

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FAMILY UNDER SOCIALISM

RACE-PRESERVATION entails the subordination of the life of the individual to that of his offspring. In many of the lower forms of life this subordination is carried so far, that parental life ceases with the act of reproduction. During the course of the evolutionary process, however, the drain on parental life decreases, mainly by substituting post-natal care of offspring for stupendous fertility as a means of securing the continuance of the species. Post-natal care of offspring, moreover, involving the satisfaction of parental love, affords compensation for parental sacrifices. Among the most highly evolved animals, therefore, an approximate reconciliation is reached between individual interests and the interest of the species, through a great reduction in the drain on parental life, and in the compensation afforded by the experience of vividly felt parental pleasures.

In the human race the reconciliation between the life of the individual and the life of the race is carried still further, and it culminates in the most highly evolved races of men. Among savages parenthood begins at an early period; mortality of children is great and is compensated for by many births; the life of individuals is but little prolonged beyond the reproductive period; and parental pleasures are enjoyed only for a comparatively short time. Among the most highly civilised races, on the other hand, the period of life preceding reproduction is most prolonged; mortality during childhood and adolescence smallest; the number of births fewest; the period of life following cessation of reproduction longest;

and the companionship of parents and children being longest, parental pleasures are enjoyed during a longer period and with greatest intensity. It follows that the highest ethical and sociological relation of the sexes is that which ensures the continuation of the race with the least sacrifice of parental life to the lives of progeny, while affording the greatest satisfaction of parental love.

The regular relations between the sexes among civilised nations and the corresponding sentiments are a result of evolution. Among the lowest savages these relations are unregulated and promiscuous. Chastity of either males or females is not valued; and even when the possessory instinct causes men to place a restraint on the women appropriated by them, they easily give their consent to temporary cohabitation with other men. As higher types of human society evolve, marital relations become more definite, and chastity, at least of females, comes to be valued. Among the highest types, the marital relation has become most definite and permanent, chastity has come to be regarded as a cardinal virtue in females, and its absence is beginning to be despised in men. Progress towards higher types of human society is thus inseparably accompanied by progress towards higher—more definite and permanent—marital relations.

At the same time, these relations have grown more into accordance with the recognition of equal rights. Polyandry grants a licence to women which it denies to men, polygamy grants to men a licence which it denies to women. Monogyny alone recognises the equal rights of the two sexes.

The evolution of higher animal types is dependent upon the growth of parental feelings and the consequent prolongation and intensification of parental care. In the human race parental care is more elaborate and prolonged than in any animal species, and grows more elaborate and prolonged with every advance in type. Among the highest races it not only embraces the children while they reside in the parental home; not only employs complex agencies for physical and mental culture and moral discipline, but it follows children into the world and provides them with means for material wellbeing. With this elaboration and

prolongation of parental care, the outcome of a greater intensity of parental love, there arises filial and fraternal attachment and love. Unknown among animals, feebly developed and short of duration among savages, filial and fraternal love and the consequent care of aged parents, of sisters and brothers, becomes gradually stronger as higher types evolve from lower, until among the most highly evolved members of the highest types of men it blossoms into lifelong gratitude and ardent filial and fraternal devotion.

The parental, marital, filial, and fraternal relations, thus binding together several generations, are sources of the greatest and purest happiness. Resting, not upon self-love, but upon the love of others, the happiness experienced by each is derived from the happiness conferred upon others. The greatest sum of human happiness, therefore, arises from those marital relations which, most closely and permanently uniting the lives of husband and wife, parents and children, secure the continuation of the race with the least number of births.

The marital relation which most efficiently subserves these objects is the permanent, monogynic relation, which, as a consequence, is that of all the highest types of human society. The permanent and exclusive companionship of one man and one woman, resulting in common interests, sentiments, and tastes, and involving mutual sacrifices, continuously intensifies the marital affections. Their common love for their joint children reflects upon the feelings of the latter and binds them together into fraternal affection. The absence of the jealousies and contentions, inseparable from polygynic unions, intensifies marital, parental, filial, and fraternal affections. The care of children being permanently assumed by both parents, both secure the largest measure of satisfaction of parental love, while securing the wellbeing of the children more efficiently than if, as in temporary unions, it devolved upon one parent alone. As a consequence, the mortality of children is reduced and a smaller number of births suffices to ensure the continuation of the race.

Socialism, modifying, to a considerable extent, the

permanent monogynic relation of the sexes, must in this and other ways alter the constitution of the family, and, therefore, must lead to retrogression in this, the most important, as in other spheres of social life. As shown in Part I. chapter vi., among its immediate results are: the economic independence of women; the abandonment of separate family homes and the early separation of children and parents, and the transference of the former to the care of the State. The further results following upon these profound modifications of the constitution of the family must now be examined.

The separation of children from parents at a tender age destroys the opportunity for the development of parental love, which grows upon the daily and hourly self-sacrifice which the care of young children demands. Still more must it destroy the opportunity for the development of filial and fraternal affections. The greatest and purest opportunities for happiness must thus be destroyed by Socialism.

The loss of this happiness must be accompanied by the loss of ethical training and sentiments of the highest order. The care of children, involving constant sacrifices of self-regarding desires, affords the highest training in altruistic sentiments. Hourly and daily the parents, and especially the mother, must subordinate their egotistic pleasures to the welfare of their children. This training in self-sacrifice, this evocation of unselfish emotions, influences the character of the race and, accumulating in influence from generation to generation, originates and furthers altruistic sentiments in other social relations. At the same time, the ethical standard is still further raised by the influence which such self-sacrifice and the general purity of the home-life exercises upon children. The constant experience of and training in unselfish actions strengthens the altruistic sentiments hereditarily derived, and the love and reverence of sons for mothers and sisters is the foundation of the respect for womanhood in general.

As parental love is the source of all altruistic sentiments and emotions, so does the care of parents for children

afford the highest training in altruism. Not only would the further evolution of altruistic sentiments be hindered by the early surrender of children to the State, but the individual training in altruism would also cease. The altruistic sentiments, which, however deficient as yet, have nevertheless made great progress, would thus gradually be lost again, and there must rise such selfishness as would ultimately threaten the very existence of human society. Just as higher types of human society have arisen through the better discharge of parental responsibilities, so must the non-discharge of such responsibilities by parents lead to the re-evolution of lower types, to the decadence of the human family into mere animalism.

Another consequence must arise. The bearing of children, connected as it is with physical restraint and intense suffering, is undergone reluctantly by all women. The only compensation for the sacrifices involved, the only consideration which makes it acceptable to women, is the expected satisfaction of the maternal sentiment from the loving care for the new-born child. Will maternity be accepted with like willingness when this compensation is withdrawn ; when the new-born babe is taken from its mother after a few weeks or even months ; when during the agony of parturition the mother looks forward to the further agony of losing her child ? That under such circumstances women will be willing to take upon themselves the suffering and sacrifices involved in the bearing of children seems unlikely. Under Socialism, therefore, the birth-rate is certain to contract, and in all probability will contract to an unprecedented extent. The socialist nations, instead of expanding, will become reduced in numbers, the birth-rate will fall below the death-rate, and Socialism will ultimately disappear because socialists have died out.

The general reluctance, if not refusal, of women to bear children must have further consequences. It robs the sexual relation of its ethical justification and value, and, therefore, leads to the degradation of both men and women. Marriage itself, when Nature's design is deliberately frustrated, is hardly to be distinguished morally from prostitution, even

when the relation remains permanently monogynic. But under the conditions created by Socialism it cannot remain so. Woman, deprived of the satisfaction of the emotions which the love and care of her children yields, will seek to fill the void in other ways. Failing to find full satisfaction for her yearnings—probably not fully understood—in the companionship of her husband, she will look for it elsewhere; and, still unsatisfied, will go further afield. Divorce and re-divorce will become so largely desired, that it must be made easy; and will be so largely availed of, that marriage generally becomes but a temporary arrangement.

Other considerations support this view. While the maternal sentiment is highly developed in most women, the majority of women as well as men do not feel other emotions very deeply. The love of which poets sing; the love which laughs at all obstacles and possesses the soul to the exclusion of everything else, is not the lot of the common herd. Minor emotions, more fleeting and less ennobling than this, draw them to the great purpose of life—the continuation of the race. The great majority of marriages, therefore, as yet, are not and cannot be perfect unions. When the first delirium is over, the hero's dimensions shrink to those of an ordinary man and the angel loses her wings. Then come the weeks and months which try temper and nerves; during which both would gladly exchange the marital yoke for their former freedom. But there is no ground for divorce, and shame as well as pecuniary considerations prevents separation. Presently, approaching motherhood invests the wife with a new glory in her husband's eye; his tenderness, as well as the further joy that awaiteth her, clothes life in its brightest colours. When the baby is born, its innocent hands constantly strengthen bonds which otherwise would yield under the strain, and its smiles forge other and more powerful ones. Gradually, under the influence of their common life—common interests and common love of children—husband and wife find each other, and the union, at one time so unpromising, becomes more perfect the longer it lasts, securing to both the utmost happiness of which their defective natures are capable.

It will be far different under Socialism. The pecuniary independence of women will cause them to be less patient with the ill-temper of a badly bred or exacting husband ; the absence of a separate family home, involving public repasts and the spending of all spare time in public, prevents the close intimacy under which the nature of husband and wife mingle till they are one. The absence of children, or their removal from parental care, deprives the union of any ethical value and of the only bond which can tie it securely. In the great majority of instances, therefore, to the unsatisfied maternal emotions there will be added actual dissatisfaction with their marital lot either on the part of husband or wife or both. These influences must tend to multiply divorces, while the influences tending towards restraint have been removed. Divorces and re-divorces, therefore, must tend to increase, till public opinion will see nothing shameful in the most frequent changes of marital relations. The chastity of women, already approaching perfection, and the chastity of men, which, though as yet far from perfect, has nevertheless improved and is still improving, will be lost again. Licence will take the place of restraint, a licence such as Rome indulged in during her decline, when reluctance on the part of women to bear children, accompanied by the utmost profligacy, prepared the downfall of the rulers of the world.

The influence of these conditions must deprive large numbers of women of all chance of permanent happiness. The attractiveness of woman to man, being more physical than that of man for woman, wanes earlier. Middle-aged men, therefore, may and frequently do attract young women, while in exceptional cases only do middle-aged women possess any sexual attractiveness for young or middle-aged men. Whatever, therefore, lessens the permanency of the marital relation must tend to deprive numbers of women of male companionship during their declining years. The condition which Socialism must create, being that of extreme instability of the marital relations, must, therefore, react unfavourably on the lives of women to an incalculable extent.

Meanwhile, the training of the children by the State, while adding to these tendencies, must produce further evils. This training must in the first instance be undertaken by professional nurses, to each of whom many infants must be entrusted. Though their training may give them a better knowledge of the treatment of infants than many mothers possess, yet that knowledge cannot compensate for the sleepless watchfulness of a mother and her constant care. The high death-rate of foundling hospitals, while to some extent accounted for by the origin of their inmates, is, nevertheless, largely due to this substitution of professional for maternal care. The death-rate in the State nurseries, therefore, will be similarly great, adding to the tendency to depopulation previously described.

The surviving children, from the earliest dawn of their intelligence, will be exposed to influences far different from those which would have shaped their character in the parental home. For the training through sympathy will be substituted a training through fear. The elastic bounds to the natural wilfulness of children, which parental care accommodates to the proclivities of each child, will give way to fixed rules to which all children must accommodate themselves. The dawning intelligence of childhood, provoking constant questions in its endeavour to understand, will be repressed and confined to fixed and uniform lessons. Breach of rules will lead to punishment, but no expression of love will encourage and meet repentance. At the very time, therefore, when the intelligence of the future men and women is most easily impressed, when as a consequence the foundation of character is being laid, influences are at work which must deteriorate character. Absolute, unquestioning obedience; abject fear of persons in authority; selfishness, untruthfulness, and moral cowardice, must be the attributes of persons whose early childhood has been exposed to such conditions.

The retrogression here sketched will be aided by another cause. As the children of those less adapted to the requirements of social life will be exposed to exactly the same conditions as the children of those better adapted, all will have an equal opportunity to survive.



Instead of the survival of the fittest, *i.e.* those best adapted for the requirements of social life, there will arise the survival of the physically strongest, regardless of other and socially more important qualities. Mere physical strength will supplant the socially beneficial qualities, adding hereditary retrogression to the retrogression induced by training.

Socialism, disregarding the lessons of evolutionary history in the sphere of the family, as it disregards them in other spheres, must bring the utmost evils on the nations which adopt it. Nature inevitably punishes the breach of any of her laws; where the breach is great the punishment is great and terrible. All life arises from the due discharge of parental responsibilities, and only through the better discharge of such responsibilities have higher types of life been evolved. To disregard this law is to abandon the very foundation of social life. Retrogression, decay, and eventual extinction will inevitably follow upon such action; they are the fruits which grow upon the tree of Socialism.

Lest it be said that the picture here drawn is unjust to socialists and Socialism, it may be prudent to cite some evidence that it is not so regarded by many leading socialists. A few quotations from the interminable mass available will, on the contrary, prove that these socialists aim at bringing about exactly such conditions as have here been shown to be the inevitable outcome of the adoption of Socialism. Nevertheless must it be remembered that the great majority of socialists may be and probably are out of sympathy with these aims and ignorant of the goal to which Socialism leads.

“Human beings must be in a position to act as freely, where their strongest impulse is concerned, as in the case of any other natural instinct. The gratification of the sexual impulse is as strictly the personal affair of the individual as the gratification of any other natural instinct. No one has to give an account of him or herself, and no third person has the slightest right of intervention. . . . All these checks, all these contradictions to nature, in the present position of women have led even persons who are

not disposed to accept the further consequences of change in our present social state to recognise the justifiability of a perfectly free choice in love, and, if need be, of an equally free dissolution of the relationship, without any external hindrance.”<sup>1</sup>

“The present marriage system is based upon the general supposition of the economic dependence of the woman on the man, and the consequent necessity of his making provision for her, which she can legally enforce. This basis would disappear with the advent of social economic freedom, and no binding contract would be necessary between the parties as regards livelihood ; while property in children would cease to exist. . . . Thus a new development of the family would take place—an association terminable at the needs of either party.”<sup>2</sup>

“The present marriage laws hinder the socialist approach to the ideal. Because we hold Socialism will ultimately survive as the only tenable moral code, we are convinced that our present marriage customs and present marital law must alike soon collapse. . . . In a socialist form of government, the sexual relation would vary according to the feelings and wants of individuals. . . . Children apart, we hold it intolerable that Church or Society should in any official form interfere with lovers.”<sup>3</sup>

“It would be the duty of the State to scientifically investigate the whole system of checks and to spread among its citizens a thorough knowledge of such as were harmless and efficient in practice.”<sup>4</sup>

“Marriage is a life sentence, not even reducible to a term of twenty years. . . . Monogamic marriage — a thing obviously and by its nature degrading. . . . Perhaps the most decent thing in true marriage would be to say nothing, make no promises either for a year or for a lifetime. . . . It would be felt intolerable in any decently constituted society that the old blunderbuss of the law should interfere in the delicate relations of wedded life.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bebel, “Woman,” *Woman in the Future*, pp. 229, 230.

<sup>2</sup> William Morris and E. B. Bax, *Socialism*, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Pierson, *Socialism and Sex*, pp. 5, 6, 8, and 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Marriage in Free Society*, pamphlet published by The Labour Press Society.