

Domestic Studies in the Year 2000 A.D.

I.

MR. SYDNEY WOBBLE smiled wearily from his sickbed on his son George, who was sitting beside him. "It really seems a pity that the Medical Control Board won't let me live a little longer. Of course there is a good deal of pain for one hour out of the twenty-four, which requires a certain amount of medical attention, but I should not mind paying a little extra for that if the State allowed any doctor or nurse to have a private practice. (However I daresay I should never have been born under the new Inspection of Parents Act.) The point is that I am quite interested in the morning paper and talking to all of you and seeing a friend sometimes . . . and in old days I could have gone on indefinitely."

"Yes, Father," cried George, "One *does* sometimes regret the anarchy of 100 years ago but in those days you would never have reached the age of 98, and you might have died of a painful and incurable disease without a chance of escape instead of this arteriosclerosis. You yourself have often told me how wildly enthusiastic people were over the Voluntary Euthanasia Act of 1940."

"They were indeed" replied Mr. Wobble, "but of course it had to become compulsory soon. The principles of my great ancestor and namesake had sunk deeply into the more thinking minds of the community, and everything did become compulsory. Besides that they began killing criminals by anæsthetics in 1930 instead of by hanging, and a great many crimes were committed by persons who were unlawfully eager to get their revenge and an easy death at the same time. Moreover the expenses of the State medical service have been considerably reduced by the power of the Local Board to decide when a patient is not worth further attention. No doubt, even when I was a young man, many humane doctors accelerated the end of the patient when it could be easily done—and then of course there were the surgical operations, which were fairly well bound to kill many people who preferred to avoid a long period of suffering. However we are far in advance of all the Christianity and Individualism of those days . . . By the way, did you see the official form? Did it give me a week or a fortnight?"

George picked up some papers from the table. "Oh here it is," he said and read the form:—

"Sir,—I regret to inform you that my Board have decided to allow you no further medical service after a week from this date, and they are of opinion that you would save yourself and your relations much inconvenience and pain by availing yourself of Section 3 subsection (1) of the Compulsory Euthanasia Act 1980. Everything can be done at your house, if suitable preparations are made, as our Travelling Euthanasia expert will be in London at that date. You are probably aware that in cases like yours the Board will allow a grant of £5 towards the cremation expenses, and will accept a preliminary Probate affidavit from yourself for the purpose of assessing death duties. For your guidance I enclose a special form which you must forward within three days to the Inland Revenue Department.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
CHAS. BROWN,
Asst. Secy."

"How very odd my father would have thought that letter," the old man remarked, "I think it would have made him very angry. When I was quite young there were a few wild writers—one of them was

called Belloc or some such name—who had no respect for the collective wisdom of the community. They thought that individuals should own land and ought not to be compulsorily insured. However they were all ultimately secluded under the 3rd Mental Deficiency Act, which substituted some more scientific tests for the cruder tests of the first Acts. Well! I suppose I must make my arrangements. The injection is painless, I believe. Don't they give me an appointment? No; I see not. How very careless! I think I should like it about 7 in the evening if they can manage it. Perhaps you will arrange it by telephone? And, after all, I would rather not know the exact time. . . . How curious to remember the crude lack of precision with which people used to die in my young days—days when quite ordinary men sometimes committed physical assaults, swore, drank alcoholic preparations at meals, married without medical permission, and even then couldn't get divorced without some legal fiction of adultery. Why, they owned houses and land in perpetuity, and read books which were excluded from the British Museum Catalogue, and wrote quite scurrilously about the Government. Those were indeed turbulent times. Everything was so casual and unforeseen. . . . However I must make a new will and get the Law Registrar to send someone to help me with that and the Probate affidavit. A week isn't long, perhaps, but still I doubt if anything will ever be very different now, and of course life nowadays is not so exciting as it was. By the way, you can put my ashes in the safe downstairs, and I should like a few ethical words at the Crematorium. There is an ethical lecturer called Jones in the next street who only charges two guineas. He might just make a passing reference to my work in connexion with the 'Better regulation of female underclothing Act.' What a splendid achievement it was. We never thought it would pass the House of Female Representatives. Well, well.

(Left dozing.)

E. S. P. HAYNES.

"Individualism."*

That is not an attractive title nor a new one, but the book has a new idea that cannot fail to interest anyone who cares to understand what he does and why he does it. The author undertakes to reconcile by logic the opposing theories of Altruism and Hedonism and their natural consequences. Socialism and anarchism, Philanthropy and Self-interest, by showing from a scientific point of view that enlightened self interest is Beneficence.

The same conclusion may be reached from the sociological standpoint as well as from the religious standpoint, for the fundamental teaching of all true religion is that "the way of transgressors is hard," that the wicked man is the fool; that narrow selfishness is stupid, and that hate is the only sin; or as the original of the New Testament calls it "missing the mark."

The book is radical if not revolutionary, and is a most important and timely work. Beginning with proof of the supreme importance of the individual, it attacks the doctrine of "the common good," showing that the interests and rights of beings are harmonious, just in proportion to their intelligence.

Professor Fite has a hard word for such slop-shop social reformers as hold that reform is to be effected by them and not by the individuals to be reformed. Naturally he has no confidence in "natural rights" nor in the taking the kingdom of heaven by force,

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woman does not necessarily share Mme. Aurel's contempt for voluptuous love.

Here Aurel, as in all her books, holds that love only exists when it is verbally formulated, whereas I, for instance, who am her ardent admirer, hold that the mystical manifestations of life—art, love, friendship—are beyond words. They are outside the intellectual scope, and, in my opinion, he who speaks of love and friendship and art, who thinks he has caught them and can take them at call from his brain and display them like goods from a bag, has been duped. Art, love and friendship are expressions of the soul and, as Francis Grierson has said, the noise of words, their too concrete and yet indefinite quality, causes the silent soul to retire within itself.

In this one review it is impossible to give any idea of Aurel's phenomenal literary and emotional psychology. All we can hope is to excite interest in her by a few haphazard quotations:

"Nous ne pleurons nos morts que d'avoir mal su tout rêvée. On ne la noue qu'avec des dons d'adolesse passer de bien des choses n'aura rien."

"L'amitié, cette idolâtre, est toujours jeune étant tous rêvée. On ne la noue qu'avec des dons d'adolescence. On la croque mieux avant les dents de sagesse. L'Amour, lui, plus réel, se broute à tout âge."

"Je souris des bêtises que j'ai faites; je pleurs sur ce que je n'ai pas fait."

"Et si malgré mon obstination à détacher de moi tout l'univers aimant, si malgré moi il me reste un ami, c'est celui là que je cherche depuis que je respire."

"Le secret de la domination pour la femme est de beaucoup demander à son entourage. Celle qui peut se passer de bien des choses n'aura rien."

"Celle qui veut se rendre utile est perdue."
"Illustre baliverne: Barbey d'Aurévilly: 'A la dixième ligne,' écrit-il, 'on sent la femme.' Je dis: Est-ce qu'à la dixième ligne vous ne sentez pas l'homme?"

"J'en cherche un qui me parlerait jusqu'aux moelles, et, faute d'insistance, les mots qu'ils me disent vont à peine à la peau."

"D'autres me parlent jusqu'à l'esprit, mais le corps, c'est plus loin."

These are from "La Semaine d'Amour" because it is the last published. The most representative of her works is that monumental effusion called "Le Couple" which, one is not surprised to learn, has met with success both in its original and translated form in Germany. I wonder if there is anyone living (except her German translator) who has understood or even read every word of this book; yet if there be anyone who has not at least respect for its exuberance—an exuberance which suggests the eloquence of one under an hypnotic influence—there is no doubt Aurel has at times a visionary's gifts—that person has not my regard or sympathy.

I have derived many a delicate pleasure in Aurel's swift transpositions of epithet; I have, necessarily, curiosity and admiration for one whose mechanism of thought and expression is so apart; I like her for writing as she can write whether it is the correct way or not, but I cannot appreciate her illogical perversity in overlooking her own sex to address men who do not, as she admits, listen: "On ne peut se parler toute qu'à l'homme. On ne le peut du moins sans crime. Les confidences non parées de femme à femme sont des hontes. On ne peut se parler toute qu'à l'homme et il ne peut nous écouter." The humiliating discovery! Then why does Aurel trouble to speak or write at all since the more comprehending and delicate friendships are closed to her—and for this we cannot reproach Aurel who wants to find her friend in her husband-lover and her husband-lover in her friend, considering all other attachments incomplete. I do not attempt to explain this pessimistic contradiction and humbly accept the position of eaves-dropper, a little mischievously satisfied all the same—this satis-

faction can be granted me who am so despised—for the disenchantment Aurel finds in her futile efforts to meet man, amends being made for the deliberate misdirection of these efforts by its avowal. Otherwise it would be unpardonable.

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA.

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II.

ELIZA FANSHAWE, K.C., sat back in her chair at her chambers in the Temple in deep abstraction. Mr. Evelyn Fanshawe, whom she had rescued in the days of her first professional success from the sweated labour of a curacy, and who had so loyally looked after her household and children for upwards of fifteen years, had "made a scene" that morning. He had found secreted among various legal documents a passionate effusion from a well-known minor poet, who rented on her guarantee an elegant little flat in the suburbs. And to the eminent K.C. there had at that very moment been forwarded from her club a letter from an obscure don at Oxford threatening instant communication with Evelyn.

To Eliza Fanshawe all this seemed highly unreasonable. Her income of £15,000 a year would amply provide for all the gentlemen if only Mr. Fanshawe continued the admirable system of domestic economy to which she had trained him from youth, and which had given scope, so far, to pay the minor poet's debts and to take the don for an occasional trip to France. She was tired of the old-fashioned phraseology in which both her lovers asserted crude male claims to exclusive possession fortified by no economic sanction. Her home was comfortable, and she was honestly grateful to Mr. Fanshawe for long years of services rendered. She telephoned wirelessly to Mr. Fanshawe, who in five minutes aeroplaned neatly on to the roof of the building and came down in the lift. Waving him to a chair she explained the situation. "I am sure," she concluded, "that you will co-operate with me to get rid of these blackmailers. Into my relations with them you need not inquire. You have a charming house, social circle, and family, together with the use of several aeroplanes, waterplanes, and other modern conveniences. You can of course get a divorce but I shall only allow you alimony with the well-known condition '*Dum castus et solus vixerit*,' and you *know* you won't like that. You are too *passé* now to pick up anyone else with my earning power or chance of being in the Cabinet with all the opportunities of successful investment which that position confers. You can do what you like. The female committee of the Bar Council would undoubtedly sympathise with me, and most of your men friends would think you a fool. Just think it over, and consider especially how the children would miss you for the large part of the year when they would be under my roof."

Mr. Fanshawe sobbed for five minutes without stopping. He gurgled the usual exclamations about deception, ingratitude, and infidelity. Eliza let him have his cry out and then tried to soothe him. She reminded him of the temptations incidental to long spells of brainwork unrelieved by leisure or amusement. . . . "Better this," she said, "than that I should ruin your happiness by gambling or drugs in which other brainworkers seek relief when they want diversion." "Let me go," Mr. Fanshawe exclaimed, and rose to call his aeroplane. "I will do all I can to forget the past—but you must never see those HORRID men again." And as he disappeared Eliza fell back into her chair and heaved a sigh of relief, inwardly cursing the antiquated prejudices of the other sex which she had to appease in order to avoid the temporary disorganisation of her home.

E. S. P. HAYNES.