

SOME FEMINISMS

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SOME may think that the problems of to-day are different from those of yesterday. This lack of orientation has been responsible for many mistakes in attacking social questions. The problems are not new, although the particular form which they take may vary from age to age. A study of history and philosophy, therefore, is the best introduction to the study of human problems. These studies are frequently ignored. Misapplications of science can be laid at the door of this unwisdom on the part of scientists and those who apply science.

The present age, like many another period, furnishes evidence of both masculine and feminine traits. The masculine type, whether in skirts or trousers, is assertive, as males are all the way up through the animal kingdom. But even in the animal kingdom we sometimes find the assertive females. Men do not differ from women in average intelligence, but in greater variability, greater richness of imagination on abstract problems, and Bianchi has indicated that the reason for this may be found in the difference in the frontal lobes of male and female. The average man is no more intelligent than the average woman, but the men are not clustered around the central mean as much as are the women. There are more men than women above average intelligence, but then also more far below. It is among men that we find the great criminal, but also the great genius. In discussing the question of such an ambiguous affair as the average, then, we must take care to note the distribution of the units from which the average is derived.

There *are* differences between male and female, differences which cannot be attributed to environment, but which have survived all environments. These differences may be small in quantity, but large in quality. There must be a reason, or reasons, why men show superiority in some directions and women in other directions. The present state of affairs has not come about by chance, for nothing happens by chance.

Man has conquered his world by intelligence—in the intellectual meaning of that term—combined with physical force, not by physical force alone, as some would have us think. It may be added that the above combination will always remain the supreme court of appeal. In no other way can mind be perpetuated, and brought into contact with environment. As soon as a civilization

loses sight of the truth that physical stamina, virility and mentality are of prime importance in the struggle to live, which is always with us, just so soon is that civilization doomed. Such has been the history of civilization in the past, and the human nature which makes and unmakes civilizations has not changed in its fundamental attributes. Proper and adequate mental adjustment to environment in the long run goes hand in hand with physical adjustments, and any movement in society which minimises the importance of this is dangerous to our welfare. Such is feminism in its militant form.

Now, feminism as here understood is not confined to the female sex, for many exceptional members of the male sex are imbued with the same spirit. It is a form of abnormal behaviour on the part of the male, as also male behaviour is abnormal on the part of the female. One of the most noticeable aspects of feminism is the tendency of the female to become more masculine and the male to become more feminine. This last is seen in the support which female agitators receive from some of the male sex.

Feminism in society is a movement which has certain objectives in view. One of the main aims is the so-called "emancipation". Feminists hold that the female sex has been subservient to the male. To a certain extent and in a certain way that is true, no doubt, owing to the physical superiority of the male and the fact that there are more males of greater intellectual power. This will always be true. In reality, this plea means that women should be freed from bearing children, and that they should be as free to come and go as men. It is most strongly advocated by those women who have not borne children, and has been most strongly pressed by the more educated and scientific who are frequently, as it were, unsexed, and become unfitted to carry out their biological function. Whether it is a worthy object, remains to be discussed later.

Another aim is labelled "equal rights". This refers to equal social rights, equal political rights, equal economic rights, equal educational rights and equal moral rights. Than equality, there is no more abused word. To have equal rights is confused with having the same rights. Yet this confusion lies at the basis of much misunderstanding. It is quite conceivable that various people of the same sex or of different sexes may have equal rights, and yet those rights may not be identical. Rights are equal when they correspond to the qualities of the individuals who make use of them. If anyone receives more than he can use, or what he cannot use, then such an one is not receiving his or her exact due. As a result, there is social injustice.

But though the average mind of woman is the equal of the average mind of man, this does not tell the whole story. There are also temperamental, imaginative, abstract, emotional and moral qualities to be considered. Then, too, there is the matter of sustained attention, associated with the function of the frontal lobes. In the male, these are larger, and this probably accounts for the fact that the male on the whole is superior in abstract powers. Men differ from men, women from women, and men from women in all these respects. There are men who resemble women in their mental make-up more than they do men, and women who likewise resemble men more than they do other women; but on the whole, there is a well-marked line between what are accepted as feminine qualities and those which are accepted as masculine qualities. These differences cannot be accounted for on the basis of environment, but rather on the basis of inherited structure, for differences of structure cannot be denied. A difference in structure would indicate that the intelligence or intelligences of each should follow different channels in life, just as a duck's feet enable it to swim and a hen's do not.

The artist, the mechanic and the surgeon may each be of equal intelligence, but they follow different vocations owing to interest, and innate differences in nature. It is well for the world that such should be, that each should follow out the course marked out or set by his or her capacities, that there should be a division of labour among persons. One aspect of feminism tends to obliterate all this, and tries to show that women should follow the vocations of men, (in that attitude they admit man's apparent superiority). Is it good that this should be? It is a curious thing that man in general does not wish to take woman's place, or follow the callings of women. Perhaps some feminist can explain this idiosyncrasy on the part of the male!

Child-welfare work is undoubtedly due to the activities of women. Much of this is good, but some aspects are not for the welfare of society. If child-welfare means, as it often does mean, the protection and nurture of those unfitted to take their place in society and assume the responsibilities of our civilization, then it is difficult to see what benefit such activities afford us. If it would only mean the proper and adequate attention to the child of good parents, or even the partial elimination of the unfit, then the movement would be socially beneficial; otherwise, in the control of feminism it is not to be so classed.

Another side-light, or perhaps head-light, on feminism is birth-control. Nature makes plain to us, (and, like it or not, we are part of nature) that to produce great variations we must

have large numbers from which to select. To insure the greatest possible number of great minds, there must be the possibility of selection from a great number. Birth-control would forbid this possibility. Its advocates and devotees say—"Expend greater effort upon a smaller number"—but the answer is that environment is of less influence in the production of great men than is heredity. Birth-control prevents great men from being born. If heredity is the chief factor, as no doubt potentially it is, then we cannot subscribe to the feminist cry of birth-control. No nation whose people practise birth-control can hope to hold a dominant place in the world, especially if this domination depends upon hereditary brain-power. It is the first symptom of decay, and among us it is to be regretted that some so-called intelligent people see eye to eye with the effete rich and the socially irresponsible. Mothers' pensions are resorted to, but these are mostly taken advantage of by those of whom we have enough. There is no reason why our intelligence should be directed towards the destruction of our own race rather than towards its betterment. As birth-control does not apply to the unfit, it is evident that it does not make for racial improvement and cultural progress. As practised, it is a decided menace to our civilization. In addition to the environmental theory of race, other elements enter into the situation, such as, desire for leisure, selfishness and pleasure, all of which are socially destructive, and all of which can be laid on the doorstep of feminism. No amount of culture can make up for poor heredity; no attendance at pink teas, literary clubs or art societies will ever take the place of being well-bred. The art and literature of Greece and Rome did not save them; neither will a mere dilettante knowledge of science and culture save us. Well-bred children are the nation's greatest asset, and these come from well-bred parents.

The *over-protection* of the weaklings and unfit, and some social welfare schemes, are sometimes of doubtful advantage. In the end they produce or lead to an effete and unstable civilization, which cannot resist the stress of living, and is thus doomed to perish at the hands of the more fit.

Again, the advance of civilization in culture should be left to the men; the conservation to the women. Such an arrangement will produce a balance between conservatism and individualism. That is, the education of men and women should be different, because their respective functions in life are different and will always be different, for no change in environment will bring about any drastic changes in human anatomy. Women can play a more subtle part indirectly than directly. The mothers of great men

have done more for the world than all the so-called female uplifters that ever lived.

Women should be educated to know themselves and their part in the world—not merely to be the imitations of man and his part. After all, the family is the unit of society; and when that is ignored, as it is to-day, again owing to feminism, matters do not augur well for us as a people. Literature, art and culture should be in the home—not in the club. A woman should teach her own children the great things in our culture, rather than give her time to the teaching of other women, while some immature governess is teaching her children. Modern *male* inventions have done away with the asceticism of woman, and she is no longer isolated; hence the old excuse is no longer valid.

The worst menace of all, let it be repeated, is the dictum of female emancipationists that women should bear fewer children, for it aims at the very source of all racial existence. This shows us feminism at its worst, and perhaps not all disciples will concur in its extreme tenets. This is why some think that the work of the world with its worry should be left to man, no matter how poorly he may do it, because much of it has the tendency to unfit or make woman unwilling to fulfil her proper and peculiar sphere in life. No one doubts the ability, superiority and veritable genius of woman in her own sphere. She has no competitor, nor will she ever have. Even in man's domain some women are superior to some men, but this is not the rule. Just so, in some of woman's occupations men are superior, yet there are many feminine duties for which no man can qualify. A good deal of the undesirable in the present situation is due to educating women exactly as men. They should receive just as much education, even more, but it should be different—because woman is different, and no education will make her the same.

Feminism has two general tendencies. In the first place, it softens the national fibre. It encourages the view that we must spend our lives looking after other people. It may tend to lack of self-reliance, and the consequence that many people are shirking personal responsibility as social beings. Next, it has a definite trend to harden the female, to remove those gentle motherly qualities which are of high survival value to us as a race and civilization.

Then, too, many of the whirlwind, irrational propaganda schemes, and matters of extreme and repressive legislation, are due to feminism of a type. A weak sentimentalism plays too much of a part, and does not conduce to our good. One's soul can never be made safe by legislation. To-day matters are progressing with

such rapidity in legislation that soon it will be impossible to go to the devil even if one desires to do so. Soon there will be no possibilities in the matter, and life will not be worth living for any but abnormal females and their male counterparts.

Much of the unrest in the world is due to fatigue irritation, in addition to emotional disturbances. Our great scientific discoveries and inventions do not come without work, effort and tension. Nor do they remove such effects from the lives of those who enjoy the labours of inventors and discoverers. All this has a disintegrating effect on the nervous system, for the tensions of life increase with civilization, and there is needed a corrective. This is the part which woman can and should play, because no one else can play the part as well as she. If the mothers as well as the fathers are subjected and exposed to the stress of civilization, as we practise it, by taking their part in business, politics, industry, education and reform, then we are on a fair way to breed a race of neurotics, and all the consequences of such as revealed by crime, dancing and jazz. It is the woman in industry and the idle woman who are responsible for the dance, as also the man who does not find feminine, but masculine companionship in the home. The fly-wheel of society can never run true without a balance. It is woman's duty to supply the balance by giving to the world a soothing influence in the form of poise, rest, quiet and harmony in emotion and sentiment. This will be, as it always has been, a great contribution. Woman, in other words, should not be the supplement of man, but his complement, and thus provide the wholesomeness of a well-balanced society.

There is no desire or wish to underestimate the value of woman to society, but there may be a difference of opinion as to the way in which she may best exhibit that value. Woman can fill a place in society which cannot be filled by man, because he is quite unfitted to take her place. Women should be the fit mothers of generations to come, and they can attain that position only by being allowed freedom from the trials and excitements which are an element in what we are pleased to call civilization.

When women mine our ores, build our ships, our railways, and their equipment, when they make the great scientific discoveries and inventions, when they condemn themselves to do the hard and strenuous physical labours of living, then we shall say that woman is the same as man—equal—but no longer a woman. She has always been his equal—always will be—but not the same. Therein lies a great significance which no wish, legislation or reform can change.