerting itself in every direction for the amelioration of the condition of the lowly. There is really no class in society so unfortunate as criminals; inasmuch as they are the victims of depravity, and suffer in
consequence of their vices. That they have less sympathy bestowed upon them than other classes of unfortunates, is very true, and accounts for their manner of treatment. Prison life should be for the reform of the prisoner. What does society gain by punishing a criminal through a series of years, and then turning him loose again to re-enact, perhaps, his crimes? The truth must be learned, that crime is only punished as the criminal is brought to see its enormity. It punishes itself as the criminal is educated to contrast it and its effects and rewards with those of virtue. Starvation, stripes, and hanging, do not affect the real nature of the criminal any further than to arouse hatred against human institutions and humanity itself. Kindness, fatherly care, and brotherly love, bestowed upon wretches steeped in crime, will, if persevered in long enough, be the agencies for the reformation of the worst. No wretch exists so depraved but deep down in his nature is a spark of humanity which, once affected, can be fanned into a flame, at length, that will burn out the depravity within the being. If this is not so, then God did not create every man in his own image, or with a germ of Divinity within him that is to be outwrought into noble manhood, sometime, through love, such as God displays towards his children, and commands them to exercise towards each other. How many noble spirits—yes, noble in some respects, have been dwarfed within prison walls and cursed for all time on earth, in consequence of the barbarous treatment bestowed upon them by hirelings whom they were conscious possessed less real manhood than themselves; though they had erred and made themselves amenable to law. True manhood should be recognized wherever it may be found; and if a condemned criminal is truly noble and manly in some respects, he should have the benefit of this, and be placed in a position where it can be recognized by his fellows, and he thus receive encouragement to reform what is bad in his nature.

Language can hardly express the wrong of classing all grades of criminals together as they are at present in the prisons of the country. The vilest wretch is on an equality with him who has, perhaps, for the first departure from honest dealing and integrity of life, been incarcerated. The two must suffer alike within the prison, if the crimes for which they are condemned are of the same grade. They must work together, eat at the same table, and be subjected to the same slow torture, through the period of their imprisonment. The effect of this is, very frequently, that the better man emerges from the prison nearly on a level with the worse one; for his experience and associations have embittered his mind and radically depraved his nature. As no mercy or consideration has been shown him, he resolves to show none to human society, henceforth; going out into the world feeling that the brand of infamy is upon him.

There is not such a great difference in human nature after all; let it be studied where it may. There are more real criminals at large upon whom the law has never laid its strong hand than there are in prisons; and these enjoy the privileges of men, and are uncursed by oppressions which gall to desperation and preclude the possibility of reform. Why should there be so little consideration
for the manhood of prisoners, since every body knows that many such are entitled to as much consideration as knaves and unfortunates outside of prison walls? It is right to incarcerate men for crime, and thus protect society against those who prey upon it; and it is equally a demand of justice that those so incarcerated should be treated with the consideration due to men. Distinctions exist in society outside of prisons, and they should within them,—not distinctions of caste, but of worth.

There is a difficulty in obtaining individuals of the right character to serve as superintendents, keepers, and attendants in prisons; for there is no service so difficult as this. A prison-keeper, and all who deal with prisoners, should have combined in their natures the noblest traits of manhood. With the greatest firmness and decision of character, they should possess a great knowledge of human nature, and tact in dealing with different characters, besides a great share of patience and benevolence. Prison-keepers should be teachers of a high order; that is, they should be capacitated to give the most important lessons that human beings need to learn—those which relate particularly to educating the nature itself into higher methods of thought and action. It should be theirs to help the criminal out of the mire of sensuality into which he has plunged, and to aid him in overcoming the tendencies of his nature to vicious indulgences. Prison discipline will amount to little in reforming criminals until it is shaped by a wise benevolence, being directed to the important object of reclaiming the prisoner, and sending him forth into society a reformed man, to take his place among men—not to be scorned for what he has been, but to be honored and trusted for what he is.

Criminals of the females sex deserve, in consideration of their sex different treatment from what they often receive. It is due this unfortunate class of prisoners always to be treated with humanity, and as much leniency as the nature of their crimes, or the demands of the law and impartial justice will allow. Women may not claim exemption from the penalties of broken law more than men; neither should the State, in consideration of their sex, wink at criminality in them, or fail to place restraints upon such of them as are dangerous to society, being at large. However, it is a serious question whether vice and crime are not propagated instead of being lessened, by the manner in which municipalities, particularly, deal with female prisoners. There is too little consideration shown, generally, for the humanity of prisoners of both sexes; but women, who can usually bear less rough treatment than men, and who, being disposed to evil, are apt to allow their discouragements and sufferings to goad them on in crime, are, often, exposed to such treatment as shames the humanity of prison-keepers and officers of the law who have them in charge; and which can scarcely fail to bring a more bitter curse upon society than the crimes of these victims have already done. With a show of impartial justice, the servants of the law forget what is due to sex, and impose hardships that nature has not fitted females to bear; besides being forgetful of the common decencies demanded in the intercourse of the sexes under all circumstances.
The result of the incarceration of females in city prisons is, usually, that they are embittered against the authorities in consequence of the heartless treatment they receive, and become more criminal in their natures; emerging from confinement with the “mark of Cain” more visibly enstamped upon them than when they entered within the prison walls.

O humanity! Blessed angel! heaven ordained to sweeten every cup of human woe, thou art too often fled from where thy presence is most needed! Thou who shouldst bear the oil and the wine to heal and strengthen the wretched, sick, and wounded prisoner's nature, dost keep aloof from where these, the most needy of the Father's children, languish! Thy cheering, encouraging voice is seldom heard within the prison, urging the frail, crime stained woman to reform, and to go out from her temporary abode to bless mankind as she herself has been blessed by humanitarian efforts! The debasing, blasting influences of vice are hindering thy work, and all classes of mankind deplore it, and suffer in consequence of it!

*Hester Vaughns*, suffering tortures in imprisonment which civilized communities should blush to inflict, are too common. These “examples to evil doers,” are examples of the inefficiency and inhumanity of prison discipline; and serve rather to increase than diminish the list of criminals of this sort, and all others. When a court of justice decides a prisoner guilty of the crime charged, whatever that crime may be, it does not shut the door of mercy and humanity against that criminal, woman or man; especially in America, whose boasted civilization is supposed to reach in its humanizing effects, every class. A woman condemned as a murderer has a right to humane treatment such as her sex, as well as her humanity entitles her to. Her crime, be it infanticide or fratricide, should not debar her from the mercies of her kind, in order that others may take warning and forbear from the same species of criminality. The crime for which Hester Vaughn suffered was not checked by the example the State offered to delinquent women, by treating her in a manner which called out the sympathies and indignation of so many in community. But it is to be hoped that humanity was so thoroughly aroused by that example, that in the future, different treatment will be awarded to female prisoners than she received, and than is usually meted out to others of the sex.

Reform! reform! should be the cry, from one extremity of the land to the other, in prison arrangements, in prison discipline, and in the treatment of female criminals. Vice should not be propagated by the very means established to stop its ravages, and these means should be effectual for the object they were intended to serve. When prisons become schools of healthy discipline and instruction in all that tends to the growth of manhood and womanhood, then they will, indeed, serve as benevolent instructions of the highest order, and mankind will have reason to bless them as an effectual means of purging society of vice.
I have outlined some of the most flagrant evils of American society, and proposed such methods for their cure as commend themselves to my judgment as the best for the purpose. There is very much to be said—very many important suggestions to be proposed in the matter of reforming society that can not be offered in a brief work like this; but I have acted upon the principle that all who have any thing which they deem of importance to be said in this crisis should say it, and as briefly as possible, that opinions may be compared and inferences drawn in favor of some schemes that will materially better conditions among us. It is a shame that the American people who are so far advanced in many respects should be a sensual people in the senses that they may truly be said to be. We boast a high civilization, and claim respect for the character of our institutions, national and private; why can we not be more consistent with ourselves and shape our morals to our institutions?

There is something almost irreconcilable in comparing our public institutions with the morals of the masses of the people. There is but one way of reconciling these, and that is, by acknowledging the sterling integrity of American character and attributing the present state of morals of the people to influences that are extraneous to their real natures, having been developed by circumstances which have served 55 to bring to the surface every wrong tendency, and aggravate these in such a manner that a growth of evils should succeed and overshadow the inherent good, in a measure, until means be instituted to destroy the fungus growth.

Our ancestors transmitted as a heritage to us as a people, real worth, integrity of character; and the means that have naturally developed themselves for the preservation and the increase of our intelligence and enterprise have served also to preserve the inherent good in our natures and give us the power of overcoming whatever interferes with our real progress and ultimate emancipation from whatever is debasing. We need only to stimulate each other to right action to be able to advance, en masse, in the road of true progress. When we are once lifted out of the mire of immorality in which we are at present, we shall be on the high road to a grander destiny than the most sanguine of us have hardly dared to hope for, since we have realized the depth of degradation into which masses of our people are plunged. We shall be redeemed; I am sure of it; thoroughly redeemed from the degrading vices which mar our nation's character; for I know we are tending now towards reformation; and the stir which has been created in society upon the various questions relating to reform, will give such an impetus in this direction that we shall achieve wonders in a few years. We must work, however, women and men, shoulder to shoulder, as faithful soldiers in a cause that can afford to have no laggards in its service. Our motto must be: Good will towards all mankind; and no compromise with error and vice. God speed the right!

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