

THE EVOLUTION OF A NEW WOMAN

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The question is often asked, "What do you think of the militant movement that now bewilders England?" Shall our women follow the course of the English suffrage movement, or should American opinion be directed in other channels? To justify the latter opinion one must explain the position in which English women find themselves. When this is understood, their action is excusable, and perhaps justifiable. Perhaps they have taken the only method by which their cause can be advanced in England, for to understand English methods we must study the ways in which Englishmen solve social problems. They decide woman suffrage in the same way they decide other problems. This we must comprehend in order to understand how women in England act, and why their program has been shaped as it has been. The striking fact of English discussion is that some antagonistic contrast or dilemma is emphasized, making the differences in opinion of more importance than existing agreements. It is interesting to hear Englishmen arguing the Irish question. Although they are divided into two groups on this topic, the method of reasoning is the same whether they oppose or favor home rule. The fundamental premise is that an Irishman is different from an Englishman. One party says that the Irishman differs from the Englishman, therefore he is inferior and must be suppressed. The other party, using the premise that the Irishman differs from the Englishman, argues from it that peculiar institutions should be given to Ireland.

With the same dogmatism they assert that Americans differ from Englishmen, declaring that to be characteristically American which is disliked as different. The American is thus the man with crass notions or crude opinions. It seems not to have occurred to them that the same crude opinions and ideas could be found on the streets of London, nor are they those which give the tone to American life. Englishmen love to use premises that exaggerate differences in men and in opinions. We find the attitude taken on all sorts of

problems. The Catholic is assumed to be radically different from the Protestant, and the man of Ulster is likewise different from the man of Dublin, although he may be only a hundred miles away. When it is carried over into the woman problem, this separates men from women by making those things characteristic of men and women in which they differ, rather than those where they are alike; and as a result an impassable gulf is created between the two which there is no rational way of crossing. Woman from this viewpoint is sex; man is intellect. Or, put in another way, woman is frailty; man is character. No agreement is possible with a man who defines woman as sex or frailty and thinks of himself as the embodiment of intellect and character.

The best representative of this attitude, and perhaps more than any other writer its source, is Thomas Carlyle. The endeavor to create impossible contrasts runs more freely through his writings than those of any other Englishman with whose work I am familiar. In Carlyle's way of thinking the few are good and the many bad; therefore the only way to get progress is through the coercion of the many by the few. Force is thus an essential element in attaining social stability, and the consequences if carried out logically would be the suppression of the many and the practical revival of serfdom. It follows from this thought that the man who coerces is a hero, and that the leaders who have used coercion are regarded as the great national heroes. This viewpoint is reflected in all English controversies. One sees it as plainly in the writings of the radical Mr. Shaw as in those of the conservative Mr. Chesterton. It is as plain in *The Saturday Review* or *The Spectator* as in *The New Statesman*.

Such a standpoint, and the methods derived from it, would lead to anarchy if there were not another English trait preventing the carrying out of coercive programs. Fortunately for England there is a limit put to the execution of logical plans of repression, and that is the high estimation of the English for martyrs. The one group standing in English opinion with the heroes who succeed are the martyrs who die. The result is that any doctrine producing martyrs brings an emotional reaction against the logic that would lead to its suppression. It is said there must be something right in the judgment of a man who will die for his cause; public opinion is fearful about putting such a man to the test; so the martyr is safe.

Perhaps it is this sentimental attitude toward martyrdom that keeps English institutions workable under the standard set up by Carlyle and his contemporaries. We may even go so far as to say that if the Irish want home rule they must produce martyrs; and in like manner, if Ulster wants to prevent home rule, it must produce a crop of willing sacrifices. The Irish question, indeed, is not at present being argued out, because there is no common basis of understanding among the Englishman, the Irishman, and the citizen of Ulster. The struggle is simply a test as to whether the minority can incite rebellion, or at least excite that kind of interest that makes people anxious to martyr themselves. Nobody is going to kill either an Irishman or a citizen of Belfast, and therefore the would-be martyr is safe.

This same situation is faced by the believers in woman suffrage and has created a prominent type of English woman. From the arbitrary premise that woman is frail and man has character, or that woman is sex and man is intellect, there is no way of arguing the sex problem on common ground, or of settling differences by compromise. Men are polite to the suffragettes if they belong to their own class, but they are indifferent to the demand which as a class women may make. In the same way the feeling of chivalry stops them from severely punishing ladies who interfere with public peace or destroy private property. The only means, therefore, that women have of influencing public opinion is by showing their willingness to be martyrs; which means that they break the law and then dare men to punish them. This has resulted in the hunger strike on the part of the women, and in forced feeding as a counter movement on the part of the authorities. No one, however, is willing that any woman should make a martyr of herself, and, as a result, the women have easily come out ahead.

Such is the situation at present in England, with no way out but revolution, or a radical modification in the way in which Englishmen solve their problems. England has, of course, progressed, but her progress may be defined as brute struggle tempered by sentiment. In England's evolution there is no regular movement of thought from the solution of one problem to the solution of the next. Each new problem is fought out in the same crude fashion.

This fact Americans must understand in order to realize the differences between American and English situations and so be able

to contrast the policies demanded in America with the policies advisable in England. It is proper to ask whether the American suffrage movement needs heroes and martyrs, or whether the progress of women in America should take place in an evolutionary manner. While the revolutionary type of reasoning is very familiar to us, it should be noted that all great American decisions have been evolutionary instead of revolutionary. This statement may be questioned, yet I believe that the facts in America are on the side of evolution in contrast to revolution. The instance of revolution most commonly used in this country is that of the Civil War. But we should remember that in that case it was the South that revolted against the evolutionary changes of public opinion, and that the South was defeated. Our great leaders in progress have been Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln, and in each case they carried the nation with them and their policies with such unanimity as to break their opponent's power. The same transformation is happening at the present time, and there is little question that the evolutionary methods as represented by President Wilson will make an epoch in our history perhaps as important as any preceding period. He at least has an opportunity for achievement; and should he fail, some other statesman will come forward who will transform public opinion as successfully as did Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln in their days. The slow, steady modification in the thought of the American man has been characteristic of him, and in all likelihood will be even more dominant in future decisions than it has been in the past. Though it is possible that we may have dynamite outrages by impatient laborers or narrow suppressive policies on the part of brutal capitalists, yet after all, each of these groups, representing only a small part of the American people, will be compelled in the end to join with the great mass in a steady forward movement.

The suffrage problem can therefore be stated in this way: Shall women and men become antagonistic and form separate groups, each of which has a way of stating its position and its differences from its opponents, or shall we tend toward a unified public opinion in which women participate as well as men? When women vote should we expect two parties, one dominated by women and the other by men, or shall we have a united public opinion gaining force because both men and women participate in its formation? It has been said recently that woman suffrage in the western states was a

failure because no special measures had been enacted by women, thus showing that women voted as the male members of their families voted. To my mind, this indicates the success, and not the failure, of the movement. Harmonious families have common ideas. The end of suffrage is not to make men and women clash in their public relations, but to find some rational way of creating social harmony. If this harmony is obtained, it will show itself, not as a public difference between men and women, but as a difference between the ideas and ideals of one age and those preceding. Happy will be the time when we shall know of no such thing as a woman's opinion or a man's opinion. All opinions will then be evolutionary and pragmatic because they are based on the common experience of our race and harmonize with our civilization.

These facts will help us to see how the militant movement arose in England and why the early representatives of the woman movement took the position they did. There is, however, another view, representing the attitude of a younger generation, whose acceptance of advanced views is a faith, not an argument. The position of older women was determined by the tradition of the group to which they belong, or was the outcome of an intellectual attitude fostered by their education. Such arguments turn on the difference between the intellectual viewpoint of the latter group and the traditional attitude of the former. These arguments, whether pro or con, do not give the real difference between the opposing groups. If the contrast is made between sex and intellect, the indefinite, prolonged argument brings no results. This happens so long as the arguments about suffrage are determined either by logic or by tradition.

Another method of treating the problem is to regard it as a phase of the evolution of modern society. Dynamic changes break down the static opposition which earlier views had to each other. The world is now, perhaps as never before, in the process of evolution, and woman is changing with every other factor in it. If this is granted, the changes can be measured in ways that explain the difference between advancing thought and the earlier attitude by noting the correspondence between the change observed and the general changes in the community. Viewed in this way the evolution of woman may be regarded as a change in tradition, a change in intellectual conviction, a change in character, or a change in physical traits. If evolution is taking place in each of these fields,

there should be marks by which we may distinguish the new from the old. A measure may be found of ideas, of character, and of physical traits by observing the changes that are now taking place among women. I shall confine myself to physical traits, since they are more readily measured than are those in other fields. The evidence of modification is also more objective and certain. The question presents itself: "Is woman a changing organism, or is merely a changing intellectual attitude observable?"

A New York paper recently published in its magazine section the pictures of sixty women, with the aim of portraying what are the traits to be found among American women, and thus fixing upon the most beautiful. It is interesting to see the standards taken in the selection of these representative women. The judges reflected the artistic convictions as to what is beautiful. There is thus a sameness characterizing these pictures that shows the basis upon which artistic judgment rests. Two facial features are especially prominent—the small, straight nose, and the sad expression of countenance. Artists perhaps think that these are the traits by which women are to be judged. They merely prove, however, that the artistic judgment is the traditional judgment, and that, controlled by these conventional ideas, artists reject types of women that do not correspond to it. To make this plain I shall insert a table of the traditional marks, giving on the one hand the feature, and on the other the quality that it is supposed to represent from the traditional view.

Feature	Quality
Square face.....	Courage
Straight nose.....	Intellect
Short chin.....	Impulsiveness
Thin lips.....	Selfishness
Sad expression.....	Morality
Paleness.....	Spirituality
Small waist.....	Grace
Small hands.....	Elegance

These associations would be difficult to interpret if we did not know the history of racial development and its influence upon our social traditions. The straight nose apparently gets its relation to the intellect through the fact that a straight nose is called Grecian, and the Grecians were an intellectual people. The association of

sadness with morality can also be readily explained when we understand how character development has taken place. Sadness means hardship, and hardship is associated with moral superiority. So it is easy to see why the sad countenance should be assumed to be an index of a woman's morality. A pale face is thought to be spiritual, while a dark, ruddy face is assumed to be vicious. Small hands and small waists have been associated with grace and elegance; this easily may be accounted for when we realize that aristocratic women have these peculiarities. The connection between health and fatness runs back to the primitive times when hunger and starvation were determining factors in the social environment. The ability to take on fat gave therefore an increased power of survival.

The real significance of the emphasis of this group of traits is this: We had, during past historical epochs, a short-lived race of women among whom there was a premature sex development. In such a group the period of child-bearing comes early. The evils accompanying this condition have been increased by the brutality of men. I recently read the narrative of a traveler who visited a primitive tribe; he said that there was no girl above nine years old who was a virgin. Such facts can account for premature sex development, the ills that go with it, and the traits characteristic of it; but it is a tragic error to imply that corresponding traits at the present time are indices of woman's development.

What, then, are the tests of normal development by which we can measure the difference between the primitive over-sexed woman and the type which at present is rapidly becoming the normal woman? In the first place, there is a delay in sexual maturity; a second evidence of advance is in muscular strength; a third in full bone development; a fourth in will power; and a fifth in longevity. Few, I think, would deny that these qualities are advantageous, or that they are a better measure of woman's physical development than those that were chosen at an earlier date.

In the past we have had one group of traits called masculine, and another group called feminine. This, however, is not because all men have masculine traits, and all women the so-called feminine traits. It is merely that more individuals with certain characteristics are to be found among men, and more with others among the women. But what is the cause of difference? The traits called feminine are evidences of physical retardation and imperfect devel-

opment, while the traits called masculine are marks of full development. Women are more subject than men to the physical disorders creating retardation; more of them, therefore, have remained on a low physical level. The result has been that the traits due to retardation and imperfect development have become regarded as sex traits, instead of evidences of physical inferiority. A race of fully developed women would have the same traits that men have, because they would advance through all the stages of physical progress that their heredity permits. We would have a healthy woman if premature sex excitement could be avoided. This view assumes that the physical traits called feminine are the result of retardation and degeneration, and that the lower physical and mental status of women can be removed by better conditions and the full physical development that would follow. If the facts bear out this position, the improved physical condition of women should create changes in their physical traits, and the new generation of women would show some of the results of the recent improvement that has taken place in their condition.

In the discussion of traits we must look at their physical basis to perceive their real meaning, and so determine whether particular forms of face and bodily development are the outcome of female heredity or of some abnormality in growth. Of this the face is the best index, because the different parts of the face are developed in different stages of child growth, and therefore the presence or lack of certain facial characteristics is a sign of the normality or abnormality of the individual at the time when this growth took place. The central part of the face represents the earliest development; most individuals have this part of their face fairly well developed. The upper face represents the next stage, while the lower face is the last to develop. The head is formed before birth; and so whatever causes retarding facial development must have been in operation before birth. When the upper face is undeveloped it would indicate that the nutriment of the mother was defective. An evidence of this is that we find a low, sloping forehead most prevalent where a defective nutrition is common. The undeveloped lower face, however, has the opposite cause, for we find a weak lower face among the newer races and higher classes, rather than among those who are subjected to great hardships. It is therefore a natural inference that the trouble lies primarily in over-nutrition, which forms

toxins in the system, retarding development. Without making too much of this argument about the presence or absence of nutrition, two things are plain. One is that the lower races have usually a well-developed central and lower face, while the higher races have a well-developed upper and middle face. The normal face in contrast to this is the oval face, which has a broader chin and forehead than that found in the round faced Madonna.

The same contrasts appear in the side view of the face. We have the flat face, which corresponds to the round face as seen from the front view. This type of face indicates a weak character. In contrast to this we have a full center face with a prominent nose and high cheek bones. This indicates complete development, and strong muscular powers. Such men have a strong will, full muscular development, and an ability to endure long and severe hardships. This type of man furnishes the managers, financiers, directors, superintendents, and other leaders of the industrial world.

When we apply these tests to women, we find that most women belong to the first of these groups. They are there, not because of any sex heredity, but because of the retardation and degeneration that have been coupled with their development. Better health is bringing more women into the second group, and as a result the type of face is correspondingly changed. We thus get the self-reliant woman, the ambitious woman, and the woman with a faith and vision. She will become the dominant type as the general health and intellectual vigor of women increase, and as a result, not merely the physical, but also the intellectual, differences between men and women will diminish.

To make my position clear I shall restate my argument. The form of elimination acting on women through past ages has checked the evolution of her physical and mental traits. The result has been a lowering of her vital powers, a shorter life, and a loss of mental vigor. The so-called feminine traits reflect this depressed condition due to ill health, bad environment, and premature sex maturity. They are a load woman must throw off to regain normality and to start anew the evolutionary process. The woman's movement of recent years reflects the improvement now going on in her physical, as well as in her economic, condition. The static woman of the past is now an elderly lady with reactionary opinions. She may like it or not like it, but from her viewpoint a change is going

on, the effects of which are shown more clearly as each new group of young women comes to maturity. These physical changes can be readily seen on the streets by anyone who cares to observe them. The vigor of young women, their greater height and cheerful look, is everywhere in evidence. It is especially noticeable in the suffrage parades. The women who swing with easy step from one end of Fifth avenue to the other are those of whom any nation might be proud. Should there be an anti-suffrage parade it would be necessary to carry the women in hacks. It is amusing to see the latter pose as mothers when they are so plainly inferior to those in the other camp. Count the children of each group and then the real facts come out, for real mothers are women of muscle and bone, not pale-faced do-nothings.

In the face of this physical uplift men's choices still remain so conventional. The young man of today has Madonna faces on the walls of his room, and he sees them on the cover of every magazine. He spends his time in looking for a girl that fits this false ideal of womanhood, and ends in getting an incapable wife who bears no children, does no work, and is fit for no place but a sanitarium. This choice is creating a serious crisis, for it brings into wedlock those not fitted for it, and keeps out those whom nature designed for mothers. It is a queer notion of men that the driving, independent girls about them do not make good wives and mothers. They are in reality women of intenser feeling, who would show their loyalty and devotion if men would change their prejudices, and let them function as wives and mothers. They are eager for self-support, and often show a disregard for masculine views; not because of any sex antagonism, but merely because they come to sex and mental maturity later than do the "sweet sixteens" men admire. Love at sixteen is a fickle fancy; love at twenty-six, coming as a natural development, is a deep abiding life force. The girl who works and waits is the good wife, because she is ready for her new functions. Her husband is her life; her work is a joy; and her children are her self-expression. Men in the end must see this, and when they do, good-bye to the divorce courts and nervous breakdowns. Health and efficiency create happiness, and it in turn is the basis of true comradeship. Democracy must in the end express itself in the coöperative family, to the support of which all contribute, and out of which come happiness, health, long life, and

vigorous children. To women of this type suffrage is not an argument, but the outcome of their life and vitality. They are love, work, and duty combined. Happy will be the day when men see this and choose helpmates instead of dolls. On this the future of the race depends. Give the new woman a chance and her superiority as a mother will be as marked as in other fields.