

[JULY

"MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM."

"Das Unbeschreibliche
Hier ist es gethan ;
Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan."
Last lines of *Faust*.

WHEN, thirty years ago, Mr. Buckle, in a lecture at the Royal Institution, urged that the influence of women had been beneficial to civilization, a critic was found to plead that, on the whole, the influence of men had also been beneficial to civilization—"yet it would be somewhat odd," he continued, "to insist upon this." And when one comes to reflect upon it, there does appear something odd in the fact that anything at all should ever have been said about the influence of women. Nothing is ever said, in the same way, about the influence of men; when they are spoken of, the vast multitude presented to the mind extinguishes all power of generalization. Is there any justification for the belief that a multitude equally vast is so much less various? There is no doubt of the prevalence of such a belief. It has been always assumed that you know a great deal more of a human being when you ascertain that a woman is spoken of than if it were the case of a man. The well-known couplet of Pope—

"Some men to business, some to pleasure take ;
But every woman is at heart a rake"—

gives the formula for almost all criticism of women. Some men are supposed to be Tories, some men are Radicals; but every woman is supposed to be a Conservative. Some men are generous, some are niggardly; but every woman is supposed to be unselfish. So natural, it appears, is this consideration of women as a class apart, that we are told of a petition drawn up in the fifteenth century to the effect that the benefits of Magna Charta might be extended to women, it having been hitherto ruled, apparently, by judges whose classical learning appears to have matched their liberal

doctrine, that *homo* could not be held to apply to a female. The very fact that there is no single word by which we can render it either in French or English proves the illusion to be a natural one. However we explain it, ordinary ways of speaking, and even thinking, bear witness to the fact that men have felt themselves the representatives of humanity, and held women to form, in some sense, a class apart.

The progress of Democracy in our day has exhibited, in the clearest light, whatever was unsound in this view. Vague notions, applicable only to gentlewomen, and by no means true of all of them, were seen to be hollow when once general attention expanded to take in the classes (why they are less classes than those above them in rank we have failed to discover) needing to earn their bread. There have been some recent attempts to keep women from work men thought unfeminine,* but all such attempts only exhibit more clearly the absurdity of their suppressed premiss—the theory that every woman has some man ready to shelter and provide for her. It was, perhaps, inevitable that in our recoil from this absurdity we should confuse two distinct issues—the question whether men and women are alike, and the question whether it is well to make their differences a basis for legislation. Perhaps the difference which the legislator had better ignore is more, not less, important than he thought it. Certainly the old view of woman, as the complement rather than the comrade of man, was unconsciously carried on by many who thought they were protesting against it: J. S. Mill, for instance, while declaiming against the subjection of women, never seems to realize that there are other women besides wives, and that no woman need be a wife unless she choose to be so. Of course, the position of independence he claimed for the married woman logically involved the right of the unmarried to choose her own profession, but the sequence should, one would think, be the other way. It would be more natural to take care that choice was free before regulating a condition unquestionably chosen. Mill's statement, that there was only one reason to be given for the subjection of women (*i.e.*, wives), "that men liked it," was answered by a woman,† that a better reason would be "because women liked it." Certainly, if men found any difficulty in getting wives, the subjection of married women would speedily become a thing of the past.

As yet, we do not seem to have left behind us a condition of which we may say, speaking generally, that men care for many things and women for one. A woman's interest in politics, commerce, literature, science, or art is a subordinate feeling; personal relation is the keynote of her life, and where it has ceased to be so, you would generally

* In the Bill brought forward in the Parliament of 1887 to debar Lancashire women from their healthful labour at the mouth of coal mines, happily defeated by an embassy from the women themselves.

† Miss Dora Greenwell, in her "Miscellaneous Essays."

find that it has been after a kind of struggle of which men know nothing. A Queen Elizabeth, a Harriet Martineau, is an exceptional being; both the ordinary woman and the typical woman find care for the dearest absorbing to brain as well as heart; and life cold and empty apart from such pre-occupation. Women, it is said by both men and women (and the generalization is surely too common and unquestioned to be quite baseless), are less selfish than men. We cannot explain the difference altogether by saying that the average man is busy and the average woman at leisure to think of other people, for we do not find that idle men are readier to think of other people than busy men are. Everybody knows selfish women and unselfish men, but for all that nobody feels the things selfish in men which would be generally considered selfish in women. J. S. Mill alluded to this difference with indignation; it seemed to him a miserable hypocrisy that men should make up for what he felt their tyranny by empty compliments to their victims. We have not so little respect for the ordinary beliefs of mankind. That view must have a good deal to say for itself which has been held by most people ever since there was any speculation whatever as to its subject matter. And our purpose here is to elicit, from the data of history, and of that prelude to national life which precedes history, some explanation of this difference. We would ask of the past why woman, if she is not to sink below man, must keep a position in some sense above him.

Thought moves quickly in our day, the milestones of our journey are soon left behind us. In choosing J. S. Mill as the type of the woman's champion we revert to one whose protest was felt bold, almost revolutionary, by many persons not yet old; yet already we turn to it with a sense of going back to a phase of thought that has become antiquated. To the present writer the reminiscence which recurs with the title is the remark once made by a woman of genius, to the effect that the book seemed to her vitiated by the author's lack of interest in physiology. As the voice of "George Eliot" vibrates on the ear of memory, her criticism on a thinker who was so little her senior seems the record of and guide-post to the march of thought in our own day. When Mill wrote on the "Subjection of Women," Darwin had already written on the "Origin of Species," but there is no sign that the speculations of the naturalist had told upon the conclusions of the logician, nor did the average reader see why they should do so. Since that time there is no department of thought which they have not influenced. The great wave which has flooded speculation in our day, and obliterated so many landmarks, leaves, as it recedes, its own distinctions; it has levelled boundaries, but has revealed stratification. The very revolution by which man has been assimilated to the lower animal creation has deepened that dividing line which runs through the whole animal creation. The laws of inheritance, science has

declared, respect this dividing line; some qualities, transmitted only in a latent form from father to daughter or from mother to son, are fully inherited only by children of the same sex as the parent who bequeaths them. So that, while the progress of our latest civilization tends towards obliteration of the dividing line of male and female, a much older and wider set of influences are at work, tending to make every generation of women in some sense more feminine, every generation of men in some sense more masculine. We inhabit, as it were, a sort of Mesopotamia, our dwelling is for ever "between the rivers," and only in the most careless record of our wanderings can the two mighty streams be confounded or appear to approach each other.

Let us turn for a moment to the writings in which this law, so much at variance with what would have been pronounced the result of modern thought just before its enunciation, is set forth and illustrated. "When a peculiarity appears in either parent," we are told by the great authority of our generation on all points of physiology,* "it is often transmitted exclusively to the offspring of the same sex. . . . Every peculiarity, according to the sex in which it first appears, tends to be transmitted in a greater or less degree to that sex." Hence peculiarities, originally individual, become the characteristic of sex, and a dividing line, tending to deepen with the progress of ages, gives a twofold character to every species. Darwin's views on "Sexual Selection" would give a large place to the peculiarities thus transmitted, and which he calls "secondary sexual characters." He says of birds, for instance:† "Just as man can give beauty, according to his standard of taste, to his male poultry . . . so it appears that female birds, in a state of nature, have, by a long selection of the more attractive males, added to their beauty or other qualities. No doubt this implies powers of discrimination and taste *on the part of the female* which will at first appear extremely improbable, but I hope to show that the females actually have these powers." "The case of the male Argus pheasant," he says further on,‡ "is eminently interesting, because it affords good evidence that the most refined beauty may serve as a sexual charm, and for no other purpose. . . . The Argus pheasant does not possess brilliant colours, so that his success in love appears to depend on the great size of his plumes and the elaboration of the most elegant patterns. Many will declare that it is utterly incredible that a female bird should be able to appreciate exquisite patterns. It is undoubtedly a marvellous fact that she should possess this almost human element of taste. He who thinks that he can safely gauge the discrimination and taste of the lower animals may deny that the female Argus pheasant can appreciate such refined beauty, but he will then be compelled to admit that the

* Darwin: "Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication," ii. 72 n.

† "Sexual Selection," p. 211.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 400; see also p. 421.

extraordinary attitudes assumed by the male during the act of courtship, by which the wonderful beauty of his plumage is fully displayed, are purposeless, and this is a conclusion which I for one will never admit." Let the reader ponder awhile over all the mystery of inheritance implied in that belief, held by the most acute observer of our time. A taste for beauty, he supposed (and the same might be said of a taste for music), is transmitted from mother to daughter, amid animals as high up in the scale as birds, and not from mother to son. What force must not such a principle of sexual inheritance have gained by the time it reached the human descendants of the common ancestor of all animals!

The bearing of this law on the character of women does not seem to us, as yet, adequately recognized. We have not given its due space to the fact that every woman, in some dim but most real sense, inherits the experiences of maternity—every woman without exception, the first savage creature to whom the name could be given as well as the latest born of our English race. If the Darwinian theory be true, the first, as well as the last, was heir to all the educating experiences of one who, at much cost to herself, has learnt to cherish and protect a helpless creature. "I believe," said once the distinguished woman whose words have been quoted already, "that morality began whenever one creature felt its need of another." We should rather say that morality cannot begin till some creature feels itself needed by another. Till we reach humanity that sense is the exclusive—it is always the peculiar—characteristic of the mother. The male knows what it is to feel need within, need without forms a part of the consciousness only of maternity. How expressive is the mere antithesis! We turn from the male to the mother, the father does not yet exist. The conditions of physiology threw on the female the care of a helpless being at the dawn of every new life, and thus whenever a young creature was born a mother was created. Primæval man was as unconscious as is the male animal of any responsibility for that new life. Neither ancestral nor actual experience would teach him anything of the claim upon him of a being whose existence would reveal itself in mere annoyance, and whose claim on him would awaken no response. But we need not suppose that the English mother clasps her babe with a fonder emotion, or lavishes on it more patient care, than the ancestress who knew no partner in either, for the farmyard and the kennel are enough to show us those who represent a yet more remote ancestry still sharing that emotion and that care. We see that one-half the sentient world anticipates the most striking characteristics of humanity, and thus learn to think of the epithet "female" as a title in some respects more important than the epithet "human." It signifies an older difference and connotes a longer line of accumulative idiosyncrasy. The father is created by

civilization. Duty towards a helpless and useless creature could be revealed to him only by broad sentiments of philanthropy, or a value for family life demanding knowledge which at the dawn of humanity it was impossible he should possess. Prior to either of these his moral education could not begin. Woman inherits a longer tradition of moral relation than man does: she, in the very dawn of her existence, finds herself dowered with a heritage of instincts unknown to him; he passes through a long stage of his education before he knows himself to be a father, but she is, from the first, consciously a mother. He is not more surely the stronger in the realm of physical might than she is the elder in that of moral law.

The mere fact that paternity is a human, and maternity an animal relation, should prepare us to expect human beings to start from a condition in which the Family meant the mother and her children; the father being unknown. The life of birds interpolates, as it were, the prose sequence of nature with a poem; we discern for a moment the home and the father. But the main stream of evolution hurries by, and the first *man* who undertook the responsibilities of paternity was, says an author who has made the subject his study,* "un homme de génie et de cœur, un des grands bienfaiteurs de l'humanité." The unmarried mother—symbol for a modern ear of forlorn disgrace—was, in remote antiquity, the focus of that reverence which can never wholly fail to attach to reminiscences of benefit and protection; and it need not surprise us that one who prefigured in her sole person the claims of the Family, should have attained a predominance in advance of that which the wildest claims of to-day would assign to women. The researches which the new interest in Origin has stimulated in every direction have illustrated with a striking variety of tradition this moral seniority of woman. Legends, more or less familiar to us, take a new meaning and a new interest when once we learn to interpret them by our knowledge of that animal world now freshly linked with humanity, and read these fragments from the lost pages of the first chapter of history by the light of studies to which they seem, at first sight, totally alien. It is ever thus. The light we seek in vain from kindred is flashed upon us by the stranger and the foe. The problem we ponder with futile attention while it absorbs our minds leaps into sudden clearness when we return upon it from studies with which it seemed to have no connection, and the discovery that our study is a

* A. Giraud-Teulon fils: "La Mère chez certains Peuples de l'Antiquité," 1867. The copy from which the following citations are made is inscribed with the name of Charles Darwin, and annotated with his pencil marks. "There seems a good deal of evidence of a gynecocratic period" is his summary. The subject lay somewhat beyond the lines of his special research, but the addition, "I have not read the latter part with care," seems to certify for the opinion thus stated the groundwork of attentive perusal of a portion quite sufficient to support the hypothesis. M. Giraud-Teulon's pamphlet is partly founded on the studies of a more voluminous writer, J. J. Bachofen, a learned jurist of Basle, of whose treatise on "Das Mutterrecht" we have made use in the following paragraphs.

fragment is the inevitable prelude to that richer phase of its development in which we discern it to be the member of a larger and more interesting whole.

The conclusion which commends itself to those* who have studied the legends of the infancy of our race in connection with the ideas of evolution is that the civilization first known to humanity was based, to quote the words of the author already cited, "*Sur la prééminence de la femme dans la famille, dans la religion, dans la vie civile, et quelque fois même dans l'Etat.*" Of this civilization, except by remote inference, we know almost nothing; our records, for the most part, assume the pre-eminence of men. But the notice of a curious peculiarity in that ancient people from whom the father of history takes his start may be cited here as a late survival from a condition once universal. "The Lycians," says Herodotus (i. 173), "have a curious and peculiar custom: they name themselves not, as other nations, after the father, but after the mother; so that if any one ask a Lycian who he is, he gives his parentage in the female line, naming his mother and grandmother." Children, the historian continues, followed the status of the mother, so that the children of a slave and a free woman were freeborn, while if a citizen, even the most distinguished, united himself with a foreigner or a concubine, the children were in a similarly dishonourable condition. We have in this account (confirmed by that of many other writers) a plain relic of an age when the father was unknown; but our chief testimony to such a condition is the tradition of a strife between the sexes which seems to have ended it. Imagine for a moment that the women of our day should propose to win anything by force from men! Yet their strength, one would imagine, would be rather increased than diminished, relatively to that of men, with the resources of civilization. We can hardly explain the fact of any strife between men and women (and the tradition seems too general not to point to some fact) except by supposing that women had once the upper hand. The story of the Amazons has a very wide range. We hear of these female warriors in Attica, Bœotia, Thessaly, at the islands of Lesbos, Lemnos, and Samothrace, over a great region of Asia Minor, Africa, and India, while the name of a great American river bears witness to the belief that a people to which the name seemed applicable were found in the New World. The legend takes its most interesting form upon the

* Such illustrations of this statement as follow here must be regarded as a handful of specimens, chosen from the work mentioned in the last note—a work affording ample material for a series which should fill, at least, the pages of this REVIEW. We do not pretend to give our readers an adequate notion of the vast and patient learning we would thus utilize; we would merely inform them that although, for convenience' sake, we refer rather to M. Bachofen's authorities than to his own page, we satisfy ourselves with the ample evidence of accurate learning which that page contains, and do not seek to verify citations supported with a large reserve of varying testimony to their general purport.

soil of Attica. Here, among the memorable things that had survived to the second century of our era, Pausanias was shown the tomb of their queen; and the hill of Mars, we are told,* was the site of their camp when they came against Theseus, "moved by envy"—envy against the hero who has conquered their queen and won her girdle. How ignoble a conquest in romantic story were that of the hero over the heroine! how little worthy of commemoration in poetry or art! It is far otherwise on classic ground. Theseus, the conqueror of women, is a second Heracles, and his bones become the palladium of Athenian dominion.† He establishes his new State on the principle of paternity, and after this revolution an imperial power is opened to his city, so that when Plutarch drew up his parallel biographies of Greeks and Romans, he gave Theseus the proud position of comparison with the founder of Rome. The pencil of the artist, the voice of the orator, even the pen of the historian, return again and again to the triumph which seems to us as remote from art and eloquence as from history; the representation of the battle occupied the centre of the Poecile‡ at Athens, beside pictures of the Trojan and the Persian war, and yet remains on the metopes of the temple ascribed by tradition to Theseus; the victory formed the theme of eloquent speakers, who recalled the brilliant service won by Athens for all Hellas;§ it is celebrated in the song of Pindar|| and the philosophy of Plato;¶ while grave and almost modern historians refuse wholly to surrender the belief in its reality, and chronologists endeavour to ascertain its date. "That this race of women should never have existed at all," says Arrian,** "being thus celebrated as it is by so many and such famous authors, does not seem to me credible." The historian of a more critical age inclines to echo his conclusion.

Another hero, perhaps better known than Theseus from his appearance in the "Iliad," repeats, with slight variations, his part against the Amazons. Bellerophon,†† the noble Corinthian, whose story is a principal point in the controversy as to the date of the "Iliad" (the "deadly signs" which he bore to Lycia having been sometimes supposed to be written characters), appears also as a vanquisher of the Amazons, while he is persuaded by the prayers of the Lycian women to forego his just vengeance on a land which had received his benefits with ingratitude; woman as warrior has to yield to his might, while as suppliant she prevails over his will. The transition from the foe to the lover recurs again and again in these traditions of combat with women; the vanquished woman recognizes her superior in her victor,

* Eumenides, 655, 656.

† Pausanias, 3, 3, 6.

‡ *Ibid.* 1, 15, 2-4.

§ Lycophron Cas., 1331-1340; Lys. Epitaph., 28; Isoc. Panyger., 19; Aristid. Panath., 13, 189.

|| Fr., 159-162; Schol. Nem., 3, 64.

¶ Menex., 239.

** Alex. exped. vii., 13.

†† Cf. Iliad, vi. 166, with Plutarch, De virtul. mulier., c. 9.

and turns gladly from the false heroism to which she has hitherto aspired to that true *rôle* in which she first feels herself at home; she submits more gladly than she would have conquered, and, where she discovers a master, she welcomes a mate. Theseus himself is the lover as well as the antagonist of the warrior maiden, who, indeed, belonged to a race, as Plutarch tells us, "inclined towards men." Moved by love of the hero, Antiope quits her home, and many a Grecian vase bears witness to the early and, as it were, premature alliance of this theme of romantic love with the pencil of the artist. As we follow these early legends, indeed, we seem to have quitted classic ground. The personages date the dawn of classic life, the sentiment is that of the modern novel. Could we more forcibly declare that this sentiment represents a perennial truth? For ever the deepest love binds opposites, some element of antagonism is present in all that contains a germ of the closest union. And if men and women, meeting on the ground of common aim, find unexpected chill and niggard comradeship, they must remember that this is the inevitable price they pay for a possibility of union far closer than that of the most harmonious fellow-workers. The dearest, stopped short of that union, will hardly be dear; and antagonism, till it be transmuted in fusion, must always be felt as a chill.

This antagonism is well known to Greek legend in an even harsher form than the story of the Amazons: we hear of a treacherous and murderous attack by women on their male kindred, in which some individual only escapes. All the great Greek dramatists took as their subject the massacre of the men of Lemnos by their female kindred. A theme which we are little inclined to think of as a material for comedy was the choice, not only of the tragedians, but also of Aristophanes;* and, revolting as is the idea, the story in which it forms the catastrophe is richer in what may be called a romantic element than classic legends of more consonance with modern taste. Hypsipyle, the Queen, who has spared her father, becomes the spouse of Jason and mother of a son known, apparently for the first time, by the name of his father;† as also, we are all told, were the children born by the Lemnian woman to the Argonauts—the early offspring evidently, born under the new condition of the Right of the Father. The poets who commemorate this horror do not regard it with a modern eye. Æschylus, indeed, says that "the crime of Lemnos is accursed in all legend."‡ But he showed sympathy with this crime, apparently (the trilogy of the "Suppliants" is imperfect), when it was repeated by the fifty daughters of Danaus, who flee to Egypt to escape the pursuit of the fifty suitors destined to be their victims. The

* The fragments are collected by Meinecke: "Fragm. poetarum commœdiæ antiquæ," ii. 1096.

† "Iliad," vii. 468; cf. Hyginus, f. 15.

‡ "Choephoræ," 621.

massacre appears, not as an expression of peculiar reluctance, but as a vindication of primæval right.

"So then let be, what Fate ordains ;
Unwavering Jove's decree ;
Yet this as ultimate remains,
Let woman's choice be free ! " *—

chants the chorus of desperate maidens, foreshadowing the fearful deed, which is yet less fearful than the surrender of woman's right of dominion—for mark, it is her *choice* which is claimed in these verses, record, doubtless, of a state of things quite forgotten by the poet who unconsciously commemorates it. The scene of this myth is laid with especial propriety in Egypt, the country, says Herodotus, where all things are inverted, and the relations of the sexes among them : "the women carry on industry and trade, the men sit at home at the loom, while the support of the aged falls on the daughters, not the sons."† The words are almost repeated in the "Œdipus at Colonus," and it is a question whether the poet or the historian be the copyist. The blind Œdipus reproaches his son with carrying on the manners of Egypt, and leaving the toils of life to the daughters. The allusion, in a burst of passionate invective, strikes the reader as somewhat forced, but is so much the better evidence of a general belief in the custom to which it points.

The vicissitudes of man's moral life are seen more clearly in their reflection on his visions of the Divine. The revolution by which the maturity of women was forced to yield to the strength of man is discernible not only in legends of the hero, we trace it in men's conception of the unseen world. Here also it would seem the start was from a female supremacy. The elder gods are goddesses ; they bewail the change by which the youthful divinities of a newer order expel from the judgment-seat the ancient representatives of law. The Erinyes, who represent the ancient order, uphold the right of the mother—they, themselves female, vindicate the claims of maternity, and cast, in comparison, the claims of paternity into the shade. We measure their claim in the reactionary vehemence of their opponent ; the new god treats the mother as a mere nurse of the infant she had supposed her exclusive possession ; the man, whose connection with it is a recent discovery, is held its sole relative. "The mother,"‡ says Apollo, "has no true relation with that which is called her child, its life is solely due to the father, and the noblest of goddesses has in proof of this sprung from the sole parentage of Zeus, ignorant of a mother." Every reader of the Æschylean trilogy has felt this passage a jarring note in a noble strain ; its far-fetched absurdity seems out of keeping with the broad human interest of the whole play ; we are

* "Suppliants," 1047, 1050. The passage, it must be confessed, is not generally so translated. But I have not found any other rendering which seems to me to make sense.

† Herod. ii. 35.

‡ "Eumenides," 627.

revolted by this extravagant and yet quibbling plea, invading the stateliest march of tragedy. Yet it is exactly where poetry seems to fail that we catch the first accents of history. If the poet admit sentiments which are saved from being repulsive only by their puerility we may be sure he is interpreting a past which has become unintelligible. The strife between male and female powers, which here takes a form so absurd and grotesque, is revealed as the beginning of the moral condition under which he was living, and we discern that the condition commonly supposed primitive was stamped with the character of a violent reaction. The ancient goddesses represent an elder law, defied by the new dynasty of Olympus. They are the embodiment of that moral life to which woman first awakened; they may be regarded as the shadow on mythology of the great truth that the moral life is older in woman than in man.

The same idea, from another point of view—or, at all events, a record of the same facts—is preserved in the worship of the great divinity: “à laquelle obéirent des populations primitives qu’on peut nommer les peuples fossiles de l’humanité.”* The Olympian dynasty, we know, is modern. Jove has a history; it is the Chthonian dynasty which is original. Demeter is but a name for the Mother Earth. The gods of light, throned above the world, are successors to the goddesses of darkness, the goddesses who find their abode in the mysterious underworld, who send up to man the varied fruit and blossoms that welcome the light, but have been prepared in the darkness. The imagined sympathy between this productive power of Nature with the moral life of man, hinted at by the fundamental identity of the Eumenides and Demeter, is just the point where modern intelligence breaks off from all early religions. “He sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust” does not express the earliest—perhaps not the most natural—belief of the human race. Men began with the idea of a close connection between two things we have been forced to relegate to different spheres—the influences of Nature, the sanction of the moral law. The beautiful choruses at the end of the Eumenides give this earlier belief a form to which we find ourselves giving an almost more than imaginative sympathy. The fundamental identity of the Eumenides and Demeter—the “gracious ones” and “Mother Earth”—is a belief we surrender with reluctance. Nature, we fear, has less sympathy with us than these children of the race imagined in their immortal dreams. But we return to those dreams gladly, and, finding them the clue to early history everywhere, cannot but feel they hold a truth, though it be expressed through the form of mere fiction.

“Dans tout le cycle des mythes de cet âge,” says our authority, “la Déesse est seule en vue.” “Does this,” asks Charles Darwin, in pencil on the margin, “indicate a period when the gentler virtues

* Giraud-Teulon, 16.

rose into eminence?" We should answer rather that it leads us to a time when the *protective* impulse to which humanity turns was inevitably female. It was no doubt a gentle influence as compared with the rough predominance of man: the stern goddesses who vindicate and embody the claim of Law are emphatically the gentle ones, the mystic deities who represent the same idea from another side gather up all that is tenderest in human relation—the mourning mother, the daughter snatched away to the underworld. Yet it is less as a gentle than as a powerful influence that this Divine female principle—the mother in the Divine—shows itself to the early children of humanity. We feel, in contemplating it, that it is with the race as with the individual, the mother is known before the father, and that which is known earliest remains, in some sense, the deepest and most enduring of all belief. When Athens in her hour of deadly peril sent forth her citizens to save the city by abandoning, for the moment, its walls, she afforded—so Herodotus tells us—a mystic sign of the heavenly influences to which her citizens turned with confidence. The Athenians were collected at Salamis, a mere handful lingered in the city that clustered at the foot of the Acropolis, yet the renegade Greeks in the king's army beheld and heard the tumult and the stir as of a vast army, the cloud of dust seemed to shroud some martial progress along the Sacred Way, while from the midst was heard the mystic hymn so well known to the initiated at the annual festival of the great goddesses. With a strange mingling of terror and awe, we may imagine, the Hellene among the Medes, who could not wholly still the pulse of his race, watched the cloud which enwrapped the mysterious army soar above earth, and float away over the sea towards Salamis. The divinities of Eleusis, it seemed, were hastening to the succour of their votaries, and the fleet of the great king was doomed. The might of Asia must yield before the protecting influence of the Mother and the Daughter.

"The hope for woman lies in the recognition by man of the Divine Feminine principle in God," says a writer who claims to instruct the world in the principles of "Scientific Religion."* There is much in the strange work from which we take these words which science and religion, as far as they are represented by the accredited votaries of either, would join in repudiating. Yet both, from their different points of view, must recognize their significance. Again and again human worship reverts to that female type which appears to have been the earliest form in which it presented itself. Zeus is a usurper; his worship never lays hold of the popular heart. The ancient is the popular worship. The Mother takes refuge in Heaven, as she is dethroned on earth, and awaits the throne which Christianity prepared for the Divine Virgin. With the rise of the new faith the female

* "Scientific Religion," by Laurence Oliphant, 316.

ideal, so long banished from human reverence, returned with the violence of reaction, and took exclusive possession of the popular worship, while chivalry was but the shadow of the popular religion on the world of imagination—we can hardly say, of fact. The worship of the Virgin expresses the new development of female influence after its long classic eclipse, and Protestantism was but an imperfect reaction against it. Evangelic Christianity dethroned Mary only to make way for an idea of Christ which differs from the historic Jesus precisely by lack of manliness. And in our day, although the popular ideal has lost its association with the name and the image of Christ, that worship of a part to the exclusion of the whole, which constitutes idolatry, has changed only its form. The female side of morality has emerged into a predominance even more exclusive than it was at the birth of Christianity. Reverence for law, reverence for truth, reverence for justice—all that the woman is supposed to forget—is forgotten by the world of our day. It may well seem that man's exclusive need now is an assertion of manly virtue. But a false ideal is rightly confronted, not by its opposite, but by its typical truth. An effeminate age, we believe, finds its salvation in reverence for the Divine Feminine. Where you find love measured by need, unchilled by neglect, careless of external attraction, and at leisure to pursue the good of the object, apart from distractions of vanity, jealousy, or selfish interest—where, in other words, you find the spirit of the Mother, there you find the seed of justice. The seed is very unlike the plant; and motherly fondness, to human eyes, more often takes the aspect of injustice than of justice. You will find it united with the spirit that is unresponsive to the greatest need because it lacks the stamp of association with the self, and indulgent to the greatest wrong because it possesses that stamp of appropriation. The inheritance of maternity in all women sets up a double standard, and contrasts the enlightening claim of the dear or the suffering with the merely negative claim of the stranger. Woman has been shut out from relations with the world, and her relations with those *not her own* show the sterile waste coming up to the very edge of the cultivated garden. Man's moral culture does not end so abruptly; civil relation forces consideration for those beyond the pale of kindred, preference, or compassion, and makes a certain place for the claims of those who are neither beloved nor pitied. But justice is not civil relation drawn closer, but family relation spread wider. It is the expansion of the love of one to the love of all, and sympathy, its apparent foe, is in truth its indispensable comrade; justice is far more remote from selfishness than generosity is. To put the resources of imagination, memory, reasoning—all that quits with most effort its familiar haunt—at the service of the cruel enemy, the distasteful and wearisome companion, or, harder than all, the hopelessly alienated friend—this is impossible to one who has not learnt

to silence the subtlest claim of self. Of a virtue so rare as justice it is difficult to say that it is rarer in one-half of humanity than the other ; all we can say is that a woman has a richer material for justice than a man has. She is not more ready to give up the thing she most wishes than he is ; that is a difference between individuals, not classes. But her wishes take their start from that sense of inalienable partnership with her kind into which he rises only in proportion as he is dutiful and reasonable. It is as with the contrast of youth and age ; growing old has not of itself any tendency whatever to make people unselfish, but that sense of a common humanity which at twenty is the distinction of rare natures is the property of ordinary men and women at fifty. Others, if we may so express ourselves, are less *other*. A crying child brings memories of some lost darling, a beggar in the street recalls the old age of a parent, a perfectly uninteresting youth or maiden comes with the claim of a friendship interrupted by death ; and self-denial is needed not to meet, but to neglect, the sorrows of those who appeal to us at every moment with some pathetic reminiscence of our own. Sometimes it is a form of self-denial than which there can be no more urgent duty, but the self which has to be denied is an expanded thing, and the sense of an indefeasible partnership in other lives is a part of its very essence. To ignore this advantage, when it is a characteristic of individuals, has always been held unwise ; is it less disastrous when this inexhaustible spring of knowledge and of power belongs to half the human race ?

JULIA WEDGWOOD.