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## HISTORICAL MYSTICISM AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Two main problems confront the provident statesman of to-day : the problem of education, with which is bound up, as cause and consequence, the question of an electorate in enjoyment of reasonable economic independence, and the problem of technical efficiency in administration. 'Governments,' Mr. Lowes Dickinson has said, 'in every civilised country are now moving towards the ideal of an expert administration controlled by an alert and intelligent public opinion.' His remark has been quoted with approval by those who have personal experience of the governmental process. The advice of experts has for long been sought by governmental departments in such admitted fields of specialised knowledge as agriculture, trade, and chemical research ; and Lord Balfour only the other day stressed its importance. But the work of legislation and administration cannot indefinitely be conducted upon a basis different from that which we feel is necessary in the case of agriculture and fisheries, and in amateur disregard of such knowledge as we may possess of the more fundamental social facts. The politician will have to recognise that it is part of his business to take into account such considerations as the alleged connexions between wages and population, between health and crime, or between housing and drunkenness. It is his business to be acquainted with the conclusions of the student of those underlying social processes, flowing from psychological needs, which are profounder than any dictates of a human Government. Legislation cannot remain a hit-or-miss matter, giving general expression to the 'will of the people' ; it should be an affair of social prescription after painstaking diagnosis. In the happily chosen words used by Professor H. J. Laski in a recent pamphlet, the citizen must live under conditions of which he has 'the sense that they are intelligible in the same way that the orders of a medical man or a sanitary engineer are intelligible ; they must be referable, that is to say, to principles which can be established as rational by scientific investigation.'

In its manifesto of 1918 the Labour Party rightly declared, 'If Law is the Mother of Freedom, Science, to the Labour Party,

must be the Parent of Law.' What is this science? The programme itself defines it. It is a political science, involving a study of the adaptation of means to ends and endeavouring to supply genuine solutions of social problems. It involves organised research as well as the collection, repetition, and dissemination of existing information. Just as modern engineering requires the study of pure mechanics, so a sound technique of government demands the development of a science of politics. As Mr. H. G. Wells declared with pardonable emphasis in his Sorbonne lecture, 'We have no Governments, we have nothing in the world able to deal with' these problems set us by an increasingly complex civilisation, 'this three-headed sphinx which has waylaid and now confronts mankind.' And 'the perils of these present times,' and especially of the next thirty years for England, demand that we shall be impatient with those who impede the work of surveying the foundations of such a science by introducing irrelevant speculations, however alluring.

It is easy to advocate such a science, to bid the young student 'plunge in.' But, unhappily, it is one thing to prophesy a science and quite another to wrest from Nature the secrets which enable us to produce it. The intervening period will be one of charlatanry. It is necessary to remind ourselves that precisely the same experience was passed through before alchemy and astrology, not to speak of mathematics, rid themselves of delusive hopes, of debased theology and of more sordid elements, and developed into chemistry and astronomy. Our business is to shorten this period of guess-work and pseudo-science so far as possible. But, if we make a cursory inspection of the history of chemistry before Paracelsus or of astronomy in the days when kings thought it prudent (if scarcely orthodox) to employ, along with Dragon Rouge, an Astronomer Royal as court magician, we shall notice that the very mark of this period of infancy is a desire to take short cuts. Men were concerned with nothing less than the philosopher's stone or the divine influences for human weal or bane emanating from the stars, or, as Bruno and Galileo himself, with constructing an entire philosophy or disputing a moot point of theology. In political science we have not yet left behind this stage. Just as a century ago manufacturers of barometers or thermometers advertised themselves as 'makers of philosophical instruments,' and as one spoke of 'natural philosophy,' so political science is still regarded as a synonym for political or social philosophy, and anyone who would discuss politics is expected to introduce appropriate reflections about human destiny. Now there may be no such thing as a political science, but at least the words do not signify what is meant by political philosophy.

There is no ground for prejudice against a social philosophy

as such, although a doubt may be entertained whether the task of such a philosophy will be to reveal a purpose for modern civilisation and not to detect that it has no purpose—no one fundamental purpose—but merely a challenge to live the skilful and fitting life. But assuredly such matters as the inconsistency of the demand for better material conditions of civilisation with the countenancing of war as a political method are susceptible of detailed demonstration in terms of the political and economic sciences. The proof is made less and not more cogent by treating it as a question of philosophical estimate and point of view. Political administration has been regarded, certainly in ancient times and definitely enough in modern times, with its sentiments and ritual, as a semi-sacred matter, much more comparable to the direction of a church than to the efficient management of a large business. As a matter of the political art and of moral education this procedure may be beyond quibble. But in the prosaic task of actually adjusting means to ends, and of actually securing harmony in social relations, this attitude is too primitive. We require the de-theologising of political methods and the application to the work of government of the dispassionate, undoctinaire common-sense and efficiency required in great industrial undertakings. But we require more than this in order to get this much. We require first a purely objective study of social situations and of how men in fact do act; and in these studies we must be able to regard human beings with the detachment which we should preserve if we were studying the antics of frogs. There has been much talk in many fields of learning of ‘Copernican revolutions’—so much talk that it has become almost a journalistic habit. But if there is to be a ‘Copernican revolution’ in politics it will involve not only a changed attitude towards such matters as the doctrine of the sovereignty of that mortal god, the State, but the recognition that political problems must not be studied, anthropocentrically, from the standpoint of the wish of a group of men, but, naturalistically, from the survey of recurrent social processes in a civilisation no more completely under the control of man than is the coral-reef under the control of the coral insect.

Such a naturalistic survey, however, itself requires an appropriate method. The solid basing of chemistry and biology upon verified observations does not depend upon pretentious world-views of matter or of evolution. The epoch-marking changes in these fields date from the publication of careful work upon earth-worms or from the discovery of artificial urea, which was the first compound known to organic chemistry to be artificially produced. The political scientist who understands his task will probably recognise that its successful execution requires a combination of minute study of concrete data in a limited field with a deliberate



method in the study of the field and with a treatment of the material governed by considerations as theoretical and 'abstract' as the atomic theory or the James-Lange hypothesis.

Political science is not concerned with the drafting of a specific piece of social legislation. This is a matter for the technique of the politician, although, as the Webbs have insisted, and as has been very successfully demonstrated in Wisconsin, a legislature will be well counselled to seek expert advice<sup>1</sup> and ministers to treat it as obligatory to avail themselves of expert information. Political science is concerned with the fundamentals of all social legislation and with the principles of social mechanics underlying all social engineering. But the politician obviously can only study these principles through the analysis of concrete instances. In this sense it is emphatically true that he must study, not abstractions, but life, and each detail with meticulous attention to its historical context. An examination of a series of similar social situations will alone show what factors (whether introduced by legislation or otherwise) accompany a healthy condition of social harmony and what are habitually present where there is social trouble. Is 'misery-drinking' constantly associated with the social condition of bad housing, or has the situation of decreasing fecundity any constant connexion with high wages (despite Malthus), with education and the development of a higher standard of living or with urbanisation? Is there a connexion between an intelligent and talented population and immigration policy, or a connexion between 'feminism' and the maintenance of a good stock? These are instances of the problems before us, partly medical and biological and partly political problems of human association. No physician has ever yet discovered the cause of disease in general, but it is not futile to hope that we may discover the causes of specific diseases, social as well as physical. The ground for this is not belief in the absurd myth of a 'social organism,' but conviction of the validity of assuming a certain constancy in human methods in dealing with pragmatically similar situations, and a conviction that like effects will be produced by like causes if we are careful enough to distinguish what causes are genuinely alike.

In the sister discipline of economics, order was introduced from the strangely compounded chaos of business detail and of reflections upon the 'moral sentiments' by assuming (one-sidedly) that at the root of all business transactions was the desire for gain. This assumption supplied the first clue to the similarity among superficially dissimilar operations, and shed a new light on the constant forms of the economic process. Later economists and psychologists have supplied other clues to the interpretation

<sup>1</sup> C. McCarthy, *The Wisconsin Idea*.

of business detail besides that of acquisitiveness. The addition of these new considerations has indeed introduced an element of increased difficulty into any narrowly systematic statement, just as physics can no longer be stated with the erstwhile Newtonian simplicity. For example, it is perceived that some of the 'laws of economics' are merely 'laws of the growth of the wheat-plant.' Distrust of the treacherous simplicity of a single clue has led many to the opinion that, since every interpretative expedient is partial, all such expedients are misleading. Hence they return from the too keen air of theory to heavy repasts on history and to the unspeculative task of digesting facts about institutional changes. The most up-to-date investigations, however, into economic motives appear to recognise that history, unless it be crossed with theory and abstract hypothesis, is likely to be sterile of scientific results. No amount of study of change will yield the conclusion of the doctrine of evolution save by the use of some such inspired hypothesis as that of natural selection.

Our first task is to observe what actually does happen ; our second is to put forward some carefully selected explanation of why it happens that way ; our third task is to test that explanation by further observation, more specific and detailed. Any more ambitious undertaking must be eschewed. In this way only can we hope to discover that little modest cubic foot of certain knowledge thanks to which we may lever up the whole world. To possess this certain knowledge is imperative if the practice of politics is going to be a little more like business and finance, which have their background in a study of economics, or like medicine with its background in physiology, and less like an Arthurian romance or a Niebelung tragedy. As civilisation advances in complexity and in integration the time inevitably comes when we can no longer afford those generous errors of judgment which render stimulating the affairs of an Oriental court or permit ourselves to indulge the simple impulses of an Attila the Scourge or of a Wenceslas the Good.

The greatest enemies of political science, and hence of the prospects of democratic government aided by scientifically enlightened intelligence, are the various forms of historical apocalypticism popular at the present time, which hold out the hope of enabling us to look unto the future. Of these the most notorious is perhaps that of Otto Spengler which professes to provide us with 'the incontrovertible formulation of an idea which, once enunciated clearly, will be accepted without dispute.' The basis of Spengler's contention is that 'the means whereby to understand living forms is analogy.' From 'a high plane of contemplation,' and by the aid of 'an organic logic, an instinctive, dream-sure logic,' he sets out to calculate the future of the West,

and the analogy of Rome provides grounds for the certainty—and inward certainty and godlike insight are, we learn, the means of historical research—that this future is one of material civilisation, of disciplined intelligence, of technique and machines, of scepticism, of interest in politics, not metaphysics. With much of this Ezekiel's vision of the future of civilisation it may well be that, as a matter of opinion, we may happen to agree. The stress on the importance of politics, on the value of the study of social forms, on the interdependence of the various aspects of any culture, on the relative nature of ethical standards, is all unexceptionable. But we protest that Herr Spengler is no Moses who sees the promised land with the prosaic eye of the flesh, that we have here nothing more than prophecy and opinion, and that the analogical method is the merest occultism, from which charge the invocation of the great name of Goethe will not save it.

There are, however, many Spenglerians in method who will not acknowledge Spengler. That the study of history is a means by which we invest life with a deeper reality is profoundly true. That historical events and human deeds belong to 'the living world of Goethe,' and not to 'the dead world of Newton,' is either a platitude or a dangerous half-truth very generally accepted. This kind of statement speedily lead us to placing the 'dead,' abstract, mathematical methods of physics into violent antithesis to the 'living' (and therefore, by implication, more valuable) concrete, chronological methods of history. To me all this appears to be nothing more than *abracadabra*, born of impatience with the painfully slow progress which is all that we can hope from the application of naturalistic methods in the field of social phenomena. The so-called 'methods of natural science' are neither limited to the study of inorganic nature, nor are they the only method of studying this inorganic nature and of appreciating its full reality. It would be preposterous to contend that the non-human world does not admit of study by the poetical methods of a Wordsworth or Emerson, and it is entirely unproven that the human world does not admit of study by the experimental and quantitative methods of natural science employed by Newton or Darwin. Whether we are dealing with the science of matter or of man, qualitatively the time factor has to be taken into account in the application of our logic, although in degree and perspective this may be more the case in human history than in cosmic history. The word 'science' has no different meaning when we speak of the science of politics than when we speak of the science of biochemistry. But advance by the non-intuitive method, if useful, is slow, and there are always those who will rattle the door-knob of the laboratory and inquire whether the laws of gravitation will be discovered at least by next month, or

whether it be not true that all that there is valuable to know the poets and prophets told of long ago.

For people of an impatient temperament, however, there is an easy, honoured and traditional way out. The course of the science of politics has been dogged by that of the pseudo-science of history, which possesses for many an irresistible attraction. It is yet surely true that history does not admit of interpretation by scientific laws, save in the sense in which we may say that the universe itself is subject to law. The writing of history is a literary interpretation of life which may rise to the heights of poetic insight. The science of politics must indeed draw upon history for its material as well as upon specially arranged contemporary observations, just as it draws upon psychology for some of its principles. But scientific politics is not political history, and their functions are different. The one has an instrumental function as a means of social control and the other an illuminatory function as a means of social education.

To many people this distinction is not clear. History is the record of human affairs, and public affairs, it seems to them, are to be interpreted better by the general study of history than by any *soi-disant* science. In a certain sense of the word 'interpretation,' this is indubitably true. Opportunity for such insight into life as we find in the pages of Horace rather than of Lucretius we shall find far more amply in the broad canvas of history, whether painted by a Voltaire, a Gibbon or a Ranke, than in the sparse designs of political science, with its statistics, technical apparatus, and catalogue of facts arranged according to their particular significance, not 'freely and equally' or by artistic merit. And here comes the great temptation. A science often produces tedium in the lay soul, a religion seldom. A little 'vision,' a few assumptions, and the whirlpool of human motives becomes a stream flowing straight to the ocean of the history-writer's or history-reader's philosophy. The ordinary reader certainly cannot be expected to escape the temptations to which a Froude and a Macaulay succumbed. History can be so poetically interpreted as to give us a conspectus of the civilisation of the world which for the rest of our lives becomes an open-sesame and an article of faith. Much reading for its own sake of the massed information called history is more likely to add to erudition than to increase wisdom in the art of government, while the reading of surveys of history, brief or not so brief, is but one way of multiplying those who have the privilege of sharing the philosophies of Professor James Harvey Robinson or of Mr. H. G. Wells.<sup>2</sup>

The history of thought is full of historical apocalypses and

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* G. R. Stirling Taylor: 'History and Politics' (*Nineteenth Century and After*, March 1927).

Messianic readings of history. Augustine, Joachim of Fiore, Bossuet, Hegel, Marx have all used history as a dark glass in which could be detected the shadowy face of the future. And this crystal-gazing still goes on, even now when theodicies and the gospel of Progress are alike in discredit and the avocation has to be pursued by more gloomy seers such as Lord Balfour (whose brief pamphlet *Decadence* is too little read), Nordau, Lothrop Stoddard, Dean Inge and others. In brief, mankind still clings to certainty, to prophecy in the midst of change. And science, which tells nothing of the future but only of what are the necessary means which the future will use, cannot satisfy this mystical craving of a religion-starved public.

This is not to say that the historical future is a completely sealed page to us. No scientist can tell us, as a certainty, the details of what is going to happen. The astronomer can only predict the eclipse on the assumption that the present movements of the solar system continue uninterrupted. Similarly, political science can only make contingent assertions about the content of future history. Certain non-scientific considerations, however, permit many statements about what is probable. It is impossible that the benefits in the field of medicine flowing from the study of bacteriology, or the Einstein theory, which required verification from astronomy, should have developed prior to those technical improvements in the making and polishing of lenses which permitted the use of the microscope and telescope. Conversely, the use of electricity renders probable a series of inventions, and the corresponding development of civilisation, along a certain line which would have been entirely impossible prior to the use of electricity. Thanks to the interconnexion of the various elements of civilisation, an interpretation of history is possible in terms of the chronological procession of inventions. This method has been used with impressive effect by such writers of genius as Mr. Wells, and marks an indisputable advance over the old philosophies of history. It yet has its limitations, and these are not always well observed. Some writers, such as the Beards, authors of the epic *Rise of American Civilisation*, are content merely to describe historical movements, while drawing our attention to the economic and geographic factors and to the tools at the disposal of a civilisation. Others, however, endeavour to augur coming developments. But the incalculable factors in the development of the future are too many for this principle of determinism by invention to prove of guidance in the interpretation of anything but the past and the immediate future. The temptation, nevertheless, is great to deduce from the 'spirit of the times' or from 'the course of history' that the future of the world lies with the democracy of the plain man, or with humanitarianism, or

with internationalism. To me any such pretended deduction appears to be precisely political science falsely so called. It does not, of course, follow that such assertions are not sound and important opinions in their own right. But my certainty that internationalism will triumph rests on nothing better than the energy of my personal conviction that private war, whether waged by States or by individuals, is bad and must be avoided, coupled with an intellectual apprehension of the principles of social structure which tells me that international co-operation under certain circumstances is not merely a fantastic dream.

History is however the basis of political science in some more real and justifiable sense than in that according to which there is 'a direction of growth' (as with a tree or a turnip) which enables us to predict to-morrow from the observation of the past. There are laws to be detected by the study of history. These are the laws which formulate those methods which human beings, their nature being what it is, recurrently adopt in confronting what are, for purposes of action, similar social situations. The illustrations which history supplies to the lessons of psychology are sufficient to enable us to frame hypotheses, for further research, about what consequences will result from the adoption of given methods. We need not concern ourselves with the antique owl-and-egg controversy about whether events produce the great man or the great man produces events. But we may observe that a natural law governs both, that these sequences are so sure, and the 'cunning of the idea' is so strong, that the single great man or the many small men having once started upon a line of action, whether it be world-reform or world revolution, must accept certain consequences of their initial method even if the result be to lead them whither they would not. The organisation of human nature in the world, called civilisation, has a mechanism which is stronger than the will of individual man or of a generation of men. France, although victorious, has to accept the financial consequences which she did not will of a resort to defensive war which she did will, for the structure of civilisation is stronger even than the victorious power of a nation. The most useful historical lessons are those provided by instances where the laws of economic and political science have been defied in vain. The *sic volo, sic jubeo* of conquerors and rulers is a childish boast where their will runs contrary to those final social facts to which Mr. Walter Lippmann, Mr. Norman Angell, and M. Delaisi have, in their different ways, recently drawn our attention. And all social legislation must remain unscientific until we direct our attention to studying these laws, and recognise that the task of legislation is to prescribe, according to the rules of political medicine and physiology, for social diseases duly diagnosed. It is not enough merely to transfer



onto the Statute-book an expression of the uninstructed will and pious aspirations of an impatient electorate.

Historical mysticism is an attitude of mind and one worthy of respect. By accepting what is good in our world, by comprehending it, by making its tendencies our own, we become free men of this world. But political science is a practical task and a life-task for students. It is not exclusive of faith in the ideal tendencies in history or of acceptance of dominant tendencies ; but it is not identical with it. If we can succeed in distilling political science from the bubbling cauldron of history and the steam of private philosophising, we may perhaps be able to control the social process, thanks to that grain of intelligence which makes man the first among, and master of, things. The hope is that by understanding, not discursively and emotionally, but precisely and technically, with the mind of a scientist and not of a dilettante, a doctrinaire or a dictator, we shall be able to live in a world where much of civil strife will no longer have the excuse of human helplessness or of a plausible fatalism. The wheels of civilisation revolve at full speed. The problem is whether man is to have his hand upon the controls.

G. E. G. CATLIN.



## CRAFTSMANSHIP AND THE SCIENTIFIC ECONOMIST

It is over a century since Ruskin was born, during most of which time the quarrel between culture and the spirit of craftsmanship on the one hand, and specialised science and the scientific economist on the other, has seemed to be one which was never-ending and incapable of solution. It is true we have had great scientists, like Huxley, Tyndall, Thomson, Russell and many others, who were, in a very real sense, also great humanists, men who not only endeavoured to relate their scientific discoveries to the conditions of contemporary life and the alleviation of human pain and discomfort, but who actually saw in the spread of the scientific spirit a great instrument of mental and spiritual liberation. Other scientists, however, have been less wise and less far-seeing, ranging not in the wide fields of science proper and imbibing its synthesising spirit, but specialising intensely in some narrow cabbage-patch of a mere sectional interest. The result has been that their humanism has suffered and their contribution to the stock of knowledge has contained little human value, or indeed value of any kind. This narrow specialism must not be confounded with concentration on an immediate problem, a task indeed for the most wide-ranging scientist.

The so-called scientific historians and economists have offered us their sectional works, asking us to take them as complete works capable of giving us a correct perspective of human life and endeavour. They believed that the scientific spirit demanded that humanity and ethics should be rigorously excluded from their inquiries. Economics, in their view, was the study of wealth production only, measured in terms of money values, and politics was the art of acquiring power in public affairs. Thus spoke the economic Machiavellis. Question was not made as to why men should produce unceasingly goods they could not themselves consume. Still less was any question raised on the ethics of production, for wealth was very ill defined and had in practice a very narrow meaning. Neither did any real philosophical discussion ensue upon the fundamental questions, why power was desirable and sought eagerly by all men, or what values and social ends it served.

Fortunately the last thirty years has witnessed the growth of something like a social conscience in Europe. It has been chiefly the gift of the Socialist movement to the world, and has been made almost despite the shallow scientific materialism with which its propaganda has been so much bound up. Early Socialists like Owen tried to moralise the growing machine industry of their time by internal arrangement within the capitalist economy. It was only when those efforts had quite definitely and unmistakably failed that the modern social economy came to be regarded as a struggle of classes, the lower ever pushing upwards to displace the higher. There was little regard, in the general conception of the class struggle, for the higher issues for which the new movement was ultimately to stand in human values. A social conscience did develop, only because the movement was a blind instinctive one, rather than a reasoned scheme, for a reasoned belief in inevitable progress and triumph would render conscience, an organ of doubt, unnecessary. Easement of conditions of labour in the matter of shorter hours and healthier factories was the chief aim of reformers, for as yet the dynamic possibilities of industrial freedom and self-expression were undreamt of. Culture and labour were at opposite poles of the nineteenth-century world of thought.

It was outside the ranks of the scientific economists and the official reformers that the first rude blasts of the bugles of the new humanism were heard. Amidst the grime and smoke of his cellar forge Carlyle, like a lame Hephæstus, sought to forge the sword of liberation by preaching hero-worship and the dignity of labour. Ruskin took up the hammer of the wearied god and sought to break the idols of the economists. In prose which, despite its prolixity and rhetoric, had magnificent passages he strived to draw men's attention to the paramount necessity of bringing craftsmanship and honest purpose into living contact with everyday work. He saw around him a few magnificent relics of a great past, relics which the barbarism of progress sought to obliterate completely. He saw sectionalism and routine replacing sound perspective and self-expression; honest craft giving way to a debased and dishonest multiplication of shoddy, and against these tendencies he protested vehemently.

It was not only as an art critic that Ruskin approached the problem of production, or even as a middle-class philanthropist. He was both of these, but the problem of industrialism to him appeared more fundamental. He saw it in part, chiefly as the problem of the place of machinery in a sound social economy. He sounded, as Morris and others have done since, a call to craftsmanship, to the understanding and appreciation of beauty in common as well as in uncommon things. He preached the value

of definiteness and attention to detail, an attention only possible for extended periods when workmen have a deep interest in their work. Ruskin tackled the problem not only from the æsthetic and the moral sides, but from the social and economic sides as well. In every true and proper sense *Time and Tide* and *Unto this Last* are economic works of significance. Alike from their content, style and effect on later thought, they deserve to outlive, and doubtless will outlive, more orthodox and more pretentious works on the dismal science. The science was not dismal to Ruskin, because through it he sought to impress upon a sceptical generation the cardinal fact that in all proper economic considerations the ethics of production must have first place—that is, in regard to method and the destiny of the product. It was also necessary to treat the labourer with human dignity and to provide him with opportunity for self-expression of his personality. Ruskin saw clearly that the object of modern production was the securing of dividends rather than the performance of social service. Consequently, a great deal of what the orthodox economists called wealth he termed ‘illth.’

Much that Ruskin wrote on economics, as upon art, will not live, if indeed it has not already perished. He passed the torch on to men like Morris however, men who, half-mad with beauty like Guinevere, sought to make the production of common things—furniture, wall-paper, enamels, dyes, printing, etc.—things of worth, ministering to a great communal æsthetic. The impress of Morris in actual production of home furniture and in revolutionising Victorian taste was considerable, although economically he had very little influence. He has bequeathed a spirit and a tradition, however, to the whole Socialist movement, the best thinkers of which have been forced back since his time on basic considerations, æsthetic and moral, rather than economic. To determine the true ends production should serve is the problem of the future. Involved in it are problems of the place of machinery in large-scale reproduction, self-government in industry, functionalism, and the distribution of the social reward. These problems have so far been tackled by few men, and even then, often with woefully inadequate mental equipment or industrial experience. It is to the solution of these problems the scientific economist must bend his energies, becoming less an exponent or analyst of current economic and financial practice than a prophet of things to come, a master-builder of the new economic humanism.

The study of the physical sciences in the middle of the nineteenth century had considerable influence on contemporary social thought, an influence not wholly for good. The evil influence it exercised in some directions was not due to any fundamental

defect in the method of scientific inquiry itself, but because of the wrong application of scientific method to social problems. Physical and biological science achieved great triumphs in England during the nineteenth century in the hands of such men as Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Clerk Maxwell, Faraday, and many others. Unfortunately, among so many genuine scientific giants there were pigmies who used a pseudo-scientific method in other fields, and by the use of false biological analogies and by the muddle-headed application of physical laws built up a whole series of social theories, which are only now in process of demolition at the hands of a more thorough psychology and more understanding sociology. There grew up a tendency for amateur sociologists to generalise widely and dogmatically on insufficient data. Biological analogies led to bad economics, in which field for the most part they were inapplicable, although many people were impressed by their use. The use of scientific terms conveys a sense of certitude to the average mind, where plain English reasoning does not.

Greatest perhaps amongst the pseudo-scientists was Herbert Spencer, who is perhaps more responsible than any man for some of the cruder beliefs of social statics, very prevalent amongst those to whom science opened up a new heaven and a new earth, and to a lesser extent prevalent still. Neither physical nor biological laws can be applied exactly to social organisation in the way they have been applied. The method of applying them was extremely unscientific, to say the least about it, and the false analysis to which it gave rise had some extremely vicious and unfortunate results. Political and municipal problems, as well as those larger industrial and economic problems which call urgently for solution, must be dealt with in detail. They are not susceptible to treatment by a generalisation merely, although the eminent Victorian philosopher mentioned was reputed to have fished with one—with little success, it is to be feared.

This apparently scientific treatment of a vast complex of difficult problems led to a hardening of belief in a necessary and inevitable progress made possible by the pursuit of scientific method. In Socialist philosophy it was assumed that the capitalist system, through capitalists and labourers forming ever greater and fewer combinations, would inevitably lead up to a great final struggle, with inevitable victory for the workers. Unfortunately, it is not the day of revolution which matters so much as the days and the months after. Men and women cannot live in a breadless Utopia, or upon revolutionary excitement.

The doctrine of progress developed a smug complacency in Liberal England and even in landless and workless England. It was felt that all was for the best in the best of possible worlds, and

that without conscious effort society must inevitably move on to better and higher things, a common ground upon which Radical and Socialist met. The spiritual book-keeping of Victorian philosophy had only one side, that of credit. It knew that early human society was of a primitive and lowly type, and it believed that the line of progress was always upwards, at an ever-accelerated rate. From its early undeveloped and miserable condition the race had developed to the high type of European culture of which the Victorian Englishman was the flower. It was difficult to believe that the race could be further improved, but scientific faith held out hopes of even a higher and a nobler destiny, that England's mission of civilisation was world-wide. To naïve readers of history, believing in something they imagined to be the scientific spirit, the universe was simplified accordingly, and English youth, like crusaders of modernity, went out to colonise the earth. By 1900 the disillusionment was complete, and their successors found that the problems which once seemed so simple were highly complex. They have been forced by the weight of all the unintelligible world to a condition of greater intellectual humility, content if they may but spell a few letters of the alphabet of social life.

No longer could evolution be defined as a development from the simple to the complex, a progress from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the undifferentiated to the differentiated. No longer could students hold the simple faith that Greek empire followed upon Assyrian and improved upon it, Roman following and superseding Greek because it was the better, and finally Western Europe improving upon Rome—last link in a long and regular series, invariable as a mathematical progression. This doctrine of progress in its simplest terms—and it was in its simplest terms it was most widely held—assumed that civilisations were necessarily an advance on those which had preceded them. There was an uneasy feeling about Greece and Rome; but we were comforted because we knew they could not have attained the highest reaches of freedom and culture, because their civilisations had been built upon a slave economy. This seemed a triumphant answer on the part of those who had abolished negro slavery half a century previously, and who were unaware of the practical slave economy of the modern wage system. The belief in the false doctrine of progress had also the effect of stifling inquiry into historical causation, as it was assumed that the laws which determined development had been fully uncovered by the scientific historian and economist, and that historical events had only to be measured by a formula to be fully understood.

The methods and habits of commercialised industry affected the social and economic thought of the time. Industry had grown

by leaps and bounds because of the new inventions, and by enfranchisement from many of the old restraints which the burghers of the Middle Ages had found necessary to their collective and individual security and well-being. These restraints had in many cases neither an economic nor an ethical justification, but some of them at least showed a live interest in the condition of the labourer and the disposal of the produce. The new industry had neglected exactly those parts of the problem of production where restraints had been beneficial. Economics was no longer a science of qualities, but of numerical relationships. Dividends replaced social purpose in the mind of the producer, and the term 'fair wage,' like that of 'fixed price,' had no meaning for the new economists. Wages were fixed in a competitive market, like the price of commodities, by chaffering and the operation of the law of supply and demand. The market was no longer the old social regulated market, whose necessities had to be studied closely by the seller. Production now determined the market, which was an over-simplified thing in which producer and buyer ceased to occupy the centre of the arena, their places being taken by chaffering and huckstering merchants and the demons of the stock exchange pit. Prices and wages were fixed by forces external to producer and workman, a famine at the other end of the earth, speculation in America, or a bumper harvest. They were subject to wide and loose general movements, which constantly threatened the stability of particular industries, and often overwhelmed hundreds of helpless people in ruin. The age of business speculation was in full flood, and it is the wreck of the storm with which we are concerned to-day.

Living and writing in this environment, economists and social philosophers were affected by it, even where their interests did not lead them to support the new system. Facile generalisations were made about society, and universal laws of wealth production and distribution were propounded, chiefly by neglecting the most pressing problems of social life and the important and intricate subjects of psychology and social dynamics. It was fatally easy to analyse so-called historical factors when such had been arbitrarily fixed upon to suit the inquirer's taste and convenience. Fallacious physical and biological analogies were employed to categorise human faculties and activities. The age-long heresy of dealing with 'factors' in historical inquiry developed apace, and was carried in the way of specialised studies to extraordinary lengths, but with disastrous results. Mankind was assumed to be an economic unity where indeed there is great diversity, and as an unrelated collection of individuals in the world of ideals and culture where there should be essential unity.

The science of history became split into a multitude of studies,



as if the spiritual, intellectual and political sides of a people's life could be regarded each as something separate and distinct from its economic and social life. Thus there were histories of politics and histories of religions, histories of intellectual development and histories of art, histories of prices and histories of invention, but little conception of the rich history of mankind itself in its diverse unity. Economics became an extremely abstruse and abstract subject, and was nicknamed the 'dismal science.' It was separated strictly from any theory of social and moral sentiments. It ceased to concern itself with the ideals, or even with the physical well-being, of peoples, and was inclined to insist that business should not be subject to any restrictions of a political or moral character.

This was a position which was bound to prove untenable ultimately, and this false science, which was also false economics, translated itself into little more than an attempt to justify by special pleading the perpetuation of social iniquities. Men felt justified as business men in actions which they would never have dreamt of doing as private persons. There grew up two moralities, private morality and business morality, having absolutely no connexion with one another. The social contradictions were complete, whilst the eminent scientific economists of Victorian England lost their wits in a fine maze of ratiocination. The whole productive economic world was explainable to themselves in terms of formal logic, buying and selling, producing and consuming, prices and values, being invariably equated with each other, and the answers always found to come out correctly. The clearness and exactitude of their great treatises are more apparent than real. Real values cannot be equated with competitive prices, the supply of products has no necessary connexion with real demand on the part of hypothetical consumers. The equations are not simple, for there are whole series of differentials of which account must be taken in the calculus of society, making the result a wholly unexpected one. Facilities for increased production through labour-saving machinery did not result in plenty of food and ample leisure to the mass of working people. Markets were over-stocked and business languished at periodic intervals (due to spots on the sun, we were told), but bellies were understocked all the time. It is a paradox that bumper harvests may mean poor prices and over-production spell starvation and ruin. The scientific economist found no solution to the paradox, for his first premise was a contradiction—that production should be for profit, and not for service.

He conceived production as an end in itself. It had no relation to communal demand. Merchants who had to market a greater volume of merchandise year by year conducted a sleepless search



for ever-widening markets. At all costs the wheels of industry had to be kept going and even speeded up. Work, not leisure or art or any worthy life, was the motto. Britain, if not the workshop of the world, had yet a proportion of world trade out of all relationship to her population, yet her people were hungry and unclothed. Her mills and her factories called out for more and more raw material. The American crop, the Egyptian crop, and the Indian crop could not keep the looms of Lancashire going, whilst the earth had to be ransacked for raw materials as well as for markets, so that a mass of shoddy and cheap gingham could be unloaded to clothe jolly niggers by the banks of the Niger. As the rest of the world took part in the feverish race, there could only be one result. The war which broke out in 1914 wrote a terrible footnote on economic materialism.

It was only men like Ruskin, Morris, Kropotkin, and their fellows who asked the significant question, Production for what? What shall it profit a nation that it clothe a whole world whilst its children go hungry and the soul of its people sink in despair? The failure to answer that question, a more terrible one than the Sphinx could ask, meant the decay of culture, the corruption of communal morals, and the terrible price of a war in which ten millions of young men died and several times that number suffered unspeakable tortures. The failure to answer it has meant that the *decree nisi* between culture and labour has been made a *decree absolute*.

But the scientific economists did not sin alone. Their sin was shared by professional moralists in the Church and amateur moralists outside it. Liberal theories were propounded which bore little relationship to liberal conduct in business. By being generalised too widely those theories were not susceptible of practical application, whilst the practical activities of men and societies were confined in watertight compartments—at least, so it appeared to the philosophers. Religion, art, business, politics, and amusement were all segregated and treated as distinct, not to mention as antagonistic, interests of the genus man. Morality ceased to be social and communal, but became an affair of the individual only. The moral man and Christian might be the inhuman slave-driving and dividend-hunting employer living in luxury whilst children slaved twelve hours per day in his mill, and society did not feel shocked at the contradiction.

The counterpart of this spirit of individualism in morals and lack of social responsibility was to be found in the prevalent dogmas of the orthodox economists, *laissez faire* and economic anarchy mirroring with remarkable exactitude the current morality. The contradictions in ethics involved an insoluble contradiction in social life, chief fruit of the hedonism of the time.

There was no escape from the economic entanglements, except, apparently, by way of social convulsion and revolution. The revolution did not take place and the antagonisms generated inside the body politic exist to-day, with the result that instead of the nation of a hundred years ago growing into a great functional society, it has developed into a somewhat amorphous and functionless mass of men and women without that basic morality and love of beauty which alone can save a civilisation.

Art and craftsmanship suffered in the spiritual decline, despite a display of great individual talent in certain fields of activity. Commercialism invaded the arts, whose exotic votaries were not quite blameless in accentuating the rot. Decadence begins when sensations and smartness are cultivated more than emotions and deep thought. Our public places were used to express the bad taste of a smug self-complacency ; and who will dare to speak of Victorian art with the Albert Memorial in existence to confound him ?

Bad taste was not an isolated affair or an accident, neither was it a thing for which self-made men only were responsible, for it was implicit in our whole educational and social outlook. The attempt to separate art and culture from the common affairs of the world had far-reaching effects on artists of talent as well as upon the average citizen, making our public and private buildings alike unsuitable for their purposes and false as works of art, and the minds of the citizens incapable of appreciating a noble beauty in simplicity of line. The bizarre or the wooden tastes of idle rich and business-engrossed men alike, both thinking of culture and business with different parts of the brain, caused the democratic birthright of art to be sold for a mess of plutocratic pottage. Art surrendered its prophetic and ennobling mission ; it lost its high symbolism and strove for verisimilitude only ; its momentary appeal was the waxlike expression of rootless water lilies. Beauty was no longer strength, but fragility. The bloom we find upon much of the century's achievement is not a bloom of health, but the hectic glow of decay, for the spiritual soil in which our life is set is shallow and possesses little nutritive properties. A growing culture is a hungry and a thirsty plant, and can only bloom when it is once more closely united with the labour of common everyday life.

But the world cannot for ever remain void of beauty. The desire to create new forms of loveliness will spring up even in the most unlikely soil. Craft will once again enthuse the heart of the worker and become the stepping-stone to great art and true scientific achievement, when the scientific economist of our time shall be no more. Orthodox economics are doomed to failure because the criticism they afford is on the surface of life and is too

simple and facile to be true, also because they seek to separate life into categories rather than to synthesise its activities in a strong, free culture. It may be that craftsmanship shall be reborn into the world as the child of modern science itself. Such a craftsmanship will be the child of a great creative age, an age when mankind shall enter into joyful occupation of its true land of birth.

Why, it may be asked, should craftsmanship depend on science and the humanistic spirit? Why should craftsmanship be a necessary ingredient of ordinary dull labour—the making of food, clothing, and machinery? Should it not be reserved for the more expensive furniture, jewellery, enamels, and other articles of luxury? Certainly not, for those productions are but the by-product of craft. The significant inventions and discoveries upon which they depend have surely wider applications than to pander to luxury. The time will surely come when the proportion of working time spent on articles of luxury for the few will be much less than it is to-day, being spent rather upon the necessities—spiritual, intellectual and physical—of the many. It may well be that beautiful furniture, jewellery, and enamels may be amongst those necessities, but they will then be in their proper social setting and adorn our common life. Craft, to be general and deep, must be applied to all production, and it can be applied consciously to all production only when we produce for quality rather than for quantity, for use rather than for profit, for society rather than for the individual.

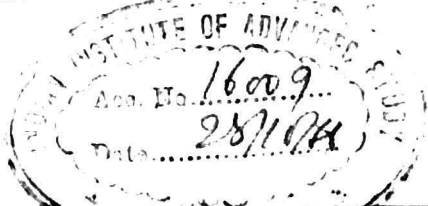
Purely imitative work is never great craftsmanship. It is true the great artists and craftsmen have copied ancient models in their nonage. Great periods of art and literature even have been presaged and stimulated by a study of the past. In the period of the Renaissance the first stimulus came from Greece, but very quickly the narrow bounds of the great achievement of Attica, or at least what was left of that achievement, were passed, and Italian industry, genius, and gift for expression clothed Europe with new glory. It was in no vain and slavish attempt to reproduce the forms of the past that the great craftsmanship of Florence and her sister cities came to fruition. It was not the exceptional thing only, but the common thing, which was glorified and made beautiful, for essentially the spirit of craftsmanship has a moral basis. It worked quietly and unceasingly at its task, which it approached with earnest and even reverent awe. The service of beauty and truth was what it struggled for rather than for an excess of exports over imports or other economic foolishness.

What the scientific economist has missed the poet has understood. *The Ode to a Grecian Urn* is not addressed to kings and generals and economists, not even to successful business men, but to the spirit of craftsmanship in common people, who in their

daily labour re-create beauty anew each day. A few urns of deathless beauty remain to us as priceless possessions of a vanished day, but thousands equally good and beautiful were in common everyday use and met a common fate. It is no matter for regret, for the age that cannot create beauty for itself has no right to enjoy that of the past. And so the poet has spoken not only to the Greek who shaped the urn, but to the Greek who made the marbles of the Parthenon and the Long Walls and the galleys which scattered the Persian at Salamis. And perhaps he has a word to whisper to those who loitered in the market-place or supped together whilst Socrates spoke of love and immortality. This ceaselessly working and leavening spirit of craftsmanship lifts an age beyond the narrow confines of its national economy and sets it blazing in the sky of culture. It was not a single conception of art, but a great many workmanlike hands and minds, which created the mediæval cathedrals and cloth-halls of Europe, great poems in stone and music frozen into sculpture. It is true no such striking monuments of culture and craftsmanship are being reared to-day, although it is the same spirit which lately fashioned articles of beauty in furniture and wove fabrics of beauty like Paisley shawls, putting to shame the infinite production of cheap factory cottons and gingham. Perhaps some of it indeed has penetrated the great steel industries and given us things of beauty to span rivers and to sail upon the seas of all the world.

So we may hope that our own time will not be so barren as we sometimes dream. Shapes of beauty will crowd upon our imagination until the dross of quantitative production is burned out of our mind. To isolate the spirit of craftsmanship is to deny it light and air and the deep nutriment of the earth. It can only flourish properly in freedom and when its roots go deep down into the soil of our social economy. How shall we insure that it do so if it be not by creating a true and fundamental science of economics? But this science must take all activities of life into its purview. It must understand the strong, silent tides of the soul if it would create a great craftsmanship.

Let us not dream too much of the past. The revival of the arts and crafts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries will not save our civilisation from decay. We may form societies for their resurrection, we may imitate their minor achievements, but to revive the spirit rather than the mere form of craftsmanship requires more heroic methods. Ancient handicraft will not displace machine production, because for the most part it cannot rival the latter in efficiency. The problem of the machines lies not in their use or their non-use, but in their control. Men's lives are dominated by the machines to-day, and that is vicious and deadly to craftsmanship, but when the machines become the



servants of man the achievements of craftsmanship may well be greater than they have ever been. It is here that the central problem lies, and from its nature it cannot be solved by cliques and coteries who have little knowledge of modern industry, and indeed little knowledge of any kind, in the real sense of the word.

Salvation is not a matter for individuals, no man living or dying to himself alone. One great instrument, and one alone, seems capable of engineering the great revolution to craftsmanship, the trade union movement, most unlikely of all as it may seem to the scoffer. But if the insurgence and feeling after self-expression and self-government in the labour world have not a deep significance for craftsmanship, then the future of our industrial civilisation will be black indeed.

Perhaps we are tired of hearing of the dignity of labour, for certainly the labourer would like to know something of the dignity of leisure. Leisure is not idleness, for it connotes a time of work, and a time to survey work and to gauge its worth. Rightly used it is the time when the mind sits in judgment upon its own activities. There can be no dignity of labour until the labourer has leisure to ask himself whither his efforts lead. He must ask himself what worthy and social ends his labours serve, and must feel, in short, full satisfaction in his work, knowing it to be right work devoted to right ends.

In this sense a revival of the sense of the dignity of labour is the precursor to the growth of craftsmanship. Nothing good can come of mere task work or work which serves an immoral or an unsocial end. It is because, however falteringly the claims are made, the unions demand a human status for their members that there resides in them the chief hope for this revival. Nor is this a mere claim that the individual workman shall be treated with decency and his work with respect. It is that, but also something more, for it is to recognise the functional value to the community of his craft, to realise that it is from its practice that a fine culture grows. When society does recognise such value, each man will become conscious of his brotherhood to his fellow-craftsmen and be jealous for the honour, not only of his craft, but of his humanity.

What the world requires is neither elaborate machinery of production nor a change of heart. The heart of man is sound. What is necessary is a true and a scientific analysis of work and its worthiness. The work that cannot be done in joy is condemned, for joyless work cannot be good work. Once jealous for craft, we need not fear for beauty, for in good craftsmanship beauty of form will surely emerge, whether it be in the building of a bridge or a ship, a locomotive or a building, furniture or clothing. And, if works of art may be rare, a piece of fine craftsmanship,

serving æsthetic and useful ends, will yet abide and be its own justification.

What remains of antiquity? A few sculptures from Hellas and Egypt—a vase, a helmet, or a piece of wall. But perhaps greater than many pictures may be our fields, a stretch of road, some fragment of gracious domestic architecture. Our fields in their rolling billows, our hedges, our Sussex hamlets, speak to us with elóquence of a great day that is passed. Yet there is comfort in the thought that the Roman road has outlived the Roman statue, because its creator possessed a greater and a finer, because less derivative, spirit. Its solid achievement speaks of purpose and good craftsmanship.

Surely here is work for the scientific economist, to make possible, by creative criticism, the conditions in which, and in which only, fine craftsmanship can truly flourish. And to it will be added art also.

G. W. THOMSON.

## THE VICTORIAN WOMAN

A DISTINGUISHED ex-civil servant lately described himself in a Sunday newspaper as 'one of those who have shamefacedly to confess that we are the products of the Victorian age.' On the same day, in another journal, a reverend canon (also a Victorian) referred to 'the godless Victorian age,' and sarcastically asserted that it was typified by the 'top hat.'

Why the Victorian age should be so frequently thus derided is surely astonishing when its record is considered. The age that produced Tennyson, the Brownings, Swinburne, Carlyle, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Trollope, the Kingsleys, Mrs. Gaskell, Ruskin, Macaulay, Froude, Lecky, Fitzgerald, Matthew Arnold, Rossetti, Meredith, Stevenson, Morris, Morley, and Bryce has no reason to feel ashamed of its achievements in literature; nor, having regard to Faraday, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Adams, Lyell, Geikie, Lockyer, Lord Kelvin, Crooks, Sir Oliver Lodge, and others too numerous to mention, was it 'top-hattish' in the way of science. Moreover, in other matters—the substitution of humane and reasonable laws, both criminal and civil, for the cruel injustice and absurdities of preceding eras, the levelling up of the great middle class, the improvement in the conditions of life and the education of the working class, the creation of the British Empire, and the wonders following on the discovery of the applications of steam and electricity—the Victorian progress was far greater than that of the whole of the Hanoverian epoch.

But the canon's reproach of godlessness seems to me even more than usually inept. I should have thought that the Victorian age was an era of bewildering religious revivals, beginning with the Oxford Movement and ending with the Salvation Army, accentuating the gibe of the witty Frenchman that the English are mainly distinguished as having thirty-nine religions and only one sauce. Certainly, up to 1860 or thereabouts there was nothing like the agnosticism and indifference that abounds now, and anyone who was bold enough to express doubts found himself looked upon with cold disapproval if not with actual dislike.

For myself, born in the year 1850, I am a Victorian unshamed, and even more unashamedly firm in my admiration for the



Victorian woman—not that I have any serious quarrel with the young woman of to-day, the ‘modern girl,’ as she loves to call herself. All that I claim is that, misled by young writers who know little or nothing about Victorian women, or by writers who, being themselves Victorians, are suffering from an ‘inferiority complex,’ she is too often disposed to feel and express a very ill-founded contempt for her forebears.

My text is that the modern girl greatly deceives herself in thinking that she is on a different plane to her predecessors, the fact being that it is her environment only that has changed her outlook, her status and her manners. *Au fond*, except for a certain lack of graciousness, she is very much the same capricious, plucky, illogical, enthusiastic, incomprehensible, but generally delightful being as the woman of Victorian times. In fact, to use a hackneyed quotation, ‘*plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*’

Now, what is meant by the Victorian woman? I think that the term only fairly applies to women whose adult life began and whose character was formed during the reign of the great Queen. Moreover, I am obliged to confine myself to women of the middle and working classes, for of *le monde où l’on s’amuse* I have but little experience. If, however, its present members are truthfully depicted in the works of Mr. Michael Arlen, Mr. Beverley Nichols, and Mr. Somerset Maugham its women most certainly cannot compare favourably with their Victorian forebears either in character or manners. I am told, indeed, that the younger generation of ‘society’ people regard good manners as a sign of insincerity and servility. If so, I think they greatly err, for, as Tennyson puts it,

Manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.

I knew well three generations of Victorian gentlewomen of the upper middle class—namely, the generations of my mother, my late wife, and my daughter—and I have also known many of that fourth later militant non-Victorian generation which is now in the full bloom of womanhood.

It is, of course, difficult in a case of this kind to avoid the reproach of arguing from the particular to the universal. One can only speak of one’s own experience, and during the earlier years of life that experience is, of course, confined to those devoted women who looked after us in childhood. Thus my chief impressions during the fifties of the last century are derived from my mother and her sisters and a very efficient but severe lady who ran a school for small boys at which I, in the company of most of the youngsters of the district of my own class (for she had a widespread vogue), received the foundations of my education.

What she would have said of the present theory of never making a child do what it dislikes would certainly have been forcible. After I was sent to a boarding school in South Devon, in 1860 or thereabouts, I also became acquainted with the mothers and sisters of several of the day-boys, who were uniformly kind to me, and, while insisting upon obedience and respect from their own children, never, in my experience, lost their affection. These gracious ladies and their daughters of my own generation will always remain in my memory as noble examples of womanhood—kind and courteous to everyone, but firm and efficient as rulers of their homes and children, yet always cheerful and full of interest in life.

I propose, then, to give some account of these women, and I have no reason to suppose that they differed in essentials from other women of their class of the same period.

And first let us compare them with the modern girl in relation to physical strength, nerve and grit.

We are frequently told that the Victorian woman fled from mice, screamed at a spider, fainted at the sight of a cut finger, and generally behaved like a pampered and neurotic infant. This is all moonshine. I do not think that I ever saw a woman faint before I came to live in London in 1869, and not often after then.

My mother (who was born just 100 years ago) married my father in 1849, and I was their first child. My earliest recollection (about 1855) was that we lived in a large country house on the border of Staffordshire and Salop, about four miles from Wolverhampton. This part of the country was hunted by the Albrighton Hounds, and both my father and mother were constant and active attendants at the meets. She was a tall and commanding woman and a bold and skilful rider. In those days women universally rode side-saddle with long 'riding habits,' and to take a brook or a 'bullfinch' in that guise was a very different affair from taking it riding athwartships. More than once she had bad falls, and I remember that on one occasion her boot jammed in the stirrup and she was dragged for some distance, but this did not prevent her continuing the sport. She also habitually drove a pair of spirited horses, a task requiring, I think, more grit and nerve than steering a motor car, for each of the horses has its own views, which do not always coincide with those of the driver.

But there is no need to labour this. Have the heroic labours of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War and quiet courage of the English women in India during the Mutiny and in countries where civilised government had not been established been forgotten? The modern girl prides herself, and quite rightly, on her work in the Great War, but her grandmother or great-grandmother did 'her bit' as efficiently as her environment

permitted in the two very considerable wars of the fifties of the last century. And how about the many Victorian ladies who, *per fas aut nefas*, secured for English women the political status which they now possess? Some of their methods may have been questionable, but their courage no one can deny.

It is very generally assumed by modern writers that the early Victorian women wore ringlets and giggled shyly when addressed by a man. This, again, is purely imaginary. They mostly wore their hair at that date in plaits coiled at the back of the head and fastened with a comb, which I cannot help thinking was at all events as becoming as the coiffures of the shingled maids and matrons of to-day. Nor do I ever recollect my mother or her sisters, or any of their contemporaries beyond the 'flapper' stage, giggling or looking shy. On the contrary, they enjoyed a hearty laugh, and a good many of them a contest of wits, with any man. I certainly never saw my mother weep but once, and that was when—poor soul!—she returned to my chambers over fifty years ago from a visit to a Harley Street doctor under an unexpected sentence of death; and I think even the most stoic of modern girls would forgive that weakness.

With regard to athletic games, at the date of which I am speaking (the fifties and sixties) lawn tennis had not, I believe, been invented, or, at all events, was not generally played, and I think that croquet and Badminton and a very graceful French game called *la grace* were the only athletic games available for women. Most certainly they did not play the rougher games of hockey, football, or even cricket. Indeed, the long dress of that period would have made it impossible; and I think that, even if public opinion had permitted it, they had too much consideration for their appearance to run about in trousers or 'shorts' looking like stumpy, perspiring and unlovely boys. Anyhow, they had not the opportunity. As now, so then, they delighted in balls and dances. There were, if I remember rightly, three large balls at our country town every year—namely, the Bachelors', the Benedicts' (a fancy dress function), and the Hunt; and in addition many of the upper middle class who had daughters gave dances at their own houses. These were not the somewhat sad-looking affairs that one now sees in hotels and like places. The round dances were mostly waltzes and galops interspersed with the rather ridiculous polka and schottische. But the waltzes and galops were much more strenuous affairs than the modern waltz or foxtrot, and I fancy that the modern girl would find that they took quite as much out of her as she could give without undue fatigue. Nor was sitting out in cosy corners tabooed, and many a match was made or initiated at these joyous entertainments.

I think that face powder was not so extensively used before 1880 as it is now, and certainly the lipstick or any equivalent was unknown; but we young fellows had seldom reason to criticise the beauty of the girls' complexions, which (at all events in the country) were almost always unaided by art.

My maiden aunts, then girls just out of their teens, were very lively young women. They were frequent week-end visitors at my parents' country house along with one or two young fellows from the town, and these parties, even now after seventy years, remain in my recollection as very pleasant. According to my memory there was not only none of that imaginary 'stiffness and primness' which the modern writer, both male and female, attributes to the Victorian woman, but there was a good deal of innocent tomboyism. It is true that there were no battles with soda water syphons (which, indeed, did not then exist), or even with pillows (which did); but I was habitually enlisted by my lively aunts to prepare 'apple-pie beds' and other like traps for male guests, and in turn I treacherously assisted the men in carrying through penal expeditions against the girls.

The 'grown-ups' dined much earlier in those days (six-thirty, if I remember rightly), and, of course, I was not permitted to be present except on dinner-party nights, when I was allowed at dessert, so that I have no very distinct recollection of how they passed the evening after dinner. I think, however, from later experience, that the elders played whist and the younger ones billiards or some game (card or other) of the kind which appealed to their age as having more fun and less thought in it, interspersed with music. I am quite sure that at that period there was more music in the home, and a far greater proportion of people, particularly women, who played or sang than is the case now, when anything but professional music is practically barred. Whether this was better or worse than the modern habit I am not prepared to say. Some of the amateur music of that and a later date was, no doubt, very often banal in composition and excruciating in execution; but it had at least the advantage of providing family amusement for the younger people in the home, and of being free from that distressing tremolo by which singers of the present day, whether male or female, attempt (at least so I am told) to express their soulfulness. However, there was always a class which loved music of a character which is still held in esteem in other than ultra-modern circles, and Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Handel, Haydn, Rossini, Verdi, and others of like quality were held in high estimation; and, unless I am much mistaken, the Saturday 'popular concerts' of classical music were a Victorian invention.

These musical diversions were, however, not confined to the

house, for some time about 1860 amateur concerts became fashionable in country society. Whether these would be tolerable to present-day taste is, perhaps, more than doubtful, but they were certainly extremely popular at the date in question. I remember well that the great hall at Wolverhampton was crowded every Saturday evening by all classes. The colliers were particularly enthusiastic supporters, filling the penny seats without fail, and I remember my mother, who was reckoned a kind of prima donna, was greatly amused (and I think not a little flattered) by hearing on one 'St. Monday' a burly miner remark to another in the market-place; 'See 'er, Bill, with the red cloak. That's 'er as sings so beautiful; see what they penny concerts 'as done for 'er.'

And now a word or two about the artistic culture of the Victorian women otherwise than in music. It must be confessed that this was the weakest part of early Victorian civilisation, with regard, at all events, to domestic art—the art of the house, its furniture and decoration. I find it impossible to put Victorian architecture and furniture on the same plane with those of the eighteenth century. But Victorian houses, if ugly, were at least comfortable and homelike, and the workmanship of Victorian furniture was well and faithfully carried out in a way which is rarely, if ever, found in furniture of the twentieth century.

It must also be confessed that the so-called artistic amateur productions of the Victorian woman were generally bad, with the exception of lead-pencil drawings, of which I still have some beautiful specimens. I remember that in the early sixties there was a craze for what was called 'potichomania,' a dreadful craft in which a clear glass vase as a base was converted into fictitious porcelain by gluing golden paper Chinese figures (such as dragons and the like) inside the vase and then giving the interior two coats of thick tinted body colour in oil. Also, later on, there was an equally objectionable treatment of photographs, which were cemented face downwards on to glass, then made semi-transparent with varnish or melted wax, and finally painted at the back in colours which showed through the photograph and made it look something like a painted underglaze plaque. But I am doubtful whether the art of the amateur young lady of the present day is much better, or at all events will escape the jeers of her successors, although she has far better opportunity of being properly taught.

Every generation, of course, differs in taste, manners and ideals from that which precedes it, and the fashions of to-day will no doubt become the laughing-stock of to-morrow. Thus I naturally fancy that in the seventies of the last century the taste of my generation had to some extent improved both in the

decoration of the house and of the person. We no longer loved elaborate wall papers and highly coloured hangings or sham stained-glass windows, nor the crinolines of the early Victorian women or the peg-top trousers, Dundreary whiskers, and pork-pie hats of the men. Yet one has only to look at old photographs (for instance of the University crews of 1873 or 1874) to see how different they were in outward appearance from their successors of 1927. Nearly all younger men then sported mutton-chop or straight whiskers and moustaches, and I suppose the girls liked it, although those photographs strike one now as almost comic. So with the women. The huge crinoline of my infancy had given way to tightly-fitting garments, which again later on were supplanted by the 'dress improver' or modified 'bustle,' all of which can be seen in the delightful drawings of the late George Du Maurier in the pages of *Punch*. I doubt not that in another quarter of a century drawings of the present fashions, both male and female, will seem ridiculous and ugly, not only to the young people of that day, but even to the survivors among ourselves, and that the fashionable 'condemned cell' style of room with whitened walls decorated with two or three etchings will seem to be cold, unattractive, and unhomelike. What will succeed it, Heaven knows. It is quite likely that it may not be an improvement.

But all the above-mentioned changes were merely external. The characters and dispositions of the girls of 1875 were much the same as those of 1855. Perhaps they were rather freer in thought as well as in manners, and I think that they had become more addicted to slang and unconventionality and what was then called 'fastness,' which was however little more than innocent flirtation.

At all events, a writer (generally reputed to be a woman) of the latter date seemed to think so, for she contributed vitriolic articles to the *Saturday Review* on 'The Girl of the Period' and 'The Frisky Matron' which created quite an excitement in female circles at the time, although I am unable to recall exactly what particular course of conduct she objected to.

I think, however, that there have been two legal changes which have made a radical alteration in women's mentality. One of these is the ease with which divorce may now be obtained. The idea of the serious character of a dissolution of marriage, which during the first ten years of my life could only be obtained by a private Act of Parliament, has, I think, vanished entirely, and I have no doubt that the Victorians would have been genuinely shocked at the levity with which divorces are now sought, and the facility with which (in many cases collusively) they are obtained. Indeed, some post-Victorian (I forget who) has been



bold enough to allege that but for the Divorce Court marriage would be an act of inconceivable folly.

Another change was brought about by the Married Women's Property Act, 1882, which destroyed the outrageously unjust laws which, in the absence of a settlement, practically handed over all a woman's movable property to her husband and gave him the administration, during their joint lives, of her land. I think that many married women bitterly and very reasonably resented this, and its abolition (while leaving the unfortunate husband liable for their torts) has no doubt made them feel freer and less economically dependent on men than the women of an earlier date.

And how about 'education'—that sacred word almost as comfortable to the modern scribe as 'Mesopotamia' was to the traditional old lady?

It is, of course, undeniable that the education of the modern girl is quite different from that of her Victorian mother. The idea of the Victorian girl's school was not to make the pupil a classical scholar or a deep mathematician, still less to make her an international forward or half-back. Its object was to beautify her body by gymnastic exercises (not rough games) and to cultivate her mind with history, geography, English, French, and sometimes other foreign literature, and to teach the fluent use of at least the French language, to impart a gracious and attractive manner, and generally to turn her into an agreeable woman of the world. I suppose that I shall be considered by many of my readers as a senile reactionary if I say deliberately that, while the modern school undoubtedly produces a different type of culture approximating to the male standard, I do not believe that it is materially superior to the Victorian school, and I am supported in this view by a letter in the *Spectator* of March 26 last from a well-known post-Victorian lady who alleges the futility of the present fashionable education. As she puts it, she herself spent many fruitless and painful hours struggling with Latin and mathematics while all her inclinations were towards literature, while cooking and sewing, domestic arts of the utmost importance (as she herself asserts), 'are very wrongly regarded' as 'extras' at most schools. Even modern languages, she says, are inadequately taught, and European history and literature practically never touched upon. In writing this I am by no means belittling scholarship in women. The creed of Tennyson's 'fat-faced curate Edward Bull' is certainly not mine, and no one enjoys the society of women of real intellectual attainments more than I do. But in every generation they, like men of intellect, are the exception, and Victorians like Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, Adelaide Anne Procter, Mrs. Fawcett,



Mrs. Garrett Anderson, and others too numerous to mention were not behind the more modern female intelligentsia.

And what of Victorian women of the working class? They were, in my recollection, women of fine character and capable of the utmost devotion. Many of them were no doubt quite illiterate, but so are, curiously enough, many post-Victorian girls and women who, having somehow scraped through the council schools, have forgotten all they learned there—even how to read.

In early and mid-Victorian days it was quite usual for servants to remain for years in a family. My father's servants seldom left except to be married; they were regarded as friends of the family, and a kindly eye was always kept upon them afterwards. But this was before the apostle Marx managed to tickle English ears with the new gospel of Envy and Sloth. Now it is notorious that this friendly sympathy is rarely found between mistress and maid. Whether this is due to faults of our educational system or the faults of temper or lack of kindness on both sides I will not venture to say.

To sum up, I see but little difference between the modern young woman and her Victorian predecessor except that to innocent feminine vanity (from which no era has been exempt) the former has added some mental sex conceit, and not a little apparent hardness and worldliness, with a corresponding loss of the graciousness and charm which was the chief asset of the Victorian lady. Nevertheless, the girls of to-day *can* be very charming and attractive when they like, and I rejoice to think that I enjoy the quasi-contemptuous friendship of many of them.

I suppose that this hardness and worldliness is a tacit compliment to man and expresses the widespread desire of the younger women to ignore sex. But the facts of Nature are against the uniformity they desire. Men and women may be 'equal' (whatever that may mean), but equality is not the same as uniformity. The two sexes are essentially different, not only physically, but in outlook on life; and women who endeavour to imitate the appearance and the hardness of men remind me somewhat of that curious insect which, outwardly resembling the scorpion, erects its tail well over its head in order to complete deception, relying upon the fact that it will be taken at its face value although it has not been furnished with a sting.

ARTHUR UNDERHILL.

