

BEBEL'S LIBEL ON WOMAN ¹

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IT is time a protest was made against the publication, as No. 15 of the Bellamy Library, of Bebel's *Woman*. What is the history of this issue? As long ago as 1885 there appeared *Woman in the Past, Present, and Future; translated from the German, Vol. I of the International Library of Social Science*.² A reprint was issued in the Bellamy Library in 1893; and now it is again reprinted without any date and without any alteration—an old translation foisted upon the public with no indication that the work makes no attempt to correspond to the present German edition. English publishers have failed during an entire month to procure for the present writer a copy of the 1910 German edition, but there is evidence enough that the work has been considerably changed.³ In the Reichstag Bebel protected himself against quotations from his own writings by saying he had "developed," and that his party was "continually

¹ Reprinted with additions from *The Crucible* for June, 1911.

² Not only is this book being industriously circulated among the half-educated, but its anti-Christian statements find their way, usually unacknowledged, into writings of various kinds touching on social and women's questions which reach a more cultured class. The Social Democratic Party Almanack for 1911 has a portrait of Bebel filling the centre of the sheet. He thus becomes the patron for the year. Yet he can be known in English to the S.D.P. only through his *Woman* of at least twenty-six years back.

³ See Postscript, pp. 24-30.

moulting." *Die Frau* has gone through an incredible number of editions, and Bebel, in a letter dated April 28, 1911, says that since the time of the English translation "my book has been much changed both in title and contents. I undertook alterations and amplifications at various times." Whether these are for the better or the worse, the English version remains as it was more than a quarter of a century ago, and by it we are for the present constrained to judge him. Is this scientific? Yet we read in italics on p. 256, "Socialism is science, applied with knowledge and understanding to all branches of human activity." And the Introduction concludes, "In the following argument I shall not hesitate to draw such conclusions as are demanded by results based on the examination of facts." Again on p. 108, "It is with facts alone that we are concerned." Has there been no advance in our knowledge of facts during the interval? Was there no need to bring up-to-date arguments based on statistics ranging from 1856 to 1877? no need for a footnote to the figures of the "last census in London" (p. 107)? Is it still a fact that there is in Germany only one suffragist authoress (p. 143)? There would appear to be considerable contempt for English intelligence on the part of the Fabian Society¹ which recommends the book, of *Justice* which advertises it exactly under the notices of "Women's Socialist Circles," of Herbert Burrows who praises it, of Mrs. Dora B. Montefiore who urges that "every Socialist woman who has time to read a book of over two hundred and fifty pages should make a point of studying Bebel's work."² Is it zeal for the truth that urges

¹ *What to Read*, October, 1910.

² *Position of Woman*, p. 1. Mrs. Montefiore has some qualms about her recommendation, and over the page she continues, "As, however, biological and sociological studies have advanced rapidly since Bebel wrote his book on *Woman*, there are to be found now

on the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist Sunday Schools who make the work a class-book for girls ?¹

It is to be feared that it is altogether another quality in the book which procures for it its vogue. That those who push its sale have other interests than those of mere truth is cynically confessed by Bebel in the preface to the sixth German edition (1886), where he remarks that he no longer agrees with all the positive statements made in the book, yet he re-issues it again "because it is still of some value for agitating"! From the character of the work, from its open attack on God and religion, from its slander of humanity, from its nauseous treatment of the question of sex, the publication seems to be part of what Bebel has stated to be the policy of orthodox Socialists in Germany—"to retain the wounds of the body social in a festering condition."

Examination of the book in detail is a troublesome task, partly because much of it is defiling, partly from the uselessness of contradicting wild general statements, partly owing to the absence of reference to authorities alleged for particular facts. To find a single sentence which Bebel quotes, it has been necessary, for instance, to hunt through six volumes of Eusebius, nine of Origen, eleven of St. Jerome, sixteen of St. Augustine.

Where we can bring Bebel of the early eighties in the writings of modern scientists interpretations of the past, and forecasts for the future, which are necessarily not contained in August Bebel's writings." But why are they "necessarily not contained" at least in last year's German edition? And can Mrs. Montefiore honestly hope that every Socialist Woman who has time to read 250 pages will be able to detect and reject these old errors?

¹ Cf. Syllabus of the Hyde Socialist Sunday School, p. 26. "Course 7. Girls' Class. Age about 15 to 18. *Why Women are prevented from fulfilling their mission.* (1) Historical and Economic Reasons. Reference book, *Woman* (Bebel)."

to book, his failure to stand the test makes us marvel that such stuff should be of use to push the cause of Socialism either in Germany or England. The most unlearned reader must be pulled up by the assertion (p. 187) that technical improvements have succeeded in stripping the perilous calling of the miner of its dangers, and that from this success we may gather how Socialism will reduce the disagreeables of all labour to a minimum (pp. 186-7). But will the ordinary reader know enough history to answer when he is asked (pp. 32-3) "What shall we say when we hear that Charles the Great . . . had no fewer than six wives at one time?" The monarch was not a moral man, he repudiated his first wife against the Pope's protest; but his second wife died before he married his third, and she in turn was dead before he took a fourth.¹ Are we to believe that Bebel has unearthed secret history? Let us try him again. One would have thought that the Carnival was a simple matter. It might have a history of precedent, but in itself, as a natural ebullition previous to the restraints of Lent, it is very human. Not so. It was a machination of the Papacy, encouraging wild mirth and profanation the better to keep the populace docile. It took place, not when we had supposed, but "for the three days before Passion Week" (p. 40)! The disgraceful indecency which is alleged on p. 33 to have attended the entry of the Emperor Charles II into Bruges must be an error of some kind, as in Charles II's time there was hardly any Bruges to enter. What authority can attach to a writer who asserts (pp. 29, 102) the existence of the *Jus Primae Noctis*? Even when Bebel wrote, the absence of evidence for the Right was proved, and there is no excuse for one

¹ For a different ordering of his marriages, which, however, equally bars out the six wives, see Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, II, i, pp. 281, 306.

writing as though no investigations had been made and published since the myth was put forward again by the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century. The pious custom of continence on the wedding night came to be known as the *Droit de Seigneur*, God's Right ; fines were paid in feudal times on occasion of the marriages of vassals ; brutal nobles abused their might not only when a wedding was toward. But these facts are no help to Bebel's argument, and he falls back on the reassertion of an exploded fable.

Equally unsound is the alleged fact with which he seeks to bolster up the assertion that Christianity thought slightly of women. Twice he tells us (pp. 18, 26) that the Council of Maçon (*sic*) in the sixth century discussed the question whether women had souls, thus proving that the Church was apt to regard woman as a thing and not as a human being. It is easy to see behind the misprint that the allegation refers to the Council of Mâcon held in 585. Now of this Council we have the official decrees, and there is no reference to any such discussion. Whence then springs the story ? From a misunderstanding of a clear paragraph in Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum* (viii. 20). Gregory, who was not himself present at the assembly, relates what he had heard of a discussion on a point of grammar. " In this Council," he says, " there was one of the bishops who declared that a woman could not be called *homo*. But when the other bishops had reasoned with him, he held his peace, for they showed him that the sacred text of the Old Testament laid down that in the beginning when God created man it was said ' male and female He created them, and He called their name Adam,' which means man of the earth, thus applying the same term to woman and man alike, for He designated each of them equally *homo*." There is no question as to the souls of women ; the

story is simply that one of the bishops doubted whether it would be correct to apply to a woman the generic term *homo*, and that he yielded before the appeal to Scripture use brought forward by the other bishops. Gregory himself followed the classical use of the word *homo* as a generic term applicable to both sexes; and he puts it down in his Chronicle as a little point of interest that a brother bishop questioned the linguistic correctness of the usage. How can there be found here any suggestion of a conciliar discussion as to whether women had souls? ¹

More baseless and more repulsive is a parallelism asserted (p. 16) when, after recounting the prostitution that too frequently formed part of pagan worship and instancing the chambers at the temples of Venus, &c., Bebel continues: "When Jesus drove out the dealers and money-changers for desecrating the Temple of Jerusalem, these same chambers existed there, in which sacrifices were offered to the Goddess of Love." Bebel has read of the horrible defiling of the Temple by the conquering Antiochus and of the revellings of the Gentiles; how has he come to forget the solemn purification by the Jews three years later, and how has it escaped him that all this took place two centuries before our Lord drove out the money-changers (2 Machabees, chaps. vi., x.)? ² Really his only qualification for speaking on the subject seems to be his hostility; let us turn to a matter where we would expect him to speak from knowledge. A Socialist leader should be accurate in economics, yet Bebel thus formulates (p. 245) the law of Diminishing Returns: "The returns of a field are directly propor-

¹ See an article by Fr. Thurston in *The Month*, January, 1911.

² As often as the regular reading of the Law in the synagogue reached Deuteronomy xxiii. 17, 18, the Israelite heard the express prohibition of the monstrous association of immorality with worship. Bebel does not seem to be familiar with the books of the Law, nor can he know that the Hebrews had no word in their language to express the idea of goddess.*

tionate to the amount of labour (including science and technical appliances) expended on it, and to the amount of suitable manure employed." If he believes in the possibilities of great advances under Socialism, there is no reason for him thus to throw dust in his readers' eyes and shirk the law as defined, say, in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Science*: "In each stage of progress there is a limit beyond which the labour expended upon a given area cannot be increased without causing a diminution of returns." In a note (p. 201) he remarks on the communistic tone of three former Popes and Fathers of the Church. Unfortunately his first quotation is from a spurious letter which he uncritically attributes to Pope Clement I. Next he quotes "Bishop Ambrosius Milan" (as who should say, "Deputy Bebel Berlin"), and seems to refer to the *De Officiis Ministrorum*, i. 28, where St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, tells of the original common possession of Paradise which has been followed (i. 29) by private property. Bebel might read the Bishop's tractate on Naboth's Vineyard, a recognition of the plucky farmer's just defence of his private property. His third quotation is Pope Gregory the Great's condemnation of those who refuse food to the starving (*Regulae Pastoralis*, iii. 21). Bebel cannot have gone to the sources at first-hand and has suffered accordingly.

The more general treatment of sociology is equally false and ignorant. From page 7 to page 11 Bebel deals with the history of marriage. "On the threshold of the past we find the horde as the first human community." "At first, and for a considerable length of time, no lasting union existed between man and wife; unrestricted intercourse (promiscuity) prevailed." From male egotism rose the marriage of a single man to a single woman. Polygamy was later introduced by ambition, and woman became the most valuable booty

of war. With *a priori* dogmatism he asserts primitive promiscuity, and the rise of the monogamic family along with the rise of private property; and passing from false history to misleading prophecy he tells us that with property will disappear indissoluble monogamy. He draws an imaginary line of development back into the past and forward into the future, and sets monogamous marriage as a stage midway between the horde and the day-to-come of easy divorce. Nor does he present this history as an hypothesis, but as established fact. A sorry example of the Socialism that is "science applied with knowledge and understanding to all branches of human activity." Anthropologists, the real scientists upon this branch, hold it unscientific to lay down stages of development; for them the problem is open because of the lack of evidence; they acknowledge that they cannot get back to the earliest stage of human life. The main "proof" of primitive promiscuity, viz., succession through females, has been shown to be no proof, not even a presumption.¹ Scientists suspect the supposed state of promiscuity as suicidal; it seems the race would never have survived it. Even as an hypothesis it is rejected by Darwin as least likely: "It is exceedingly improbable that primeval man and woman lived promiscuously together" (*Descent of Man*, ii. 346). To those who derive our origin from the highest apes and yet start us with promiscuity, we may retort that this is to lift us below the ape. To the Catholic, primitive man is Adam and Eve and their children, and here we have not savages, but human beings worthy of a Creator who desired creatures capable of paying Him rational worship. As to the degradation of the entire race, or the alternative continuation at all times in some regions of such a civilization as science now disinters at ever

¹ See Devas, *Studies in Family Life*.

more remote dates in Assyria and Egypt, the Church is silent. No Catholic is Westermarck, but in his *History of Human Marriage* he rejects promiscuity as a proved world-condition: "There is not a shred of genuine evidence for the notion that promiscuity formed a general stage in the history of mankind"; he cannot even accept the hypothesis of a continual up grade: "We may, perhaps, say that irregular connexions between the sexes have, on the whole, exhibited a tendency to increase along with the progress of civilization" (p. 69). Careful students stand arrayed against Bebel when he emerges from beyond the dawn of history.

We expect Bebel to be a hostile critic when he treats of the Bible narrative, but we are surprised when we find his hostility blinding him to statements made in the book he is judging. Thus in a note (p. 11) he says of Cain: "He possessed no sister, as, according to the Bible story, the first pair of human beings were Malthusians or adherents of the Two-children System." But "according to the Bible story" besides the children Abel, Cain, and Seth, Adam "begot sons and daughters" (Gen. v. 4).

Bebel is scandalized (p. 18) that Abraham "lent his wife Sarah without scruple to other men, *e.g.*, to Pharaoh." Abraham is blameworthy enough because, not rising to a higher morality, he said, "They will kill me," and for fear of his life did not protest when "the woman was taken into the house of Pharaoh" (Gen. xii.), and there is no necessity to invent the charge that he used to "lend his wife without scruple." The polygamy of the patriarchs found no disfavour with Jehovah (p. 19); and has Bebel now to learn that this was so because, for the increase of the chosen people, God, the author of marriage, gave leave for more than one wife—a leave that was not subversive of the end

of marriage (as would be polyandry), and so could be granted by the supreme Legislator, though it is *ultra vires* for any other power? Surely, it is trifling to object that "The ten commandments of the Old Testament are, as a matter of fact, addressed only to man, for the tenth commandment names women along with the servants and the domestic animals" (p. 24). Was there no commandment addressed to servants not to kill, not to steal? Were those only understood to be bound who had been brought out of the land of Egypt?

Equally hard is it to believe in the sincerity of the inference put forward on the same page that Christ despised women, because "when His mother humbly sought His assistance at the marriage feast at Cana, He replied, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?'" Did no doubt enter Bebel's mind that in the original (John ii. 4) there might be no reproof, no rudeness such as is conveyed by the sound of the salutation in European versions? Christ gives His mother her title of prophecy, and gently lets her know that He needs no pressure on her part to perform the miracle of kindness she asks of Him. What perversity to pass by such incidents as that of Christ conversing with the Samaritan woman upon the profoundest truths, His dealing with the woman who was "a sinner in the city," with the woman taken in adultery, His friendliness with the two sisters of the family of Bethany, and to wrest a charge of churlishness from the account of His presence at the marriage of Cana, so full of human sympathies!

From the words "Some there be that are eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake"—where, in answer to the disciples who urge that it is better to avoid the burdens of matrimony, the Master replies that it is not better for all, but to some is given the gift of living singly for God—Bebel (p. 24) concludes that Jesus

looked with contempt upon marriage. And that the disciples may not be greater than their Master, *all* are accused of regarding marriage as evil (p. 25). In support he gives quotations without references from Tertullian, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Origen, Eusebius. Jerome and Augustine are amongst the Fathers who wrote entire tracts in defence of marriage against Gnostic and Manichæan heretics. Origen declares that God is the author of the matrimonial union (*Comment. in Matthaëum*, xiv. 16). Tertullian writing to his own wife exclaims, "Whence are we to find language adequate to describe the happiness of that marriage which the Church cements, and the oblation confirms, and the benediction signs and seals, which angels report and the Father holds as ratified" (*Ad Uxorem*, ii. 9). Eusebius says, "To those who are not called to the priesthood, holy Scripture gives liberty, nay more, openly proclaims to all that 'marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled'" (*Demonst. Evang.*, i. 9). There is not a Father who while praising virginity does not explicitly guard himself against the libel of Bebel that marriage is accounted evil. St. Jerome's phrase (*Against Jovinianus*, i. 3) is typical of all: "Will silver cease to be silver if gold is more precious than silver?"

St. Paul, says Bebel (p. 25), hating the flesh hated woman. This of St. Paul who says that those who forbid marriage "give heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1, 3), who gives command "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it" (Eph. v. 25). And "So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church" (Eph. v. 28, 29). On p. 26 we are given

I Tim. ii. 11, 12 in italics and told that here St. Paul "raises his influential voice against the higher education and culture of women"; but St. Paul is here engaged in giving instructions for the ordering of public worship. St. Peter and St. Paul are said to justify "any simpleton of a man" in considering "himself better than the cleverest woman" (pp. 25, 26), because they require the obedience of the wife to the husband "even as Christ is the head of the Church." St. Joseph was head of the holy family (Matt. ii. 13, 20), does the Church therefore consider him better than Mary? The simple fact is that the husband's headship, his right within the society of two to decide on matters morally indifferent, confers no personal superiority. The wife is not inferior to the husband any more than in Bebel's imagined Socialism the worker is inferior to the "business executive" (p. 181) who see that he gets his due return in goods, and no more, for work done (pp. 180, 194). Before the Church and before God the sexes are equal: "there is neither male nor female" (Gal. iii. 28). Listen to Tertullian on the equality in marriage: "Both are brethren, both fellow-servants, no difference of spirit or of flesh" (*Ad Uxorem*, ii. 9). Christ himself is for all the type of virtue; the same law binds all; "With us what is not allowed to woman is equally disallowed to man" (Jerome, *Epist.*, 77). What injustice this equality of moral burdens would entail if there were any doctrine of woman's natural inferiority! The Church recognizes what nature teaches, that woman is different from man, not that she is his inferior. Physically, mentally, and morally she is other than man; the sexes are complementary, each supplying the defects of the other. Her constitution is normally more delicate and is at times taxed more than man's. Her outlook is more ideal, her imagination more lively, her emotion more pervading;

he is generally colder of temperament, more abstract in his views, more critical in discernment. Who shall range these diverse gifts in a scale of superiority? The Church may recognize an actual inferiority due to education and the conditions that have ruled the life of women in the past; the Church may realize that the cares of maternity will for ever bar the majority of womankind from identity of opportunity with man. But she refuses to agree that these circumstances can touch with degeneracy woman's being. If anything, the Church sees a more spiritual mind in the woman, adapting her more naturally for the education of the soul as of the body of the young.

Bebel is confused and contradictory on this vital matter of the difference of the sexes. He says (p. 8) that woman's sexual peculiarities are the foundation of the bondage to which he declares she has been subjected; that this bondage of centuries has lessened her bodily and mental powers; that her education has been deliberately directed to increasing this weakness (p. 65); that consequently "she is a fruitful soil for all forms of religious and other charlatanism" (p. 66). He maintains that: "the only dissimilarity which has a right to permanence is that established by nature for the fulfilment of a natural purpose, which is externally unlike but in substance the same" (p. 122). What precisely does he wish to convey by this last belittling clause? "I too," he concedes (p. 141) "consider it an advantageous division of labour to let the men defend their country in the field, while the women undertake the care of house and home." Yet he decries this division on pages 112 and 113. He looks forward to the realization of "the first fundamental law of the Socialistic community—the equal duty of all to labour without the distinction of sex" (p. 180), to the day when "she works under exactly the same conditions as man" (p. 229), when

all "functions may become simply alternating ones to be undertaken in turn by all those engaged in the branch, without distinction of sex" (pp. 183-4). If we are to understand from this that the weakness of the female sex and its peculiar endowments are due entirely to centuries of slavery, and that the progress of science (p. 130) will make the sexes identical, assimilating them in nature, function, and formation, then Bebel's woman in the past has never existed, his woman in the present is a creation of his own out of this nothing, and his woman of the future is a chimera. The difference of man and woman meets us at every stage of history; long ago woman would have turned and revolted beneath this victimization; the future will not destroy woman by making her identical with man, nor by identifying these two complementaries destroy progress.

But let us take advantage of his want of clearness to assume Bebel to mean that woman has ever been, is, and will always be fundamentally different from man, and that this difference has been in a variety of ways pressed to the subjection of women. What are we then to make of his assertions (p. 26) that "the advancing civilization of the West, acting in spite of Christianity," was the cause of gradual improvement, and that Christianity "has merely denied its true attitude with regard to woman, and that reluctantly and under pressure"? "Christianity," says Bebel on the same page, "was a mixture of Judaism and Greek Philosophy." Yet he must know that, if it were only this mixture, Christianity would not be in the world to-day the strong bulwark, against which he finds it necessary to hurl his pages of attack. Celsus in the second century, accused the early Church of doing all for women. If the elevation of woman was not due to Christianity, let Bebel explain why it was present under the Christian emperors and not in the unchristian Germanic tribes? In the early

Church, women shared the charismata, later they were in honour as deaconesses and eminent as martyrs. Could St. Paul do more to elevate the union of husband and wife than he does when by a sublime comparison he gives as the model for married life the union of Christ and His Church? How often he salutes women as his "fellow-workers" in the Lord, and most touchingly in Romans xvi. 13, "Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." Hear St. Peter's exhortation in his first Epistle (iii. 7), "Ye husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the female as to the weaker vessel, and as to the *coheirs* of the grace of life." Christ Himself ordained that the message of His Gospel should carry with it the story of the woman who anointed His head with precious ointment: "Amen, I say to you wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her" (Matt. xxvi. 13, Mark xiv. 9). The fact is that to Christianity the world is indebted for its highest conception of the equality that should exist between the married; it has effected more than all other forces combined against polyandry and polygamy and to preserve Europe from the polygamous civilization of Mohammedanism. Lecky, no friendly witness, bears testimony in the passage, too long to quote in full, on pp. 234-5 of vol. i of his *Rationalism in Europe*: "The world is governed by its ideals, and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more profound and, on the whole, a more salutary influence than the medieval conception of the Virgin. . . . All that was best in Europe clustered around it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of our civilization." Where paganism protected woman by subjecting her to a tutelage that betrayed an absence of all confidence in her, Christianity shields her by means more honourable to

her, regarding her as privileged because of her physical weakness and because of her dignity.

What compulsion forced Christianity to adopt this attitude? Is it not the natural working of the mission of the Church to sanctify the individual? Was it "shrewd calculation" on the part of the Catholic Church that honoured Mary as the Mother of God (p. 26), or is the shrewdness Bebel's, who sees in this a substitution for heathen goddesses (p. 27)?

Bebel strangely argues that the presence of known sexual evil in the world proves that the Church condoned it. He quotes Augustine (p. 92) as confessing the necessity to the Church of the existence of prostitution, and cites the provincial Council of Milan in 1665 as though it "expressed itself to the same effect." He does not say that his quotation (*de Ordine*, ii. 4) is from a work written by St. Augustine immediately after his conversion with which he later expressed his dissatisfaction in his *Retractationes*. Nor does he tell us that Augustine's argument is "Cease to distinguish between dishonest women and honest matrons and you have disorder." The date for the Council must be a misprint for 1565, when bishops, princes, and magistrates were urged to extirpate panderers out of their territories and not to suffer bad women to dwell outside of some remote assigned locality (*Mansi* 34A, Col. 72). In similar fashion, England, when it enacted a muzzling order, must be said to have declared rabies "inevitable and organized it by state regulations."

To what effect is it to quote strong expressions from ascetical sermons, when the congregations are reminded that Adam's sin, to which we owe the fall, was preceded by Eve's failure to observe the command laid upon them both; that in a pagan world woman's safety, or her reputation, often depends on withdrawing herself from public association with lawless men; that where licence

is rife woman is the spark, man the tow whence bursts the flame of passion ; that as woman is glorified in Mary, called the gate of heaven, because with her began the recovery of the world, so is she humbled by the memory of Eve, styled the gate of sin and death and hell, because with her began the destruction wrought by Adam? Above all, such expressions fail to convey the spirit of the Church when they are not merely misinterpreted, but tainted in the original with Manichæism.

Bebel's history of the Sacrament of Matrimony is brief but full of errors. He says (pp. 28-9) that the early marriage ceremony "had merely the character of a private contract between two persons of different sexes," that not till the ninth century was its validity made to depend on ecclesiastical sanction, and that "it was not till the sixteenth century that the Council of Trent raised marriage to the rank of a sacrament."¹ Marriage as a natural contract was instituted

¹ This charge of inventing sacraments was echoed by the Archbishop of Armagh (then Bishop of Down and Connor) at a Belfast meeting. The *Church Times* of Jan. 13, 1911, thus comments on his speech: "It is with feelings of peculiar shame that we read the outpouring of the right reverend prelate. It is true that he began with a sort of hyper-orthodoxy by speaking of marriage as 'the most sacred institution which God had ordained since man and woman came to be.' We have always known marriage to be a sacrament, but we must protest against its undue exaltation to be the most sacred of all sacraments. But the Bishop went on with a complete somersault to say that marriage was discovered to be a sacrament only at the Council of Trent. Furthermore, he made the astonishing assertion that the whole of this doctrine was founded on 'a mistranslation in the Douay version of the one text Ephesians v. 32.' Thus the 'sacrament of marriage' was never heard of before the Council of Trent—was never spoken of, for example, by any of the Schoolmen—and the Council depended on an English translation which did not appear till twenty years afterwards. This is theology with a vengeance, not to say history. . . . With a further excursion into history, the Bishop of Down informed his audience that before the Council of Trent 'marriage was a civil ceremony.' He should really have given some examples of this hitherto unknown ceremonial. But enough. We are filled with shame, we say, in hearing of this rubbish poured from the lips of a Bishop of our Com-

by the Author of Nature when He created the two sexes, and its object and duties were determined by Him. Jesus Christ elevated it to a sacrament and committed its discipline to His Church and to "the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). When Christ forbade polygamy and divorce, and St. Paul condemned the incestuous Corinthian, the Head of the Church and His Apostle, in their official capacities, controlled the union of the sexes. It was in view of the denials of Luther and Calvin that Trent declared anathema upon those who should say that the sacrament of matrimony was invented by man. On a similar occasion of an error of the day, Innocent IV three and a half centuries earlier required the Waldenses to retract a like denial of the sacrament. The Church, beginning from St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, has ever taught of matrimony what belongs to the essence of a sacrament. St. Augustine makes matrimony equally a sacrament with Baptism and Holy Orders (*de Nupt. et Concup.*, x. 11 : *de Bono Coniug.*, xxiv. 32), St. Ignatius, the martyr of the second century, writes, "It is fitting that brides and bridegrooms should marry with the judgement of the bishop, that their nuptials may be according to the Lord and not according to passion" (*Epist. ad Polyc.*, v. 2). St. Ambrose testifies to the Church's ceremonial: "For as marriage itself ought to be sanctified by the priestly veiling and blessing, how can that be called marriage where there is no wedding of faith?" (*Ep.*, 19, *ad Vigil*, n. 7). As we should expect from these few early extracts, the liturgical books show a tradition of matrimony as a sacrament going back to Apostolic times ; this is attested even by the rituals of sects that

muion in the greedy ears of Belfast groundlings. So speaks the worst kind of demagogue, pandering to the fiercest prejudice, stirring the most odious passions, and doing all in the name of 'our civil and religious liberties.' Poor Ireland!"

separated themselves in the first centuries. The Church never regarded marriage as a purely private concern beyond her control ; witness her legislative regulations, *e.g.*, the second canon of the Council of Neo-caesarea in the year 314, declaring null a marriage within certain degrees, which the civil law allowed.

When this control has been thrown off, Bebel promises the woman of the future freedom to enter a union where "should incompatibility, disappointment, and dislike ensue, morality demands the dissolution of a tie that has become unnatural and therefore immoral" (p. 230). Such amorous relationships of mere whim or passing inclination are likely to bring about a real subjection of woman to man's injustice.

In Luther, Bebel finds one whose words, a true interpretation of healthy nature, should be chiselled over the doors of churches, declaring the begetting of children a physical necessity for each man and woman, that man or woman can no more oppose the sexual instinct than he or she can cease from eating, drinking, and sleeping (pp. 36, 43). "The so-called animal passions occupy no lower rank than the so-called mental passions" (p. 44). Marriage is the law for all ; celibacy is unnatural and for none. Bebel needs a little fundamental knowledge of physiology and psychology. Animals satisfy their innate appetites according to their instincts, and so fulfil the law of Nature. Man lacks this sovereign instinct ; his body is the seat of animal appetites, every one of which is good and implanted of set purpose ; but they are means, not an end ; they are means to be used for an end under the control of reason where the appetite is inordinate. Some inclinations point to laws which have for their end the perfection of the individual ; they are of obligation for each individual ; every one is bound to take food and to check any impulse to overeating. Other laws have the

perfection of the race for their end, and do not *per se* bind each individual. Thus Nature's tendency which urges to the multiplication of the race is strong enough to ensure the continuance of the race without making necessary the marriage of a given couple. The bearing of children is not always a social duty. Bebel on his reading of Nature must be prepared to say that Nature requires each individual absolutely to carry out the law as soon as he or she has reached the age of being capable.

"Every one hath his proper gift from God (1 Cor. vii. 7), and different individuals meet different needs of the community, which has to be maintained not alone in bodily multiplication, but also in spiritual increase. Virginity is a gift of God as is marriage; but heroism does not lie with marriage, and there is no fear of the world taking the harder way.

Bebel again and again (pp. 36, 43-4-5-6-7, 84-5-6, 89, 253) lays it down that each must gratify this sexual impulse under pain of bodily and mental disease. Let us answer shortly by referring him to the resolution passed unanimously by the Conference of Preventive Medicine (Congress of Brussels, 1902) and signed by more than 150 leading medical men, representatives from all parts of the world: "Young men should be taught not only that chastity and continence are not harmful, but further that these virtues are to be highly recommended from the point of view purely of medicine and hygiene." *The Lancet* (February 1, 1896) condemned "the heresy . . . that chastity is physiologically bad for young men. We have quoted the words of leading physicians and surgeons, *e.g.*, Sir William Jenner, Sir James Paget, Dr. Gowers, and Dr. Lionel Beale, to the effect that chastity never did harm to mind or body, that such discipline as it involves is excellent, and that marriage can be safely waited for, even for years,

without the least danger to health." *The British Medical Journal* says on December 11, 1897 (p. 1742), "Adult men are sometimes under the impression that chastity is a danger to health, and to them it is often useful to be distinctly assured that such is not the case."

But, urges Bebel, as an historic fact, an unmarried clergy has carried licentiousness as a plague (pp. 30, 31, 83, 97, 104). Scandals there have been, and not least, there where is the source of much of the so-called evidence. Take the testimony at the widest, and we find marriage relations the purest in regions where there is religious celibacy, and the harm is doubled where the clergy is not celibate. Such a man as Döllinger was well aware of the lesson of present and past, and he held that celibacy was essential to the efficiency of the clergy. Renan testified, "The fact is that what is commonly said about the morality of the clergy is, so far as my experience goes, absolutely devoid of foundation." ¹ Clerical celibacy (which Bebel would seem to think (pp. 26, 252) only came in with Gregory VII in the eleventh century) both on utilitarian grounds and for the deeper reason of the spiritual paternity forming Christ in souls (Gal. iv. 19), was from the beginning regarded as the more excellent way ; though it was not possible always to find unmarried candidates for the priesthood, nor by the imposition of hands to enjoin departure from wedded union. In the fourth century the self-denying ordinance was general in the West, and the Church has known how to provide the means to enable her clergy to lead the celibate life. What defections there have been are not due to the law imposing an impossible burden, but the blame of them must be laid upon those who, had there been no law, would have been dishonest still.

It is impossible to be enthusiastic for Bebel's picture

¹ *Catholic Encyclopædia*, "Celibacy."

of the world to come, where as soon as the child is old enough to leave the breast he passes to "common guardians" (pp. 216-17), to be reared in the atmosphere of presumptive state-love; where police, crime, and religion disappear (pp. 212-15) and there succeeds "the conviction that heaven is on earth" (p. 224). His vision of the future is not likely to be more true than his view of our present world, where he sees no veneration for old age, no reverence towards innocence, no joy in work done, no power of devotion or attachment to transfigure the lowliness of service; where marriage is ever an affair of the market, pleasure always sought in unlawful ways, crime and failure and misery the only outcome of humanity's struggle. Hypothesis, sophistry, railing at the "bourgeois," will never get rid of human passions and the ills our flesh is heir to.

Woman has an ennobling work to accomplish for the spirit of humanity; the good genius of the race, she balances the movements of the world of thought and action. She is not condemned to mediocrity because she may not aspire to masculine qualities. Her lot demands amelioration and she rightly strives for the recognition within organized society of the rights which that organization entails. Bebel's out-of-date book is a stumbling-block in the way of woman's redress. Its facts are fictions; it denaturalizes nature; its creed is corrupting; it makes sex the divinity to be served in an unrestrainedly animal world.

Postscript on the German Edition of 1910.

The title of the book is altered to *Woman and Socialism*, but the method and main doctrine are unchanged. Religion is still charlatanism; when Socialism comes there will be no immorality, the sexual impulse will be obeyed in unions that will last as long as liking lasts. Statistics are fuller and more up to date; the

"only" (Eng., p. 143) German suffragist authoress is now (Germ., p. 292) the "first," but the Council of Milan (see above, p. 18) is still (Germ., p. 176) a hundred years out. The curiosities about the Carnival (above, p. 6) have disappeared; the Malthusianism of Adam and Eve (above, p. 11), the lending of his wife by Abraham (above, p. 11), and Jehovah's attitude towards polygamy (above, pp. 11-12), no longer find mention. Instead of the horrible charge against the worship of the Jews (above, p. 8) we now read (Germ., p. 39) that up to about 150 years before our era the Temple at Jerusalem was the ordinary gathering ground of prostitutes—a statement which reflects as much on the doctrines of the Jews as a Trade Union meeting in Trafalgar Square impugns the management of the National Gallery. The fable of the Council of Mâcon (above, pp. 7-8) is repeated (Germ., p. 61), with the addition of the detail that the Council by a majority of one decided for the fact that women had souls!

Bebel still holds (Germ., p. 11) as undoubted an original horde stage of promiscuity for the human race (above, pp. 9-10), and with him savages are a picture of the past through which man has worked his way upward in an infinitely long and slow course of development. In this realm of conjecture his faith is unhesitating, and in a phrase, saying there is no documentary evidence, he rules out the possibility of contradiction from the Bible even as a merely historical witness.

As to the differences of physical capabilities in men and women, he has not yet spoken his mind definitely; but he has toned down an extreme evolutionary theory and now holds quite safely that present differences are to some unknown extent due to conditions of life and education and to social developments. He clearly admits a difference of physical characteristics which

ought not to be altered (Germ., p. 252), and agrees (Germ., p. 261) that the qualities of men and women are different but of equal value. Here is a portion of page 122 of the English translation printed with square brackets round the significant omissions of page 248 of the German (see above, p. 15): "*The only dissimilarity which has a right to permanence is that established by Nature for the fulfilment of a natural purpose [which is externally unlike but in substance the same].* Neither sex can overstep natural boundaries, as it would destroy its proper purpose in doing so; [upon this we may confidently rely. Neither sex is justified in erecting barriers for the other, any more than one class for another]." So that sex is something deeper than class-distinction.

Bebel reaffirms (Germ. pp. 66-7) his interpretation of the *Jus Primæ Noctis*, and he appeals to Jacob Grimm's *Weistümer*, i (1840) and to Sugenheim's *History of the Abolition of Serfdom-Vassalage* (St. Petersburg, 1861). On Grimm Bebel should read his compatriot Michael's *History of the German People in the Middle Ages*, i, pp. 54-5 (Freiburg, 1897) and see the long list of authors there quoted. Modern research might be expected to have discovered protestations and evidence of resistance to a custom that would so outrage human dignity; but there is no new support found for what historians call a "legend," "a learned superstition," and the old foundation in such old writers as Grimm and Segenheim consisted of anecdotes, suspected passages, and misunderstood texts. To take an instance which though remote in time has something of local nearness to us, Bebel on Sugenheim's authority says that in Scotland the *Jus* was made convertible into a tax by Malcolm III at the end of the eleventh century. The source of this evidence can be traced back to a *History of Scotland* by one

Hector Boethius of Aberdeen in the early sixteenth century. He attributes the abominable right to the days of a legendary king Evenus, "long centuries" before Malcolm, and states that it was only stamped out by Malcolm's substitution of the Laws of the Merchet. Now the *Leges Malcolmi*, lib. iv, cap. xxxi, give no hint of the conversion of any custom, have no penalties for any one who should assert an ancient Jus; they simply give the different amounts to be paid to the feudal lord on occasion of marriage. These sums are to be paid by free or unfree, noble's daughter and thane's daughter; a count's daughter paid twelve cows to the *Queen!* Where is there here so much as a hint of the conversion of an old corrupt practice? The infamous right never existed, and for historians the question is closed. See the works with the subject-title by Louis Veuillot, A. de Foras, Karl Schmidt.

There are in the German edition (pp. 414-15) quotations from St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, and Bossuet additional to those on p. 201 of the English version to prove the communism of Early Popes and Fathers (see above, p. 9). No references are given for these quotations, an omission which is an affront to the intelligence of readers, and entails vexatious toil on any one who is anxious to see that authorities are rightly used. The quotation, which is said to show the communism of St. Augustine, has been discovered in his Interpretation of Psalm 131, where after speaking of the law-suits and discords that follow private property, he says: "Let us then, brethren, abstain from the possession of private property, or from the love of it if we cannot abstain from the possession." This is not communism, but is preaching the doctrine of the Master who gave the Counsel (not Command) of Evangelical Poverty: "If

thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow me" (Matthew xix. 21). In the same sermon the saint warns his hearers not to presume on wealth or powerful friends if they have them. He tells them that the man who has "a full house, rich lands, many farms, much gold and silver," but does not put his trust in them, knows that he must possess them and not they possess him—such a one, he says, is numbered among the poor of the Church to whom the fifteenth verse of this psalm promises "I will satisfy her poor with bread." Detachment, not communism, is St. Augustine's teaching.

Bossuet is cited from the *Art of Government, drawn from the Words of Holy Scripture*, a work written for the instruction of his pupil, the Dauphin. The place may be found in Bk. I, Art. 3, Prop. 4: "Take away government, the earth and all its goods are as common among men as air and light. . . . According to the primitive right of nature no one has a particular right over anything, and everything is the prey of all (*tout est en proie à tous*). . . . Hence springs the right of property." Mark how the last portion of the quotation reads in Bebel, and hear the conclusion he draws from it: "'Everything belongs to every one: and it is from state government that property comes.' This last phrase means when more clearly explained that the transition from common to private property is the cause of state government which has to protect private property." Bossuet's meaning is nothing of the kind. His argument is that by nature the possession and use of the earth and its fruits belong to man, but nature does not assign and mark off particular goods as the property of particular individuals. Hence in the absence of authority might is right, none is secure against violence, and "everything is the prey of all." But, says Prop. 4: "In

an ordered government each individual renounces the right to seize by force whatever suits him"; under a government legitimate claims are backed by the power of the magistracy, the natural enemy of all violence; and the sustenance of each from the fruits of the earth is assured. Bebel cannot have read his quotation in Bossuet, or he would not have mistranslated the French and distorted the argument.

There is a quotation from St. John Chrysostom which a search through his works has failed to disclose. Possibly the failure to recognize it may be due to the translation not faithfully rendering the Greek. Bebel's alleged quotation runs, "Let no man call anything his own. We have received everything from God to be used in common and mine and thine are lying words." The nearest parallel that can be found in St. Chrysostom corresponds in nothing to the greater portion of the quotation, but there is a resemblance to the last six words in a homily on 1 Cor. xi. 19, "mine and thine, that chilling phrase" (*τοῦτο τὸ ψυχρὸν ῥῆμα*). In hundreds of places Chrysostom preaches against the evils of luxury and the immorality of the rich; but he is careful to point out that destitution is not virtue, nor wealth sin. His doctrine is clear, and Bebel cannot give chapter and verse to prove him communistic.

In the German, p. 60 (corresponding to p. 26 of the English translation), where Bebel purports to be giving the Christian view of woman, two quotations from St. Thomas Aquinas are introduced. Here again there is no reference, and an examination of the several probable places in St. Thomas has not discovered any such texts as Bebel attributes to him.

On the whole, then, the 1910 edition in contrast with the old English translation is disappointing; the wisdom that should come with years and with criticism has borne little fruit. The promise of "conclusions

demanding by results based on the examination of facts " remains and seems likely to remain for Bebel an unattainable ideal. A baseless history, warped Bible texts, mistranslation of the Fathers, a travesty of Christianity, spurious decrees of Councils, the *Jus Primae Noctis*—these are the alleged facts. That on examination they turn out to be fables leaves Bebel unconcerned and makes no difference to his argument. But if that is his attitude—and from his admission that he prints in the 1886 edition statements with which he no longer agrees, as also from the 1910 edition in general, such it emphatically is—he removes the whole discussion from the level of serious historical enquiry down to that of cynical mischief-making which trades on the ignorance or gullibility of his readers. We regret that we must take leave in this spirit of a book widely influential in the Woman movement, but the position is of Bebel's choosing not of ours. We are fully alive to the need of solid advocacy of the cause of Women, but it is only fair to point out that this is an instance of a good cause damaged by invoking the aid of the cynic and the agitator. In the truth lies Woman's strength, and truth will win.

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