A Sex Revolution

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Preface.

Dear Reader:—The history of the past shows us that nations rise, go through a longer or shorter period of prosperity and then decay. The ruling motive in the life of nations, so far, has always been the same, the aggressive or masculine. Self-aggrandizement, *our* nation right or wrong, all to be laid upon the national altar in the name of patriotism, a centralizing of wealth and power in the hands of the few at the expense of the many, and the result has always been what? Go, gather together the human wrecks of any one nation and you have your answer.

Now will not this latest and brightest of nations perish also unless methods are changed, unless the social lever is reversed? Already the seeds of decay are taking root; is there not some law through which we may take a new lease of life, and what is that law, if there be such, if it be not that

"woman, take the lead?"

True, woman is already quite prominent, is becoming more so, but she does not seem as yet to realize that with man's methods she will succeed no better than man has done. She must formulate her own methods before her true work can appear. Woman must be free, must refuse to be led, must believe in herself, before the evils attendant upon imperfect motherhood can be eliminated, and as I see things, the only hope of our nation lies in this direction.

Let us once rise above the necessity of armies, navies, prisons, almshouses, asylums, etc., then the future will stretch out before us with ever increasing brightness. The first step toward this desirable consummation is to believe that it *can* be done; the next is that it *will* be done, and lastly to determine to do it *ourselves*.

L. W.

Chapter I.

First, a little something about myself. I, Margaret Mulgrove, am a childless widow. My husband, Richard Mulgrove, went into the Union army at the beginning of our last war and never came out alive. My only child, little Bessie, took the scarlet fever in the second year of my widowhood, and though employing the most skillful physician in the whole country around, I could not save her. To say that I was desolate does not begin to express the feeling I had.

An aunt, my father's only sister who lived in another State, hearing of my bereavement, decided to come and stay with me awhile and wrote me to that effect. Now my father and mother had in their lifetime (I forgot to say that I was an orphan also) had been good orthodox Christians and had brought me up to walk in the same path, so when Aunt Belinda wrote me she was coming I was a little troubled, for I had been told that she was an Infidel.

I believed infidelity to be something awful, and as our community was a very respectable one, to have a woman of that character come among us, and as my relative was an affliction I had not counted on, but it could not be helped; aunt would be there the next day and I must make the best of it. So the next morning I went to work to put things in the best order possible to receive my expected relative.

She came about ten o'clock, a pleasant faced, white haired lady toward whom my heart instinctively went out, and in spite of my prejudices I felt that I should love her. She stayed with me several months during which time nothing was said or done which brought up the subject of beliefs. True, I had purposely avoided everything that could lead in that direction, but she did not seem at all inclined to be aggressive.

The Sunday, and in fact the day before she left, our minister's sermon called out some remarks from her that surprised me very much.

"Why aunt," I exclaimed, "I thought you were an Infidel!"

"And so I am to church theology."

"And yet you have just affirmed your belief in the underlying principle of all church theology."

"How is that?" she asked.

"You said you believe in God manifest in the flesh."

"I said I believed God manifest in the flesh was necessary to the salvation of the race, but I did not say I believed it had already taken place."

"Not taken place! do you then look for a coming Christ?"

The old lady smiled. "Before you can understand me," she said, "you must learn that a narrow personal application of a general principle is, must be false. The universal spirit of life can never be manifest in its fullness through, or be embodied in a person, in any one man or woman. When God is manifest in the flesh as I mean, it will be through the race. Man, as a race will have become God-like, will have arisen above his present condition, will be saved, not from future, but from present hells."

"Well, I really cannot understand you, aunt."

"I mean simply this, my child, when enough of the love, power and wisdom immanent in the deific fountain becomes developed in the race, and in harmonious proportions, then the evils which now afflict humanity will disappear."

"But how is this to be done?" I asked.

"By belief in our own power to accomplish, through the God within ourselves, that which the church expects, waits for a God outside of ourselves to do for us. God, the soul or spirit of the universe must be manifest in, and act through us to the overcoming of all difficulties, to the surmounting of every obstacle that lies in the way of the progress of the race."

"But we are such weak mortals," I said.

"We are weak only through ignorance, weak because we do not know how to handle nature's forces, which are the true God forces."

Here I involuntarily looked at my hands which were small and delicate, as if to ask: "What can these do toward saving a world?"

Aunt Hobart saw the movement and asked: "How far can you make your voice heard, Margaret?"

"Oh, I have a good strong voice, aunt."

"But suppose you wanted to call the doctor here immediately, could you stand in the door and call him from his office?"

"You know I could not, besides, a voice like that, and all possessing it alike, would be a very unpleasant endowment. The noise, the confusion of sounds, with every one calling at such a distance for whatever they might want would make a perfect babel."

"What then would you do?"

"I would step across the street to the telephone and call through that."

"So you would make your voice heard after all?"

"Yes, I suppose so." And then I repeated: "Nature's forces are the real God-forces," for I was beginning to get a glimpse of her meaning.

"Yes, the real God-forces, a knowledge of one of which will enable you to send your voice hundreds of miles in any direction you choose, provided nature's conditions have been previously complied with; through such knowledge you can extend your personality, your veritable self, in your voice, over a vast range of space, but you are an invisible silence at every point except where you desire to manifest a God-like power, but what does that power say?"

"What does it say?" I repeated wonderingly.

"It says, 'Child, obey me, and then command me.' "

"How, I do not understand?"

"Can you speak your message through a telephone unless all the conditions upon which the transmission of the sound depends have been complied with?" she asked in reply.

"Certainly not, aunt."

"And if everything is right, if the governing law has been obeyed, and you make the effort, can anything prevent your being heard at the desired point?"

"Certainly not," I again said, and then added, "you make things very plain, but it is all so very different from the way I have been taught it bewilders me."

"But you can understand that when you obey the law you command the result—command a God-force; is it not so?"

"It seems so," I answered hesitatingly, "but it looks almost like blasphemy to say so; we, poor mortals, to talk of commanding God-forces!"

"Nevertheless, my dear child, it is true and when we, the race, have so come to understand, and so learned to obey a sufficient number of those God-forces to cover all human needs, then we shall be able to so command them as to save ourselves from every human ill. Then God will be manifest in the flesh in fact and in deed."

For some little time I sat in silence. I was overwhelmed with the magnitude of the thought. Seeing that I made no reply, aunt continued:

"You can now understand what Jesus meant when he said that heaven and earth might pass away but not one jot or tittle of the law. The law, not human enactments but nature's commands must be obeyed before the desired end can be obtained. The only price current for any and every blessing is perfect obedience to the law involved. No bribery in nature's courts."

"You quote a good deal of bible for an Infidel," I remarked.

"And why not Margaret? Because I am an Infidel in the church sense of that term, it does not necessarily follow that I am Infidel to truth. If you question the fact that nature's laws are immutable, suppose you test the matter in the realm of mathematics. Could you solve even one problem therein if the law involved is not strictly obeyed?"

"No, aunt, I could not," I hesitatingly replied. "I might work at it as long as I pleased, but I could never obtain a correct result if I violated the simplest rule concerned."

"But suppose you do not violate the simplest rule, what then?"

"Why, the correct result is sure to be obtained; it has to come."

Aunt quietly smiled at my reply. "In other words, you command the result," she said, "and now, my dear, which interpretation honors Jesus the most, the one which the church has adopted, or the one I have given? I refer to his declaration of the necessity of fulfilling the law, of course, though there are many more of his sayings that are just as little understood."

"You are opening up to me a wonderful range of thought," I said in reply, "and I only wish that you had said these things sooner, or that you were going to stay longer."

"Oh, I think I have said enough now to keep you busy with thought for some time to come, and you can visit me after a while and then we can talk more of nature's laws and of such portions of the bible as shadow them forth."

She left me the next morning, but just before she went she put a book into my hand saying, "Read it carefully, it will give you food for thought." I took the book and laid it aside. I was too full of the train of thought that had been aroused to read then.

While aunt remained I had gladly devoted every moment to her, but now I was alone, and I could look at what had been said, could examine the sentiments advanced in the quiet of my own room. The first thing I did was to go over what had been said in connection with the telephone. I then took up the telegraph, and I thought if the telephone is an extension of the voice then the telegraph is an extension of the arm.

I next tried to imagine how thousands of bona-fide fleshly arms would look extended through the atmosphere in all directions. The picture was too comical; I laughed till the tears came. The next thought was how likely they would be to get tangled, and then another hearty laugh. It was a wonderful school, this method of thinking, but the most important lesson learned was that the invisible is the real, that it is the real self that goes out upon telephonic and telegraphic lines, that the body is but the machine through which the "I am" acts.

Yes, I saw as I had never seen before that the invisible is the real, that spirit, mind, being invisible, could, through a knowledge of nature's invisible forces control the visible, the tangible. Then the idea of God manifest in the flesh as aunt Hobart presented it; but what about a crucified

God, I asked when I thought of this. Now we are a sort of double beings and talk with ourselves, or there was some foreign invisible intelligence present, for if ever I asked questions and received replies I did then.

The response to the question: "What about a crucified God?" was "Through what feeling has the race suffered the most?"

"Through what feeling?" I repeated.

"Yes, through what feeling; has not that which gives the most happiness when conditions are right, been also the source of the deepest suffering to-wit love?"

My inner consciousness acknowledged the truth of this and the unknown something continued: "Then has not God, the God of love been crucified, nailed to the cross of hard conditions ever since the race had an existence?"

This application of the idea seemed so true, so in harmony with that other new idea, new interpretation of the meaning of God manifest in the flesh, that I felt as if a new world had opened up before me, but the reply to my first question continued to roll in upon me:

"Are not the toiling millions the bleeding hands and feet, and are not the thinkers of the ages those who are in advance of their time, the thorn-crowned temples? is not the wormwood and the gall ever being pressed to the lips of such thinkers, and further, is not the war-demon ever thrusting the soldier's spear into the side of this crucified God, this grand humanity that is capable of so much?"

I was awed into silence, and then my thoughts turned upon her whom I had always heard spoken of as an Infidel, and I said to myself: "If she is an Infidel where are the Christians?" Again a silence while the words: "A crucified God," "God manifest in the flesh," kept flitting through my brain. Soon again I felt the thought of what, as before said, was my other self or an unseen presence independent of myself. I say felt, for I heard no sound but the words were as distinct as though I had. Perhaps it would be better to say I saw them.

"There are two things needed to secure the salvation, or elevation of the race, power and wisdom. We need the power to do, and the wisdom to know what to do."

"And where is the office of love," I asked, "I had supposed that to be the redeeming power."

"Love is the creative power; wisdom the true redeemer, and yet they cannot be separated, but we have the love already—love crucified. The allegory, for it is only that, makes Jesus the God of love and then crucifies him. But there was a resurrection, and that resurrection is typical of what must come to the race, a rising out of the grave of ignorance into the light of knowledge, of wisdom.

"The resurrected Christ will not appear till in the fullness of time, or till the sufferings, the sad experiences of mankind have evolved the wisdom which will save us from such experiences, and in the meantime the suffering goes on evolving its lessons. This idea is symbolized by the words: 'The sufferings of Christ are fulfilled in his members.' "

"And his members are those of the church," I said.

"Not so. The members of that body are the whole human family, in the heart of every one of which is love enough to save a world if love alone could do it. Who can measure the mother's love for her child, but oh how it has been crucified! But this love-God is slowly rising and will eventually become the wisdom-God, God manifest in the flesh, and then we shall have an evoluted, a fully unfolded redemption."

There was no more, and indeed I do not think I could have borne any more then, but all through that week I kept revolving in my mind what I had heard.

Chapter II.

The next Sabbath morning I went to church as usual, but somehow, what the minister said seemed tame. I was so little interested I remained at home in the afternoon, and then I remembered the book aunt had given me. I had not even looked at it. I would get and read it. When I took off the wrapper I read:

"the strike of a sex."

"What a queer title," was my thought, but I opened it and began to read. Page after page was scanned, becoming more and more interested as I progressed with the reading, and I did not put it down till the last page was finished. I then lay down upon the lounge and tried to think; but soon I became restless and thought I would take a walk, so I arose, threw a veil over my head and passed out the back door through the garden and turned my steps toward the woods.

I walked on for some time without noticing that the country through which I was passing was new, and when I did it did not disturb me in the least, and I still continued to go forward. Presently, as I ascended a little eminence, I found myself overlooking a vast upland plain, upon the border of which I was standing, and near me on the right I saw a man dressed in officer's uniform and holding a trumpet in his hand. As I looked he raised the trumpet to his lips.

"Please don't blow?" I heard a voice say, and I noted that the words were an entreaty, the tones a command.

I turned to see from whence the voice proceeded, and near me stood a woman in whom was embodied all I had ever imagined, and more, of womanly beauty, dignity, and power. As I looked upon her I did not wonder that the tones of her voice were commanding, for her very presence was both a benediction and a command; a benediction in that I too was a woman, and a command to make my womanhood a blessing to the world.

"Who are you?" I involuntarily asked.

"I am the embodied spirit of motherhood; men call me Lovella," was her gracious reply.

The man who held the trumpet had paused and was looking at her. "Why may I not blow?" he asked at length.

"Why would you blow?" was her response.

"I would summon the warriors of the nation to defend its honor and prevent its disruption."

"And the cost of all this," she queried, keeping her eye fixed upon him.

"The cost," he repeated, looking as though that was nothing so that the object was accomplished.

"Yes, the cost," she persisted, "not to you but to the people; they must pay the bill, you reap the reward."

The man made no reply to this but looked as if he wondered who this woman was who thus presumed to question him.

She continued: "For the sake of a false standard of honor you would imbue the nation in blood. To preserve an unbroken union to rule over you would make thousands of widows and orphans. A compact of states that must be enforced by the sword had better be broken."

"You are uttering treason; you are an anarchist," he said, again raising the trumpet to his lips.

Lovella stepped nearer and laid her hand on his arm. "If you blow, I must," she said. I then saw attached to her girdle a trumpet of wonderful workmanship upon which was inscribed "The Power of Mother Love." Emboldened by the kindness of her smile I stepped forward to examine it more closely, when I found it to be composed of myriads of hearts closely cemented by intertwining fibres.

The man paused again and stood looking at the woman.

"Yes, only a woman," she said, in response to his look, "but a woman in earnest. Does it surprise you, sir, that woman who has hitherto worked with man, thought with man, depended upon man, should now begin to work for herself and her children?"

"But why should she work against man to do this?"

"In self-defense and in defense of her children."

"In self-defense! why man is woman's natural protector."

The look upon Lovella's face when he said this was simply indescribable. I could think of nothing but Whittier's lines:

"With a scorn in her eye that the gazer could feel, Like the glance of the sunshine when it flashes on steel."

and nothing but the steel of supreme self-assurance could have withstood that look without flinching. Still her reply was as even, as gentle in tone as though speaking to a little child.

"How has man protected us? Where are my sons? Where are my daughters?" she asked.

"Where are they? is not the land full of them?"

"Not all of my sons are here—five hundred thousand of those who went, at your command, to war with their brothers, have left their bones to whiten southern battle fields, or they have been buried beneath southern soil, and yet you would summon the demon of war to devour still more of them."

The great, strong man quailed before the eye of this woman, still he would not yield.

"Your sons," he said, "you have counted the rebels. Do you, madam, claim as sons those who fell fighting against the flag of our nation and still call yourself a daughter of Freedom?"

"I am not the daughter but the mother of Freedom, and you chain her continually; but what of those who were on the other side, my fair sons of the north?"

"They died nobly, died defending the flag of their country."

"Ah, but they died, were killed, shot down, were starved to death."

Her look forced a reply. "Yes, they died," he repeated hesitatingly.

"Then where was their protection, where the protection of their wives from widowhood, their children from orphanage?"

"It is of no use to argue with a woman," he said, and he lifted his trumpet to his lips and blew long and loud. As he did this Lovella blew also, and strange to say the sound of her trumpet drowned that of his.

The man did not seem to realize this till he had blown a second blast, and then finding that her work neutralized his he attempted to take her trumpet from her. She only smiled at the futile attempt and waited.

He blew again. She did the same, and at the same moment, but this time she sent out a peculiar note the sound of which had hardly died away when I saw myriads of women coming from every direction. They soon filled one-half the vast plain, while a group of the most advanced among them, judging from their appearance, surrounded the tall "Spirit of Motherhood."

"My daughters," she said, "who of you are willing to yield up your sons to fight the sons of other mothers?"

There was no response only by their expressive looks. Lovella persisted: "Will you not make your wishes known in this matter?"

This time the cry was: "No more war, no more war."

"Wait," said the man, "do not decide hastily; do not force us to antagonize you; think upon this matter before you decide. What has become of your spirit of patriotism, of that self-sacrifice which has hitherto made women so lovely?" but again the cry was heard, "No more war."

For a little time there was silence, and as I looked upon the vast multitude I remarked to one standing near me, "another 'Strike of a Sex.' "

"Strike," she said, looking as though she did not quite understand.

"Yes, the time when you assembled and demanded the right to your own bodies."

"Oh, that is what you call it, a strike; well we find that we must demand yet more in order to make that concession practical. A strike, this a revolution."

"A sex revolution, what do you mean by that?" I asked. The "Strike of a sex" had astonished me, but this was yet more, so I awaited her reply with a mixture of curiosity and interest.

"We mean that man's methods must be reversed, that love guided by wisdom shall take the place of brute force."

"You intend then, to take the ruling power into your own hands—our own hands, I suppose I ought to say, as I am a woman too."

She laughed. "You would have to say 'we intend,' to match your amendment, but we intend to show man that there is a better way and to insist that it shall be followed, if you call that taking the ruling power into our own hands. We are determined that our sons shall no longer be sacrificed to man's idea of national honor, national glory. Does killing and killing elevate nations, make them glorious? Does not the wail of bleeding hearts drown the shout of victory as well as the cry of defeat?"

"What you say is all too true," I replied, "but why has not this step been taken before?"

"Because woman has been a slave, and has believed that she must be one; but she is getting a taste of freedom, she is beginning to sense her power."

Here the man again made an effort to impress the assembled multitude of women with the importance of preserving this "glorious nation" intact.

"This nation" he said, "planted by the hand of God in the midst of the waters, and made great through his favor, shall we permit it to be dismembered by a few hot heads with impractical ideas—this nation which God has raised up to reflect his own glory, and to be a light to the nations of the earth—shall we permit it?"

"If God planted this nation," replied Lovella, "he does not need the blood of our sons to nourish it. He is able to take care of it without our help or he possesses no God-like power, and as for his glory, will it shine the brighter by being reflected through blood? No, we have had enough of war."

"Very well; if this is your final decision, we must act without you. We thought, when we conceded what you asked awhile since that you would be content, but as we find you are not

we must look after the welfare of that which has been committed to our care in spite of your protests."

"Committed to your care!" and again I thought of Whittier's lines as I saw the look upon Lovella's face. "How well the nations have prospered under your care, and how well you have cared for the mothers under whose throbbing hearts the nations have marched into existence, let history declare," she continued. "Your assumptions are without foundation; your methods are failures; something else must be tried, for war must cease," and the assembled multitude bowed their heads in assent.

"Who is that man?" I asked of the one with whom I had before spoken.

"His name is Selferedo, and he loves power, is in fact the embodied spirit of the love of power, of selfishness," she replied.

I turned my eyes toward the beautiful woman who stood confronting Selferedo so firmly and yet so quietly, and asked: "Why is she called Lovella?"

"Because she is the embodiment, not of creating, but of protecting love."

"What," said I, "is not creating and protecting love one and the same?"

She smiled. "The quickening power which plants the germ," she said, "is masculine, but at conception protecting love takes it in charge, builds its body from her own, thus making it so a part of herself that from henceforth it is her care. Look to the history of the past and say if the creative, the masculine principle protects, but hark, Selferedo speaks again."

I turned and heard him say: "Madam this is not fair; you have taken a dishonorable advantage of me by drowning the sound of my trumpet with your own. Your followers are here, but you have prevented the calling of mine."

"You have had time enough to call yours since mine came, why have you not done so, sir?"

"Because I expected you would continue to do as you had already done, madam."

"Try it, sir."

He lifted his trumpet and blew a blast that seemed to me loud enough to raise the dead. Presently I saw coming from all directions multitudes of men, but they seemed surprised when they saw their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters there. "Why are you here," they asked, "your places are in our homes." No reply was made to this, but Selferedo said:

"I have summoned you, my sons, to the defense of your country. If you would protect your homes you must repel the invader. All are not needed, so we will cast lots as to who shall go."

They began to prepare for the casting of the lots when Lovella called upon them to listen to her. This Selferedo tried to prevent but she said: "Sir, you accused me awhile since of unfairness; you have talked to the daughters, why may I not talk to the sons? Have I not the right?" she asked appealing to those who had gathered at Selferedo's call.

"You have, and we will listen to your words," was the general response, so Selferedo was obliged to submit, though he did so with very bad grace.

"I regret," said she when silence was restored, "that I must correct the statement that has been made to you. It is false; our homes are not in danger; a portion of this confederation of states has decided upon an independent government. This you know was done once before, not by these same states, nor for the same reason, and they were forced back by sword and cannon, but at what a cost. Five hundred thousand of our best men gave their lives; heart-breaking wails of agony went up from hundreds of thousands of homes; widowed wives, orphaned children, maimed men filled the land through all its borders—"

"But our flag was preserved intact," cried several voices.

“Intact, with blood dripping from all its folds! intact, does that restore the dead to life, does that heal broken hearts!” she replied.

There was no response to this and she continued: “Now as then, our homes are not in danger; now as then we shall be the aggressors; now as then we shall invade other homes if you consent to this war. Let them go in peace. If they can do better alone we have no right to prevent it, and if they cannot they will come back of themselves if we leave the way open.”

Then, in turn, Selferedo harangued them, brought to bear all the motives, all the influences he could summon. He talked to them of patriotism, of national honor, of their duty to their country, and while he yet held their attention he said: “We will not cast lots but will trust to your patriotism, to your love of country and call for volunteers; all who are willing to resist this attempt to dismember our common country will please step to the front.”

There was a moment’s hesitation, then one, and another, and another took their places, even till there was enough for an army. Selferedo smiled triumphantly. “We have enough,” he said.

Lovella turned to the women. “Will the wives, sisters, mothers and daughters of these men come to their sides,” she asked.

Immediately there went from among the women to the sides of those men a number fully equal to their own. The men looked up inquiringly. “We have come to go with you,” they said in reply.

“No you cannot go, we do not want women,” said Selferedo. “No, no, you must not go,” said those fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons.

“We shall go if you do,” was the firm but quiet reply.

“But we will not let you go.”

“Then you will kill us, for if you go we shall or die in the attempt.”

I realized then as never before the possibilities of the power of woman’s love.

Chapter III.

"But *we* won't let you go." I saw then as I never before the assumption of the position that man takes; taking it for granted as he does, that he is woman's rightful ruler. If "and he shall rule over thee," was pronounced upon woman as a curse, the sooner she repudiates such rule the sooner will that curse be lifted. However there was not much assurance in the faces of the men there present when wives, mothers, sisters and daughters made that declaration. I never saw such an expression. They were speechless with astonishment.

"What does this mean?" said Selferedo, looking at Lovella as if he would like to annihilate her.

"It means, sir, that we are in earnest; it means that we do not intend that the men shall be killed off till large numbers of our women must live alone or violate the law."

"Or violate the law." he repeated inquiringly.

"Yes; you men make the laws, and you say that a man can have but one wife, which is right in itself, is Nature's law where you do not violate her conditions, and then you declare war and the men many of them, are killed: is that not practically decreeing an equal number of women to celibacy or a violation of natural law and legal statue?"

Selferedo looked as if a new, but unacceptable light was dawning on his mind. He evidently felt the force of what she said and could not readily reply to her argument, and she continued:

"In view of all this we have decided that if you go to war we will go with you, that we will share danger and death by your sides, that what God hath joined together, we will not permit you to put asunder."

"And leave your children, such of you as have children, motherless!"

"Why not," she asked. "If you go to war to kill other children's fathers or be killed yourselves, we will go too, and will kill other children's mothers or be killed ourselves."

Selferedo and those with him looked horrified. He opened his lips as if to speak, then closed them again; at length he gasped in the same words he had used before, "What does this all mean!"

"It means that the crucified God is rising from his tomb."

"Not much God in woman's going to war," he retorted.

"You do not understand; men cannot," said Lovella gently. "Woman represents the love element of the God-forces in Nature. Hitherto it has been a negative, a yielding, and consequently a crucified love. The love in woman's heart has suffered till its latent power is aroused, so aroused that it demands redemption or extinction; we repudiate eternal torture."

"Eternal torture," I repeated to myself, "surely woman's life has been little else."

Selferedo did not seem to know what to say to this, but as Lovella made no further remark, he at length asked: "And how much more are you going to demand? As I said awhile ago, when we conceded what you demanded in what you call a 'Strike of a Sex,' we supposed you would leave us alone so far as our way of doing things is concerned."

"I believe you graciously conceded us the right to our own bodies," she said in reply.

"We resigned all rights as husbands and put ourselves in the place of dependents upon your favor."

"What right have you then to demand that we shall bear sons who must go to war, must kill or be killed. If we have the right to our own bodies how dare you ask us to use them as gestating rooms for sons who must be reared as marks for bullets or for cannon balls?"

"So you intend to separate from us again unless we grant what you demand?"

"Have not these said they will go with you, and die with you, if need be?"

"But that is what we do not want."

"Why not say then in so many words that you want us to rear sons as an offering to the war demon, and daughters whose husbands are likely to be torn to pieces to satisfy that governmental pride which is ready to immolate its citizens on the altar of national ambition. If you persist in declaring war this is what you mean and why not say it?"

"You are Anarchists, you do not believe in government."

"Wait till you have given us a just government before you accuse us of being opposed to government as such. A just government will be a permanent one, you can rest assured of that."

Again Selferedo was silent, while the vast concourse of both men and women stood waiting the result. At length he said: "But you have not told us how much more you intend to demand."

"How much do you think we ought to demand to make things as they should be?" She smilingly asked. To this there was no reply.

Lovella now turned to the men, who, enthused by Selferedo's eloquence, had volunteered for the war and asked: "What will you do?"

"What can we do? we cannot see these dear ones die."

"You have enlisted and you cannot go back; desertion is death," thundered Selferedo in his most commanding tones.

"Then we must die for fight we will not," was the equally positive response.

"And we will die with you," said mothers, wives, sisters and daughters.

"No," said Selferedo, "we do not war on women."

"When you take away fathers, sons, husbands and brothers you do war on us, and you cannot prevent our dying if they die."

Then there arose a great cry from the men who had not enlisted, and from the women who were with them. They said: "These shall not die for we will not permit it."

Selferedo trembled for he saw that his power was gone, while Lovella said: "War does not tend to the elevation of humanity; on the contrary it brutalizes, drags us down. Its results are evil and only evil, therefore we demand that war shall cease, shall our demand be accorded?" and from the vast concourse of men came the response clear and strong: 'Your demand shall be accorded.' But Selferedo stood silent and rebellious. Lovella read his thought and said:

"You mistake in believing that the glory of our nation has departed because we ignore an insult rather than fight. National duelists are no more honorable than are individual duelists and the creed of honor once held by them has long since been discarded by gentlemen, by all honorable men. The real glory of our nation has but just commenced; from henceforth the nations of the earth will look to us as taking the lead in beating swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks."

"More bible," was my thought, and indeed, Lovella seemed to be very familiar with that book, and how much her ideas were like aunt Hobart's, yet aunt was called an Infidel. I wish we had more such Infidels. What she and Lovella thought seemed to me to be the highest kind of fidelity

to truth, seemed like the butterfly as compared with the worm when put beside past teachings; but, comments aside, I must go on with my story.

Selferedo replied to Lovella's gentle words with: "Time will tell if a nation ruled by women can maintain its position. Judging by her yielding nature, such a nation will become the prey of surrounding nations, will be picked to pieces and divided amongst them; what does woman know of government?"

"Judging from the past, you mean; you forget that she is becoming a positive power."

"If she becomes a positive power, in what will her methods differ from man's? How can she maintain her positive position without the sword?"

"You forget, sir, that positiveness and aggressiveness are not one and the same thing, even as force and power are not the same. We pay the nations the compliment of believing them capable of being swayed by moral weapons, if skillfully handled. Besides, as to woman's knowledge of government, has man evolved one that is satisfactory?"

To this Selferedo, as before, made no reply, and she continued:

"Man has had the control of affairs in all of the ages of the past; is it more than fair that there should be a sex revolution?"

"A sex revolution, what do you mean by that?" he asked.

"Let the subservient sex become the dominant one for a time. Man's forte is force, woman's love; suppose that force yields the reins to love?"

"Love is a syren; her dalliance leads to death if followed too far," he said contemptuously.

"Alas," she replied, "how little you men understand love! With woman in the lead, love's true law will be learned, and man will cease to grovel in the dust of passion, unsanctified either by moral purpose or spiritual life. Then the central, the creative love, out of which all other loves spring, will become a refining instead of a consuming fire. It will then be like the bush that Moses saw, which burned and was not consumed, a glorifying fire, an uplifting power, a quickener in our search after truth."

The man's reply was a sneer with the words: "Oh, you are very beautiful, but you cannot move me, if you can these others," indicating with his hand the men assembled, "and though defeated now I bide my time."

"And so can I, to be understood" said Lovella with a sigh, "but I will now try to tell what we demand. I do not like the word, demand, but as you have not heeded our requests, our pleading tears, the force of self-assertion must be overcome by the force of love's assertion. We will conquer or die, not for ourselves, but for humanity, so I say we demand. You have conceded to us on the war question, for that it was evil did not need to be proven, and the how to remove it was already plain.

"But there are other evils that the way to cure them is not yet plain. We demand, no ask, for if they will not do so we must study them alone—we ask that our brothers study these questions with us, and when the cause of any evil is found, its working clearly understood, we then demand that said cause be removed at no matter what cost, for in the end, its removal will always cost less than its continuance."

"That is, we men must be put in leading strings," said Selferedo, scornfully.

"Why not;" she replied. " 'With what mete ye measure it shall be measured to you again' is a law of nature. One extreme must bring the other before the balance comes.

"For ages past the men have led

In church, and state, and home,
And battlefields have strown with dead
To gild ambition's dome,
But now the great transition comes,
Earth's slaves are being freed,
Love's light is kindling in our homes,
With woman in the lead,"

is the language of one of your own sex, is the declaration of a sex revolution and we propose to make it good, to practicalize it."

"So you propose to run this world for the ages to come, do you?"

Lovella gave him a look such as a mother might give to a wayward child: "No Selferedo, only till a balance is restored, then we can go on together," she said.

"And how long, suppose you, will it take to bring the balance you talk of," he asked in the same sneering tone in which he had so often spoken.

"Live for us as we have lived for you; give us the aid of your earnest thought, knowing the while, that the decision rests with us, say fifty years, and if the changes that we bring are not for the better, we will then concede you your old place."

"Fifty years," he repeated to himself, "fifty years, just like a woman's calculation; what can they accomplish in that length of time," then aloud: "Well, it shall be so; if you think you can do so much in half a century, you shall have the chance to test your power."

"And the credit of what we do will be yours as much as ours, for you have prepared the materials for our work, we shall only arrange it. We could not do what we wish to do but for what you have done."

"If it is creditable," added Selferedo, "we will share the credit with you."

"Would you prefer that it be otherwise than creditable," asked Lovella, looking him calmly in the face.

"We shall see," he said again, "but remember, it is but fifty years, and at the end of that time I think you will have discovered your folly, if not long before."

There came a sort of mist before my eyes just then, a hazy appearance which I involuntarily tried to brush away. The effort seemed to intensify the difficulty and I wondered what was the matter. Presently things cleared but the scene had changed. Instead of a plain filled with women, or even half filled, I was looking into a very large room in which there was a number of both sexes.

Lovella and Selferedo were there, and I seemed to have the power to look into the very soul of the latter. Externally he was as pleasant and agreeable as a man can make himself when he has a purpose to accomplish, which he does not wish to have known. To all outward appearance he was as anxious to have Lovella's plans succeed as though they were his own. His manner said: "Fair queen, I am your servant for the next fifty years, and well may you prosper," but the internal thought was, "yes, your plans shall be carried out and proven so foolish that we men will never have any more trouble from that source. Woman's rights will be a thing of the past, will have been thrown into the waste basket of rejected schemes, and from thence forth woman will fall back into her proper place, glad to yield the lead to us."

I looked to see if any of the others felt as Selferedo did. Of the some two or three dozen men present there were five who held positions of wealth and honor, were chosen rulers of the people.

Of these, four shared Selferedo's feelings, while the other one really hoped that with "woman in the lead," something better would come to humanity. "Four of the five only care for themselves," was my silent comment, when, as if in answer to the thought, I heard the words:

"How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven."

I turned to see who had spoken, and if ever there was a divine man in human form, here was one. I looked at him inquiringly, but was too much awed to speak.

"Yes," he repeated, "the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of love with wisdom as a devoted counterpart. The prophecy of a new heaven and a new earth is no idle dream, but the conditions which will make things new here must be the work of woman, must be born of woman."

Emboldened by his kindly manner I asked: "Would you accept woman as leader?"

"Most certainly; woman alone can lead man to the divinest heights. Man was first, but the fact that he was incomplete without her showed that he needed a leader. He will finally accord her her true place."

"It would indeed be a grand woman who could lead you," was my thought.

"Yes, grand, and more than that, is she to whom I owe so much," he said in response, "but listen and learn." Saying this he vanished.

Chapter IV.

When I had in a measure recovered from my surprise, I heard Selferedo saying:

"Fifty years will soon be gone; if you would accomplish anything worth the while you, or I should say, we, must work fast."

"The best way to facilitate a work is first to understand it," replied Lovella.

"And what do you propose, my fair commander?"

"First of all a thorough investigation of the machinery of society, both as to its separate parts, and as to its relations, the effect of one part upon another; and here is where we want the aid of the best, the broadest, the wisest minds of both sexes."

I could see that Selferedo was not well pleased, but he smilingly asked: "And how much of your precious time must we devote to this work of investigation?"

"Enough to master the subject, five, perhaps ten years."

"But there are some evils, dear lady, the causes of which are so plain there is no need that time be spent to investigate. The fifty years, as I have already said, will soon pass, and I should like to see something done that will tell upon the future. If we can do enough in that time, with 'woman in the lead' to demonstrate her fitness to lead, then there is no more to be said. She will have proved her place. Yet it appears to me like assuming a great deal for her to make the attempt when the best men of the ages have failed to remedy the evils that seem to be inseparable from human nature."

"You forget," she said, "what you men have already done. But for that, we could do no more than the squaw of the wigwam could do if such a work were proposed to her. You have been so intent, however, in evolving wonders from nature's storehouse that you have overlooked their proper adjustment. It takes months to prepare the land, particularly if it be timbered land, and months more for the wheat, corn, potatoes, and whatever else is needed for a good meal, to grow and ripen, but when all is ready the housewife will prepare the meal in an hour.

"Fifty years, it is true, is but an hour compared with the time you have worked, but with your aid we expect in that time to be able to satisfy some of the hunger that now prevails."

"I do not think that hunger prevails, or that it ever has to any great extent," said Selferedo. "Now and then someone may fail in getting enough to eat, but compared with the whole people the cases are very rare, and if they were known a supply would be forth coming. Generally, when such cases do occur, it is the party's own fault, and there is the county house to go to, if nowhere else."

Lovella sighed, when she found that Selferedo only thought of physical hunger. "The county house is but a sorry refuge at its best," she said, "but there are other kinds of hunger than that demanding physical food. Heart hunger, soul hunger, spiritual starvation prevail everywhere, and these result from a lack of balance in societary relations, and from our ignorance of the finer forces of nature in their adaptation to soul needs."

Selferedo seemed very much surprised at the idea of spiritual starvation. "Why, really," he said, "I cannot understand you. Spiritual starvation, and church spires pointing heavenward from every village in the country. Surely, we are a very religious people."

As he said this something wonderful occurred—something that made me think of the magicians of Egypt. Lovella waved her hand and there appeared before us a most loathsome and disgusting scene, brutal men, degraded women, ragged children contending for the garbage that had been gathered from the streets. It was a scene from one of the slums of the metropolis of our country, as I afterwards learned.

"Look," she said. He did look and shuddered at the sight.

"How much spirituality is there in the churches when such places as that can exist almost beneath their very shadows," she asked.

"And do you expect to purify such places as that?" he asked in reply.

"We expect to try and that you will help us. In your haste to evolve great things you have knocked down and trampled upon my weaker children. The churches have no healing for such as these; not that their intent is not good enough, but they don't know how; they do not understand causes. These are among the things to be investigated, and these poor wrecks are the ones that the spirit of motherhood must heal as far as is possible, and at the same time must find out and remove the causes that have produced such results."

The conversation had so far been carried on between Lovella and Selferedo, but Lovella now turned to the others and said: "We will now look upon some of the grand things that man has done," and as she spoke there unrolled before their gaze immense forests that slowly changed into fertile fields, wigwams that gave place to comfortable dwellings, and still the change went on, till large cities, magnificent residences, storehouses filled with the choicest products of all lands, wonderful architecture, elevated railroads, hanging bridges, magnificent steamers, marvelous machinery, railroads upon which palace cars were gliding, telegraph and telephone lines, these were among the many things shown.

The glorious works of the artist, panoramas of scenes that were past, or in some other part of the globe, all these and more, to please the eye and charm the heart, while the rich melody of music and song ravished the ear and enthused the soul—all these, and more than words can express, were shown with wonderful distinctness, while in and out were moving with stately tread, or flitting, dancing along, noble looking men, beautiful women and lovely children, all robed in rich garments, and all fair to look upon.

And in contrast with each of these achievements of man's skill, there came along beside them pictures of what had originally been of the savage condition from which all this had been evolved. It was grand, and Selferedo's eye kindled as he looked, and then turning to the others, he said,

"With all these achievements of man so illustrated before us, in view of all this we are now asked, have pledged ourselves to give to woman the lead. What has woman done to deserve such a concession?"

At this the men present began to murmur. "Wait," said Lovella, "there is another side to this question. The men who have done all this—all and much more than has been shown us, have all been borne beneath woman's heart, have been fed from her bosom and dandled upon her knees, while these, her sons, have assumed to rule over her, refusing to give her a voice in their counsels; is this just, my brothers?"

"It is not just," responded the women, but the men were silent. They ceased to murmur, however, because woman was given a trial leadership, while first one woman then another made some such remarks as these:

"I wonder how much of all this the men would have done if they had had the children to take care of." "Haven't we always stood by them, cared for them when sick and encouraged them when well, we surely deserve a share of the credit." "Credit, or no credit they couldn't do without us, could you?" said the last speaker, turning toward them a smiling face.

"We shouldn't like to try it," was the general response, and then one of them remarked: "We are waiting to have our work mapped out for us."

"That in good time," said Lovella; "there is enough to be done, but we must go to work advisedly. The work of the past that has succeeded was man's to do, and he has done it in his own way, not under woman's direction; on the other hand, the work that woman can do, has tried to do and has succeeded so poorly in the trying, has had to be done in man's way, and while contending with the adverse conditions which he has furnished. Civilization as it exists to-day, reflects man not woman. I have shown you some of the grand things that man has done; I will now show you some other things—things that have resulted from the lack of the mother element in his work." Then there came into our range of vision, one by one, scenes that I can never forget. Dear reader, I am glad you did not see them, for to see and not be able to relieve is torture.

But having seen I must try to tell you, though words can but feebly express the misery thus portrayed. If the enlightened direction of mother love cannot change all this then there is no hope.

Lovella looked very sad when she proposed to show the other side of the picture, but after a little hesitation as if debating where to begin, there filed before me, before those assembled in that room, thousands of the most wretched looking women I ever saw, and upon whose foreheads was written the word, "prostitute," but above that and traced by some friendly hand, was written "victim."

"Prostitutes," I exclaimed, looking at Lovella, "I thought that woman abolished prostitution at the time of what was called the 'Strike of a Sex.' "

"Look again, and carefully," was the reply; then, as I turned to watch the long procession I saw what I had not noticed before, a tablet upon the breast of each giving the causes that had brought them into this condition.

I found that about one out of ten of the whole number, being born with strongly passional natures, and not finding satisfaction by marrying, had chosen this life in preference to the tortures of celibacy, or the unsatisfactory relief of solitary vice. These looked healthier and happier than the others, but far from being satisfied with their lot.

Of the others about four tenths had been driven to desperation by man's perfidy, and, cast out by society, had rushed into prostitution as the only thing left them. The remaining half had been driven to it by want, and sold themselves to keep from starvation, to feed their hungry children, or perhaps an aged parent; in some cases all three were combined.

There were cases in which a loved but helpless companion was thus furnished with some comfort while the means by which it was obtained was carefully hidden from the sufferer, the woman thus becoming a veritable sacrifice to love, and beyond what man is capable of, Christ souls in woman bodies, martyred with the supremest martyrdom possible to human beings; nailed alive to that of which the cross is but a symbol, the masculine organ of generation.

As Lovella noted my thought she said: “Man may be nailed to a wooden cross with spikes of iron, but woman groans from the torture inflicted by a cross of flesh and blood.”

Her earnestness awed me, and my heart went out in a great wave of pity toward this unfortunate class of my sisters, for in all that I saw, in the lowest degradations I witnessed, I realized the truth of what the apostle Paul said. I accepted the spirit thereof though I should word it differently. He said, “but for the grace of God,” I say, “but for different conditions, surroundings and motive powers brought to bear, I might have sunk to the level of the lowest.”

When I had fully noted the causes that crowd women into prostitution Lovella asked. “Can you see now why woman cannot abolish this curse?”

I looked at her in a sort of dazed way, for though partially sensing the reason I could not put it into words.

“It is the economic problem,” she said. “Man controls the bread and butter question; that must be rightly adjusted first.”

“But,” said I, “woman’s right to herself puts it in her power to demand such adjustment; she can refuse herself to man till he makes it.”

“True, but they have conceded to us half a century of leadership, together with their sympathy and aid and that is much better than an attempt to force matters in the way you suggest. Many children, more than the entire population of to-day, will be born in that time, and some of the first born will have children, and even grandchildren.

“All these gestated under the influence of, and with the idea of ‘women in the lead,’ this together with the influence of mutual searching for the causes which produce the evils which so mar our grand civilization—searching for with the full determination of removing them—such children will be a radical improvement upon those gestated and born under the influence of the old ideas, and surely, that is a much better way of doing than to stand aloof and demand what man himself does not yet know how to grant.”

Selferedo listened intently to what Lovella was saying and I saw from the change in his countenance that this power of heredity had not entered into his calculations, and his thought was: “Here is a new factor, one that we must neutralize in some way or she will beat us yet,” and he centered his hopes on hurrying up, overdoing the matter. “Come,” said he, “this philosophizing is all very fine, but when are we to get to work?”

“We have already begun our work,” she smilingly replied. “Men of sense build their homes ideally first—build them in their brains before putting them into visible shape, and women must act with equal discretion. We have a great work to do, and it must be idealized in detail before it can be actualized. Don’t hurry us; we have waited your motion for ages—now please give us our own time.”

“That would do if you had ages at your command, but unless you demonstrate your fitness for leadership, you must resign at the end of fifty years.”

“And would you be sorry to resume your old position?” she asked.

He turned away with the first impatient movement I had noticed since he was forced to yield to the demand that war should cease. I think Lovella understood him though she gave no sign that would indicate it.

Chapter V.

The next group that passed before us was that of unhappy wives—wives who submitted to husbands rather than incur greater evils. Women who were so situated that they must part with their children and go out homeless or yield in opposition to their own feelings. The greater portion of these were from the laboring classes, and as I looked upon their hollow eyes and sunken cheeks, as I saw that their faded appearance was the result of overwork and bearing unwelcome children, and as the effect of such conditions upon their children were clearly shown me I cried out in an agony of protest.

"Is this the outcome of the pledge that woman should own herself?"

"Do you not know," said Lovella, "that one may keep the letter of a pledge and yet violate its spirit? Our best, our noblest men, such as we may safely counsel with in reference to the great work to be done, will keep the spirit of that pledge. They will hold, not only the persons of their wives, but their own persons sacred. They will continue their respectful, lover-like attentions and wait the pleasure of their companions, realizing that mutuality is far more satisfactory than enforced claims, and they will thus preserve instead of destroying the attraction which first drew them together."

"But what about the others," I asked. "How is it that they can obey the letter and yet so violate the spirit of their pledge?"

"I do not suppose," she replied, "that the husbands of those unhappy wives, those unwilling mothers, have insisted upon obedience to their desires. They have made no demands so far as the letter of a demand is concerned, but with a sort of lordly indifference they have said, by their manner if not in words, do as you please, I make no claims, but if you are free I am; I can find other women who will accept me, women who need my aid and I cannot support more than one. She knows that he can make her utterly wretched even if he does not drive her from *his* home and put another in her place, thus separating her from her children, so she yields to what seems to her the lesser evil because she has not the courage to face the consequences of a refusal. He has made no claims upon her, of course he hasn't, but he has compelled her to submit all the same.

"And he is not so much to blame for this; he is held to that plane of life by conditions he cannot break. His daily life is not his own. It is not the love of accomplishing—of evolving works of use or pleasure that sends him about his daily toil, not the love of the work of which others have the results, all but a mere subsistence, but hard necessity which holds him to it.

"He has no time to spend in intellectual enjoyment or to cultivate an esthetic taste. Only purely sensuous enjoyment and that in its crudest form is at his command, and his poor wife must be made to minister to that while the coarseness of its expression repels her and destroys her power to reciprocate his passion, if indeed, a chronic state of sexual hunger can properly be called passion. Poor man, he is to be pitied. Poor wife and poorly organized children—double victims, victims of victims, and what is to be done?

"Such men know nothing of the tender care which, cultivating the rich fruits of the garden of love, renders them an increasing and perpetual delight, and thus they ignorantly crush the life out of earth's purest joys, leaving only fierce fires and ashes. What can be done to change all this, think you?"

"It seems to me," I said, "that it will take time, education, culture."

"Yes, it will take time, but how much time have these poor people to devote to culture, and what chance is there under such conditions that children will be born capable of a high state of cultivation when born of mothers who must toil during the day to the last point of endurance, and then satisfy, or try to, the husband's merely animal desire, at night; merely animal desire because the conditions, do not admit of any higher feeling, and this during all the time that the poor wife is from her own poorly cared for body feeding another life. Besides, what kind of influences do her surroundings send along the line of her nerves to the coming one? Garrets, cellars, bare walls, coarse food and clothing are not very likely to furnish the elements for a high order of offspring."

She paused and looked at me in a way which made me feel that she desired some expression from me as to where the trouble lay.

"It seems to me," I said in reply, "that this evil, like the other, is rooted in our false system of property relations. Those whose toil produces the wealth of the world do not get their share."

"Then what is to be done?"

"The system itself must be changed; there is no other way."

Lovella then turned to the others: "You have heard the reply; is it correct?"

The women and a majority of the men replied in the affirmative, while the others remained silent and thoughtful.

At this point Selferedo said: "There certainly can be some method of adjusting things without making such an entire change as your remarks seem to indicate."

"Please find such a method and show its feasibility and we shall only be too glad to adopt it," replied Lovella.

"Would not a plentiful supply of legal tender currency make business brisk, wages good and furnish employment for many hands that are now idle? This would apply to woman as well as man, as women now do almost everything that men do, and that certainly would give them a chance to avoid prostitution if they so chose, and it would greatly relieve the other conditions of which you speak."

Lovella was silent for so long a time that Selferedo seemed to imagine that she could find no objections to what he had suggested, but just as he was about to reinforce his views with additional arguments she said:

"Those who now possess the wealth would find a way to divert the surplus increase to themselves, and the wage laborer would still be tributary—would still be a wage slave, and slaves, as such, can never become cultured, refined, or morally elevated."

"But why, madam, would the increase necessarily go to the already rich?"

"Upon the same principle that additional blood in an already congested human body would surely rush to the congested part. Our economic body is congested, the first thing to do is to restore the equilibrium. If the two kindred evils which have been portrayed before us were the only ones rooted in economic congestion, there might be some faint hope of an adjustment, but there are others to be considered. We will now look upon another scene in which it is woman that is still the sufferer."

As she said this I looked a little to the left of where I was standing, and I saw an immense multitude of women of all ages. Ae they marched slowly by I noted that each one plied a needle, a sewing machine or both, and what was more strange, each one carried with her an exact reflection of her surroundings. Near some were fireless rooms and hungry, crying children. Now and then these would snatch a crust of bread or some broken meat or cold, perhaps raw potatoes and divide among the crying ones reserving the smallest portion for themselves, and then work with renewed speed as if to make up for lost time.

Then again these would wrap the children in the poor apology for bed clothes and hurry out to get the poor pittance for their toil with which to buy a little coal and a little food, being careful always, if possible, to save something towards the rent. On, on they went till the line stretched far beyond my range of vision, and still they came, a hungry, gaunt, sorrowful multitude, many of them working upon rich garments, while the plainest, coarsest of those upon which others stitched, were better than they themselves could wear.

As one hollow eyed woman passed I felt a strange sensation, and looking to learn what it meant I saw lines that connected her with the cloak I wore. "She made it, a portion of her life has gone into it" was my thought, and then such a wave of sadness, of gloom came flowing in upon those lines of connection and enveloped me as it were. It was just what she had felt while making the cloak.

Quick as thought the question came to me: "Suppose you were a wife and soon to be a mother would not this feeling be woven into the very life of your child?"

"Oh heaven, is this possible!" I exclaimed. Lovella saw and understood:

"Yes," she replied, "it is more than possible. The rich cannot escape the results of the conditions imposed upon the poor. People recognize the fact that the germs of physical disease may be carried in clothing or bedding, but fail to recognize the equally important truth that moral disease can be communicated in the same way, and that in some cases it may thus become a hereditary endowment for evil."

I can never forget the feeling of yearning horror that came over me—an inexpressible pity and a yearning to take them out of such horrible conditions. Lovella, as usual, read my thought and said in response:

"And we must do it, it is a part of our work. It is because of that, that these scenes are thus portrayed. To do so simply to shock the beholder's feelings would be cruelty, but in the end we expect, intend to do away with all such conditions."

"In fifty years?" asked Selferedo in an incredulous tone.

"Why not?" she replied, turning her luminous eyes full upon him, "the materials are prepared for the new structure, they need only to be rightly adjusted."

"Ah, the materials, you give us that much credit?"

"Most certainly, and we credit your further ability by acknowledging our need of your continued effort."

"As your servants," he replied, bowing to hide the mocking smile that wreathed his lips.

"Why not," she again asked, "did not he who is claimed as 'the Master,' say 'He that is greatest among you let him be your servant?' " There was a smile upon the faces of those present at this reply and Selferedo said no more, but one of the men who was in sympathy with him remarked:

"I suppose you will say that these also are the victims of our economic system."

"Well, are they not?" she asked.

"I cannot see, madam, how the system can be charged with the results of the selfishness of employers."

"The system is at fault, my dear sir, because it leaves the fate of the employee in the employer's hands. Any system which allows one class of people to make it impossible for another class to have direct access to the sources of supply is a false one, not only because of the dependence it involves, but because the natural tendency of such a system is to make the dominant class selfish and tyrannical."

"You make a good people's advocate," was the only reply, and he also took refuge in silence, and still the hollow eyed, sad faced women continued to file past.

"Will they never have done," said another impatiently.

At this there dropped over them something that was like a veil, thus hiding them from our sight, but Lovella said:

"As long as time lasts they must continue their march unless something is done to remove the causes which make them what they are, but there are other armies of sufferers that we must look upon in order to get some idea of the magnitude of our work," and then there came thousands upon thousands of men, and some women, who were reeling and staggering with drunkenness.

Oh, the sickening sight! blear eyed, bloated, pale, haggard, blasphemous and obscene songs, curses and cunning leers, desperation, imbecility, shrieks, stolidity, each phase terrible in itself, but when thus combined the scene beggared description.

"That surely," said Selferedo, "is not the result of our economic system. Those men are not obliged to drink unless they choose."

"And what would be your remedy," asked Lovella.

"I would imprison every man who drank to excess."

"Do you believe there is any truth in the sciences of physiology and phrenology," she continued.

"Certainly, but as yet they are far from being perfect."

"True, but I would like to have those for whom you propose a prison examined by as competent physiologists and phrenologists as we have. I feel very certain that some physical or moral defect, perhaps both, would be found in every one of them."

"And you would therefore consider them irresponsible, is that what you mean?"

"In a measure, yes."

"That will not do, Lovella, some of the most noted men that have lived, died drunkards."

"And noted, talented men and women have died insane, sir, but there was some unbalanced brain condition or of body reacting upon the brain, which, when a pressure was brought to bear, could not stand the strain, and this is equally true of the drunkard. When we have a knowledge of what perfect motherhood should be, and the conditions to carry it out, we shall have no drunkards and no insane people."

"You claim a great deal for motherhood, madam."

"There is a text of scripture, sir which says: 'The seed of a woman shall bruise the serpent's head,' did you ever read it?"

"Most assuredly I have, but I cannot see what possible application that can have to the subject in hand."

"But what meaning do you attach to the text, Selferedo?"

"I—I have not thought much about it; the Christian world claims Jesus as the seed of the woman."

"The Christian world has attached certain meanings to many things which a more extended knowledge has shown to be capable of much broader interpretations, and in this case I do not think it will be very difficult to show the application to the subject in hand."

"Well, please give us your interpretation," he said with an indulgent smile, such as self-conceited men often bestow upon woman while listening to her ideas.

Lovella took no notice of this, but proceeded to comply with request. "Civilization," she said, "is the result more of man's efforts than of woman's; not only is society as it exists to-day his child but the law also gives to him the children that woman bears. They are legally his, and they are his too by the quality of their natures, because gestated and born under conditions that he furnishes. They are not the seed of the woman and the serpent's head, figuratively speaking is everywhere apparent.

"Now when our sex revolution is fully accomplished, then motherhood will come to the front. The children will then be hers. Then she will see to it that a knowledge of our own bodies and brains, together with that of the conditions under which perfect motherhood can be actualized—will see to it that such knowledge shall take precedence of all else. Then the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and not till then.

"Now," she continued, "if you can show that our property system has not interfered with the best conditions for motherhood, then I will admit that it has had nothing to do with the condition of these," waving her hand towards the still passing wrecks of manhood and womanhood.

"The liquor traffic interferes far more with the conditions for perfect motherhood than does our economic system," was his reply to this.

"That the liquor traffic intensifies the evil cannot be denied," said Lovella, thoughtfully, "but our laboring men do not all drink, not all of the men who are reduced to the lowest degree of poverty, and the results to motherhood in such cases are none the less disastrous. But suppose it can be shown that the traffic itself, the greater part of it, is the result of the system which makes the pursuit of wealth of paramount importance, what then?"

Selferedo made no direct reply to this, and as to my own feelings, the most bitter thought of all was that what I had witnessed represented facts, that though the wretched ones I had seen were not exactly in marching line, that they were even much more numerous than there represented.

Chapter VI.

Hitherto, with the exception of Lovella and myself, only the men had spoken, and aside from Selferedo, but two of them, but at this point one of the women remarked:

"It seems to me that prohibitory laws enforcing a stop to the manufacture of intoxicating drinks would settle that question, and in view of the importance of the right conditions for motherhood, the fact that intoxicants are so destructive of all that makes a mother's work a blessing should be sufficient reason for the enactment of such a law."

Like a flash the army of drunkards disappeared and in its place stood a large city through the streets of which marched an army of women carrying flags and banners. On the latter were various inscriptions which read: "Down with the saloons." "Five thousand dens of destruction, away with them." "Two and a half million dollars paid annually for license to sell liquid fire." "Think of the cost to the people of five thousand saloons, and who pays it?" "What's to be done?" "The saloon must go." On they went with determination written upon their faces, and I watched till I saw every saloon closed.

"Oh, I am so glad!" I exclaimed involuntarily.

"Wait," said Lovella, and then the scene changed. As all liquors were worthless now, could not be sold at any price, it followed as a matter of course that the five thousand saloon keepers, together with the wholesale liquor dealers, were now deprived of their means of support. We were next shown these with their wives and children, not less than twenty-five thousand people, all anxiously asking how they were going to live.

The most of them had been rendered utterly poor. True, some few owned the houses in which they lived, but now the taxes would be much heavier, for the two and a half millions of license money which had helped to defray the expenses of the city government must be raised by increased taxation and how long would their homes be theirs with no means of self-support.

This was a side of the question I had not thought of. Lovella seemed to possess the power of illuminating that which she wished to teach. She said not a word as by a wave of her hand one scene after another was brought before us. More than five thousand men wanting employment and not five hundred vacant places in the whole city, and these but temporarily, for there were enough others to more than fill them, others much better qualified than an ex-saloon keeper would be, and what was to be done?

The first scene placed before us in answer to this inquiry was the home of a man who supported a wife and six children from the proceeds of a corner grocery. His rent was very high but it would now be higher. The taxes being increased, those who had houses to rent would add the tax to the price demanded for their use. It was all he could do now to live and if the ex-saloon keeper on the opposite corner took up the grocery business he must go under; there was no help for it.

He did not speak, but by some occult law his thoughts were made visible. The ex-saloon man did start a grocery upon a small scale. He must do something in order to live, and he trusted to his customers in the old business to patronize him in this. He struggled along nearly a year and

then failed, but not till the competition, the division of the trade had so involved the old grocery keeper that he could not rally.

On, on we followed this family from one downward step in misfortune to another. Having lost his hold the man could not regain his footing; and finally, with his wife dead, and his children scattered, he filled a suicide's grave. True his fate was no worse than that of many the cause of which could be traced to saloons, and the woman who had advised the prohibitory law said as much, when Lovella replied, and most emphatically:

"we want a cure, not a change of evils."

The next scene shown us was the career of the ex-saloon keeper. Slowly it was unrolled at one end and rolled up at the other till at last the man sat with a kit of burglar's tools by his side, and in reply to his wife's remonstrance he said: "I cannot see you and the children starve, and everything else that I have tried has failed. By some sort of hocus pocus some people get all there is and if I am sharp enough to get some of it back I don't see that I am so much worse than other folks."

Next we saw the family gathering up their household goods and taking a western train. We saw the husband and the oldest son leave at the first station and return to the city in disguise; we saw them go to the house of a rich merchant who was known to be absent, and entering by means of their burglar's tools, gather together such valuables as they could find. They hoped to get away without being discovered, but when they left two women lay dead upon the floor and the house was on fire. They escaped and were never traced.

"Now," said Lovella, when this last scene disappeared, "multiply these cases, with varying shades of detail, a thousand fold and you will have some of the results of a forced closing of the saloons *under* our present property system. You may think the pictures overdrawn, but I can assure you they are not."

"Then you would leave the liquor traffic untouched," said Selferedo.

"I would go to the root of things and remove the causes which create a demand for liquor and then the traffic would cease of itself; but there is yet more to be shown of the results of an enforced morality," and again she waved her hand.

There now came into view some fifty cottages occupied and partly owned by laboring men. These homes were being paid for in monthly installments, and with no bad luck, would in another year be wholly theirs. Not one of these men drank, and but few of them used tobacco. I felt a shrinking as I gazed, for with the previous scenes before my mind I sensed what was coming.

Presently I saw those men returning from their work with saddened faces. They tried to put on a smile as they entered their homes but their wives saw that something was the matter and began to question them; then it all came out.

The ex-saloon men, in order to get work were underbidding them, and unless they would consent to work for less wages they were likely to lose their places and with them all hope of paying for their homes. If they consented to work for less they could still secure bread for themselves and families, but the prospect of saving their homes was but little better.

It seemed to me that I could bear no more. The idea of those men losing their homes went through me like a knife. But the worst part of it was, I could see that such a result was but the natural sequence of our economic law under such circumstances. If our earnest workers for

reform would only try to trace the reaction as well as the action of the forces they set in motion they would work to better purpose, because they would work more wisely than they now do.

We were shown a few more scenes all involving the same lesson and then Lovella said:

"In the scene wherein the laboring men were shown to be in danger of losing their homes, together with others thus affected, you may multiply your fifty by thirty and not overstate the number of homes lost to honest worthy men because of the breaking up of conditions caused by forcibly closing the saloons in one city only, and when the whole cost is counted, when all who suffer by this change are considered, you will find that the evil designed to be removed presents itself in other forms and the sum of the misery produced is even greater than before.

"True, there are many, very many cases of rejoicing, scenes of gladness which, if portrayed, and the other side not shown, would be considered unanswerable evidence of the great good done by closing the saloons, but what we want is to *heal* this our great human patient. This driving the disease from one part of the body to another,

"is not a cure."

"But you do not tell us what should be done," said one of the two men who had before spoken.

"Too many have told that before they found out themselves, and I am willing to wait a little; besides if I knew exactly the true and only method, I would only give out at first, such hints as would set others to searching for the better way, as I should want a great deal of *intelligent* assistance."

"You must remember," she continued, "that work well done is twice done. This subject must be thoroughly understood before we can adopt measures that will secure success. I might show you in succession the vast armies of the insane, the idiotic, the blind, the deaf and dumb, and bring up the rear with the long, long train of those who fill our poorhouses and our prisons but you have already seen enough of society's wrecks. Rest assured, however, that any method which does not reach all those will be work half done, consequently not done at all.

"Men point with pride to the asylums they furnish for human wrecks, thinking it an evidence of great humanity on their part. They do not realize in the least the shame of there being a need for such asylums. When the conditions for perfect motherhood are secured there will be no such need, but until woman revolutionizes society such conditions cannot be had.

"Now," she said in conclusion, "it is my wish that those present, acting upon the lines of thought here indicated, shall go forth and study the workings of society in all its parts, that you may arm yourselves with the truths which will enable us to accomplish the revolution contemplated. Go singly, two by two, or in groups, but be watchful, careful, wise, and determined that no present nor personal interest shall for a moment blind your judgment.

"Do this, remembering what it is that you are undertaking. If you cannot solve the problem, if there cannot be formulated and put into practice a system of society which will not grind up one portion of its members for the benefit of other portions, then we might as well cease trying to do for others. The only thing left us will be to make the most of ourselves individually, and let those who cannot stand the pressure go down to be ground over in the evolution of the eternities.

"Study this question for the next five years, and then meet here to report. Till then, adieu."

The scene vanished and I found myself where I had lain down to rest after reading "The Strike of a Sex."

I lay for some minutes in a half dazed condition with Lovella's last words still ringing in my ear. "Yes," I said aloud, "I will go with the others," and that fully awakened me.

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