

This power of choice among the women is in all cases an important agent in the improvement of the race, because, as a rule, they will naturally choose the handsomest men, or those who can best provide for them. Darwin shows conclusively how this process of selection inevitably leads to the propagation of the largest number by the finest individuals.

Perhaps one of the best instances known of a community in which males and females were absolutely on an equality in regard to intercourse, and in which marriage was simply a matter of mutual inclination, was that of the Sandwich Islands, as described by Cook, in his voyages. Marriage, in fact, there was none, men and women coming together and separating without any ceremony or agreement whatever, just as they felt disposed. At a grand feast given to Cook, a young man and woman, so he tells us, performed the rites of Venus in presence of the whole company, without attracting any particular attention. The queen herself, in such matters, was equally without restraint, and was evidently surprised—perhaps shocked—at the way her advances were met.

We must be careful, in such matters, not to judge people so situated exclusively from our point of view. Such practices, with them, were not licentious, nor in any way calculated to do harm, as they would be with us. Indeed, Cook distinctly shows that they were remarkably modest, tender, and affectionate with each other, and with no idea of immorality. Similar testimony has been given in regard to certain of the people of Madagascar, with whom the relations of the sexes are equally unrestrained.

It appears, from all that is known, that marriage has everywhere been, primitively, an individual or tribal arrangement, purely civil, like any other personal contract. It is always at a later period that the priesthood in any way assume control over it, and in some countries they have never done so. In several ancient countries of the Old World, the priests seem to have undertaken the initiation of young people, at the age of puberty, into the nature of their sexual relations, and to have done so under the guise of a religious rite. These initiations, which occurred at stated intervals, always took place in the temple, or in the sacred groves, in strict privacy and seclusion. They were regarded as sacred mysteries. The church, in fact, gradually assumed the place of the community, and marriage finally could not be legitimate without its sanction. Still this change was gradual, and not complete till comparatively recent times. Among the ancient Hebrews, we read of men serving for their wives, as Jacob did for Leah, and of men taking women for wives, or having them given to them by their parents, but no church service or priestly sanction seems to have been required. Neither do we find anything of the kind among the ancient Greeks and Romans till Christianity became the established religion. Then the church took absolute control of marriage, as it did of many other things which previously had been controlled by the state alone.

More recently, and especially at the present day, the tendency is again to make marriage a civil contract only. It is so regarded in our own country, and church sanction is not obligatory. No ceremony of any kind, nor any set formula is required, but only sufficient proof of the fact that the parties have mutually agreed to be man and wife. It is merely to give this proof, that witnesses are required at all, and when either a minister of religion or a justice of the peace marries a couple, he only acts as witness; and any other witness would do as well legally. In fact, the parties marry themselves, or make their own contract, and the minister, magistrate, or other person who is commonly said to marry them, only bears testimony to the contract.

In short, the civil marriage, or contract, properly testified to, is demanded by law, but all religious or other ceremonial sanction is optional, and adds nothing to the legality of the union.

It is the same with divorce. Formerly this could not take place except by sanction of the church, but now it is a civil matter only. For certain causes, and by fulfilling certain requirements, married people can separate, and enter into new engagements, without the church having anything whatever to do with it. Even in the countries of the Old World which have established churches, as in England, for instance, these principles now prevail, and over neither marriage nor divorce has the church any legal control whatever.

It is worthy of remark also that the tendency of modern legislation everywhere is constantly toward simplifying marriage, and facilitating divorce when shown to be desirable.

The maintenance of the family relation, as we now have it, by the marriage of individual men and women in single pairs, is indispensable to the existence of society; without it, in fact, society, as it now exists, could never have come into being, nor could it now continue if such marriage were abrogated. But still there are often cases in which both social and individual interests will be better served by annulling the contract than by compelling its continuance, and in such cases divorce should always be obtainable, providing due provision is made for insuring the rights of all concerned.

In all settled societies, one essential condition of marriage is a proper care for the children which may result from it. Whenever marriage ceases to be communal, those entering into it must make provision for their offspring, if they have any, so that they may neither perish nor become burdensome to others. Both law and custom make this imperative, and in fact society could not exist if it were not so.

To discourage illicit unions, the children which may result from them are everywhere subject to various social and legal disabilities, and are called *illegitimate*. They not only do not inherit the father's property, but even his name is refused them, so that they have to be called after the mother. Formerly *bastards* were often treated more unjustly even than they are now, and though many of that class have become great as statesmen and warriors, still their birth was always a stigma to them. Those among them who were entitled to bear coats of arms, no matter how acquired, were compelled to have them crossed with the *bend sinister*, or mark of bastardy. But, in spite of this, many bastards were very eminent, and some even, like Falconbridge, boasted of their origin. William the Conqueror was a bastard, and so was one of the most famous Austrian dukes; in fact, history tells of many of them.

Illegitimacy has always been a difficult matter for legal regulation, because it is manifestly unjust to punish children for no fault of their own, and yet at the same time the offspring of legal marriage must always occupy a different position from that of mere concubinage. By the law of Scotland, which is also our law, illegitimate children cannot inherit from the father, nor, with us, does a subsequent marriage between the parties make them legitimate. In Scotland, however, this is not the case, for marriage at any time may make legitimate all the children the parties may have had before, which seems both reasonable and just. The difference arises from the character of the Scotch law of marriage, which requires only consent and publication. Any parties not already married, who live together as man and wife, and who call themselves so, are to all intents and purposes legally married. In England



also a bastard can be made legitimate by a special act of Parliament; as was done in the case of the illegitimate children of John of Gaunt, in the time of Richard the Second.

Most foreign countries follow the Scotch law, by making a subsequent marriage between the persons legitimize all the children they may have had before. But with this condition, that at the time these children were born the parties could have married if they chose; or, in other words, providing there was then no legal barrier to their marriage.

A curious complication occurs sometimes, when one of the parties may have married another person, in the mean time, and have had other children by them. The question then arises whether the legitimized bastards take equal rank and right with those born in the intervening marriage, and who were undoubtedly legitimate. It is contended that they do not, but the question has never been legally settled, so far as I am aware.

In France, if a man acknowledge an illegitimate child as his, during his life, that child is entitled to a share in his father's property, the same as his legitimate children.

There are many curious law-points in regard to marriage and legitimacy, which need not here be discussed, though some of them are very interesting. The law in England is not, in many respects the same, in regard to these matters, as it is in Scotland and Ireland; especially in regard to what constitutes a marriage. In consequence of this, it sometimes happens that parties are legally married in one of these countries, but not in the other; and a woman may be a lawful wife in Scotland, and at the same time only a concubine in England.

This confusion all arises from the interference of the churches, and marriage by priests. If the civil marriage alone were everywhere all that was required in law, and compulsory, leaving the religious rite optional, there could be no uncertainty.

An act passed in the reign of George the Second, in reference to Ireland, makes any marriage void between Catholics and Protestants, or between two Protestants even, if celebrated by a Catholic priest. A later act in the time of George Third, modified this so as to allow the Catholic priest to officiate, providing the parties had first been married by a Protestant minister. Any priest violating this law is liable to a penalty of two thousand dollars.

The marriage act of England, at the present time, is the simplest, and perhaps the most perfect in the world. It simply provides that every marriage must be duly witnessed and recorded before the registrar of the district in which the parties live. Very few preliminaries are required, except proper public notice, for a certain time, in the case of minors. There is no ceremony of any kind, the whole transaction being regarded, so far as the law is concerned, as a civil transaction, like any other contract. Any rites or ceremonies, if they wish any, are left to the parties themselves, but they are not in any way essential to the legality of the marriage.

The registry contains the names, ages, occupations, and residence of the parties, and also the names and residences of their parents, with some other particulars. All these local registries are periodically transmitted to Somerset House, London, where they are safely recorded, and can be consulted at any time for a small fee.

It is impossible to overrate the immense advantages of such a system, thoroughly carried out, over the slipshod, loose system, or rather no system, of our own coun-

try. There can never be any of those interminable suits at law, such as we often have, turning upon the question whether certain parties were ever married or not. If they were married in England, there is the record to prove it; and if it is not on the record they never were married, and that ends it. With us the fortunes and standings of individuals and families often depend upon memories more or less treacherous, and oaths more or less unreliable. It is a constant occurrence, after a rich man's death, for some woman to appear and claim to have been privately married to him! Witnesses are easily found, and she is either bought off, or the estate is wasted in litigation. Such a thing ought not to be possible, nor could it be if we had a proper system of compulsory public civil registration.

In New York we have a registry law, I am aware, but it is so imperfect, and so badly enforced, that it amounts to very little, and is evaded in many ways. Certain religious denominations even oppose any law whatever of the kind, and do all they can to nullify it. The only true system is to make a public civil registration, duly attested and preserved, compulsory in every marriage, and the only thing requisite to make it legal. Then the parties can please themselves in regard to rites and ceremonies, according to their views on such matters.

There is nothing in such a law to which any one can reasonably object, and its benefits are obvious. Even Quakers (who have no marriage ceremony of any kind), Secularists, Free Thinkers, and denominationalists of every kind, accept such a law gladly, and acknowledge its advantages.

The law in England, till recently, was very unjust in regard to the property of married women; all they possessed becoming the property of their husbands, to do with as they pleased. Even if anything was left or given to them, the husband could take it absolutely, as he could anything they might own in any other way. This, however, is now changed in many ways, and there is no difficulty in securing property to a married woman's own use and control. Any woman who earns wages, or has an income in any way, and a worthless squandering husband, can obtain a magistrate's order securing such wages or income to her own use. And further than this, a law is now in the process of elaboration, and will assuredly be soon enacted, compelling any man who neglects to support his wife when he is able, or who abuses her, to keep away from her, if she requests it. He will have no right to go near her, and will be liable to punishment if he does, or annoys her in any way. In short, the whole tendency of modern legislation on these matters, is towards more complete justice to women.

In Scotland, a rich wife is bound to support her husband; and in France a father-in-law is bound to support his son-in-law, even if his daughter be dead. In England a man cannot legally marry his dead wife's sister, but in the English colonies he can. This prohibition is entirely a church scruple, and will evidently be soon done away with.

Keeping a mistress, in most countries, would be a sufficient cause for divorce, but in France it is not necessarily so, unless the husband bring her into the same house with his wife!

It should be generally known also, that a marriage may hold good in one country but not in another, for reasons which might never be suspected. Thus a Roman Catholic man, say of one of the Catholic states in South America, may marry a Protestant woman here, and she will of course be his legal wife, but if they should go to his own country to live, he could disown and desert her, if they had not been mar-



ried by a Catholic priest; cases of great hardships and injustice of this kind have occurred to English women on many occasions.

In France also, if a man have parents living, no matter what his age, he cannot legally marry without their consent; and several cases have occurred where English women have married Frenchmen, and found themselves, when in France, disowned, and no wives at all, merely because the parents did not approve of the match.

Such are a few of the anomalies, inconsistencies, and injustices, appertaining to marriage; some of them arising from church interference, and others from the old notion still clung to, that woman should be in every way subordinate to man. The only cure for all such evils is the making marriage everywhere a compulsory civil contract, *between equal parties*; and recognizing the woman's rights in herself and her property the same as we do the man's, in the fullest sense.

The following sketch of the position and influence of women in ancient Greece, by James Donaldson, LL.D., from the *Contemporary Review*, is exceedingly interesting and valuable, in relation to the matters we have been discussing. It will show how different have been the notions and practices of men, respecting women, at different periods, and may well make us ask if there be not much we could learn from these ancient people:

"Everything that has life has a course within certain limits predetermined for it, through which it passes until it finally disappears. The seed of the oak gathers materials from earth and sky until it fashions itself into the majestic tree. It will not become a rose or an elm. So it is with the higher animals and man. The lines of their progress through life are distinctly marked off. But, within the limits special to each class there are different degrees of perfection. All the individuals seem to strive after an ideal which none attain, to which some come very close, and to which all more or less approximate. Man has also his ideal, but, in addition to the instinctive power of soul which strives after the ideal, he has the faculty of being conscious of the ideal and of consciously striving after it. What is true of man is true of woman. What is the ideal of woman? What could we call the complete development and full blossoming of woman's life? I have no intention of answering this question, much agitated in the present day. I do not think that I could answer it satisfactorily, but it is requisite for the historian of woman in any age to put it to himself and his readers. A true conception of woman's ideal life can be reached only by the long experience of many ages. The very first and most essential element in the harmonious development of woman's nature, as it is of man's, is freedom, but this is the very last thing which she acquires. Impediments have arisen on every hand to hinder her from bringing her powers into full activity. Ignorance, prejudice, absurd modes of thought prevalent in particular ages, conventional restraints of an arbitrary nature, laws that have sought to attain special aims without regard to general culture and well-being—these and like causes have prevented us from seeing what woman might become if she were left unfettered by all influences but those that are benign and congenial. It is the part of the historian to take note of these obstacles, and to see what, notwithstanding these, woman can do and aims at doing.

"The first condition, therefore, of a successful study of woman's history, is to come unbiased to the task. We must for the time keep in abeyance our prevalent opinions. There is peculiar need for this in this subject, because, should we have false opin-

ions, they are sure to be held with a tenacity which is great in proportion to their falsehood; and should we have true, we are likely to give them an exaggerated importance and power; for all opinions on women are apt to be intense. We have therefore to suspend our ordinary modes of thought, and enter into conceptions and feelings and a manner of life widely different from our own. Some of these differences I must explain before I enter on my history.

"And, first of all, the Greeks looked at the relations between the sexes from a point of view utterly strange to us. Among us there exists a clear and definite doctrine which lays down rigidly what is right and what is wrong. The Greeks had no such doctrine. They had to interrogate Nature and their own hearts for the mode of action to be pursued. They did not feel or think that one definite course of conduct was right and the others wrong; but they had to judge in each case whether the action was becoming, whether it was in harmony with the nobler side of human nature, whether it was beautiful or useful. Utility, appropriateness, and the sense of the beautiful, were the only guides which the Greeks could find to regulate them in the relations of the sexes to each other.

"We have to add to this that their mode of conceiving nature was quite different from ours. To them everything was natural, or if you like supernatural. If wine gladdened or maddened the heart of man, the influence was equally that of a god. The Greek might be perplexed why a god should madden him, but he never doubted the fact. And so it was with love. The influence which the one sex exercises on the other is something strangely mysterious. Two persons of different sexes meet. If we look at them, we see nothing very remarkable in either; and if we continue our look for an hour or two, we might notice nothing remarkable going on. Yet a very extraordinary change has taken place. The hearts of both have begun to vibrate wildly. The commonplace man has had wings furnished to his mind, and he sees heaven opening before his eyes, and an infinite tenderness suffuses his soul. The girl, who could not utter a word in her own behalf before, has had her lips unsealed, and wit and brightness and poetry sparkle in every sentence which she addresses to her companion. She too flings from her the ordinary routine of daily life, and sees before her a paradise of purest bliss and unending joy. Whence comes all this inspiration? Whence this temporary elevation of the mental powers? Whence this unsealing of mortal eyes, till they see the beatific vision? 'From a divine power,' said the Greeks. And this divine power seemed to them the most irresistible of all. It swayed the gods themselves. If the gods themselves could not but yield to the magic power, how could it be expected that a mortal could resist? The religion of the Greeks could not, with such a mode of conception, strongly aid them in self-restraint. It could merely inculcate forbearance and compassion. And this we find to be the case. In a speech which Sophocles puts into the mouth of Dejanira, she expresses her conviction that a wife has no right to expect a husband to be always faithful to her, or to blame the woman with whom he falls in love. 'Thou wilt not,' she says, 'tell thy tale to an evil woman, nor to one who knows not the nature of man, that he does not naturally rejoice always in the same. For whosoever resists love in a close hand-to-hand combat, like a boxer, is not wise. For he sways even the gods as he wishes, and me myself also; and how should he not sway another woman who is such as I am? So that if I find fault with my husband caught with this disease, or with this woman the cause along with him of nothing that is evil or disgraceful to me, I am unquestionably mad.' Such religious forbearance is not found



in poetry only. It is inculcated on wives as a strict part of their duty by a female Pythagorean philosopher, Perictione, who wrote on the harmony of woman, and the sentiment disappears only before a philosophy such as that of Plato and Aristotle, which rose far above the common conceptions of the Divine Being.

“Throughout our estimate of women, it is also of great importance to remember the passionate love of beauty which animated the Greeks. A modern mind can form almost no idea of the strength and universality of this passion. The Greeks loved everything that was beautiful, but it was in the human body that they saw the noblest form of earthly beauty. They did not confine their admiration to the face. It was the perfect and harmonious development of every part that struck them with awe. It would occupy too much space to give a full account of this love of the beautiful, or to bring home the intensity of the Greek feeling. One instance will suffice. The orator Hyperides was defending the Hetaira Phryne, before a court of justice. His arguments, he thought, fell on the ears of the judges without any effect. He began to regard his case as hopeless, when a happy idea struck him, and, tearing open the garment of his client, he revealed to the judges a bosom perfectly marvelous in form. The judges at once acquitted her, and I have no doubt that the whole Greek sentiment agreed with their decision. But we should make an entire mistake if we were to suppose that the judges were actuated by any prurient motive. One of the writers who relate the circumstance gives the reason of the decision. The judges beheld in such an exquisite form not an ordinary mortal, but a priestess and prophetess of the divine Aphrodite. They were inspired with awe, and would have deemed it sacrilege to mar or destroy such a perfect masterpiece of creative power. And though no doubt there were low-minded Greeks, as there are low-minded men everywhere, yet it may be affirmed with truth that the Greeks did not consider beauty to be a mere devil's lure for the continuance of the race, as Schopenhauer represents it, but they saw in it the outshining of divine radiance, and the fleshly vehicle was but the means to lead on the soul to what is eternally and imperishably beautiful.

“These are only some of the points in which the Greeks differed widely from us, and we must realize the difference before we can read the history aright. But this history has to face other difficulties. The influence of woman is often exercised most powerfully in such a quiet and unobtrusive manner that no historian can take note of it. Who, for instance, could narrate the action of beauty and of beautiful ways upon thousands of hearts? The influence is silent, but not the less potent. We have this additional difficulty in Greece, that almost all we know of women is derived from men. Now men rarely write dispassionately of women. They either are in love with them, or hate them, or pretend to hate them. They have had sweet or bitter experience of them. And when they do write about them, they write according to that experience. But not only is the history of Greek women written by men, but it was written for men. This fact must be specially remembered when we have to deal with the utterances of the comic poets, for women did not act in the plays, nor is it probable that they were even present at the comedies during the best days of Athens. But men taking the parts of women are sure to act them with all the exaggeration and license which are natural to such representations. No great stress must, therefore, be laid on the wild abuse of women which can be culled in large abundance from Greek writers. One early satirical poet divides women into ten classes, of which only one is good. And he proceeds with his invective very much as if women did not exist:

“‘Listen, O people,’ says Susarion, who may be called the inventor of comedy. ‘Susarion says this: Women are an evil, but nevertheless, O countrymen, it is not possible to have a household without evil, for to marry is an evil and not to marry is an evil.’

“A satiric poet gives it as his opinion that ‘a man has only two very pleasant days with his wife, one when he marries her, the other when he buries her.’ A comic poet says pithily, ‘Woman is an immortal necessary evil.’ Euripides says:

“‘Terrible is the force of the waves of the sea, terrible the rush of river and the blasts of hot fire, terrible is poverty, and terrible are a thousand other things; but none is such a terrible evil as woman. No painter could adequately represent her; no language can describe her; but, if she is the creation of any of the gods, let him know that he is a very great creator of evils and a foe to mortals.’

“Quotations like these could be made in hundreds, but they really tell us little. They could be matched by a large number of sayings from the same authors, in which woman is praised to the skies. Euripides was specially blamed as a hater of women. The remark was made in the presence of Sophocles. ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘in his tragedies.’ And even in his tragedies he has painted women of exquisite tenderness of heart, and capable of the grandest self-sacrifice and of the purest love.

“With these preliminary observations, we enter on our task. I can only select prominent periods. And the first that comes before us is the Homeric. And here we require all the power of transporting ourselves into different times that we can command; for the phenomena are singular and unique. If we look at the external position of women, we must place the Homeric age exceedingly low in civilization. Women have almost no rights; they are entirely under the power of man, and they live in continual uncertainty as to what their destiny may be. The woman may be a princess, brought up in a wealthy and happy home; but she knows that strangers may come and carry her off, and that she may therefore at some time be a slave in another man's house. This uncertainty seems to have produced a strong impression on their character. They are above all women meek. If the terrible destiny comes upon them, they submit to it with all but unrepining gentleness, and their gentle ways soon overcome the heart of their warrior tyrants, and they make them their companions and friends. But low though this position be, it has to be noted that it is the inevitable result of the character of the times. Might was right. The strong arm alone could assert a right. The warrior had to defend even what belonged to him against any new-comer. He himself sacked the cities of others. His own city, too, might be sacked, and if his wife's fate was to be carried off and to become the mistress of his conqueror, his own was to perish mercilessly by the cold edge of the sword. Man and woman alike held their lives in their hands. Women were not warriors, and therefore they had to depend entirely on the protection of men, and were consequently subject to them. Such was their external position. But when we look to the actual facts of the case, nowhere in the whole range of literature are women subjected to a sway so gentle, so respectful, so gracious. Indeed, it can scarcely be called a sway at all. The physical force, which no doubt exists, is entirely in the background. In the front we see nothing but affection, regard, and even deference. The men appear never to have found fault with the women. It was natural for a woman to love, and she might do what they would deem an eccentric or disproportionate action in consequence of this influence; but it was either a man or a god that was to blame. She was for the time mad. Even in the case of Helen, who



brought so many disasters on Greeks and Trojans, the men find no fault. She reproaches herself bitterly, but the men think that it was Paris who was to blame, for he carried her off forcibly. How could she help it? And how could she prevent Paris falling in love with her? It was the business of woman to make any man happy whom destiny brought into her company, to diffuse light and joy through the hearts of men. Helen was surpassingly beautiful, knew all womanly works to perfection, was temperate and chaste, according to their ideas, and had a mind of high culture. All these were gifts of the gods, and could not but attract. The Trojans themselves were not surprised that Paris should have fallen under the spell of her charms: for a being so beautiful was a worthy object of contest between Greeks and Trojans. But she did nothing to excite Paris. She would have been happier with Menelaus. And when Paris was slain and Troy captured, Helen gladly returned to her former husband, and again occupied her early queenly position with dignity and grace, as if nothing had happened. The only woman in regard to whom harsh words are used is Clytemnestra; but even in her case the man is much more censured than the woman, and if she had merely yielded to Ægisthus, under the strong temptations, or rather overpowering force, to which she was exposed, not much would have been said. Agamemnon would have wreaked his vengeance on the male culprit, and restored his wife to her former place. But at last she became the willing consort of Ægisthus, and his willing accomplice in the dreadful crime of murder. Yet even for this it is on Ægisthus that the poet lays the burden of the blame. For this mild judgment of women there were several causes. First, the Homeric Greeks were strongly impressed by the irresistible power of the gods and of fate, and the weakness of mortals; they thus found an easy excuse for any aberrations of men, but especially of helpless women; and their strong sense of the shortness of life and the dreariness of death led them to try to make the best of their allotted span. Then their ideas of love and marriage tended to foster gentleness. In the Homeric poems there is no love-making; the idea of flirtation is absolutely and entirely unknown. They no doubt spoke sweet words to each other, but they kept what they said to themselves. And a man who wished to marry a girl proved the reality of his desire generally by offering the father a handsome gift for her, but sometimes by undertaking a heavy task, or engaging in a dangerous contest. And when she left her father's home, she bent all her ways to please the man who had sought after her, and she succeeded. In the Homeric poems the man loves the woman, and the woman soon comes to love her husband, if she has not done so before marriage. The Homeric Greeks are, even at this early stage, out-and-out monogamists. Monogamy is in the very heart of the Greek heroes. No one of them wishes more than one woman. There is a curious instance of the power of heroic affection in Achilles. A captive widow has become his partner before the walls of Troy. She is very fond of him, and he becomes very fond of her. But there is no proper marriage between them, and Achilles could not worthily celebrate his marriage in a camp far from his friends and home. Yet such is his love for her, and her alone, that she is to him a real wife. And, when Patroklos dies, Briseis, in her lament over him, states that he promised that he would make her the wedded wife of Achilles, and take her to Phthia, the native land of the hero, and celebrate the marriage-feast among the Myrmidons. Probably Achilles had often given her the same promise, though he knew that his father might assign him a wife, and there might thus be difficulties in the way, and Patroklos had offered to help him in carrying out his design. If there

was such true love to a captive, we may expect this still more to be the case with wives of the same race and rank. And so it is. Beautiful, indeed, is the picture of married life which Homer draws. 'There is nothing,' he says, 'better and nobler than when husband and wife, being of one mind, rule a household.' And such households he portrays in the halls of Alcinous and Arete, and in the Trojan home of Penelope and Ulysses. Indeed, Homer always represents the married relation as happy and harmonious. In the households of earth there is peace. It is in the halls of Olympus that we find wife quarreling with husband. But the love of these women to their husbands is the love of mortals to mortals. They do not swear eternal devotion to each other. They have no dream of loving only one, and that one forever, in this life and the next. They do not look much beyond the present; and therefore, if a husband or a wife were to die, it would be incumbent on the survivor to look out for a successor. Even when a husband is long absent from his wife, it is not expected that he can endure the troubles of life without the company and comfort of one woman's society. Thus Agamemnon takes to himself the captive Chryseis, and comes to love her better than his wife. Thus Achilles becomes so attached to Briseis as to weep bitterly when she is taken from him; but when she is taken from him, he consoles himself with the beautiful-cheeked Diomedes. And Ulysses, though he loves his Penelope best, and longs for her, does not refuse the embraces of the goddesses with whom he is compelled to stay in the course of his wanderings. Homer's insight into human nature is apparent in the circumstance that it is only in the heart of a true woman that he places resistance to the ordinary modes of thought. The peculiarity of Penelope's affection is that it will not submit to prevalent ideas; she loves and admires her Ulysses, and she will love no other. Contrary to all custom, she puts off the suitors year after year. The time has arrived when every one expects her to marry again. She has seen her son Telemachus grow to manhood. She has now no excuse. But still she refuses, waiting against hope for the return of him who in her heart she believes will return no more.

"After what I have stated, I need scarcely say that the influence of woman was very great in the Homeric period. The two poems turn upon affection for women. The Trojan war had its origin in the resolution of the Greeks to recover Helen, and the central point in the 'Iliad' is the wrath of Achilles because Agamemnon has taken away from him his captive Briseis. Ulysses and Penelope, as every one knows, are the subject of the 'Odyssey.' The husband consulted his wife in all important concerns, though it was her special work to look after the affairs of the house. Arete is a powerful peace-maker in the kingdom of her husband Alcinous, and it is to her that Nausicaa advises Ulysses to go if he wishes to obtain his return. All the people worship her as a god when she walks through the streets. Penelope and Clytemnestra are left practically in charge of the realms of their husbands during their absence at Troy, each with a wise man as counselor and protector. And the very beautiful Chloris acted as queen in Pylos. Altogether, the influence of Homeric women must be reckoned great and their condition happy.

"For this result two special causes may be adduced—the freedom which the women enjoyed, and their healthiness, possibly also their scarceness.

"The freedom was very great. They might go where they liked, and they might do what they liked. There was, indeed, one danger which threatened them continually. If they wandered far from the usual haunts of their fellow-citizens, strangers



might fall upon them and carry them off into slavery. Such incidents were not uncommon. But, apart from this danger, they might roam unrestricted. They were not confined to any particular chamber. They had their own rooms, just as the men had theirs; but they issued forth from these, and sat down in the common chamber, when there was anything worth seeing or hearing. Especially they gathered round the bard who related the deeds of famous heroes, or the histories of famous women. They also frequented the wide dancing-place which every town possessed, and with their brothers and friends joined in the dance. Homer pictures the young men and the maidens pressing the vines together. They mingled together at marriage-feasts and at religious festivals. In fact, there was free and easy intercourse between the sexes. They thus came to know each other well, and, as the daughters were greatly beloved by their fathers, we cannot doubt that their parents would consult them as to the men whom they might wish for husbands. Even after marriage they continued to have the same liberty. Helen appears on the battlements of Troy, watching the conflict, accompanied only by female attendants. And Arete, as we have seen, mixed freely with all classes of Phæacians.

“Along with this freedom, and partly in consequence of it, there appears to have been an exceedingly fine development of the body. The education of both boys and girls consisted in listening to their elders, in attending the chants of the bards, and in dancing at the public dancing-place of the town. There was no great strain on their intellectual powers. There was no forcing. And they were continually in the open air. All the men learned the art of war and of agriculture, and all the women to do household work. The women made all the clothes which their relatives wore, and were skilled in the art of embroidery. But they not merely made the clothes, but regularly washed them, and saw that their friends were always nicely and beautifully clad. These occupations did not fall to the lot of menials merely. The highest lady in the land had her share of them, and none was better at plying the loom and the distaff than the beautiful Helen. We have in the sixth book of the *Odyssey* a charming picture of a young princess, Nausicaa. Nowhere are portrayed more exquisitely the thoughts and feelings and ways of a young girl who is true to her own best nature; who is reserved when reserve is proper, and speaks when a true impulse moves her; who is guileless, graceful, leal-hearted, and tender. Happily I have not here to exhibit her character, for to do anything but quote the exact words of Homer would be inevitably to mar its beauty; but I have to adduce some of those traits which show how the Homeric girls grew. Nausicaa is approaching the time when she ought to be married, and in preparation for this event would like to have all her clothes clean and in nice condition. She goes to her father, and tells him that she wishes to wash his clothes and the clothes of her brothers, that he may be well clad in the senate, and they may go neat to the dance. The father at once perceives what desire the daughter cherishes in her heart, and permission is granted; the mules are yoked to the car, the clothes are collected, and the princess mounts the seat, whip in hand, and drives off with a number of maid attendants. They reach the river where are the washing trenches. The clothes are handed out of the car, the mules are sent to feed on the grass, and princess and maids wash away at the clothes, treading them with their feet in the trenches. They then lay out the clothes to dry. While the clothes are drying, they first picnic by the side of the river, and then, to amuse themselves, engage in a game at ball, accompanied with singing. This is a day with Homeric girls. They can do everything that is necessary—drive

wash, spin, and sew. No domestic work comes amiss to one and all. And they are much in the open air. They thus all find active employment. Time never hangs heavy on their hands. And the strength and freshness of body produce a sweetness of temper and a soundness of mind which act like a charm on all the men who have to do with them. It seems to me that this explains to some extent the phenomena of the Homeric poems. There is no vicious woman in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. Some of them have committed glaring violations of the ordinary rules of life, but they are merely temporary aberrations or fits of madness. And there is no prostitution. This healthiness explains also another feature of the Homeric women which deserves notice. There was an extraordinary number of very beautiful women. The district of Thessaly, from which the whole of Greece ultimately derived its own name of Hellas, is characterized by the epithet the land of the beautiful women; and several other places are so characterized. But their type of beauty was not the type prevalent in modern times. Health was the first condition of beauty. The beautiful woman was well-proportioned in every feature and limb. It was the grace and harmony of every part that constituted beauty. Hence height was regarded as an essential requisite. Helen is taller than all her companions. The commanding stature impressed the Greeks as being a near approach to the august forms of the goddesses. As one might expect, the beauty of the women is not confined to the young girl between the ages of seventeen and twenty. A Homeric woman remained beautiful for a generation or two. Helen was, in the eye of the Greek, as beautiful at forty or fifty as she was at twenty, and probably as attractive, if not more so. The Homeric Greek admired the full-developed woman as much as the growing girl.

“Such, then, were these Homeric Greek women. The Greek race was the finest race that ever existed in respect of physical development and intellectual power. Do we not see, in the account that Homer gives of the women, something like an explanation of the phenomenon? A race of healthy, finely-formed women is the natural antecedent to a race of men possessed of a high physical and intellectual organization.

“When we pass from Homer, we enter a new region. We do not know how far Homer's characters are historical. We cannot doubt that the manner and ways of the men and women whom he describes were like those of the real men and women among whom he lived. He may have idealized a little, but even his idealizations are indicative of the current of his age. But we know little of the modes in which the various states of Greece were constituted, and of the relations which subsisted between them. We have to pass over a long period which is a practical blank, and then we come to historical Greece. In historical Greece we have no unity of the Greek nation. We have men of Greek blood, but these men did not dream of forming themselves into one nation, ruled by the same laws, and mutually helpful of each other. The Greek mind regarded the city as the greatest political organization possible, or at any rate compatible with the adequate discharge of the functions of a state. And accordingly if we could give a full account of woman in Greece, we should have to detail the arrangements made in each particular state. There are no materials for such an account if we wished to give it; but even if there had been, it is probable that we should not have learned much more than we learn from the histories of the two most prominent of those states, Sparta and Athens. It is to the position and influence of women in these states that we must turn our attention.

“To form anything like a just conception of the Spartan state, we must keep



clearly in view the notion which the ancients generally, and the Spartans in particular, had of a state. The ancients were strongly impressed with the decay and mortality of the individual man; but they felt equally strongly the perpetuity of the race through the succession of one generation after another. Accordingly, when a state was formed, the most prominent idea that pervaded all legislation was the permanence of the state, and the continuance of the worship of the gods. They paid little regard to individual wishes. They thought little of individual freedom. The individual was for the state, not the state for the individual, and accordingly all private and personal considerations must be sacrificed without hesitation to the strength and permanence of the state. A peculiar turn was given to this idea in Sparta. From the circumstances in which the Spartans were placed, they had to make up their minds to be a race of soldiers. They had numerous slaves in their possession to do everything requisite for procuring the necessaries of life. They therefore had no call to labor. But if they were to retain their slaves and keep their property against all comers, they must be men of strong bodily configuration, hardy, daring, resolute. And as women were a necessary part of the state, they must contribute to this result. The regulations made for this purpose are assigned by the ancients to Lycurgus, but whether he was a real person, or how far our information in regard to him is to be trusted, is a matter of no consequence to us at present; for there can be no doubt that his laws were in force during the best period of Sparta's existence. And the laws bear on their front the purpose for which they were made. All the legislation that relates to women has one sole object, to procure a first-rate breed of men. The one function which woman had to discharge was that of motherhood. But this function was conceived in the widest range in which the Spartans conceived humanity. In fact, no woman can discharge effectively any one of the great functions assigned her by nature, without the entire cultivation of all parts of her nature. And so we see in this case. The Spartans wanted strong men: the mothers, therefore, must be strong. The Spartans wanted brave men: the mothers, therefore, must be brave. The Spartans wanted resolute men—men with decision of character: the mothers must be resolute. They believed, with intense faith, that, as are the mothers, so will be the children. And they acted on this faith. They first devoted all the attention and care they could to the physical training of their women. From their earliest days the women engaged in gymnastic exercises; and, when they reached the age of girlhood, they entered into contests with each other in wrestling, racing, and throwing the quoit and javelin. They engaged in similar contests with the young men, stripping like them before assembled multitudes, and showing what feats of strength and agility they could perform. In this way the whole body of citizens would come to know a girl's powers; there could be no concealment of disease; no sickly girl could pass herself off as healthy. But it was not only for the physical strength, but for the mental tone, that the girls had to go through this physical exercise. The girls mingled freely with the young men. They came to know each other well. Long before the time of marriage, they had formed attachments and knew each other's characters. And in the games of the young men nothing inspired them so much as the praise of the girls, and nothing was so terrible as the shouts of derision which greeted their failures. The same influence made itself felt when they fought in battle. The thought that, when they came home, they would be rapturously welcomed by mother and sister, nerved many an arm in the time of danger. All the training an-

terior to marriage was deliberately contrived to fit the Spartan women to be mothers. And it is needless to say that all the arrangements in connection with marriage were made solely for the good of the state. All the Spartan girls had to marry. No one ever thought of not marrying. There was one exception to this. No sickly woman was allowed to marry. The offspring must be healthy. And, indeed, if she had had to consult her own feelings in Sparta, the sickly girl would of her own accord have refrained from marriage. For the state claimed a right over all the children. They were all brought very soon after birth before a committee appointed by government, which examined into the form and probable healthiness of the child, and if the committee came to the conclusion that the child was not likely to be strong, its death was determined on. But there must have been very few sickly women among the Spartans. If a girl survived this first inspection, she had, as we have seen, her trials to go through, and only the strong could outlive the gymnastic exercises, and the exposure of their persons in all weathers during religious processions, sacred dances, and physical contests. The age of marriage was also fixed, special care being taken that the Spartan girls should not marry too soon. In all these regulations the women were not treated more strictly than the men. The men also were practically compelled to marry. The man who ventured on remaining a bachelor was punished in various ways. If a man did not marry on reaching a certain age, he was forbidden to be present at the exercises of the young girls. The whole set of them were taken one wintry day in each year, and, stripped of their clothing, went round the agora singing a song that told how disgraceful their conduct was in disobeying the laws of their country—a spectacle to gods and men. The women also, at a certain festival, dragged these misguided individuals round an altar, inflicting blows on them all the time. Men were punished even for marrying too late, or for marrying women disproportionately young or old.

“Such was the Spartan system. What were the results of it? For about four or five hundred years there was a succession of the strongest men that possibly ever existed on the face of the earth. The legislator was successful in his main aim. And I think that I may add that these men were among the bravest. They certainly held the supremacy in Greece for a considerable time through sheer force of energy, bravery, and obedience to law. And the women helped to this high position as much as the men. They were themselves remarkable for vigor of body and beauty of form. A curious illustration of this fact occurs in one of the plays of Aristophanes. An Athenian lady resolves to put an end to the war between the Athenians and Lacedæmonians by combined action on the part of the wives from all parts of Greece. She has summoned a meeting of them, and as Lampito the Lacedæmonian wife comes in, she thus accosts her: ‘O dearest Spartan, O Lampito, welcome! How beautiful you look, sweetest one, how fresh your complexion, how vigorous your body! You could throttle an ox.’ ‘Yes,’ says she, ‘I think I could, by Castor and Pollux, for I practice gymnastics and leap high.’ They were not, however, merely strong in body, but took a deep interest in all matters that concerned the state. They sunk everything, even maternal feeling, in their care for the community. Many stories and sayings to this effect have been preserved. A Spartan mother sent her five sons to war, and, knowing that a battle had taken place, she waited for the news on the outskirts of the city. Some one came up to her and told her that all her sons had perished. ‘You vile slave,’ said she, ‘that is not what I wanted to know; I want to know how fares my