


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THE CELIBATE'S APOLOGY

BY
A MISOGYNIST



LONDON :
WATTS & CO.,
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

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A CERTAIN old bachelor in a small London club was nicknamed "the misogynist" in consequence of his frequent gibes at the expense of the members of the feminine sex. Ultimately his friends, who were mostly married, asked him to write a pamphlet in which he should expound systematically the charges he had to make against women. The pamphlet was read aloud at a special meeting of the club, and the gist of it is here presented for the delectation of the general reader. It contained a description of the supposed characteristics of most women of civilized times and of to-day, which are highly disconcerting to the fancy of a confirmed bachelor, especially if they were to be

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experienced frequently and at closer quarters.

* * * *

The first great characteristic of most women is mental silliness and triviality, or personal sentimentality. Women generally take little interest in public or abstract things. As a rule, they take no interest in most matters for themselves, but, if at all, only in relation to some person—*e.g.*, a husband or a son. They dislike theories of truth or justice, but regard everything from a personal point of view. Their children must be regarded as being prettier and cleverer than other people's children. In Italy they pester examiners with letters entreating them not to "plough" their sons; in England and elsewhere they bother Ministers of State and Members of Parliament with demands for patronage and promotion for their sons and nephews. They must satisfy their instinctive desires to pet and manage in trifling matters their husbands, or children, or their cats

and dogs. "If it isn't a man, then it's a dog, or a piece of furniture; and we love it with the same passion, only in another way," says Marie Bashkirtseff, who has revealed feminine feelings in a wonderfully candid manner. Women spoil their children, making them often intolerably selfish and conceited. In English boarding-schools some of this vanity is (painfully) kicked out of the boys, but no one dares to kick a girl, so she remains permanently injured by the parental fondness. Girls at school often form exaggerated attachments to teachers, and are morbidly sensitive to praise or blame; as exemplified in literature by Hauptmann's *Hannele*, and in real life by the case of Charlotte Brontë. Women develop violent loves and enthusiasms, often for the clergy. "It is especially in the passion of love, the attacks of jealousy, the transports of natural tendencies and the instincts of superstition, that women astonish us," said Diderot. "Love-making

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is to males an incident, but to women a vocation. They live in and by emotions. Woman's need of love is greater than man's need."

Their emotional enthusiasm is generally exclusive ; they want to have a monopoly of the affections of some male devotee. They are jealous of their husband's bachelor friends, whom he often has to drop after his wedding. Frazer gives an amusing illustration of this jealousy in the behaviour of the old Queen of Loango in Africa. "In marrying her, the husband engages never more to look at a woman ; when he goes out he is preceded by guards whose duty it is to drive all females from the road where he is to pass." Our Queen Elizabeth was jealously angry when any of her young courtiers or bishops dared to get married. Tolstoy makes Anna Karenina's desire for complete possession of Vronsky lead ultimately to her suicide. In one of Brieux's plays a botanist's girl-friend

destroys his collection of rare plants out of jealousy. Marie Bashkirtseff says, in her diary, "Jealousy makes me quite mad." Mothers often hate to hear other people's children praised. Their sentimental love generally has an obverse side of violent hatred. Women as a rule dislike unorthodoxy in religion, customs, or politics. They are envious of those women who are richer or cleverer than themselves; they relate spiteful tales about other women; and in their malicious gossip make mountains out of mole-hills, feeling a glow of pleasure at being horrified or indignant at the doings of others. Their competitive instinct takes trivial and malignant forms, and gives rise to much pain and ill-feeling.

As sentimentalists, they are possessed by eager and impatient desires; they are instinctive, capricious, and yet persistent. New schemes of theirs are eagerly and passionately desired. Their wishes and

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feelings are not to be controlled or postponed; they are "in a desperate hurry." Therefore they are so often extravagant in dress and in charity. "I, who burn, who boil over, who bubble with impatience, am nailed to the same place; I have enormous emotions!" cries Marie Bashkirtseff. "She is restless herself," said one woman of another, "and cannot let anyone else rest." While men become quieter as they grow older, women often remain unbalanced until old age.

As sentimentalists, women are approbative, wanting not to improve themselves or to learn new things, but to be praised and appreciated for what they are. They are highly sensitive; they cannot stand any chaff, such as males in England are accustomed to give and take. If blamed or thwarted, they take refuge in tears, demand the compassion of strangers, or become hysterical. Medical books show that hysterical tendencies are common among women, especially at certain

periods—*e.g.*, puberty, menstruation, and change of life, when they become “morbidly irritable or excitable,” in the words of Dr. Luff. “I am angry, and have not been crying; I have not lain down on the floor. It’s a bad sign. It’s better to be furious. There’s a pressure on my heart; I should like to howl,” wrote Marie Bashkirtseff. As Suffragettes in England, women have been destroying public and private property, and practising hunger-strikes, because Mr. Asquith would not give them the vote. In contests with their husbands, they can disarm argument and criticism by repetition and by tears. “I feel quite hurt” is a common feminine phrase.

The mental silliness of women is a cause and effect of their excessive personal sentimentality. They are not interested in politics, business, or philosophy; but they are interested in persons and in personal gossip and in trivial details, such as dress and titles and physiognomy.

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They are intolerant and obstinate in their (chance-born) opinions, and are often sociable because of their silliness. Being devoid of mental resources, they must start conversation to lessen their *ennui*. But it must be trivial conversation, or they will complain: "Oh, you're getting beyond me!" What do they read? Newspapers which contain pictures and anecdotes of kings and titled persons, and descriptions of parties and dresses, and of fashionable weddings, such as are to be found in *Home Chat*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Lady*, and the *Queen*, and novels such as those of Hall Caine, Marie Corelli, Charles Garvice, or Mrs. Henry Wood. The *Nineteenth Century*, the *Nation*, *Everyman*, Meredith, and Hardy are not in their line. "Many a woman," says Miss Hutchins, "has passed through a long and blameless life without ever using her mind for five consecutive minutes." "What do we see," asks Karl Pearson, "between three and four

in the afternoon of any fashionable London thoroughfare? Hundreds of women, mere dolls, gazing intently into shop windows at various bits of coloured ribbon!"

As sentimental and silly, women are highly sociable. They must pay and receive calls, talk and be talked to, must "see life," and go to concerts, parties, and theatres to show off their dresses and to chatter. "They are fond of telling everyone of their troubles, and thus court sympathy," says Sir J. Paget of nervous women. "They have a craving for change," says Dr. Moll, "as shown in the continual search for new pleasures, theatres, concerts, parties, tours," etc. In England they love the "At Home," and in Germany the Kaffeeklatsch. They like to be out late at night in the glare of electric light in crowded rooms. "I want to live faster," said one. "I hope to be introduced into society for its life, its happiness." If such events do not

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frequently happen, they complain: "We see nobody; we go nowhere." Strindberg, in *The Confession of a Fool*, says of his heroine: "Bored with her home life, vivacious and restless, she possessed the art of shining; she was always the centre of a crowd, she liked to prolong her parties until the small hours of the morning." In English drawing-rooms many ladies have the irritating habit of beseeching pianists to play something, and then at once starting conversation; and in the same way they will chatter loudly at theatres during the performance of the overture of an opera. Picture exhibitions for them form another opportunity of displaying new frocks and talking trivialities.

Their sociability, their vanity, and their silliness make women excel in the worship of conventional snobbery, of caste and precedence, of titles, orders, badges, of the cleric's cloth, the king's crown, and the officer's uniform—*i.e.*, they value

people more by external trappings than for personal qualifications of brains and character. Marie Bashkirtseff said : " Common people irritate and disgust me." A lady, who was married to the captain of a small trading-vessel, said to a guest in their house : " Isn't it a pity that my husband is not a gentleman ?" A late lamented queen was passionately excited for fear that a nobleman, when talking to her, might tread on the hearth-rug in her presence, and indignant because a bishop's wife had sung at a public concert. A lady, married to a manufacturer, said to him in the presence of strangers : " Well, dear, we won't discuss Robert Browning with you, but you can tell us if coal is up or lard is down in the City." A lady, when calling upon another lady, whose son had proposed marriage to her daughter, looked round the drawing-room, and remarked : " You don't live in such style as I should have expected." She then asked : " Have you had a member

of Parliament in your family?" The senate of ladies, established in ancient Rome by the Emperor Elagabalus, discussed and decided questions of fashions in dress, etc., and especially as to who should be allowed to drive in chariots, and who to ride on horses, asses, mules, or oxen. Women, being generally devoid of originality, copy one another in everything, and are therefore intolerant of breaches of conventional rules. "What will people say?" and "It's out of the question" are common phrases with them. Many of the jokes in the columns of *Punch*, intended to please ladies, are based upon snobbish assumptions, as that 'Arry and 'Arriet cannot dress, speak, and behave like ladies and gentlemen. As conventional snobs they have generally obeyed the dictate of the fashions of their time and place, however absurd or injurious they may be, as in tight-lacing, face-painting, and the wearing of nose-rings and earrings and high heels. A

lady at Cheltenham told a young man that he must not ask a doctor "How much?" but that he ought to press a sovereign wrapped in paper into his hand. The same lady was greatly pained at losing her copy of *Debrett's Guide to the Peerage*, and would never buy a travelling ticket from Cook's offices.

Women are generally vain, approbative, and eager to be praised, and to get above other women in social position. They are complacent, and devoid of the faculty of self-criticism. Compliments and appreciation from others are treasured in their memories. They like to be praised for their looks, their clothes, money, furniture, husband, and children. A woman never considers herself ugly. Marie Bashkirtseff regarded her journal as the most instructive book that had ever been written, because it was the first candid description of a female soul written by a woman. She writes: "I am charmed with myself. I am pretty; I am animated.

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I consider myself a divinity. As usual, I was the life and soul of the party. I have a gigantic imagination. I shall create a sensation. Fancy appearing on the boards and seeing thousands of spectators waiting with beating hearts for the moment you will begin to sing." On account of such vanity and sociability women excel as actresses, and as public dancers and singers. Too many women in real life are great actresses.

Their vanity, snobbery, and sociability, when combined with laziness, in the middle and upper classes in England and America to-day, make women extravagant in the purchase of clothes, furniture, pictures, and ornaments. "Much of the time spent by women of the middle classes in increasing the comforts and ornaments of home, with the rounds of shopping, is simply a misdirection of the labour of others," says Karl Pearson. Lady Jeune says that in smart country-houses ladies change their dresses five

times a day. Women think that they must buy what other women buy, and must keep buying new things for the house, although it may be already full of things; must demand new things from their husbands in the presence of strangers, and in foreign travels must rush to the shops instead of trying to appreciate the characteristics of the countries visited. English and American ladies want their husbands to toil in business competition that they may lavish money on new dresses, jewels, and ornaments. Edith Wharton describes this evil in her novel, *The Custom of the Country*. Wells describes it in his novel, *Marriage*, wherein he speaks of women as "half savages, half pets, unemployed things of greed and desire," wanting "dresses and carpets, and hangings and pretty arrangements, excitements and satisfactions, and competitions and more excitements." He cries fiercely: "And, above all, we've got to stop this jackdaw

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buying of yours; you're to come out of Bond Street, you and your kind." But in real life the husbands dare not stop it, as it is becoming the general rule. Mrs. Harris writes that "Woman has become mainly a consumer, with disastrous results. She demands so much that the postponement of marriage is frequent—hence the social evil. She expresses herself in the decoration of her person or her house, with selfish ends or for ostentation." Manufacturers and shopkeepers make enormous profits by advertisements of changing fashions, which women think that they must obey at their husbands' cost. In a recent *cause célèbre*, the hero said to the heroine: "You love spending money," a very mild way of putting it. Miss Hutchins says in her book, *Conflicting Ideals*: "Some women will cover their drawing-room with trinkets, and think they have done quite a day's work when they have dusted and arranged them.

They buy furniture, china, and pictures, handsome and expensive, in far too great quantities, and arranged with no reference to the tastes and occupations of the inmates of the house. Women are invariably supposed to be paid for, not only in the serious expenses of life, but in the little outings and amusements." Mrs. Hartley and Olive Schreiner think that this great evil of ladies' extravagance is due to their idleness as wives of rich men, and to their lack of experience in the way of earning money by business and productive work.

In some cases the extravagance of women takes the form of constantly giving presents to their friends and relations, or of giving money to the poor and to the churches. Women are generally violently opposed to Radical laws and schemes for taxing the rich for the benefit of the poor, but they enjoy the pleasures of giving doles and subscriptions to individuals whom they know. If they have

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managerial ability, their benevolence takes the form of patronizing and fussy philanthropy—*e.g.*, of the amateur nurses who went to the Transvaal in 1899, who, in the opinion of Sir F. Treves, were worse than the plague of flies. Patronizing philanthropy is satirized by Wells in the person of "Aunt Plessington" in *Marriage*, and is exemplified in the work of District Visitors, resented often by the poor victims of the system, as portrayed in Reynold's valuable essays entitled *Seems So*.

As sentimental, idle, and extravagant, ladies are often querulous and fastidious. They are exacting and ungrateful towards trustees because "they have no experience of business and know little of the machinery of civilized life that provides them with the wherewithal of existence." "Women have never been contented," says Mrs. Colquhoun. "She is petted by her husband, she is surrounded by numerous and delicate attentions, yet she

is not satisfied." "She grows fastidious, she craves the costly, grows capricious and freaky, even in appetite," says Stanley Hall. "There is no one so perverse," says a writer in the *Spectator*, "as is the woman without intellectual interests, whose situation happens to be at variance with her ideas of comfort." Old maids and widows in lodgings and pensions make troubles *re* dirt, smells, and food, until some landladies refuse to take female guests. As unemployed persons, they fill their minds with nervous apprehensions about health, the weather and accidents, complaints, and desires for change and excitement.

They often become quarrelsome and hysterical, they brood over small personal criticisms, and embitter the lives of their husbands and relatives by constant rows. Dickens often makes fun of women pushing on unwilling husbands to fight on their behalf. In one of Brieux's plays one husband comes upstairs to see another

man, and implores him to allow him to shout insults in a loud voice so that his wife can hear them from below. Pinero, in *Mary Goes First*, describes the squabbles of two rival ladies in a small provincial town ; and Fletcher, in his amusing novel, *Mothers in Israel*, portrays the squabbles of two Yorkshire women in a Christian congregation.

When they have power women often become tyrannous and cruel, as in the cases of Queens Elizabeth and Mary of England, Catherine II. of Russia, and Elizabeth Farnese, the termagant of Spain. Jerome K. Jerome speaks of "your Cleopatras, Pompadours, Jezebels, Lucretia Borgias, Salomes, your Roman task-mistresses, your ladies who whipped their pages to death in the middle ages, your modern ladies of fashion, decked with the plumage of the tortured grove."

Women's silliness, vanity, and sentimentality express themselves in the form of religious emotion. Women imbibe

instinctively the patriotic and religious creeds of their time and place, and have no desire to criticize their creeds or to search for truth for its own sake. If asked to prove the truth of a creed, they regard the request as offensive, and can only reply, "I know I'm right." Women can maintain their mental comfort by closing their eyes to unpleasant facts that contradict their views. "Women are convinced of their being in the right without ever having sat in judgment on themselves," says Belfort Bax. If they had read Tennyson or Pascal, they would quote them as to the heart proving the truths of theology. Women are more credulous, more prone to fear, more reverent and complacent than men. And in religion they experience a romantic warmth and excitement. Women have not produced great works in music, politics, poetry, philosophy, or architecture; but they have produced some verses and paintings, especially of a religious

type, "where a weak and vague sentimentality can be expressed with little effort," as says Weininger. "The average woman will accept a statement, and be ready to die for it, if it is uttered by some man with such authority and unction that her emotional nature is sufficiently thrilled" (Havelock Ellis). Women form the majority of the attendants of all the churches. Women love to decorate altars and to sew things for bazaars. In many cases they are subconsciously in love with the local clergyman, as is exemplified in Hauptmann's play, *Hannele*, and in E. L. Linton's novel, *Under which Lord?* A rector in the Midlands said to his new curate: "You must be very careful with young women; your predecessor was supposed to be engaged to three girls when he left here, and we had quite a scene at one house." Mrs. Hartley says that, as a young girl, she sought for God "as the passionate woman seeks her lover. My need for religion lasted until my sex

needs were fully satisfied; then, little by little, it faded."

As religious persons, women are generally spiteful and intolerant. Being devoid of imagination and of contact with all sorts and conditions of men, they cannot realize how other people can, in other circumstances, come to hold other views than theirs. They regard people who are open opponents of their religion as monsters who ought to be crushed, in older days by bloodshed, and to-day by the social boycott; and they can still exercise considerable pressure in this direction in the ways of blocking freedom of speech.

In England and America of to-day, in the richer classes, women do not want to have children, or to do housekeeping. Ladies are lazy, snobbish, and extravagant; and girls of the poorer classes, copying the ideals of their betters, want to become ladies in shops and offices, and to escape from domestic service. Servants,

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like their mistresses, have become extravagant, quarrelsome, discontented, and hysterical. Although it is plain that most women are meant by nature—*i.e.*, by their physical and mental constitution—to be mothers, many try to avoid this function, and so become increasingly lazy and discontented. W. L. Thomas says that “the American woman of the better classes has superior rights and no duties.” Stanley Hall says that nowhere in the world are the males working so hard and the women doing so little useful work as in America. Ladies are not trained to be housekeepers and mothers. They are bad accountants, unpunctual and unbusinesslike. In England they cannot even buy food wisely and defeat the tricks of the shopkeeper. Olive Schreiner, in her book called *Woman and Labour*, maintains that English and American rich society is being corrupted to-day, as was ancient Rome, by the enormous unearned tribute it receives from subject

racess and classes. The rich ladies show the symptoms of this corruption most markedly, and are degenerate parasites to a large degree to-day. They begin by hiring nurses, cooks, governesses, and housekeepers, and end by living in hotels and refusing to have children. "The most helpless case of female degeneration we ever came into contact with was that of the daughter of a poor English officer. This woman could neither cook her own food nor make her own clothes, nor was she engaged in any social, political, intellectual, or artistic labour. Though able to dance for a night, or play tennis for an afternoon, she was yet hardly able to do her own hair or attire herself, and appeared absolutely to have lost all power of compelling herself to do anything which was at the moment fatiguing or displeasing, as all labour is apt to be, however great its ultimate reward." Mrs. Hartley regards woman's unrest as largely due to lack of work, and especially

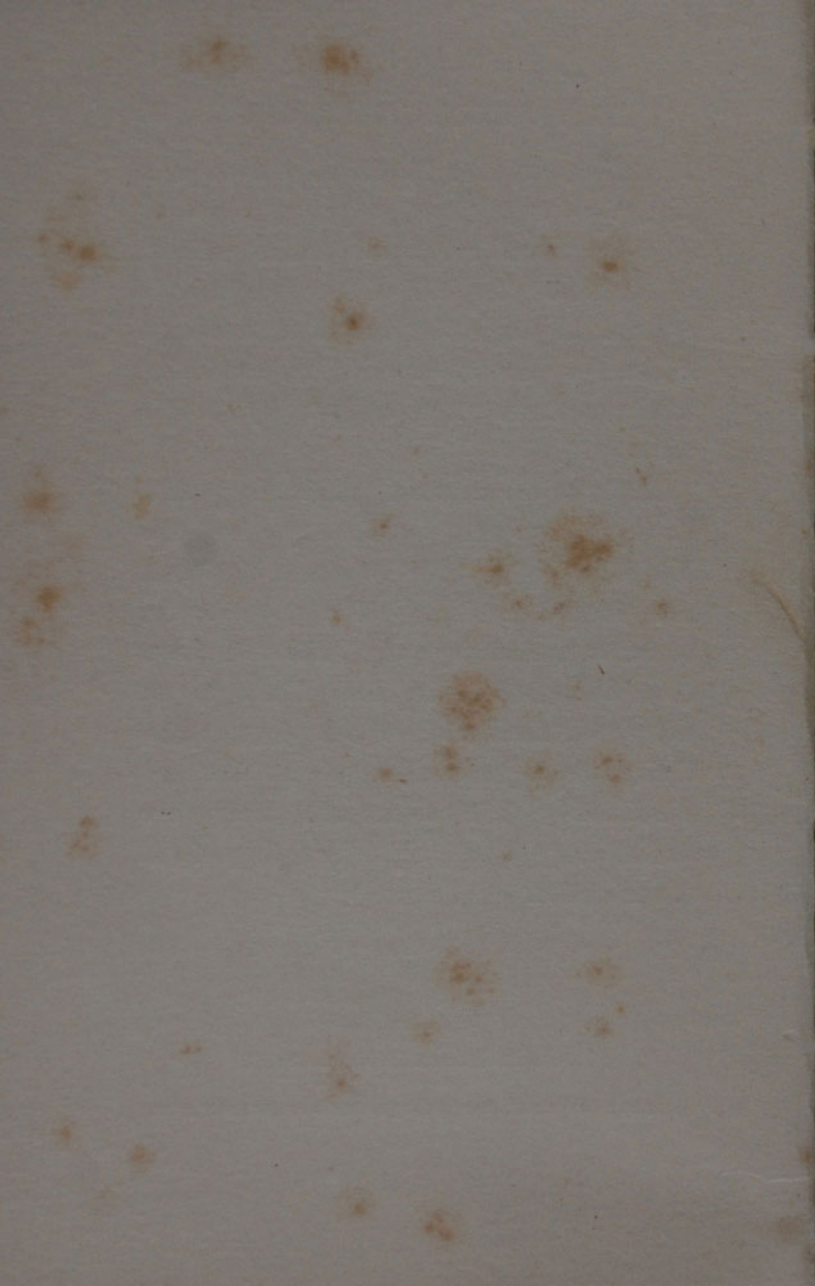
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of mother's work. "The women of our richer classes have become impotent by reason of their soft living." But "women do not yet know what they want." They will "gain nothing by snatching at reform. Woman is by her temperament inclined to do too much or to do nothing. It frequently appears as if woman expects to hold tight to her old privileges as the protected child, as well as to gain her new rights.....to stay on the pedestal when it is convenient, and to climb down whenever she wants to. This cannot be."

George Gissing, the Victorian novelist, described such women in the English middle classes in *New Grub Street* and *In the Year of Jubilee*. Mrs. Colquhoun says of modern English women, "Modern girls are giving too little and asking too much." "They despise the tasks which they cannot perform well." "The standard of appearances is high, that of real craftsmanship exceedingly low."

Mrs. Hartley, who thinks that women in primitive days had property, directed industry, and ruled all home affairs, allows that "the loss of her freedom by woman is often the result of her own desire for protection and her dislike of work, and is not caused by man's tyranny."

In conclusion, said the misogynist, having escaped matrimony in the Victorian era, when women displayed the sentimentality, jealousy, snobbery, sociability, and hysteria which I have described, I am the less likely to be entrapped in the Georgian days, when their extravagance and laziness have so wonderfully increased, and they are demanding more rights as they fulfil fewer duties.



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