

Thelyphthoria or Exploitation of Women

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[Page 11] THE real meaning of sex, the relations of the sexes in the past and at the present time, and the influences that these relations have on the present condition of mankind, are questions that transcend all others in importance, and that have more to do in determining the present condition of humanity than all other questions combined. No more certainly does the race arise by generation than it falls by abuse of the generative powers and functions. So likewise with regeneration, which means literally a new birth. It means not only that the individual shall be born again, but it means that the generative functions, individually and collectively, must be *re-formed*. There is no human attribute in which man approaches so near to deity as in the power to generate human beings. Here he is a creator. There is no power in man capable, when perverted, of dragging him so deep into hell, and through which he can degrade so hopelessly so many other human beings as through the sexual life. Neither England nor the "civilized world" have had time to forget the "Pall Mall Gazette's Secret Commission", through which a single glimpse was obtained of the ruined lives and horrible depravity caused by perversion and degradation of the generative power of man. It was as though the door of the bottomless pit had opened for an instant, so that the world could get a single glance and be stifled with one puff of the vapours of the *inferno*. All that Dante ever painted was as a pleasant dream to this. The *inferno* is no myth, nor is it in the bowels of the earth, it exists in the body of society, and is eating out the heart of humanity. The present writer has neither the purpose nor the power to paint this realm, this leprosy of society. It would be appalling to even name its departments. The seduction, desertion, and prostitution of young girls ending in suicide; the most loathsome and demoralizing diseases, scarcely second to leprosy, if not the real cause of that terrible disease; infanticide, only another name for murder; rape with its lynchings, and murder in every form; the pouring out on humanity and in the pure air of heaven daily and hourly of a fathomless, conscienceless, heartless ocean of lust. It is as though there had been poured into the pure stream of life the very dregs of the bottomless pit, [Page 12] and then, as though to prevent a single effort at purifying the stream, the Prince of Darkness has tabooed the whole subject, and attempts to cover with odium everyone who utters more than a mild regret, or who dares to long for the pure waters of life. Ask any old physician, who has had opportunity to know the under-current of society, if the above category is overdrawn, and he will tell you that it is incomplete. Here at the very fountain of all, life is the root of all evil. We are now writing for theosophists, some of whom have expressed a desire for practical instruction, and here are a few hints only. If the whole stream of life is corrupt, it can be purified only by commencing at the fountain-head. There is but one way in which any man can help to purify or benefit the world, and that is by purifying himself. The whole of humanity is sexually diseased. Only the grosser crimes have as yet been named in this connection. Legalized prostitution and perversion of the highest attributes under the sacred name and in the habiliments of Love have not yet been mentioned. The theosophic life and the highest human achievement has been often declared to involve absolute chastity — purity in thought, word, and deed; and with this condition, love has been declared to be the absorbing element, the crowning glory. Over against this statement stands the record of celibacy in the clergy, and to it may be added the results as ordinarily witnessed of male and female continence both in private life

and in various societies, whether as a matter of choice or necessity. The results desired have seldom flowed from these conditions, and hence the earnest student is often bewildered and left in doubt as to the real meaning and possible results of chastity. Beyond this there are young people greatly interested in studies called theosophic, beside many married persons seeking to know theosophic truths, and striving to lead theosophic lives. To these last-named individuals the present essay is particularly addressed. The reform of the world from the horrible abuses named is not herein attempted. The attempt is made only to throw a little light on this all-important subject, so that those who are really in earnest, and who desire the truth in order to use it and serve it, may receive assistance. Let those who talk of England and America as "Christian Countries", count up the number of prostitutes in the large cities alone; let them add to this the number of cases of seduction, rape, bastardy, suicide, and murder, including abortions, the latter largely among the upper classes, and when they have gone thus far with their statistics, let them pause and read the "Sermon on the Mount"; then if they are still ready to abuse and ostracise those who hesitate about attaching the sacred name of Christ to "modern civilization", we shall have nothing further to say in that direction. If the wailing of the slaughtered innocents, the homeless waifs cast out on society, the despair and degradation of the poor prostitutes, and the shriek of the suicide as she rushes [Page 13] into the unseen world, do not blanch his face with horror and force him to cry, How long, O Lord! how long! argument would be wasted and words worse than useless. There are others again who do revere both the Sermon on the Mount and the author of it, and who hold the Bible and real Christianity in reverence, and who feel deeply the awful sarcasm of calling this or any present nation of the world, Christian. If these care to know the real bible doctrine on the subject under consideration, let them consult an old work bearing the title of this essay and printed in London in 1780. The following "memorandum" appears in the second of the three octavo volumes.

"The grand question to be tried is, — Whether a SYSTEM filled with *obligations* and *responsibility* of MEN to WOMEN, and of WOMEN to MEN, even to *death* itself, and this established by INFINITE WISDOM, is not better calculated to prevent the *ruin* of the *female sex*, with all its horrid consequences, both to the public and individuals, than a SYSTEM of *human contrivance*, where neither *obligation* nor *responsibility* are to be found, either of MEN to WOMEN or of WOMEN TO MEN, in instances of the most *important* concern to BOTH, but more especially to the *weaker sex*? " I have quoted the above as italicized in the original. The author shows the Bible doctrine to be beyond all controversy, that whether a man be married or single, he is "joined by God" to the woman with whom he is carnally intimate, and that "he shall not put her away all the days of his life", and as this necessarily involves polygamy and precludes divorce, the author faces the problem squarely, and shows, not by argument, but by Bible, that is "the law and the gospel". The present writer does not argue nor advocate this point either pro or con, but refers to it for the benefit of those interested in the subject from the Bible stand-point. The book can be found in many libraries, and can be occasionally picked up at old news-stands. One thing is very certain, and that is that the laws and practices of Christendom are widely at variance with the "law of God" as set forth in the Bible, and compiled and annotated in "Thelyphthoria, or a Treatise on Female Ruin".

Every careful student of religions, of occultism, or of theosophy, is aware that the symbols and the god-words of all-religions have a very close relation to sex. Not only Payne Knight, and Inman, but hosts of other writers, have pointed out and abundantly illustrated this fact. The deity to whom was offered divine honours in the various religions, was sometimes male, sometimes female. The God of Christendom today is undeniably male, notwithstanding the fact that the original name in Hebrew is both male and female, and that to a *specific degree*. The Catholic Church, wise as a serpent, in this as in all other generations, recognises this androgynous God, and god-name, and has elevated a woman to the God-

head. If our present civilization be claimed still as [Page 14] Christian, it cannot be called catholic in its treatment of woman, in its practice of abortion or infanticide, whatever may be said of other crimes in this direction. It would surprise most persons to learn to what extent the fast and feast days, and " all the ordinances of the Lord's house", conform to and are derived from the periods of time which are related to parturition, viability, and the like. Suffice it to say that the mysteries of religion, like the mystery of life, are all involved in the mystery of sex. This fact no one having the least knowledge of the subject can deny, for the evidence is overwhelming. Furthermore, the degradation of religion and the degradation of life has everywhere, and at all times, gone hand-in-hand with the degradation of the sexual instinct, and has sprung directly from the sexual degradation of woman and the bestialization of man. On the other hand, pure religion, pure life, and pure men and women go together. In the degradation of the world, man has always taken the lead, and woman been the victim. Every student of history knows that no more correct measure of any age, or any people, can be made than that which is based on the position and estimate in which women were found at that time. The new age that is just dawning for the human race is called " the Woman's Age". For many centuries, at least, woman has not occupied the position which is open to her today, and it is doubtful if, since written history began, her opportunities have been anything like that which she may now enjoy. True, this opportunity falls to the lot only of a favoured few. The great majority are still in darkness and bondage, the victims of man's laws and passions. The responsibility and the god-given opportunities of the favoured few are seldom appreciated. These favoured few, who, from larger intelligence or fortunate circumstances, are free to live pure and noble lives, seldom rise to the full stature of conscious liberty. We hear a good deal of the Brotherhood of man, but there is more pressing need of the Sisterhood of women. True the leaven of humanity is beginning to work. Yet, how many of these free and really noble women will pass a poor prostitute in the street without, almost unconsciously, gathering in her skirts for fear of contamination? How many will meet a girl in society over whose fair name has passed a cloud of suspicion, whether true or false, and not shrink into herself ? And yet where are they who are so much in need of love and sympathy as these poor victims ? To house these outcasts in asylums, feed them, clothe them, pray over them, thus marking them more indelibly as outcasts than even man has done, has seldom permanently reformed *one*. Ask your woman's soul, my noble sister, how it would regard these things were you to change places, and do not call yourself Christian till you have learned how Christ spake to these, and how he LOVED THEM. You can reform them but by love, and not by cold charity and self-righteousness.

Many of the students of the Higher Life are in every way unprepared for real chelaship, but they can place themselves in training if they so desire, but to begin by abandoning wife and children will be to train in the opposite direction. The very fact that they find themselves so situated is evidence of a needed development *through* these things, not away from them. Karma has placed them just here to learn, to consider, to overcome. If either man or woman imagines, when so situated, that he or she can draw away from companions and children, from friends and associates, leaving them to take their chances, and so develop the higher life, the first principle of theosophy has yet to be learned. The nearness of your relation to these gives you the opportunity for helpfulness that no one else in all the world enjoys. There lies your work, you can make home a very paradise by learning the difference between lust and love. Love seeketh not its own but another's good. Love endures all, and bears all, and at last triumphs over all. As even animal lust may create a human body, so divine love can regenerate a human soul. What we need in the world today is not celibacy, but happy homes in which love reigns, and love pure and simple will make these homes a tabernacle for angels. Husband and wife may so live together as to be a source of joy, of perpetual delight, nay, even of health and physical strength and continual inspiration to each other. They may learn thus the very secret of love itself, and enter *together* the higher life, clad in raiments of purity and light, and they may help to uplift their children, and *such children* as the world sorely needs. The fountain of life and the fountain of love flow from the same divine source. Both life and

love are sexual, but in a sense that the world never even dreams of, and never will, till it learns to put aside the animal attribute *egoism*, and really exercise and base their whole lives on the principle of divine *altruism*. How many men imagine they love the pure girl they "marry" ? And how many of these have really down deep in their souls one thought beyond self? Ask the divorce courts of America and the unhappy homes of England. Reform the family, regenerate the homes, and from these will go out an influence that in time will reform the street, the brothel, and prevent at least the participation in these crimes and all the loathsome diseases and penalties of *your own children*.

If there is a young man or woman who is free from obligations, free to work for humanity, one who appreciates the opportunity, and values it above home or any personal advantage, or possible gain, *the time for such an one has come*. Their souls will be filled direct from the pure fountains of love, and they may be the blessed medium through whom the Divine Love is to reach the poor, the outcast, the unloved. Would any of these feel honoured and grateful to take orders direct from a Mahatma ? to be the chosen medium between such an one and a society of theosophists ? [Page 16] The door is wide open. "*Enter ye who will*". Act as the messenger of love, of charity, of self-forgetfulness, of helpfulness to every ready soul, to the sinful, the degraded, no matter how low a criminal he or she may be, *for by so much the more is help needed*. Do this modestly, patiently, persistently, and a new joy will come into your soul, and all mahatmas *in all worlds* will delight to do you honour, and whenever you *need* their help or their presence be sure it will not be wanting. The writer, an humble layman, has tried this even in a slight degree, being trammelled on every hand; he has needed help, needed instruction many times, *and it has never failed to come*. It has come in its own way, often as though it came not. Yet there it was ! The first sentence in a book taken at random when thinking of something else, would perhaps answer a question that I deeply felt the need of knowing. Be not anxious, be not disappointed, only be, *faithful, silent, sincere, and patient*. Do the duty that lies nearest at hand in the best way you can. Do it as though for love of the dearest one in all the earth; or, better, do it for the sake of Love. So the love-nature will expand and grow. The more you give out the more you will receive. Love delights to flood the soul of the one who delights to pass it on. Love fills us full at all times; but what little dwarfed and deformed vessels do we present to the Goddess: she fills them full, and is poorer for this gift, for she is entitled to larger vessels and better measure, and less dross than we mix with the pure waters of love. Love bargains not for return, receives nothing back, begs only the privilege of giving. Full-freighted soul! hurry on thy gifts, love waits without to renew thy store. Disappoint her not. Thy store of love will be like Egypt's bondsmen's quails and manna, not alone ere the morrow, but in a moment, if thou restrain thy love. Dost thou desire the mysteries of love, to know how she creates, preserves, renews ? Fill thy soul full of her, and *thou wilt be love*, the mystery thine. Shall not he who has the *power* of love have also the mystery ? are these not one ? Where *use* reigns, mystery disappears. Love is the great revealer. Her neophytes walk in her presence as in a blaze of glory; ask what thou wilt in the name of love and it is done. Knowest thou the hierarchic name of love ? the unwritten name, low-breathed from ear to ear ? I'll give thee then a substitute till in some other fair degree the true Master's Word shall echo in thy soul. 'Tis self-forgetfulness, consideration for others, preferring to be burdened with nought else, that thou mayest be full of love, and only love. Do this, and every zephyr of every wind that blows shall whisper in thy ear the name by which the fair goddess is known in realms elysian. Give all thou hast away but love, and then be quick to give love away: squeeze thy soul dry of love, and then with quick rebound thy love shall span all space, and sitting on thy throne shall be the fair goddess thyself, thy other self, now two in one, and *One with all*.

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