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Mating or Marrying, Which?

William Henry van Ornum

1898

The distinctions of sex seem to extend throughout all nature, certainly through all animate nature; and there is reason to believe that it does not stop at the limits of what is termed the inanimate. In fact, who can say that nature is anywhere inanimate? Every atom of the universe seems to possess the power of selection, by which it is able, under favorable conditions, to attract to itself certain other atoms widely diverse from itself in physical properties, which, together form new substances and manifest new attractions. Along with these attractions and their correlative repulsions goes the active interplay of natural forces, which, throughout every part of the universe, is working evolutionary changes not unlike a progressive growth. Even deep below the ocean's bed, or far beneath the foundations of the everlasting hills, under pressures so great that they cannot be estimated, heat, electricity and magnetism, combined with chemical reactions are changing old forms into new ones in a manner strangely suggestive of vital action. Even there, the separate atoms are moving freely among each other and arranging themselves in definite order, building up crystals always according to certain patterns, each after its own kind.

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No matter how much people may differ in opinion as to the First Cause of all this power of selection in nature, there can be no difference of opinion as to the fact of its existence. There are certain ways in which things act under certain conditions; and those conditions being the same, the same actions will always follow. It is convenient to call this uniformity of action a law of nature, taking nature to mean the sum total of the universe in which we live, with all the forces operating in and through it, including the possible First Cause, if there is such a First Cause. We may say then that the power of selection is inherent in every sentient being, every plant and every atom of the universe; and that the impulse to exercise it is a law of nature. All this may not be sexual selection; but sexual selection is clearly a part of it. It is a part of this universal impulse which drives different animals, different plants and different atoms to blend with others, either for their own perfection or for the production of others distinct from themselves. There is just one thought right here that is worth noting, because it is likely to have an important bearing upon our conclusions. Each separate animal, plant, or atom possesses this power of selection for itself and not for others; and its own impulses are adequate for the proper exercise of it, without interference from others. At least, this is the case with everything below the human animal. Why should it not also be true of him?

This natural selection, as applied to sex when free from outside interference, is what we will call mating; while a union under formalities and regulations, imposed by society as a prerequisite to any union, constituting a limitation of the natural freedom of selection, is what we will call marriage.

Our purpose is not to enter into any elaborate consideration of the sexual relations of other beings than mankind, further than to throw needed light upon that important subject. Much has been written and spoken during the last twenty years on natural selection; but when it comes to elucidating the way in which natural selection works, in every day life, among human

when freed from sordid considerations, would be adequate to its perfect use. So, there is not the slightest danger to be apprehended in the utmost freedom on the part of the woman in the matter of sex. But, on the other hand, there is the greatest danger in every form of restriction not imposed by nature itself.

And it will make better women. It will take away the drudgery of woman's life; and give her such an object in life as she can never realize under present conditions. It will give her leisure and opportunity for improvement. It will give her the absolute control of her own person, under the workings of such a system, it is reasonable to expect a higher physical, mental and social development than anything ever heretofore known.

These changes will necessarily come gradually. As co-operation takes the place of capitalism, the economic conditions must become easier and woman's lot more independent. Then the old forms and customs will respond less and less to the manifest needs; while the new may, for a time, be regarded as immoral and disreputable; but they will continue to approve themselves and justify their practice until they become finally established. In this way a new morality, or custom will arise.

Then the association of the sexes will be purified from every sordid or base consideration. It will be the highest expression of love unmixed with greed or ambition for social station. So far from being in any way degrading, it will be the highest and purest form of association. Nor need there be the least fear of what purists are pleased to call promiscuous sex relations. If those relations depended upon the volition of the male, there is no doubt that this would follow; because the male is lacking in that form of ideality which is so strong in the female. It is perfectly natural for a man to mate sexually with women, with little regard to selection; and any pretense of moral scruples may generally be set down as a pure pretense. He may, by a sort of religious phrensy, cultivate certain scruples, especially if his amateness is weak; but those scruples constantly run counter to his impulses, which are always in revolt against them. And when the opportunity comes, the scruples are apt to be forgotten. But the case is different with women. That quality of ideality is nature's own safeguard of the race. If woman could be left perfectly unhampered in the exercise of it, her own natural promptings, which are always good when healthy, and

animals at least, and its consequent bearing upon social customs and moral standards, it does not seem to me that much light has been shed upon the subject. And yet, it is highly important that we understand the practical workings of a natural law which exercises so great an influence over the lives and characters of individuals; and, in a larger way, over the life and character of the race.

Marriage consists in certain formalities which society imposes upon individuals for certain purposes, as a prerequisite to the granting of its permission to the sexes to mate at all. Not that society rightfully has anything to say as to who may or may not mate; or the conditions of the mating; but it assumes to determine these questions as a means of perpetuating the institution of private property, and the inequalities which grow out of it. The necessity and the only necessity for the exercise of any regulation whatever, on the part of society, of the relations of the sexes, arises from the necessity of preserving private fortunes. If private fortunes are to be preserved and perpetuated from one generation to another, then it is necessary to maintain the integrity of the marriage relation and the control of society over it. It is for this purpose that the distinction is made between legitimate and illegitimate children; that is, to preserve the succession of estates: to protect one man against being saddled with the expense of the support of another man's children, and so be made to suffer in his estate. And again, if a system of property rights is to be preserved according to which each person's claims are to be weighed and measured against the claims of each other person; if we must continue to take from some by law, to confer upon others, according to certain predetermined rules which the greedy will find ways to break whenever they think they will not be caught; if the present scramble for individual fortunes is to be kept up, with its resulting inequalities and injustices; if there must continue to be born into the world certain persons with more and better rights than 'inhere in others, the right of succession to estates, for in-

stance, then it is necessary that society should continue to interfere in the natural right of individuals to mate as they please; and to preserve the marriage relation intact, or as near intact as theological dogmas, moral codes and statutory enactments can compel. No matter at what expense of suffering, of suppression of natural instincts, of consequences to offspring born of low ideals, ruined from conception in their physical and mental constitutions: I say, no matter at what expense of all these, the marriage relation must be preserved. The reason to be for the institution of marriage lies in the institution of property. When that falls, marriage as a compulsory institution will fall with it.

Let those who entertain any doubt as to the truth of the statement that the purpose of the institution of marriage is solely to preserve private estates and determine who is to yet the property in cases of succession, study the laws on the subject of marriage, both civil and ecclesiastical, in every country in the world where private property prevails. Everywhere they tell the same story: the fact of the marriage is the thing that determines the right of the child in the estate of the parent. In order the more certainly and effectually to control the actions of individuals in this matter, the Church has made marriage a religious sacrament; and so surrounded it with supernatural terrors, which it visits upon those who mate independent of its sanction. In this, the State has largely acquiesced; because its own object is identical with that of the Church; and it recognizes the effectiveness of its methods. In my other works I have shown how completely our whole social fabric is built upon property as a foundation.

It has become quite the thing among a class of would-be reformers to talk of freeing women from the dominion of men; and yet not one in a thousand of those who indulge in such talk have any adequate conception of what the source is of that dominion. What good is it to preach to women to assert their in/dependence and become a law unto themselves, when

from property not to say anything of the anxiety and worry from which none can wholly escape so long as it continues, we shall be likely to ask ourselves, what can we do to hasten the time when private property shall be no more?

So, it will be seen, that the reasons to be for the prevailing moral codes, or customs which uphold the marriage relation, are still operative and must continue to operate until people realize the necessity of abandoning the institution of property. I do not mean by this that sex reformers, by reason of their preachments, will not be able to induce a few women, who chance to be possessed of independent sources of support, to act independently of moral codes; but I do mean that no considerable headway can be made in that line. Such women, in number, are to the great mass of women about like a dipper of water to the great Atlantic. A thousand times more can be done by putting in practical methods of co-operation—in such a full and adequate co-operation as will replace private rights, divided interests and individual properties with a common property. Then the economic question will be eliminated from the problem of the relations of the sexes. The production of wealth will be carried on for the common account, by means of the best appliances and under conditions which will insure the best results with the least expenditure of labor. Every one will be provided for from the common estate. Then no woman will be compelled to depend upon any particular man for a support. Her support will come just like the support of all others. There will be no question of legitimacy to arise to place her offspring at a disadvantage with others. She can seek her ideals as associates. She will not be compelled to accept a man who fulfills none of her ideals, and thus risk bringing into the world a brood of degenerates. If men wish to enjoy the association of the other sex, they will be compelled to make themselves worthy of it; not one time but every time. This will make better men and better children, children freer from the taints of heredity, from congenital defects and degenerate reversions.

erty rights. The question of marriage is not a religious one at all. The Church in attempting to make it such has succeeded in giving it only the sanction of its theology which is quite another thing.

The second fact is that a natural mating of the sexes, free from any interference of society, fulfills all the requirements of human needs apart from determining and maintaining property rights. It qualifies the requirements of religion regarding religion to mean a social force proceeding from and operating upon the emotions for the purpose of fitting mankind for association one with another in this life. Love is but another name for religion.

The third fact is that the function of sexual selection naturally rests with the female. It is she who is to determine with whom she is to mate; and she must do it with reference to her own ideals. Any restraint placed upon her freedom of choice must operate disastrously in the building of the race.

The next question is, is the institution of private property of such vital importance to mankind as to justify so great an interference with the operation of the natural law of sexual selection as is involved in the institution of marriage?

I shall not undertake here to answer this question fully; because I have sufficiently done so in my forthcoming work "Co-operation Past and to Come" wherein I have shown that the institution of property is but a passing phase of human development; that it has had a definite mission to fulfill in that development; and that when that purpose has been accomplished it will disappear and be replaced by common rights, common duties and common property. In the mean time, it is enough to call attention to the fact that the world is paying a very high price for what little good it can get out of these restrictions to liberty. When we take into account the domestic infelicities sometimes resulting to awful tragedies; the moral, mental and physical monstrosities which are born to mismatched couples; and the poverty, strife degradation and crime which result

they know that if they are to fulfill their manifest destiny they must be individually dependent upon some individual man for the bread they eat? Women know that they cannot fulfill the office of motherhood and still rely upon their own powers as breadwinners. It is true that some women do raise families and practically support the whole household at the same time; but no one will undertake to justify it or recommend its extension to women in general. Therefore, those who are so anxious for "woman's emancipation" will do well to go deeper than the surface of things: to strike at the root of the evil, which lies in the institution of private property.

There are two powerful influences at work which seriously interfere with the natural law of selection; and which prove effective props to the institution of marriage. One is the Church and the other the state. One assumes to speak in the name of religion and the other of morality. One enforces its decrees by appeals to the superstitious fears of its adherents and the other by the penalties of the law. One binds the soul and the other the body.

Let no one misunderstand me. I say, the Church assumes to speak in the name of religion; but it is in a foreign tongue. Religion, so far from being the same thing as ecclesiasticism, or even a system of theology, is entirely distinct from either. It is a social force proceeding from the emotions and operating upon the emotions of others for the purpose of softening the asperities of mankind and fitting men for association one with another in this life. It has nothing necessarily to do with another life. The conception of a life to come belongs to the domain of theology and not religion. It is a dogma of the Church and not an impulse of the heart. For a fuller analysis of religion, see my forthcoming work "Co-operation, Past and to Come." But the thing that the Church teaches as religion is quite another thing. It enjoins a love and veneration for something supernatural that is, above nature, as a source of authority and as a guide to human conduct. If a question arises among those who acknowl-

edge the sway of the Church, respecting what may or may not be done, appeal is made to the authority of their pretended religious books or teachers. The question is settled strictly on authority by a "Thus saith the Lord." Reason, or human needs do not enter into the question at all. It is easy to see then, how powerful must be the influence which the Church wields over its subjects to cloud their perceptions as to any matter in which its authority is acknowledged. The teachings of the Church are based wholly on authority; and just to the extent to which that is acknowledged, reason and love, the supreme guides in all things, are dethroned; or rather are never permitted to become enthroned, because, to enthrone love and reason is to dethrone authority.

Morals, on the other hand, have their origin in human needs. I say, that is their origin. They may outlive the needs which gave them rise; and, in that way, become just as great a hindrance to human progress as the authority of the Church or the State. But while the need remains they perform a salutary part in determining human conduct. The term "moral," has a Latin derivation and signifies, a mode, a fashion, a custom, or habit. And like all customs which arise among men, in their origin they spring from some real or supposed need. But their tendency is to outlive the conditions which made them necessary at first, and thus to become clogs and hindrances to human development. The needs of mankind change from one age to another as development progresses; and therefore the customs: that is, the morals, must change with them correspondingly, or else moral codes become a curse. They act to cloud the judgment; hinder the enthronement of reason; and prevent the march of progress. Statute laws are only a concrete expression of so much of the moral codes as have been formally enacted into law.

It is time now, to consider the mating of the sexes, with and without the sanctions of marriage, and see if we can determine the relative effects of freedom and restriction respectively. To

thought of another is an act of infidelity to him, will not feel as keenly as another would his deficiencies; and therefore, she will be less susceptible to feelings of disgust at his shortcomings. Such a woman may continue to cohabit with a brutal husband without serious danger to her offspring. But under favorable circumstances, even she may lose her balance and be carried into open or covert revolt by a power she little dreams of. Let her be brought in contact with another, who, from personal qualities or peculiar relationships, she regards with esteem and veneration; and the chances are good that formal marriage ties will be broken. She does not understand that she is acting in obedience to a natural law which impels her to select the best possible paternity for her child. She may succeed in stifling her natural promptings in obedience to her early training; but if she does, it is at the expense of her woman's nature; and thereafter, if she accepts the embraces of the husband, when he no longer fills her ideal, it must be at the risk of bringing into the world a monstrosity. Nature has little respect for human laws, even when made to preserve so sacred a thing as private property; but it punishes any infractions of its own laws by penalties which the guilty can not avoid.

But the woman of independent spirit, of refined and cultured tastes, who instinctively revolts at manifestations of brutality and sensuality and who yearns to realize her ideals in her association with the male sex, dares not, must not accept the embraces of one who fulfills none of those ideals, but who excites in her nothing but disgust, no matter what may be the ties which an artificial marriage institution has imposed upon her.

Several facts have now been established, in the course of this study, with sufficient clearness to be accepted as a basis for further inquiry.

The first is, that marriage, in-so-far as it interferes with freedom in sex relations, is an arbitrary social regulation imposed solely for the purpose of determining and maintaining prop-

just as one strong in vital force, can, within certain limits' resist the attacks of disease. Nature, when free to act, is capable of overcoming the tendency to reversion, otherwise it would be impossible to make any progress whatever. All this goes to show how direct is the influence of the surroundings upon the making of the individual. It is the way that nature works to adapt man to his environment. When there is a bad social environment those who must live in it, in this way are fitted to it. If we want better men and better women we must change the conditions—the environment.

The influence of low ideals upon the mother and through her upon her child, is well illustrated among the lower animals. It is well known among the breeders of dogs that a thoroughbred female, if once paired with a mongrel, will taint her future offspring long afterward, even when it has been fathered by a thoroughbred. I see no way to account for this except that the mother becomes debased in her ideals by association with the cur. The same thing too, has been observed in the breeding of horses. There is a probability that the same distinguishing characteristics run all through the animal kingdom, only varying according to the degree of the animals' development; and that it is the quality which gives direction to natural selection. This impressionable characteristic of the female, when it has its natural and proper action, is fraught with untold good to the species; but when thwarted by low and debased ideals born of bad social conditions, or by legal restrictions, it carries with it an awful punishment.

So far we have dealt with conditions and laws which apply to women in general; but I do not wish to be understood as maintaining that the principles laid down, while universal in a degree, apply to all women equally. The coarse, uncultivated and undeveloped woman, who has been trained under a system of restriction; who has been taught that the first duty of a wife is subjection in all things to her husband; who is ready to shut her eyes to all his imperfections; and who thinks that any

do it properly, it will be necessary to consider the effect upon all the parties in interest. Those are, first, the individuals who mate; second, their offspring; and third, society at large. While it will be necessary to study all these different aspects, yet it is impossible to separate their effects upon the different persons. For instance, the relations between mother and child are so intimate that whatever affects one is apt to affect the other; and therefore, it will promote clearness to consider them together.

Broadly stated, the objects for which the sexes mate at all, are, first, the happiness and improvement of the contracting parties; and second, the production and rearing of offspring. It will scarcely be denied that love ought to be the basis of all union between the sexes, and that too, a love unmixed with sordid considerations of every kind. In fact, natural sexual selection, or mating, is only the expression of love apart from any thought of property, rank or station in life. Where the sexes are so united, they need no law or regulation of society to keep them together or determine their conduct. They will remain together just as long as the love continues which brought them together at first, law or no law. And when that ceases, the relations ought to cease, as will be made manifest in the course of this work. To continue them is no longer a continuation of the natural selection. Love cannot live when the relations cease to be voluntary; it always dies whenever compulsion becomes necessary.

We cannot carry our study much further without taking into account the differences between the sexes; and the part those differences play in the accomplishment of the objects for which the sexes mate at all.

In the first place, we will note those characteristics of the female which most distinguish her from the male, and the part which they perform in determining the character of the offspring. What are those characteristics? Wherein does woman differ most widely from man? Admitting that this is a subject which is open to a wide difference of opinion, I will only un-

dertake to present my own idea, based upon my observations, which must stand or fall upon its own merits. To me that difference, in the main, lies in her sympathetic, emotional and intuitive nature. These, I think, are the qualities which most distinguish her from man. And these are precisely the qualities which have most to do in determining the character of her offspring. While a man will reach his conclusions after an elaborate course of reasoning and calculation; a woman, being generally more en rapport with the "soul of things," brushes aside his figures and details; and goes directly to the heart of the subject, as if by some intuitive impulse. She acts more spontaneously—more impulsively. And it is open to question if she is not quite as likely to form correct judgments as the man. Certain it is that this makes her more imaginative. She deals more with ideals. She is constantly seeking ideals in everything. And those ideals partake of the predominating characteristics of her own constitution. They express her longings. If, by training, temperament and association, her own ideals are gross and sensual, she will seek the gross and sensual among her male friends. If however, she has learned to value something higher, even if she is unable to attain to it herself, she will form a higher ideal; and strive to realize it in her association with the other sex. This quality of ideality, resulting from her emotional, intuitive and sympathetic impulses, is the great distinguishing characteristic of the sex: the characteristic which has more to do in determining the character of the child than any, perhaps than all other causes combined. It rises superior to heredity. It can absolutely neutralize the influence of heredity just as a strong and robust man in the full vigor of health can throw off the germs of disease and prevent them from obtaining a lodgement in his system. There are men, and I doubt not women also, whose vital forces are so vigorous that they can with impunity, expose themselves to the contagion of small pox without taking them. Some even are able to overcome venereal diseases where the exposure is by actual contact. The vital forces, when

to healthy growth: if her lot is cast among those whom we call criminals, those who must live by preying upon others; if she is called upon to resort to stealth, cunning or strategy, or depend upon the exercise of these qualities on the part of her husband or others, for the supply of necessities, so that these qualities come to be regarded as desirable, ideal, even for the time being, she will be sure to give birth to a child marked by cunning, secretiveness, or given to strategy and deceit. She will give it the qualities of a criminal. And further, if her children continue to live in this atmosphere of criminality, as is frequently the case, because society closes and bars the door of their exit, we are likely to head a race of criminals, or rather, several generations of men with criminal instincts. And then the social Pharisees will compile long genealogical tables to show the tendency of crime to become hereditary in certain families. Of course, as long & the conditions continue the effects of those conditions will be felt. The thing that I wish to make clear now is, that it is the female, far more than the male, who determines the character of the offspring, that she does it through her emotional, impressional and idealistic nature, in response to the conditions which environ her; and she does it, not as a reproduction of her own character; but, first as a representation of what she sees, or thinks she sees in the male; and second, of the predominant feelings, emotions and aspirations which govern her during the time of conception, gestation and lactation. And I am so strongly impressed with the power which favorable or unfavorable conditions exert, that I fully believe that if no woman ever mated with any man except one which fulfilled her best ideal as to noble manly qualities; and the conditions surrounding her during gestation and lactation were favorable, even to a normal degree, it would be impossible to produce a deformed or depraved child, or one possessing congenital or hereditary taints. As I have before said, heredity, regarded as a transmission of the undesirable qualities of ancestors, is a reversion; and, under favorable conditions will be thrown off,

character which each may have formed of the other. Excess always produces satiety; and satiety leads to revulsion. It is even probable that a large proportion of the female diseases, those which are peculiar to the sex, are the result of sexual excesses. Could but a tithe of the physical sufferings the sorrows and heart-burnings of married life be told it would be appalling. It is only when exceptional cases find their way into the divorce courts; or startling tragedies are enacted in real life, that the world gets a peep behind the scenes. And yet, we regard it as a matter of special wonder that children are born with undesirable hereditary characteristics.

I am fully convinced that the family life as now commonly lived, wherein the husband is the breadwinner, while the wife attends to the domestic labors of cooking, washing, ironing and the general housework, is bad; and promotive of anything but harmonious relations between them, or lofty ideals in either as to the qualities of the other. The adage, "familiarity breeds contempt," here finds an abundant verification. After the night's rest, each is engaged in their own way at their peculiar duties, until the labors of the day are mostly done. They are then brought together again when each is wearied with his or her own cares and labors. Oftentimes they are irritable and worried, or inclined to find fault. Then bickerings arise, too often ending in criminations and recriminations; or one is moody and exacting or is careless of the other's feelings. To make it still worse, they commonly occupy the same bed, which should never be done habitually. Aside from the excesses which it promotes, the sanitary objections are conclusive. And then, it is all calculated to dispel any high ideals which they may have formed of each other. If neither ever entered the presence of the other except under such conditions as would stimulate a mutual love and respect there would be less necessity for the interference of the law in the relations of the sexes.

Coming back now to the influence of the mother upon her child, if the social atmosphere in which she lives is unfavorable

acting vigorously through the physical system enable the individual to pass unscathed through dangers which would be fatal to those in whom they are less active. And so, with a woman soul free, with her woman's nature unhampered and in vigorous exercise she may bid defiance to the laws of heredity so far as any taint that can attach to her offspring. If a woman mates with the man who best meets her ideal, or whom she thinks meets that ideal she will stamp that ideal upon her child. I say, "whom she thinks meets that ideal," for the question is not so much what he is as what she thinks he is. His real character may differ as wide as the poles from the conception she has formed of him; and yet, it is her ideal that she will stamp upon her child. The powerful influence which the imagination of the mother exerts over the offspring is well known, especially in cases of malformations and abnormalities. Have we any reason to suppose that it is less powerful when operating along beneficent lines? If now a woman who has yielded herself to the man who has won her affections whom she believed was the embodiment of all that was noble generous and true finds that he is not all that her fancy had painted him; but, on the contrary that he is mean vulgar and heartless, so that her ideal is destroyed which she had formed of him her child will certainly partake of the new characteristics she has discovered; and if she continues to mate with him, the disgust and loathing which takes the place of love is likely to find expression in a moral or physical monstrosity, according to the degree of the mother's repulsion to her mate. It is from this that come deformities, congenital and hereditary defects, degenerate reversions, and monstrosities. Here is where we get our Guiteaus, our Prendergasts and our Jesse Pomeroy's. If married, the woman no longer finds her ideal in the man who claims her by legal right; but law and custom still compel her to submit to his embraces; or else she is placed under circumstances in other ways which call into activity the characteristics which are afterward found impress upon her child. There is a consciousness of degradation and she

makes actual, in her offspring, the degradation which she feels. Therefore, it will be seen, how important a part love plays in the development of the child, and, in a larger way of the species; and also, how absolutely sexual relations should cease when love no longer exists.

It will be seen from all this that the influence of the male upon the character of the child, except at the time of connection, is wholly secondary: that is, it is an influence exerted upon the mother through her emotions and her imagination; and by her impressed upon the child. Undoubtedly, at the time of connection his influence is of the utmost importance. Some have regarded it as so great that it makes little difference what the mother may be if the father is all right. They have claimed that it is the father that fixes the character of the offspring; that the mother does little more than furnish a receptacle into which the seed is dropped and in which it develops until birth. Such claim that the child will follow closely the characteristics of the male parent with little regard to the female. But this ignores some of the most obvious facts in nature.

At certain regular periods the female ovaries give off what is known as the "ovum," germ cells, which, if they come in contact with the germ cells of the male, are likely to become impregnated. If so, they pass on into the womb where they are developed until birth. But without such a blending of these opposite cells the germs of either are incomplete. If connection takes place at a time in the month after ovulation has ceased so that this blending is impossible, there can be no conception. I contend that at the time of conception the part which the female pays in determining the character of the child is equally as great as that of the male; and that for the whole nine months following, her influence is not lessened one particle, while that of the male is greatly lessened; and, under some circumstances ceases altogether, so far as exerting any direct influence beyond the initial point. Every particle of nutrition comes from the mother; and every emotion, every thought, every aspira-

tion which she experiences carries its impress to her unborn child. It is her soul, her spirit her ideal that is being stamped, indelibly stamped upon its young and plastic being. Let her experience fright disgust, horror or any other strong emotion and she will register that emotion upon her unborn child with absolute certainty in some way.

Nor does her influence cease with the birth of her child. While nursing a babe, the ready sympathy between the mother and child is scarcely less delicate and active than before birth. Strong emotions act almost as promptly through the mother's milk as they formerly, did through the umbilical cord. And then it is the mother's love that comforts and soothes it in its little troubles; her approbation and encouragement that stimulates it to early endeavors; and her lullaby that wafts it to dreamland. Whatever influence the father exerts up to a comparatively late period is purely secondary. It is an influence upon the mother, mainly, as already shown, through her emotions and the building of her ideals, which she in turn stamps upon the child. He fills a larger place in her thought than all other men combined. If he impresses her with the idea that he is an ideal man that he possesses ideal qualities she will fix those same qualities upon her child, even to physical conformation. His conspicuous habits, his walk, his methods of expression, his ways, every kind of a peculiarity she will photograph as it were, upon the child. If on the other hand, he proves to be something different from her ideal of a man—if he is mean, vulgar vicious dishonest, brutal, or that her emotions become those of disgust and loathing the chances are good as for a child strongly marked with some hereditary taint, some congenital defect, physical or mental or some degenerate reversion.

More than this, the very habits which prevail in married life actually do tend to produce these very effects. When men and women are constantly thrown together in such close relationships as they are, it promotes excesses, if nothing more, which are unfavorable to the preservation of lofty conceptions of the