

**Woman**  
**and the**  
**Socialist**  
**Movement**

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*By Olive M. Johnson*

# **Woman and the Socialist Movement**

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*Preface By Nathan Karp*

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## PREFACE

Olive M. Johnson wrote *Woman and the Socialist Movement* in 1907 in response to a call issued by the Socialist Women of Greater New York for an essay on “‘Woman’ from the socialist point of view.” Johnson’s entry became one of two essays that the Socialist Women chose for publication. As a statement by that organization explained: “*Woman and the Socialist Movement* . . . though written by a member of the SLP, is entirely nonpartisan and has been adopted by many locals of the Socialist Party for agitation among women. It has been translated into Russian, Jewish, German and Swedish.” The SLP, of course, also published the pamphlet.

Johnson joined the Socialist Labor Party sometime during the 1890s and remained a party member until she died in June 1954 at the age of 82. During most of her years of membership she was an active and capable socialist agitator, serving the movement and the SLP as speaker, writer, candidate for political office, study class instructor, National Executive Committee (NEC) member, national convention delegate, etc.

Johnson was in close contact with Daniel De Leon from 1904 until his death in May 1914. During that period, she carried on an extensive correspondence with him on all aspects of the labor movement and the party’s work, and she had frequent opportunities to discuss matters with him personally at the semi-annual NEC sessions in New York. In 1910, Johnson and De Leon were delegates to the International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen.

In 1918, the SLP elected Johnson editor of the *Weekly People*, a post she held until 1938. The Socialist Labor Party published many of her writings in pamphlet form, among them *The Cooperative Movement*, *Daniel De Leon: American Socialist Pathfinder*, *May Day vs. Labor Day*, and *Woman and the Socialist Movement*.

We reproduce Olive M. Johnson’s *Woman and the Socialist Movement* here, not only because of its historical interest, but also because of its sound socialist content. Some of Johnson’s language does, of course, reflect the mores of the period in which she wrote. Even with its limitations as seen from today’s

perspective, it nonetheless represented a giant step forward in thinking regarding women's role in society and the socialist movement. She succinctly and convincingly presents the need to resolve the class question if we are to end the repression of women. The work also attests to Johnson's considerable abilities as a socialist agitator.

NATHAN KARP

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE ECONOMIC RELATION OF WOMAN IN THE PAST.

#### EVOLUTION.

Every social scientist to-day accepts the fact that the human race has developed from forms lower in the scale of nature, and that the career of humanity has been a growth from savagery through barbarism into civilization. Modern science also recognizes that this progress has an economic basis; that it is the modes and methods of producing and exchanging the necessaries of life that determine the status of progress; that it is the development of the means of production that has forced humanity onward from stage to stage; that the morals, ethics, religions, manners, customs and laws of the human race are but reflexes of their economic status of development.

In order therefore to understand woman's position in society—past and present—it is necessary to investigate what has been and is her economic relation to society, her relation to the means of life, of production and exchange.

#### EARLY DIVISION OF LABOR.

Man is a social animal as well as a tool-using animal. From the very earliest stages the human race collected in herds which later developed into clans and tribes, and, finally, into nations. The first coming together was undoubtedly for mutual protection. Out of that grew love for society.

The first division of labor was between man and woman. It probably commenced as soon as—or possibly even before—man had learned to use sticks and stones as weapons. The male would go forward to fight the enemy while the mother female, who was a necessity to the life of the infant, stayed in the background to nurse and protect it. Hiding and shrinking from danger became therefore the nature of woman. With the invention of weapons and tools on the one hand, and fire and pottery on the other, the division of labor became complete. To fight the enemy and procure the food became the lot of man; to

raise and guard the children and prepare food became the duty of the woman.

As soon as mankind commenced to subdivide and spread over the surface of the earth, its battles were no longer confined to the fight with the elements and the wild beasts of the forest. Man has fought man, tribe has fought tribe, and nation has fought nation for the supremacy of the earth. The history of man proves that this eternal struggle has been by far the most severe and destructive. It has also been that which has most rigidly enforced the laws of progress and development. Only those groups of men that were able to invent or adopt inventions were able to withstand the rest or gain new possessions. Others would either perish or be crowded into barren, secluded and undesirable portions of the earth.

Two distinct sets of duties have run through the ages, one for man and another for woman, each necessary for the maintenance and prosperity of the race. Man has been the fighter, the protector of the existing society. Woman has been the rearer of the child, the builder of the future society. Man has been the fisherman, the hunter, the yeoman, and the artisan, the one that procured food, clothing and shelter. Woman has had charge of the preparation of food and clothing, and has taken care of the children. Their occupations led each sex into a different mode of life from the very first. This brought, of necessity, different modes of development. Man became adapted to motion and exertion, became strong, brave, rough and enduring. By constantly using tools and weapons and learning their value, he developed to ever higher degree the powers of invention and discovery. This in turn developed the brain so that it finally ran into the channels of art, science and literature. Woman, on the other hand, by constantly staying at home, adopted quieter habits. She has therefore less energy and endurance. By association with the children and the sick and wounded she became kinder and more sympathetic, but her circle was narrow and required little mental or physical energy of the kinds that man developed.

The process of evolution has made different beings of the two sexes. These differences must not and should not be ignored. In the early stages of the human struggle they developed for the good of the entire race. In class society

the ruling classes have known how to turn both the advantages and disadvantages of each sex to their own good and the oppression of the enslaved. But, as the economic development points to a future society of peace, leisure and plenty, so does the sexual development point to a future when the good in both sexes may be amalgamated into a greater and nobler humanity.

MATERNAL LAW.

That the economic relations in society are powerful and determining factors in the social relations is well demonstrated by woman's position during primitive communism. At that time man's tools and weapons were as yet crude, and they were his only possession. But woman was the ruler of the house, or rather the women of the gens were the rulers of the community house. They owned the household goods and utensils, and the value at that time of these acquirements for the art of cookery can scarcely be over-estimated, as they greatly increased the value and nutriment of the food. Moreover, the women were the earliest tillers of the soil, the little plot around the camp. They had charge of the first domestic animals, at least those whose meat and milk were used for food.

Therefore while these our ancestresses were hard workers they were also well nigh economic masters, and, says a writer on the subject:<sup>1</sup> "Woe to the luckless husband or lover who was too indolent or too clumsy to contribute his share to the common stock." We might well imagine what a life the women of the community would lead him, particularly as all the women were related, belonged to the same gens and the man at marriage went into his wife's household. Sometimes indeed, he was bodily ousted from the house and had to go home to his folks again or hunt for another wife to take him in. Inheritance was then traced in the female line and the children belonged to the mother.

PATERNAL LAW AND CLASS RULE.

The next division of labor was that between the slave and the freeman. As man learned to any great extent to till the soil and domesticate the animals, he

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Wright, for many years a missionary among the Seneca Iroquois, quoted by Engels.

invented a new means of production—the slave. Instead of killing and eating, or otherwise disposing of the conquered enemy he was set to work to produce the necessities of life for the conqueror. The conqueror became the master; the slave, a mere tool and instrument of production, an animal of drudgery at best.

With the growth of slavery the tribes became powerful, they developed into nations and became attached to the land. There existed now a division in society between the slave and the freeman. There also soon arose another, the difference between the rich and the poor freeman. Some were able to get more slaves, more land, more animals, more precious metals, etc., than the others, and therefore acquired greater economic power. These new forms of wealth were man's wealth. They developed within man's specific domain of acquiring food. With them, therefore, man gained economic affluence and power.

The possessions of woman on the other hand sank into insignificance. The implements for her work remained simple, her possessions remained few and comparatively valueless. Man's "house" became the powerful one and begat the attractive power. Gradually woman had to leave her family at marriage and go to the home of her husband. She became absorbed by his family and assumed its name.

As man accumulated private property and assumed economic power, he naturally desired to perpetuate both in his own family instead of leaving it as formerly to be partitioned among his wife's kindred. Thus arose inheritance in the male line. Later on primogeniture was inaugurated to further assure the concentration of wealth and power within man's "house" and the predominance of the male line.

Man's rule had been established in society. Woman's possessions had no economic value. The division between the sexes had become complete. Property was man's and women were even excluded from the inheritance thereof unless no male children existed.

In the ancient nations, the circle of the wife was narrow and miserable. The



freemen owned the wealth and the slaves and held mastery over land and sea. The slaves did the work on land and sea and also in the household. The “free” woman’s economic pedestal was knocked from under her by the slave and therefore she was often less considered. She was tolerated only as the breeder of the race of freemen. In the more warlike nations, such as Sparta and Rome, where many free citizens of strength and courage were highly valued for martial operations, woman held a higher position as mother and wife than in the purely agricultural and trading nations such as Athens and Phoenicia.

With the establishment of class rule in society, woman lost her prestige. The women of the ruling class were probably the part of humanity that first became wholly and totally parasitic. Theirs, therefore, was the lot, and to them clung the stigma, of the parasite. They were tolerated only as necessary evils, were below consideration, treated as objects of scorn and often subjected to actual degradation.

#### MEDIEVAL SOCIETY.

As the concern of this pamphlet is to find in the course of woman’s evolution those women who are or should be directly interested in the Socialist movement, we have little or nothing to do with the women of the upper class. It is the working women that concern us.

With the reorganization of society after the downfall of the Roman Empire, chattel slavery disappeared in the progressive part of the world as a general and worldwide institution. The exploited class were serfs, attached to the land and sold with it. The freemen consisted of two classes—the feudal class, the owners of the land and the serfs, and the artisan and trading class of the free towns.

With the dissolution of chattel slavery, woman regained an economic foundation in the homes of the burghers and serfs. The home became the unit of production and a number of occupations developed within its walls that fall entirely to the lot of women. Spinning, weaving, carding, brewing, baking, sewing, and for relaxation fancy work of various kinds by which home and

clothing were made ornamental, kept the housewife busy from early morning until late. To teach these various occupations was the duty mothers owed to their daughters, and a bride's chief value was her efficiency in them. Medieval society was a combination of the various family units and much of the prosperity of a nation depended upon the skill and industry of its women.

To judge by song and poetry and romance, one should think that these homes were ideal ones. But economics is not poetry. These women were household drudges, coarse and ignorant from the very nature of things. The serfs of the middle ages were not slaves in the historic sense of the word, but they were working drudges over whom the master possessed the right of life and death. The women were not slaves in the historic sense of the word but they also were mere working drudges. They were drudges at home and serfs under the master, and the indignities to which they could be submitted seem, to us, at least, worse than death. Even the wives of the free burghers are scarcely to be envied. While they were exposed to fewer indignities and less deprivation, their horizon was narrow and their views petty, bounded as they were by the daily routine of work and the small gossip among the neighbors.

Humanity to-day bears the traces of its inheritance from savagery and barbarism. The working class bears the traces of past slavery and servitude. Woman has the additional disfavor of narrow association and cramped views, and the stigma that past slavery and serfdom throw upon her as peculiarly hers. This is the inheritance that the past ages give the woman of to-day. This is what she must face frankly, battle against, and overcome.

## CHAPTER II.

### MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY.

#### PRIMITIVE FORMS OF THE FAMILY.

Marriage and family life have not always been what they are to-day. In fact, monogamy is a rather modern institution, and as far as its ideal attainment is concerned, humanity has even now a long way to travel.

When man lived in wild herds sexual intercourse was promiscuous. In the course of development, a form of group marriage and blood relationship was instituted under which all men of one group were the husbands of all the women of another group and vice versa. This system of marriage was one of humanity's great inventions, as by it interbreeding was prevented. This was a most important step in the progress of the race. It improved the health and strength of the tribe and when once established there sprung from it moral concepts, high for that status of development. In these stages of the family, it was a matter of course that descent was traced in the female line.

During primitive communism, a form of pairing family developed. One man and one woman only were husband and wife. Polygamy was of course neither abolished nor forbidden, much less did they have our moral concept about it. However, it was seldom practiced. Food was hard to procure and it was man's bounden duty to provide for the woman with whom he lived, and as man went into the family of his wife, or wives, it was the women who saw to it that he fulfilled this duty. If he utterly failed, he was bluntly ousted from the house. That was the barbaric, plain and unsophisticated method of divorce. The man was then free to pair with another woman and the woman could choose another mate. The children remained in the mother's family and the mother's brother was a nearer relative and owed greater duty to the child than the father himself.

Between the pairing family and the monogamian intervenes the patriarchal

family. This was monogamous in nature and concept, but when the patriarch was rich enough it became polygamous because slavery had arisen and he had the right over his female slaves.

#### MONOGAMY.

Monogamy arose with the development of private property. It is far from meaning the sole association of one man with one woman, as the word would imply. It simply means the legal recognition of the marriage of one man and one woman. This in turn, means that the children of such a marriage are the only legitimate heirs of the persons involved. Side by side with it grew the two nasty heirlooms of modern civilization—prostitution and adultery. Neither the ancient masters nor the feudal lords recognized the first iota of the moral concept of monogamy. The ancients had a house full of pretty female slaves and their intellectual female associate was not the wife but the hetaera. The knights of the middle ages had the right over their female serfs and their romantic love, so beautiful in song and poetry, steered headlong for prostitution and adultery. Nor does monogamy fare better, from a moral point of view, today, with its crop of divorces and its host of scandals. Many of our leading pillars of society have several living wives and many of our prominent society ladies have ditto husbands. The “affinity” is becoming as well recognized as the Greek hetaera. For the rest, man buys his sexual pleasures from the women whom poverty forces to sell. There is small difference between that and the ancient institutions under which he took the same privileges as his divinely ordained right. The modern way only is more hypocritical, as it is considered shameful and the shame and blame fall upon the woman only.

Historic monogamy is a strictly economic institution. It means nothing more or less than the seclusion of the wife of the economic master, be he slave-owner, feudal lord or modern capitalist. This seclusion has for its purpose the bringing up of legitimate heirs through which to perpetuate the economic mastery. It brought about the first degradation of woman, as it made her a parasite, and marriage a speculation. Among the ruling classes, it has remained so throughout. Marriage has been a contract seldom made by the contracting parties themselves. Parents, guardians and marriage brokers have

attended to that business. The determining factor has been property. Where choice has been allowed at all it has been only within the given class of the chooser. Often the contract has been made without the parties seeing each other, generally without the least reference to their likes or dislikes. Children have been betrothed in the cradle or while too young to be concerned at all. Land, goods and chattels have been the world's most irresistible Cupid! It is a serious mistake to think that the "age of romance" was an age of marrying for love. On the other hand the romance as a rule headed for the very opposite of matrimony. The heroes were often already married, the heroines as often so.

The grand old institution of marriage has had very little to do with love, faith and troth!

#### THE PROLETARIAN FAMILY.

We saw that polygamy was seldom practiced among our barbarian ancestors because food was too difficult to procure to allow the man that luxury. Even so throughout the ages have the poor been too poor to follow in the footsteps of the rich in creating the expensive corollaries of the monogamian family.

Among the poorer classes monogamy has been comparatively strict from the force of economic necessity. And as economic necessity is the world's greatest teacher, so among the propertyless monogamy has become the greatest moral virtue. It is therefore among the proletarians that the purest of all human feelings, modern sex-love with a view to marriage and life partnership, has sprung into life.

Even animals exercise choice at mating and often show strong likes and dislikes. Man has no doubt always had preferments. But sex-love, true, pure and lasting, is a very modern virtue and could spring only from generations of the strictest monogamy. While the ancients secluded their legitimate wives, and themselves remained perfectly unrestricted, the poor herdsman composed songs to his beloved one and his suit once won he was usually too poor to look for further adventure. While the feudal knight romanced for another man's wife

or betrothed, the poor serf toiled and saved to get together that with which to purchase the “right of the first night” from the lord for the woman of his choice. Crude and simple and coarse and ignorant as these herdsmen and serfs might be, a life companionship purchased by a multitude of sacrifices, before and after marriage, could not fail to breed devotion, and devotion from generation to generation might well be expected to bear a child as pure as the modern sex-love.

While the modern heiresses look for titles with which to adorn their names, and titled degenerates look for fortunes with which to revive their faded glory; while middle class matrons dicker for position, money and support for their marriageable daughters; while immorality, scandal and divorce stalk rampant in the land, that part of the industrial proletariat that is separated from the scourges of both wealth and extreme poverty are remaining as nearly as possible pure from the taint that pollutes the upper and lower slums alike. With the proletariat property can play no part either as a matchmaker or an agent of oppression. The workers own nothing but their labor power, and that they all own alike. The “man with a good job” may appear as a desirable match from a proletarian point of view, but as a job is in itself a most unstable thing only the most superficial can allow it to influence their choice.

The average proletarian home is far from ideal. There are thousands of rocky reefs in the worker’s matrimonial sea. The inherited narrowness still clings to the woman, the inherited brutality still clings to the man. Then there are the troubles bred by economic conditions, by lack of work and small pay, and high cost of living and large families to be fed and clothed. “When poverty comes in through the door, love flies out through the window,” is a proverb that holds good forever.

But the workers are too poor to indulge in the vices of the rich. Their troubles are of a different character. It takes at all times all a worker can make to support home, wife and children. His wages do not allow him to support an “affinity.” Such extravagance would too soon be detected, and a working woman of to-day sooner seeks the factory for employment than to sit neglected at home.

No property brought her to the man, no property holds her there, and the legal and official trappings instituted for the control of property in matrimonial relations are meaningless to the working class. A new morality, a union based on mutual love and faith is growing in spite of all influences to the contrary. Out of this will spring the morals of the future, a monogamian family in the full sense of the word.

## CHAPTER III.

### WOMAN UNDER CAPITALISM.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE MACHINE.

During the past three centuries there has been such development of social-economic forces as to cause complete revolutions in every relation of human life. It began with the great development in navigation, which resulted in the discovery of vast continents and the opening of world-wide markets for the manufacturing and trading classes. It blossomed out in the development of the great science of chemistry and the manifold discoveries and inventions consequent thereupon. It finally culminated in the discovery of steam and electricity as motive powers. The development of all these branches has forced on and in turn been forced on by the wonderful inventions and improvements in the means of production. A machine is an appliance by which the actual performance of the working process is taken out of the hands of man and is accomplished by the mechanism. In the handicraft period the operative process was limited to the use of a tool in man's own hand and the duration of the workday was subjected to man's physical capacity within the twenty-four hours. Stretch this as they might, man had to eat and sleep even be he denied all further recreation.

But the machine is a different "animal." There is no limit to the number of "hands" with which it may perform the working process. There is no limit to its hours of activity. Twenty-four hours are as good as eight. It needs neither rest nor sleep nor recreation. It indulges in no vices that unfit it for work. It gets no "lazy feelings" nor "cranky notions." Modern machinery is well nigh ideal perfection as far as the performance of the labor process is concerned.

#### PRODUCTION OF COMMODITIES.

The modern system of production differs essentially from previous modes of production. Formerly the production of goods, whether actual necessities of life



or luxuries, was carried on for the immediate need of the producer himself, or of his economic master. Exchange of products was spasmodic and accidental and what was exchanged was the surplus only, that which was produced over and above what was needed at home. Commerce, therefore, was not a world-wide general institution but a branch by which the surplus articles of some were brought within reach of those whose wealth allowed them to consume more than they produced. The general contempt in which the early trading classes were held arose from the fact that they added no wealth to society but lived by buying cheap from the producer who had to sell and selling dear to the consumer who desired to buy.

Under modern capitalism it is different. No one consults his own needs in the production of wealth. A man may spend a lifetime in producing a single kind of goods. A man may never consume an iota of his own products. What is produced to-day is commodities that must go to the markets and be sold before they can be consumed.

#### APPROPRIATION OF LABOR.

In the handicraft period when the tools were hand tools and the actual process of labor was performed by the human agent, there could be no question to whom the products of labor belonged. The man who owned the tools was himself the worker, and as a matter of course, the product was his. When he employed apprentices or journeymen they worked not ultimately to receive wages but to learn the trade and become masters themselves. If, therefore, they gave value to the master's product they received the other value of learning from him. Under capitalism this is altered. The tool has grown into a machine that very seldom can be operated by one man alone. Moreover, the division of labor has extended to the individual products. In the modern labor process one person does not produce a finished product, only a part of a product, sometimes only a fiftieth or a hundredth part. A single machine therefore could make no person independent. The labor process is co-operative. But as an inheritance of earlier stages, the means of production have remained individual property, and as an inheritance of this property right the products of labor have remained the property of the owner of the machine. Capitalism, therefore, is co-operative labor and individual appropriation of the products of labor.

CONCENTRATION OF WEALTH.

The very nature of the machine has demanded concentration. Individual ownership was an impossibility. Even scattered ownership was against its nature. In the beginning of capitalism it was a maxim that “competition is the life of trade.” But free competition, if it means anything, means success to the successful; and this in turn means sure death to competition itself. The unsuccessful would ever be crowded out and have to join the wage working class. The keener the competition the fewer were the successful ones, and the larger and more costly the means of production became, the fewer were the favored ones that could enter the “free” race at all. Capitalism, therefore, means the concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands with a corresponding increase of the wage working class, the class of the people that owns no wealth in means of production but depends for a living on the sale to the owners of the means of production of its physical and mental capacity to labor. Capitalism therefore means the division of society into two classes, the owners of the means whereby to produce the necessaries of life, and the actual producers of the necessaries of life.

THE CAPITALIST CLASS.

As capitalism developed, the capitalist class became gradually entirely divorced from the labor process. So far is that true that few capitalists know or care in what kind of a factory their capital is actually invested, and fewer still have the slightest idea of the actual technical process of the factory in which their capital “works.” Their “work,” as far as they perform any, consists in business schemes and tricks of trade. A portion of the capitalist class has even got beyond the scheming stage. They are mere useless idlers who waste in riotous living the tremendous surplus fleeced from labor.

PROFITS.

We have seen that under the capitalist system no one engages in production of commodities for his own use. On the contrary capitalists often

manufacture things of which they never consume an iota themselves. The end in view is quite different. It is simply and ultimately to reap profits, to draw out of an investment more capital than has been put into it.

It is a maxim that labor produces all wealth. It is utterly impossible to conceive of wealth without the labor process. As the capitalists have been divorced from the labor process, as their only “work” is non-productive, it is self-evident that they add no wealth to society. Their capital is wealth in the first place appropriated from labor. When, however, they from year to year draw dividends on their investments, when their plants are becoming ever more valuable, when their personal fortunes increase apace, then it ought to be plain to everyone that the capitalist method of appropriating labor’s products is thoroughly successful.

The workers own nothing but their power to labor. A worker must find work or he will starve and suffer. To find work means plainly the sale of one’s labor-power to the owner of the machine. When a worker gets work he agrees to work for a certain wage for a certain number of hours a day. During those hours his labor belongs to the employer. It is the worker’s duty to give his employer all there is in him, regardless of the wages he receives. Whatever wealth the worker creates during the hours of work belongs to the employer regardless of the wages he pays. It is plain, therefore, that the less the employer pays in wages and the more the worker produces the greater is the surplus wealth that flows to the capitalist. For example, if a man can produce \$5 worth of wealth in a day and he receives \$2.50 in wages, \$2.50 goes to the capitalist. But if his wages are only one dollar, \$4 goes to the capitalist. Or, if by improving the labor process or other means the \$2.50 man can produce \$10 instead of \$5 worth of wealth, then the capitalist gets \$7.50. To arrange all manners of ways so that the worker can be skinned of as much as possible belongs to the schemes and tricks of the successful capitalist and his mental hirelings. It is this “work” that keeps them busy at all hours and earns for them the titles of “industrious,” “smart,” “thrifty,” etc.

The capitalist system is a refined method by which the ruling class robs the

producing class out of the product of its toil without the workers realizing it. Even when they see stupendous fortunes amassed in the hands of a few men they have no idea how it all happens. Capital is unpaid labor. Profits, interest and dividends are unpaid labor. All the wealth and luxury squandered by the capitalist idlers represents unpaid labor. Capitalism appropriates for a few all the inventions and discoveries of past ages. It claims for its favorites the fruits of the toil and experience of past generations. By so doing it holds the power over the present generation and robs it from day to day of the fruits of its toil.

Wage labor is the modern and refined method of slavery by which the worker is forced to carry himself to the market from day to day and sell himself piece-meal in order to live.

#### ADVENT OF CAPITALISM.

It is perhaps a peculiar trick of fate that the first machine to play any part in the revolutionizing of industry should go down the ages with a woman's name—the spinning “Jenny.” Should we perhaps take it as a token of woman's worse enslavement by the machine? Or does it forebode the dawn of her freedom? Certainly, it is the first for the factory girl of to-day! But evolution points to the machine as the emancipator of the woman of the future!

The spinning jenny was closely followed by the machine loom and a number of other appliances that completely revolutionized the textile industry. The manufacture of cloth had been woman's occupation throughout the ages. Already during the handicraft period had she commenced to do this work for a livelihood. The competition soon became impossible. The revolution in the weaving industry took this branch of work from the home and made it an industrial pursuit. It became factory work. In England with the development of this industry, and the opening of the world's markets for the products, the demand for wool greatly increased. Merrie England that had been dotted with independent homes was converted into a great sheep pasture. When the process of concentration was too slow the people were forcibly evicted from the land. Home industry was extinguished. The victimized peasants congregated in towns to seek employment. Men, women, and children alike sought refuge from

starvation in the factory. The conditions of labor were beyond description. The workers were poor, ignorant and unorganized. Every advantage could be taken of them. The workshops were unsanitary and degrading. The wages were as low as misery could make them and there were practically no limits to the hours of labor. The degradation of the population defies description. The women and children being the weaker ones, suffered the most bitterly. But in proportion as they crowded into the workshops men were also crowded out. Thousands of men sought the highways as tramps and became a menace to the owners of property. Stringent laws were made against them, and it went so far that men were even hanged for vagrancy. That is the manner in which capitalism announced its advent upon the world's stage. Thus did England become the workshop of the world and the Mistress of the Sea, and on the misery of the workers did the English capitalists grow into wealthy lordlings.

“THE NEW WOMAN.”

Bearing in mind that it is the economic relations that determine the social relations, we may now trace woman's position in existing society. What remains of the economic foundation of the middle-age home? We may well say, absolutely nothing! All the good old womanly occupations are to-day industrial pursuits. The economic foundation of the woman at home has for a second time been entirely knocked from under her. This time it is the factory with its machine production that has made home labor unprofitable. Woman has no post in the home unless she remains there merely as mother or as housekeeper on a small scale for the man who is lucky enough to afford the luxury. But the very restlessness of the women demonstrates the instability of their position. They get “lonesome,” a disease unknown among our busy grandmothers. The upper class woman drowns her lonesomeness by delving headlong into society. “Society” is another name for balls and suppers and dissipation and high living and strong drinks and exciting gambling and genteel cigarette smoking. The middle class woman tries to dispel her lonesomeness at the “club.” The working woman's restlessness turns to finding work. Even when not actually driven thereto by necessity her mind turns towards work. The work in the little home is insufficient and non-productive. It does not give satisfaction. Daughters, sisters, and often wives desirous of having the family “get on” better go to the

factory, store or office to seek work. To learn a trade and find an occupation is nowadays as much the thought of the girls as of the boys. Marriage is not the rule nor is it the haven to which woman looks for her support. It is incidental. The work is the rule and the means whereby she feels surest to be able to live. It is time enough to learn housekeeping when a girl is married. There is not much to learn anyhow in these days of canned goods and bakers' kitchens. For that matter, it is found to be about as cheap not to keep house.

With this change in the economic relations came inevitably the corresponding changes in social relations, in manners, customs and ideas. Not only has the upper class woman broken loose in "society," not only has the middle class woman broken loose in the club, but the working woman also has broken the narrow bonds that were the result of a narrow social horizon. The woman's activity no longer being confined to the home her pleasures and associations could of course not remain confined to it. She can be seen on the street, alone or in company any hour out of the twenty-four without being considered indecent. Early hours and late hours, day work and night work have taken care of that. Being an independent wage earner woman would of course soon seek and pay for her own pleasures too. In these days of bachelor maidens it is too tedious a process to wait for the lover to take one out. So woman can go alone to balls, concerts, theaters, etc., without shocking the "decency" and "modesty" of the community. The commandment of the early Christian apostle that woman must not be heard in public is no longer recognized even by the most devout worshipers of the gospel themselves. Women are very much heard from in the fashionable churches and the Salvation lassies have done us the service of dispelling the last remnants of old fashioned modesty and backwardness.

The movements of women are freer than ever before in class society. Indeed we might almost say they are free. Therein consists the upward step in her evolution, no matter what other degrading influences may be at work.

Such are the changes in ethics and morals, customs and ideas wrought among the women of the last century! What would the women of the

revolutionary days, if they suddenly came to earth, think of the Twentieth Century Woman?

### WOMAN'S INVASION OF INDUSTRY.

When society's economic foundation was removed from the home, we saw that the women of the working class naturally drifted to the shop and the factory. There they found the doors open for them. The division of labor has done away with skill and consequently the long period of apprenticeship. The workers are machine tenders, feeders of the mechanism or receivers of the finished product, packers, pasters, labelers, etc. What is entirely needed in some branches are nimble fingers, close application to work, patience and submission.

The first result of the introduction of machinery was the increased competition among men for jobs. That lowered wages. Then machinery simplified the labor process. That opened the field for women and children, which threw still more workers into the field of competition for jobs. That lessened the chance for marriage and the raising of families. To-day, it takes the combined effort of the adult members of a family—and often even of the children—to keep the family alive. When they succeed in more than merely keeping “the wolf from the door” the demand of civilization is ever for better things and tastes are cultivated. To satisfy these tastes, the workers are perfectly willing to work. Especially is that true of the younger generation that would almost rather never have been born than not to be “up to the times.”

The capitalist class is ever after profits. Therefore, they are ever after cheap and easily exploited labor. Therefore do they joyfully employ women and children whenever possible. That women are cheaper than men there can be no denying. Why it should be so even when they perform the same work ought not in the least to cause any wonder. There is almost a world's history behind that. Traditionally they are not the bread winners. Even to-day thousands of them work only to help the family eke out, or to earn for themselves clothes and pin-money. They have never been the fighters of the world and are therefore more easily subdued and imposed upon by their bosses. They have never moved en



masse and are therefore unused to organization and generally remain unorganized.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

There is one phenomenon peculiar to modern society which perhaps more than actual starvation is responsible for driving all the members of the family into the nets of capitalist exploitation. That is the uncertainty of things. The spectre of want is as dreadful as want itself. The introduction of labor-saving machinery throws thousands of workers out of employment from time to time. No one knows whose turn it is next. Neither the most skilful mechanic nor the almost exclusive brainworker is out of reach of the competition of the machine. The division of labor and technical and modern methods make it ever possible to substitute cheap labor for dear labor.

Moreover, the tremendous magnitude and increased speed of modern production and transportation and the perpetual attempt on the part of the capitalists to increase their profits by neglecting to install costly safety appliances and proper means of precaution make modern production ever more precarious. The industrial field is a battlefield strewn with the corpses of the working class. He who leaves for work in the morning can never be sure that he will not return a cripple, or even that he will return alive, at all. The poet sings of man's inhumanity to man in past ages of brutality. Wars have always been destructive. The healthy, able-bodied men have been killed off and women have been left widows and children orphans. At such times the women have often had to buckle down to hard work and drudgery. There is less of that sort of warfare to-day, but the industrial battle is far more destructive. More people perish annually upon it than were killed in the world's greatest battles. Just at this writing (December, 1907), the civilized world should experience a thrill of horror, if the commonness of such things had not long ago worn off the effect at several most dreadful mine disasters. Does the civilized world of our "democratic government" ever give a thought as to what becomes of, what suffering has to be gone through by the widows and orphans of the miners whose charred bodies are now being excavated from several mines?



Society is becoming more and more reckless as to its expenditure of human life. Everybody, therefore, is anxious "to look out for a rainy day" and it is sure to "rain" sometime, but the worst is that it generally "rains" long before the workers have had chance to prepare for it. Herein lies one reason why girls are very anxious to learn a trade or office work, because "no one knows but it may come in handy sometime." "Something may happen to father," or if she expects to get married the day may yet come when she may have to support herself and her children. This uncertainty, too, makes marriage less attractive. It far from furnishes a girl a safe and sure asylum for the future. On the other hand, it mirages the prospect of a family for which she may have to care.

With continual disquietude about the future, who can wonder that a perfect mania for work takes possession of man, woman and child in civilized society?

### FACTORY LIFE.

Employment is to-day the rule for women. Marriage is incidental. Old maids and old bachelors have grown apace during the last fifty years. In the factory districts of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut there are whole "she towns." In the mining, lumber and railroad camps of Pennsylvania, Ohio and the far west are whole "he towns." "Everybody works but father," sing the songsters of a New England textile town.

There are those who hail with joy the freedom and independence of the industrial woman worker. That is almost to add insult to injury. Capitalism has torn the home asunder; has broken all the ties of family relationship; has made tramps out of thousands of men; has created arduous toil for the women; has taken the children from the home, the school and the playground; has thrown each into competition with all and ground their brains, bones, and sinews into profits. Wage slavery spells the very opposite of freedom and independence. Of what brand is the freedom of the thousands of girls who go to the factory of a morning for a long day's toil? Those hours mean misery, slavery, and degradation to them. The atmosphere is unhealthy, mentally, morally and physically. Though the work is simplified and easy its continual sameness is

wearisome and hard. Long standing on her feet destroys a woman's health. The whole combination of circumstances unsexes her and makes her unfit to become a wife and mother. It stunts her mentally and makes her stupefied and coarse. It forces on moral degradation in the same degree that it destroys healthy family life and physical and mental culture. Nothing is more repugnant than the unsexed, boldfaced, rude, masculine girl, unless it be the weazened, physically deteriorated, effeminate man. Capitalist society produces a plentiful group of each. A likeness is produced between the sexes, but likeness is not equality. Boldness is not independence. To be rude and tough and do as one pleases is not to be free and strong and a person of character and will.

Factory life is the very opposite of freedom. It is wage slavery. There never was a worse slave-driver than the exacting, ignorant, overbearing boss of today. Work and toil and worry and strife can only destroy the mental faculties, and freedom can only come from knowledge and understanding. The road to freedom may indeed lead through the industrial workshop, but the goal is not reached until humanity has made the machine its slave, instead of being a slave to it and the few owners thereof.

#### EDUCATION.

It is not only factory work that woman has invaded, but she is probably an even more formidable competitor of man in the educational and professional branches of work. Every such occupation has been invaded by woman. She has taken the pulpit and the professor's chair. The majority of teachers in the grammar grades and high schools are women. Of clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers, typewriters, there are more women than men.

With the development of a general and complicated system of commerce such as capitalist distribution necessitated, the demand increased greatly for persons to perform this kind of work. Moreover, branches of industry sprung up in which the workers required knowledge, or at least scraps of knowledge of sciences such as chemistry, mathematics, drawing, languages, etc. In every previous social stage, education has been a special privilege enjoyed only by a favored and exclusive class. This class was strong by its power of knowledge

and enjoyed high privileges. But with the development of the chemical, technical and clerical branches of industry, capitalism demanded that knowledge and brain as well as brawn and muscle should be mere commodities. An article in such demand could not remain a special privilege of a favored elite. Therefore, it has come about that the institutions of education and learning have grown apace. Therefore, too, no doubt, it is that the instinct of capitalist “philanthropists” leads them to establish libraries and universities and trade schools with such “tainted money” as can be well spared from the field of exploitation and riotous society life. Schooling has been cheapened so that it is within reach of almost anyone. Moreover, it has been extended to both sexes alike. Girls can acquire education equally with the boys, and as a natural consequence women can enter old and new branches of such work in equal competition with men.

But not only was education cheapened as concerns its acquirement. It was actually reduced in quality. It has become thin and watery, so to speak. It is true indeed that a ten-year-old child to-day knows, almost by intuition, many common rules of science that were disputed or even wholly unknown to the greatest philosophers and students of ancient times. But for all that a college student to-day is not necessarily either a philosopher or scientist. Philosophers and scientists, developed or in embryo, are as scarce to the pro rata of population to-day as ever before in the world’s history. Common education to-day is routine knowledge of specific technical branches. It is a stuffing process rather than assimilating process. It produces specialists, quick at performing routine work but who possess little knowledge outside of it. It has reduced education to a mere commodity. It has created an educated proletariat that upon the labor market has exactly the same standing as the industrial proletariat.

But for all that, even poor education is a step in advance of no education. Capitalism has in this as in many other respects proven itself a great equalizer. While the mass of students and scholars to-day are in learning far below the students and learned men of yesterday, they are however in knowledge and education infinitely above the mass of people, even the wealthy and

economically favored people, of every previous stage of history. At the same time, while the supercilious lament the decline in the status of learning because of generalization and specialization, there can be no doubt that the world today has its ample quota of eminent scholars in every branch of learning, and that science, art and literature are on a higher plane than ever before.

Capitalism is a transition period to a higher status of society. Equality is a corollary of high development. By throwing the educational institutions open, on the one hand, to the working class, and on the other hand to both sexes alike, capitalism has fulfilled a great mission to the human race. Knowledge breeds thirst for knowledge. Thorough and sound education must follow poor and specialized education. Once the human race has learned enough to realize how infinitely little it really knows and how many grand and wonderful things there are to learn, then the greatest avenue to knowledge has been opened. Once the women have entered this avenue with equal opportunities with the men they will be quite sure to try to keep up the pace. In women of science and knowledge and determination the rising generation will find quite different educators and companions than in the supercilious, society-hunting, flighty and ignorantly egotistic women of to-day. The child will acquire almost as his birth-right, principles of knowledge and science and rules of health that to-day are difficult to inculcate even in the best of people.

Once such people are on the earth there is little room for slavery and oppression! Freedom and equality of all humanity, must at last prevail!

"THE SERVANT PROBLEM."

It is scarcely possible to expostulate on woman's troubles and tribulations without stumbling upon this much disputed ground. Of all the worries of the society woman, the problem of controlling her menials is probably a little the worst. The lackeys, that is, the genuine hangers-on of plutocracy, constitute at the present time a large class of people. The more riotous the society life of plutocracy becomes the larger grows the army that they draw in their wake. The train must needs be long to make a splendid show, equal or over and

above, their society rivals. They keep whole such retinues for mountain homes, seaside homes and city homes, homes in the south and homes in the north. Some fit out whole floating palaces and make cruises around the world, waited on and bowed to at every turn. Some have nurses for their poodles and flunkies that take them for an airing.

These places with the rich are desirable refuges for men and women who can curb their entire individuality and become mere mummies and lickspittles. There is no indignity to which the typical flunky will not stoop. Often, however, the servant gets the mastery over the master. They are the go-betweens in dissipations and secret adventures. If these are to remain secret the servant must be bought. But one that can be bought for silence can also be bought to talk. Thus these inevitable evils to a useless and corrupt class become the scourge and menace of their good master or mistress, who often becomes entirely tyrannized by them. In most of the great scandals the servant plays a formidable part as a witness. But it depends on which side can buy, whether he is silent or talks. The rumors and small gossip that are always afloat concerning various society people mostly come through the servants' hall. There is no doubt that society ardently wishes that we still lived in the age when the servant class could be reduced to dumb mutes and eunuchs.

The lackey class furnishes no field for Socialist propaganda. They are hangers-on of the rich and are as a rule ardent upholders of the system that furnishes them with a parasite upon whom they in turn prey. The richer and the more lavish and extravagant the master class the better are the pickings that fall to the lackey.

They therefore stand firmly by the rich in all their folly and extravagance. They hate the industrial proletariat by nature and instinct as opponents of the class that furnishes them with their lazy good-for-nothing lives. In turn they are most heartily despised by the industrial proletariat. Lackey and flunky have become terms of actual contempt.

Of all the subjects of discussion in the middle class woman's club, this one

of the servant has probably been the most difficult to solve. They have lost all patience with the factory and store. It has taken the girls away from the domestic service and made them too “proud” and “independent” to be domineered over by an overbearing mistress. Girls nowadays do not care much to give up their evenings and Sundays and don’t want to ask anybody when they can go or when they shall return when the work is once done. In short, it is the employment of women in the factory that has created this ticklish servant problem.

The middle class loves to ape the manners of the plutocracy. They cannot, of course, come up to it on account of the expense. But they will imitate as near as they can. The modern servant is a great obstacle in their way. They have not the wealth with which to buy obedience, cringing and crawling. The servile servant somehow manages sooner or later to get into the family of the rich. The independent servant is a holy terror to the middle class woman. If she is no good the house is turned topsy-turvy. If she is worth while keeping she becomes almost a household tyrant that can neither be domineered or dogged around. Girls are not kept in middle class homes to strut and flunky around. Their serving is no sinecure. They are there to work, they “are hired for it” and expect it. But being able and willing to work they stand not much of a lady’s funny work. As a rule they are as ready to go as they were to come, and if they cannot get suitable servant work they look to the factory for employment. I have known of girls who quit their service because it was demanded of them to wear silly little caps on their heads such as no civilized person would put on. I have personally known a girl who left a splendid position as nurse of two little girls and took much harder and more disagreeable work because the mistress, who had very plutocratic notions, demanded that she should wear an apron on the street. She had never dressed that way and refused, insisting that her clothing was her own business, and so they parted. This girl was a refined, educated girl with the finest faculty for entertaining children. As a psychological study we took special pains to become acquainted with her successor and found her to be a coarse-grained, ignorant, foul-mouthed, slovenly girl, the mere association with whom would ruin any child. But she wore an apron and would have worn six to satisfy the mistress for whom she smirked and cringed to her face and roundly abused to her back.



Outside of the lackey and flunky, problems which remain for the rich to settle as best they can, the servant problem is being absorbed into the general industrial problem. The middle class home has very much a tendency to disappear. The apartment house and family hotel are taking its place. The “impudence” of the modern servant has much to do to hasten the course. That is proven again by the fact that this tendency is much less in evidence on the Pacific Coast where servile Japanese and Chinese servants can be had than in the East, where most of the servants are Irish, German or Scandinavian girls who become much too quickly Americanized and will look for other work if the service does not suit.

Many of the old time servants’ tasks have become real industrial pursuits. The cook, the waiter, the porter, the cabman, the barber and even the bootblack are industrial proletarians. The “servant problem” therefore does not concern the Socialist. It will take care of itself in the happy course of social evolution.

#### MURDEROUS SOCIETY.

In investigating the condition of woman there is one phenomenon that is striking and becomes more so as it is peculiar to modern society; that is, the growing frequency of the female cripple. We do not here have reference to the cripple by birth or from illness, but the industrial cripple, the otherwise healthy and able person maimed at her work. In a general way, the great recklessness of modern society as to its expenditure of human life on the industrial field has been referred to. But for that matter, human society has always been lavish in the expenditure of human life, if not upon one battlefield surely upon another. The marvel may well be that there are any human beings left to tell the tale of destruction, so vigorous have they been about it.

But in every previous society man has fought to protect the women and children of his own class or nation. On the industrial battlefield, however, there is no protection afforded anybody. The strong cannot shield the weak. It is rather a scramble of all against all in a helpless jungle. Women have to take their share of the danger equally with men and often perish on the field. Whole factories have been blown up by combustible oils and gases and the corpses of

women have been mingled with those of men. Dangerous conflagrations have broken out in workshops and both men and women have perished together or have jumped from upper stories together only to be maimed for life or killed.

Writers from the southern cotton mill districts tell us that it is a common thing to see little children with their fingers and often their whole hands cut off. Women get arms and legs cut off by machinery of late with shocking frequency in every industrial state. The poets sing pretty airs to woman's finest adornment, her crown of luxuriant hair and the "equality" woman who cut it off to be like man did not stay in style very long and was never popular. But this very adornment has caused many women the most fearful torture. It has caught in the machine at which they were working and they have been scalped as clean as if the most skilful redskin had done it with his knife. These cases are becoming common. Within the last few weeks five such cases have been reported in the papers that have come to my individual notice—three in the east, one in the middle west and one on the Pacific coast. Women's clothing also furnishes a particular source of danger. Many are the unfortunates whose dresses have been caught in the machinery and who have thus been hurled to an instantaneous death. While we scarcely would fall in line with the advocates of the bloomers as the only sure road to the millennium, we do unhesitatingly pronounce it criminal not to have proper safety appliances where women have to work in danger of such shocking deaths.

But as thousands upon thousands have gone under in humanity's onward course and thousands upon thousands have been sacrificed upon the altar of progress, so these women are the sacrificed victims on the altar of a woman's broader life and approaching emancipation.

Woman's economic emancipation is necessary to her social and general emancipation. The road to economic emancipation leads through the factory. The old had to be entirely broken up to give room for the new. But in the process of transition, thousands are ground down with excessive toil, thousands suffer misery and degradation, others are maimed and murdered; but above all there is one bright star, the star of the emancipation of the human race from all forms of slavery.



UPWARD AND DOWNWARD TENDENCIES.

In the process of evolution in our age there are at work two decided tendencies, an upward and a downward one. Capitalist society discards yearly thousands of unfortunates from the real race of life. The slums grow apace. Women and men equally are the recruits for the slums. To the slums belong not only the unfortunates that live by begging, petty stealing, and other immoral practices.

To them belong the whole useless degraded hanging-on element in society. The female sex furnishes the tremendous army of professional prostitutes, and there are those in lace, silk and diamonds as well as in rags and tatters. Thieves, frauds, confidence men, horse racers, professional gamblers, and every other kind of fraud and "sport" are recruited from both sexes alike.

These are society's off scourings. It is a large class that may have to be reckoned with in time of social disturbances. They always swing to the side of the rich, from whose crumbs they live. In Russia to-day they are furnishing the reaction's "Black Hundred," the scourge of the revolutionary movement and the dread of the working class. They furnish no field for Socialist propaganda. They are themselves beyond redress and have no future generation for which to hope and work.

Even among the workers proper, those that remain within the realms of usefulness, there are downward tendencies. The intense and brainstunning work in the factory degrades the worker to a mere drudge. There remains no interest or incentive beyond work, eat and sleep. The men often drown their misery in drink. Who can blame them when one is really fair about it! Sometimes the women do the same, but then they are dangerously near the brink of the slums. Oftener they become crabid, stupefied, reckless of personal appearances, narrow and peevish. The moral atmosphere in the factory is so polluted that both in word and deed the girls often hover on the brink of slum life. The thing that Roosevelt has designated as race-suicide has a most deteriorating influence on the womanly virtues of the women of to-day. Innocence, love, and virtue fall before it. Kindness, sympathy and motherly love

are blunted. But it is on the increase, and the most strenuous presidential exertion cannot stop it. It is born in capitalist society from the uncertainty of a livelihood and the corresponding decline of healthy, happy, prosperous family life.

But the entire picture of modern society is not dark. It has some very bright spots indeed. There be those, mostly of the intellectual class or those that live by taking advantage of the ignorance of the workers, who declaim on the ignorance and stupidity of the workers and say that nothing can ever be done with them. These people are either dishonest or do not in the least comprehend the spirit of the working class.

It cannot be too carefully borne in mind what the working class is—that it has been an enslaved class since the day man evolved out of barbarism. We bear on our backs as our birthright the marks of ages of slavery and servitude. For centuries the oppressed class has been whipped into submission. The most progressive, those that have ever dared to rebel, have been ruthlessly murdered. The tale is the same from the first uprising of slaves to the Paris Commune, Red Sunday or the Idaho and Colorado Bull Pens.

But in spite of all it has suffered, the working class to-day is educating itself the world over and is organizing for its emancipation. There are decided upward tendencies at work. The general and common education of both sexes has already been treated. The demand for an eight hour day is growing. With an eight hour day there is always some time for leisure and improvement. The right of the workers to organize is to-day at least morally conceded, however much it is contested in fact. The free association of boys and girls, men and women is probably one of the most uplifting tendencies. It creates a good natured rivalry that stimulates both sexes onward and it has the tendency to inspire each with what is good in the other.

On the whole we have great cause to rejoice at human progress. It has ever been only a small minority that led the human race onward and upward. That minority is proportionally ever so much larger to-day than ever before in

history. Progress is far more general as it has penetrated all layers of society and is carrying with it its pro rata of the female sex that has been in the background throughout the ages.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

That so great and sudden economic changes and the corresponding changes in woman's position as took place with the introduction of capitalism should bring forth womanly abnormalities is not surprising. Some, drunk with their newly acquired freedom of action, were bound to make themselves ridiculous, over-bearing and domineering. They denounced all mankind and roundly upbraided man for what they termed his tyranny and oppression.

Artemus Ward, America's greatest humorist and satirist in the days of the breaking up of the old regime and the beginning of the new, has turned his pen to caricature the "Woman's Rightsist," as he caricatured and upbraided every sham and upstart in society. As a "wandering showman" he frequently runs across her and once when he has had an exceptionally hard tilt with members of the "Bunkumville Female Moral Reformin' & Wimin's Rite's Associashun" he exclaims: "O, woman, woman! you are a angle when you behave yourself; but when you take off your proper appairel & (mettyforically speakin')—get into pantyloons—when you desert your firesides, & with your heds full of wimin's rites noshuns go round like roarin lyons, seking whom you may devour somebody—in short, when you undertake to play the man, you play the devil and air an emfatic noosance."

For some time this sort of a woman was very much in evidence. Woman imagined herself trampled upon and abused by man, but invariably when this sort of woman's rights were sifted down, they were inspired by a desire to rule and domineer, themselves. Some went so far as to deck themselves out in most ridiculous costumes, oftenest in imitation of man which went to prove that what they most desired was the place of him whom their envy caused them to abuse.

Not to quote against this sort of women only the man satirist I quote here

also upon the same subject one of the foremost intellectual women of our day, the great actress Olga Nethersole,<sup>2</sup> who says: “I do not sympathize with such of my sex—alas, far too many of us—who selfishly enshroud themselves in a self-pitying cloak of martyrdom and who, by some strange hallucination, imagine the whole world is arrayed against them. For them I entertain nothing but pity. They are invalids, mentally, morally and physically. Thank God, each succeeding generation sees fewer of these undesirables who seem to have been born to make their own and their friends’ lives unhappy. They live paradoxically, for they are happiest when most unhappy.”

In the progress of evolution the female has been the unfortunate sex. Woman has been selected for faculties good for the community, the nation and the general advance of the race in the struggle for existence, but which at the same time happened to be less in her favor as an individual being. In class society, she has been additionally held back by property laws and sexual degradation. But for all that there is not the woman alive, unless she is utterly blinded by prejudices, who will not admit that woman’s best friend is man and that her worst enemy is woman herself. Every man admires, and enjoys the society of the intellectual, progressive woman. The average woman, however, holds herself aloof from man’s talk, man’s views, man’s interests and man’s society in the full and broad and intellectual sense. If man treats Woman as half a child and engages with her in petty, senseless tattle that he never would use among men, it is because woman herself invites it and would be infinitely bored by broad, healthy, vigorous “man talk” on the topics of the day or the interests of the world. It does not take the broad-minded man very many minutes to detect the broad-minded woman who has an interest in, and an understanding of, the world and its topics of interest.

The woman can never reach the level upon which man stands by making a

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<sup>2</sup> [Olga Nethersole (1870-1951) was an English actress who was arrested for performing in the play *Sapho*. The play, by Claude Fitch, was based on a French novel by Alphonse Daudet. Nethersole played the role of Fanny, an unmarried but very sexual woman. The production opened at Wallack’s Theater on February 5, 1900, and was closed by the New York City police on March 5 for immorality. Olga Nethersole was arrested for “violating public decency.” She was found innocent. Nethersole went on to produce two revivals of *Sapho*. (From the Internet)]

row upon him. It will take vigorous work, unlimited patience, resistless endurance, and the healthy influence of several generations of energetic, educated, broad-minded mothers.

EQUAL SUFFRAGE.

The so-called woman question has, during the last years, boiled down almost entirely to a question of the ballot, the right of equal suffrage for man and woman. As a question of moral right, justice and equality, who but the most pig-headed can have any opposition to woman suffrage? She is part of society, she suffers keenly by its wrongs and she is, or ought to be, deeply interested in its progress. But politics and State rule came into the world with class society and its repression of woman. What is more natural, then, than that woman as a whole should share the fate of the oppressed classes and be prevented from partaking in the political deliberations of the privileged class?

At the present time it is not worth the while of the progressive, at least not of the Socialist, woman, to go one step out of her way to procure the ballot. The struggle to-day is a class struggle. The reforms that might be procured by use of the ballot are insignificant and could only serve to patch up existing society. We Socialists don't want it patched. As far as the ballot is and can be used to abolish the present system, let whosoever has it, use it. The working class is anyhow the immense majority of the population and is more than sufficient numerically to vote out present society when they are educated to do so. The great political battle of the working class is a battle of education. It is carried on with speech and with pen, and in this campaign the capable woman takes her place regardless of capitalistic laws, or of class society's restriction of the ballot.

In a Socialist society the question solves itself. The administration there will have for its aim the direction of industry, of production and distribution, of education, enjoyment, and health, and will and must be carried out through these various branches. As woman partakes in all these branches of work she will unquestionably assume her part in the administration of them. She will assume this work naturally as her right and duty without either grant or favor.

As a peculiar manifestation of the manner in which progress works it cannot fail to be noted in this connection that it is under the most tyrannic government in the civilized world, in the Czar's domain, over in little Finland, that the women to-day stand out conspicuously with the highest political rights both as to the use of the suffrage and as to actually having been elected to the nation's highest legislative body. There we hail it indeed as progress and cheer it as one of woman's greatest accomplishments of the ages. It is progress indeed over there, as it greatly increases the vote of the oppressed class and the political forces opposed to autocracy. That country is not as yet ready for the Socialist revolution. Every reform lessens the power of the Czar and the powers of the State. The spirit with which these Finnish women enter into their work is a glorious sign of woman's progress.

#### TRADES UNIONISM.

Morally it seems to be conceded that women have the same rights as men in the trade unions of the A.F. of L., and many people really think that they have so in fact, if they only took advantage of it. But these unions are capitalistic unions, i.e., they have for their basic principles that the interests of capital and labor are identical. As far as they serve labor it is only the pure self-interest, not the class interest, of a few favored members of a craft. From the nature of these facts they cannot be of much, if any, help to women in their struggle. CAPITAL'S INTEREST in women's labor is to get cheap labor, and to interfere with that would be too much against the "mutual" interest. The only union we know that has declared for equal rights and equal wages for women and held strictly to the declaration is the Typographical Union. The result has been, not by any means, that it opened a branch of high paid labor for women but that they have been almost entirely kept out of a trade that they were as well fitted to work in as any other. So we see that the selfish interest of the typos has been served by their "spirit of equality and human rights." Most industries in which women work in great numbers have been entirely ignored by the organizers of the A.F. of L. That is quite consistent with its nature. The A.F. of L. is a graft organization as well as a craft organization. The leaders look for high dues and high initiation fees in order to keep them in high salaries and fat sinecures, and as women's wages are, as a rule, very low, it is a

poor field for extortion. Competition, too, is great in women's branches, as the work is generally much simplified, and there would be but poor hope of creating a job monopoly. As a rule, therefore, the women have remained practically unorganized. They have made no efforts themselves and the A.F. of L. unions have made no efforts towards it.

The Shoe Workers, Textile and Laundry employees, however, have large mixed organizations. In them, however, have gone on the grossest fakirdom and hugest extortions. Their efforts have been mostly discouraging and all of their strikes have been defeated. The last Fall River textile strike can almost be said to have been disastrous, so much suffering and misery did ensue during it and from it, among these workers.

There have of course never been any efforts to equalize the wages of men and women in these trades, much less to bring women's wages up to what is considered "a fair wage," in the average organized craft. Women workers, whether organized or unorganized, have remained very poorly paid throughout. If craft unionism has failed to better materially the workers' condition even in the most favored craft, and if where wages have been advanced it has been only by means of high dues and initiation fees that have kept other workers from the field of competition, how could it be expected that it could do anything for the trades where men, women and children are pitted against each other in factories where the most improved and perfected machinery has simplified the labor process and made competition keen?

The action of women in the trade union movement has mostly boiled down to auxiliaries and Label Leagues. As these have for their purpose to help union labor by special efforts as purchasers on the field of distribution after the capitalist is through skinning the worker in the workshop, their efforts have been valueless and the interest has ever been small. There are few women that go out to trade with the workers' small purse who do not have far greater interests in the bargain counter than in the union label.



THE DOWNFALL OF CAPITALISM.

Capitalist society is working its own downfall. The concentration of wealth points to the fact that in the near future all industry in this country will be controlled by a very few men. It has been the historic mission of capitalism to improve and concentrate the means of production. The struggle of the individual capitalist on the industrial field has forced on the improvement of the machine as well as concentration itself. But this has created that which is bound to work the ultimate downfall of capitalism itself—namely, the Industrial Working Class. When the means of production grew too large for the owner himself to operate, he hired help. When his employees became numerous his profits grew large and so he could ultimately himself withdraw from the labor process and give his time either to financial schemes or pure enjoyment. All the work fell to wage labor, which really means that all the machines fell into the hands of wage workers. Not only do wage workers perform the actual process of physical labor, but every position in an industry from manager and bookkeeper to the errand boy, is filled by wage workers. Then the scattered workshop has disappeared. The industry has arisen. Thousands of workers are collected under one roof, many thousands into one community. The division of labor has made one person dependent upon another, one labor process upon another, not only in one industry, but industry is interdependent upon industry. The shoe worker, for an example, cannot make shoes without the machine which requires a number of industries, from the miner to the metal polisher, nor without raw material which requires a number more, nor without light, fuel and power which take in some more again, nor without food, clothing and shelter which come near taking in, directly or indirectly, all the rest.

The process of labor is co-operative in the fullest sense of the word. The workshop only is private property. Thousands of workers have never seen their employer and often do not know who he is, still someone, somewhere, owns the machines and appropriates the product. It is, under such circumstances, only natural that the co-operative process of labor should point to the co-operative ownership of the machine and the products.

It is only on account of the wrong vision of the working class that it submits



to this exploitation. They imagine that the capitalist gives the workers work and that they therefore are dependent upon the capitalists. It can be only a matter of time until the workers must realize their illusion, and then the real truth will appear plainly, namely that it is they who give up the products of their labor and that, therefore, it is the capitalists who are dependent upon the workers. They will then realize the necessity of the machines becoming collective property, and as they already are in reality in possession of the machines, it will be an easy matter to oust the present owners.

But the capitalist class, like every other ruling class, will try to perpetuate its power to the very last. So they set race against race and man against woman in order to blur the class struggle. Through the press and other mouthpieces they declaim loudly against the Mongolians, but the capitalist class see to it that they get plenty of cheap and easily exploited Mongolians into the country. Through the same organs they tell about woman being the competitor of man and how she lowers his wages and his standard of living, but they joyfully hire women and exploit them to the very last notch. The capitalists never take themselves seriously. It is only the workers that are supposed to take them seriously!

But you cannot fool all the people all the time. It is only a matter of time until the mass of workers will realize the iniquities of capitalism even as the Socialists already do. The process of evolution is inevitable. It points to the cooperative ownership of the already cooperatively operated means of production. The capitalist system has reached its fullest development. It has fulfilled its mission. Society can progress no farther capitalistically. If progress is to continue, Socialism is inevitable. But systems may retrograde. There have been long periods of retrogression in history. After the downfall of the Roman Empire there followed five centuries of dark ages in Europe. Progress had to work out through side streets and by-ways, so to speak. But the revival came in the fullness of time. It had to come. Human progress cannot be indefinitely stopped.

To-day it depends upon the working class whether progress shall continue

in the direct road which evolution points out to the human race. The working class is the class of progress. It operates the means of production. It must be the future owner. Class rule must disappear and the whole people must be co-owners and co-workers. Before this can be accomplished, however, it takes much education of the workers. They must become class-conscious, self-reliant and able to manage industry through their industrial administration. If the workers cannot rise to that point, however, then the course of wealth points inevitably towards imperialism, to the capitalist-feudal rule of a few and the absolute enslavement of the masses. There is no middle way. Wealth production and distribution are the determining factors of the status of the people, of freedom or slavery, of customs, ideas, and laws. The to-morrow of the world is Socialism and freedom or capitalist imperialism and coolie slavery!

Can the women of the working class, can any woman indeed, afford to ignore this? Woman's first instinct is as mother. For her child she is willing to sacrifice all. How can she stand lazily by while the dear little ones of to-day, the men and women of the future are threatened with slavery and oppression? Is it not worth a woman's while to spend a few short hours to learn about Socialism? Is it not her place to join hands with the workingmen for its accomplishment?

## CHAPTER IV.

### SOCIALISM AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT.

#### THE SOCIAL QUESTION.

There is to-day no woman question, no religious question, no nationality question and no race question. There is only one question before which all the rest disappear or into which they dissolve themselves. That is the LABOR QUESTION, the SOCIAL QUESTION.

When Socialism first became discussed in this country it was airily put aside as un-American. "It could not grow on American soil." In Germany it was called un-German, in England un-English, in Russia un-Russian, and Japanese comrades tell us that in Japan it is called un-Japanese. To judge by that, one should think it was unworldly, indeed, and that those struck the keynote who said that before we could have Socialism we must change human nature and all people must become angels. But for all that Socialism proved not to be so easily put aside. It proves to be in America, Germany, England, Russia and Japan to stay as an agitational force until it can be fully established.

The social question faces us everywhere. Statesmen have to wrestle with it. It pops up in Congress and in the judiciary. It has faced the present executive of this nation,<sup>3</sup> as it has faced no one in that capacity before. When the Idaho-Colorado outrage was perpetrated against the officers of the W.F. of M.<sup>4</sup> and he was deluged with protests calling upon him on his official dignity to stand up for the rights of citizenship that had been trampled upon and human rights that had been outraged, he became mightily angry and determined to squash it by putting his imperial foot hard down upon it. With one stroke of his

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<sup>3</sup> [Theodore Roosevelt]

<sup>4</sup> [Western Federation of Miners President Charles H. Moyer, Secretary-Treasurer William D. Haywood and a former WFM officer, George A. Pettibone, were illegally kidnapped and transported from Colorado to Idaho in 1907 to stand trial for the assassination of former Idaho governor Frank S. Steunenberg. The men were acquitted. Olive M. Johnson attended the trial as a special correspondent for the *Daily People*.]

authoritative pen he condemned all labor agitators and all Socialists as “undesirable citizens.” What must have been his surprise when that did not settle the social question forever. With that ban upon him every agitator was surely expected to go into lifelong hiding. But the other thing happened. A new deluge of protests came pouring in and, such is the wicked humor of the masses, it became an honor to be an “undesirable citizen.” Now “third-term Teddy” is trying hard to make good. He is standing for “all the people” at the present time at Goldfield,<sup>5</sup> and “will not allow any injustice to the workingmen.” Even the imperial Theodore has found out as did once the late Mark Hanna<sup>6</sup> that the workingmen are more easily cajoled than blustered into submission. He who would not quail before the biggest bad bear has had to quail before the social question!

This subject is taking tremendous proportions. It is cropping up in the school and the college, in the pulpit and on the public platform, in the press and in the home, in the workshop and out of it. It is the paramount question of the day.

Woman to-day is priding herself on the progress she is making. She is conscious of her power over the rising generation. She looks with joy to the place she will assume in the future. Therefore she cannot afford, for a day or an hour, to delay to post herself upon the great subjects of the day! The social question is not necessarily all dry economics and hard, ugly disagreeable tasks. The art, music, poetry, drama and literature of each succeeding age, that has been of value and has lived, is that which has stirred the human soul to progress! It has portrayed the sufferings and wrongs and misery of the oppressed. It has ridiculed the tyrant and the oppressor. It has satirized

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<sup>5</sup> [President Theodore Roosevelt sent federal troops to Goldfield, Nevada, in December 1907 at the request of Governor John T. Sparks. The presence of the troops enabled mine-owners to reduce wages without resistance. A state force was organized to replace the federal troops, which were withdrawn in March 1908.]

<sup>6</sup> [Mark Hanna (1837–1904), Ohio capitalist and U.S. Senator who also led the infamous Civic Federation created to foster “labor peace.” Hanna coined the phrase “my labor lieutenants” in reference to Samuel Gompers and other leaders of the American Federation of Labor to denote their service to capitalism and betrayal of the labor or socialist movement. Gompers was a vice president of Hanna’s Civic Federation.]

outworn customs, manners and laws. It has pointed out wrong and upheld right and truth. It has held up to the people the mirror of the future. There is not a field in which woman moves where she cannot make herself useful—in the nursery where she tells her little fairy-tales to the babes, in the factory where she meets the oppressed of her class, in the broad field of learning where she can disseminate knowledge and truth and beauty and high ideals to the world at large. She is half of humanity. She suffers deeply by its wrongs, she should indeed be highly interested in its progress.

### THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT.

We saw that property laws and class rule have been the source of the oppression of woman and the lower classes alike, by the property-holding classes of all ages. We also saw that family relations among the workers were freed to a great extent from the nastiness and degradation that attached itself to misery and property, poverty and wealth alike. We saw that property laws and property relations have little if any influence in the working class family. Even so is this true in the social relations among the workers. The moral influences of the happy stage of being propertyless are most beneficial. We might unhesitatingly say that the wife, sister or daughter of an intelligent workingman, when the family is out of reach of poverty, is about the freest human being in the world to-day. It does not alter the fact that thousands of them do not know or realize it but complain and hanker for the follies of the rich. A fairly well paid workingman when in his health and prime stands, even under capitalism, in a position to shield his wife and daughters from the pangs of wage-slavery. Their lives are active and useful, their work may even be hard but their movements are free. If their visions are clear and their views bright they have every opportunity of equality, friendship and companionship with the men with whom they associate.

While the women's rights advocate wrapped herself in the cloak of the martyrdom of the ages and made war upon man as her tyrant and oppressor, the Socialist woman quietly assumes her position in the labor movement. She becomes a militant on the battlefield of progress, a champion of the right of humanity. In the Socialist organizations there was never a question of woman's

right and equality. The Socialists are to each other not men and women, boys and girls; they are COMRADES with equal rights and privileges. The gray-headed men and women veterans in the movement are the “Comrades” of the little boy and girl in the Young Socialists’ Club. The very use of the term shows the beauty of the fact behind it. But the equality is not likeness. No one strives for likeness. Each seeks his or her place and does the work it requires, conscious of its value, whatever it may be. All cannot be speakers, editors, or writers, but all can WORK. The COMRADE Editor is of small use without the COMRADE that pushes the subscription list. The COMRADE Speaker would have little to say without the COMRADE that distributes the handbill. There is no sentimentality or brotherly or sisterly love about the comradeship. It implies only that all are co-workers with equal rights and equal duties, co-workers that can be controlled and criticized and corrected, co-workers that must be ruled by science, reason and order. It implies discipline as well as freedom, obedience as well as power.

The Socialist women have none of the obnoxiousness of the women’s rights advocate. As a rule they are modest and quiet and proud of being womanly and ready for the work they can do, whatever it may be. They do not try to imitate man. Why should they? Their usefulness consists in being women! They do not aspire to the place of man. Why should they? They have naturally and easily made a place for themselves. They do not envy man. Why should they? They know that the misery of the working class is common to them all.

The question whether woman has a place in politics, has vanished for the Socialist woman. She has taken her place in the political campaign as educator and organizer and worker. The question of electing or being elected is the insignificant part of the Socialist campaign at the present time. The great question is to educate the working class to class-consciousness and then organize them for united action both on the economic and the political field. The Socialist woman, therefore, is no politician. She is simply working to preserve her home and the happiness of the future generation. With her it is a question of progress and human rights.

SOCIALISM.

The economic development points to the collective ownership of the means of production in the future society. That is all there is to Socialism. The other questions will take care of themselves. Ethics and ideas, marriage relations and laws, will reflect themselves in the changed conditions. No one can prophesy exactly what they will do. We can only judge in a general way from general economic knowledge.

Woman lost her power over herself and her children and her civic rights in society, as her possessions lost their relative economic value. When man of the ruling class acquired economic power he begot all power. In a Socialistic society the economic power falls away from class or sex. It will rest with society at large. Woman is part of society. She will produce economic goods or serve the good of the community in some useful capacity as well as the man. There will be no room for parasites, no room for rulers, no room for slaves. It will be a return of the primitive tribal relationship where the good of all will be the ultimate aim and end, only it will be on a larger and broader and fuller basis, an international, an intersexual, in short an interhuman basis.

Slavery has been an inevitable scourge in the progress of the world. In order that a part of humanity might advance, and learn and bring out the higher things, another part had to become the drudges, in the days when food was hard to procure.

Aristotle once said that in order for slavery to disappear machines would have to be invented to do the work of men. He never dreamt of such machines existing and the largest portion of the human race being enslaved to them for the benefit of only a very few, who not even are truly benefited as they are no longer the intellects of the world. But it is quite natural that the enslaved class should first have to learn the value and pay the price of liberty. "He who would be free must himself strike the blow."

The machine is here which Aristotle designated as the emancipator of mankind. It only remains for mankind to emancipate itself from it. Man has



harnessed the elements to his will, let him now harness his will to control the giant he has called into life!

Expert statisticians have figured out that with the aid of modern machines, if all able-bodied men were employed for a reasonable number of days in the year, for only four hours of the day, the nation could be supplied not only with the necessaries of life but also with luxuries such as now only the rich can enjoy. Four hours' work a day can be called neither work nor labor. It is only healthy exercise. By men and women aiding each other in their different capacities, it would reduce the workday till it was so short as to amount only to a bit of pleasure.

Some people like to speculate on the Socialist Republic and wish to know if women are to work side by side with man in the factory or if she will stay at home and do work there only. That question will take care of itself and future generations will settle it without the least regard to what we might have to say about it. One thing is certain, woman will be economically as free as man. She is part of society and society will own the economic powers collectively. That there will be division of labor is certain. That is part of progress. That this division will be based on natural tastes and powers is also quite certain. That is according to common sense and reason.

The great subject to-day is the education and organization of the working class both upon the political field, the great field of agitation where the capitalist hirelings can be met on their own ground, and upon the economic field where the workers must prepare for taking over the industries and carrying out the administration of the future. Women should do all they can to become organized to resist the oppression by the employer if possible, but most of all to fit themselves to take their places in the administration of the Socialist Republic.

The work in the Socialist organization furnishes all the opportunities for women. It is her only true and proper field of action.

[THE END.]



## WOMAN AND THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

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