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LIDA PARCE

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Woman---Comrade and Equal

EUGENE V. DEBS

The London Saturday Review in a recent issue brutally said: "Man's superiority is shown by his ability to keep woman in subjection." Such a sentiment is enough to kindle the wrath of every man who loves his wife or reveres his mother. It is the voice of the wilderness, the snarl of the primitive. Measured by that standard, every tyrant has been a hero, and brutality is at once the acme of perfection and the glory of man.

But it is a lie and a libel. The author of it is an unnatural son striking his mother, a brutal husband glorying because he is able to fell his faithful wife to the earth, a beastly father beating his daughter with his fists and gloating as she falls because he is stronger than she.

Real men do not utter such sentiments. He who does so prostitutes his powers and links himself once more to the chattering ape that wrenches the neck of the cowering female, glorying as he does so in the brute force that is his.

Yet the sentiment is not confined to a moral degenerate who writes lies for pay, or to sycophants who sell their souls for the crumbs that arrogant wealth doles out to its vassals. It is embodied and embedded in the cruel system under which we live, the criminal system which grinds children to profits in the mills, which in the sweatshops saps women of their power to mother a race of decent men, which traps the innocent and and true-hearted, making them worse than slaves in worse than all that has been said of hell. It finds expression in premiers hiding from petticoated agitators, in presidents ignoring the pleading of the mothers of men, in the clubbing and jailing of suffragettes, in Wall street gamblers and brigands cackling from their piles of loot at the demands of justice. It is expressed in laws which rank mothers and daughters as idiots and criminals. It writes, beside the declaration that men should rebel against taxation without representation, that women must submit to taxation without representation. It makes property the god that men worship, and says that woman shall have no property rights. Instead of that, she herself is counted as property, living by sufferance of the man who doles out the pittance that she uses.

Woman is made the slave of a slave, and is reckoned fit only for companionship in lust. The hands and breasts that nursed all men to life, are scorned as the forgetful brute proclaims his superior strength and plumes himself that he can subjugate the one who made him what he is, and would have made him better had

his customs and institutions permitted.

How differently is woman regarded by the truly wise and the really great! Paola Lombroso, one of the deepest students of mind that time has ripened, says of her.

The most simple, most frivolous and thoughtless woman hides at the bottom of her soul a spark of heroism, which neither she herself nor anybody else suspects, which she never shows if her life runs its normal course, but which springs into evidence and manifests itself by actions of devotion and self-sacrifice, if fate strikes her or those whom she loves. Then she does not wince, she does not complain nor give way to useless despair, but rushes into the breach. The woman who hesitates to put her feet into cold, placid water throws herself into the perils of the roaring, surging maelstrom.

Sardon, the analytical novelist, declares:

I consider women superior to men in almost everything. They possess intuitive faculty to an extraordinary degree, and may almost always be trusted to do the right thing in the right place. They are full of noble instincts, and, though heavily handicapped by fate, come well out of every ordeal. You have only to turn to history to learn the truth of what I say.

Lester F. Ward, the economist, the subtle student of affairs, gives this testimony:

We have no conception of the real amount of talent or of genius possessed by woman. It is probably not greatly inferior to that of men even now, and a few generations of enlightened opinion on the subject, if shared by both sexes, would perhaps show that the difference is qualitative only.

I am glad to align myself with a party that declares for absolute equality between the sexes. Anything less than this is too narrow for twentieth century civilization, and too small for a man who has a right conception of manhood. I declare my faith that man, like water, cannot rise higher than his source. I am no greater than my mother. I have no rights or powers that do not belong to my sisters, everywhere.

Let us grant that woman has not reached the full height which she might attain—when I think of her devotion to duty, her tender ministries, her gentle spirit that in the clash and struggle of passion has made her the savior of the world, the thought, so far from making me decry womanhood, gives me the vision of a race so superior as to cause me to wonder at its glory and beauty ineffable.

Man has not reached his best. He never will reach his best until he walks the upward way side by side with woman. Plato was right in his fancy that man and woman are merely halves of humanity, each requiring the qualities of the other in order to attain the highest character. Shakespeare understood it, when he made his noblest women strong as men, and his best men tender as women.

Under our brutal forms of existence, beating womanhood to the dust, we have raged in passion for

the individual woman, for use only. Some day we shall develop the social passion for womanhood, and then the gross will disappear in service and justice and companionship. Then we shall lift woman from the mire where our fists have struck her, and set her by our side as our comrade and equal and that will be love indeed.

Man's superiority will be shown, not in the fact that he has enslaved his wife, but in that he has made her free.

LIDA PARCE

While she was yet a little girl Lida Parce learned in the school of experience some of the great lessons of the worker's world. Later she educated herself sufficiently to teach school in the pioneer districts of Arizona. From this she saved sufficient funds to take a college course, after which she became one of the best paid teachers in the city schools of Phoenix, Ariz.

In later life she became prominent in the club work of her city, and was an ardent suffragist. As president of the state suffrage society she helped secure the passage of the bill for woman's suffrage in Arizona, which was immediately vetoed by the governor. The study course in the club was for three years historical, and this, together with her experience in the passing and subsequent vetoing of the suffrage bill, led her into the study of sociology, and finally into the recognition of the moving force behind things, which is principally economic.

Comrade Parce joined the Socialist party in Chicago, where she is still pursuing her studies at the University of Chicago. She is a speaker of much ability, lecturing for the party, and before women's clubs of the city. She has written a pamphlet entitled "The Economic Interpretation of History," and is working on a book of rather ambitious proportions, entitled "The National History of Marriage."

From Mr. Kaneko

A post card from Mr. Kaneko, dated September 19th, and reaching us October the 14th, says: "I have at last been taken to a hospital, where I was unconscious three days. Have been here ten days, and am getting better right along. Don't be impatient. I will be all right soon. My father is with me. Can't write much now.—Kiichi." Although this is the 25th, we have had no further word, and can only hope for the best. Mr. Kaneko wanted very much to get well, and his own optimism has inspired us with the hope that he might return to us at least very much improved in health.

When Thanksgiving comes you, too, will have much to be thankful for in the growth of Socialist sentiment the world over.