

ART. VI.—THOUGHTS ON SOME SOCIAL QUESTIONS,  
PAST AND PRESENT.—II.

IT cannot be denied by any impartial observer that the general progress of affairs (especially in the material and scientific world) has been enormous during the last century, or at least during our late Queen's reign; but, at the same time, I am certain it is unwise and wrong to endeavour to make out that all matters are improved and all social plans and movements are necessarily a gain. One of my chief and long-cherished contentions is with regard to the treatment and training of children, and added years have only confirmed my former convictions. The results of these changes cannot be known to the generation now living, but I venture to affirm that we can in some measure anticipate them. "Hot-house growth" and the forcing of plants is hardly considered to be conducive to long life and protracted vigour, and I believe the same truths apply to the animal as well as the vegetable world. A natural and gradual growth, not always in heat or sunshine, is required for healthy development, and can anyone say that this is now the general or prevailing treatment of children?

Precocity is rather the system which is encouraged by every means of excitement, whether of body or mind; life spent mainly with their elders, instead of in the quiet and shade of the nursery (a term and a locality now nearly obsolete), where they were left mainly to their own resources and amusements. Children now share in the conversation as well as the meals and the food of adults—a practice which, as doctors have assured us, is most injurious to their health and development, and also to their moral qualities, by indulging habits of greediness and selfishness and the liberty of choice and selection at an age when none should be allowed. To those who have been accustomed to the simpler and more natural customs of former days and the habits of obedience universally inculcated, it is a matter of astonishment to witness present plans and the behaviour which they encourage. I could give many instances of this growth of self-will and disobedience in children, now so almost universal that we may consider the command is reversed, and now stands as "Parents, obey your children." It is impossible to believe that the vigorous old age enjoyed by many of my contemporaries can be attained by those who are now living lives of excitement, with late hours and varied amusements, for we cannot expect that life can thus be used up at both ends with impunity. Again, the recent development of the employment of children as

“charitable agents” is surely another novelty of the present time which may bring forth undesirable and unexpected results.

When I look back upon my past life of simple enjoyment, without “forcing” either of mind or body, I give thanks that my early days were spent at the beginning, instead of the end, of the century. When we hear so much on all sides of the marvellous growth of sanitary and medical science, and especially of hygiene, my satisfaction is greatly lessened when I see the methods which directly counteract its beneficial influence.

Books on these subjects were not known in my early days, but I venture to think that mothers had, and exercised, a larger amount of common-sense and enforced a more implicit obedience than they do now, with all the help that they receive. A Bishop says in his recent charge: “Still more serious is the almost universally confessed weakening of parental authority, and consequent loss of home life and discipline. . . . The training-ground of character is the home.” One result seems to be that simple “treats” are almost unknown to children of the present day, their life being one succession of excitements and gaieties, even including weddings, fancy balls, and all their attendant circumstances of gay and elaborate toilets and late hours. Can we wonder that they become little men and women before their time? If these methods grow and spread, Keble’s beautiful lines on childhood will no longer be true, but refer only to a past age:

“The heart of childhood is all mirth:  
We frolic to and fro,  
As free and blithe as if on earth  
Were no such thing as woe.”

I may name here one modern feature often set forth in children’s books, especially on the temperance subject—I mean the mischievous one of enlarging on the wickedness of drunken parents, and holding them up to condemnation before the eyes of children.<sup>1</sup>

Then, again, what do we at present know of the results of the excessive increase of all athletic pursuits, especially among girls? Bicycling, for instance, even for children, has become so common that the effects may well be looked for with anxiety. That it may help some to health and strength

<sup>1</sup> I cannot refrain from quoting a passage from a book of great interest, “Social Transformations of the Victorian Age,” by Escott, which, though rather too *couleur de rose* on all matters, expresses the exact truth when he speaks of “little men and women, whose only childhood will be reached in their dotage.”

is possible, but for all, or the many, its results may be doubted, and, indeed, I have heard that this opinion is maintained by some doctors. It seems to me strange that on so many of these important matters the opinion of doctors is not given or asked till perhaps it is too late, and mischief done which cannot be cured. I am often tempted to ask if the German (and I believe also the Chinese) is not the better and wiser method than ours, the medical adviser visiting and knowing his patients in health as well as in sickness, and thus acquiring a correct knowledge of their condition, and probably saving them from foreseen dangers which may be averted; "too late" must often be the result of our present system, but I suppose the preservation of health is hardly considered to be the province of our doctors—only its restoration, when that is possible.

I may add here two more matters, though in the literary rather than the social world, which we can hardly think have improved since the days when I used to read novels and witnessed plays. The enormous increase in the former class of books over those known and read fifty years ago cannot but strike those who read the almost weekly or daily reviews in the *Times* and other papers, and it is to be feared that they form the larger part of the reading of the young of the present day, and what can be the result? In one column forty "recent novels" are often announced!<sup>1</sup> But even the *Times* says: "Sated with home fiction, good, bad, and indifferent." I will cite two opinions recently given by eminent authorities. Canon Gore says: "I believe that the current theatre is constantly representing vice and vicious habits for no high ends of art, for no high ends of combating evil, simply as an ordinary matter which we recognise and accept." In an article on "Modern Plays" the *Guardian* says: "Society surely is beginning to find out that the plan of going indiscriminately to all plays, with a view to elevating the drama, has been tried and has failed. It will be a wholesome reproach to the virtuous public if, after all, it is the actors and actresses who make the first practical effort to exercise that *moral* censorship of the stage, which the official censor may be said to have disclaimed, if he really confines himself to the maintenance of a mere material propriety." Then, again, can we say that with increased standards of education there is any sign of improvement in manners, which are certainly not taught in schools now, with or without the extra fee? No one who sees and hears children, and even older lads, in the streets at the present time can believe

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<sup>1</sup> 1,513 were published in 1901.

in any such improvement either in behaviour or language. With regard to language or speech, we surely cannot fail to notice the increased use of slang amongst the upper classes, and especially young women and girls, such as was hardly heard in former days from our brothers. One instance may be named—the word “awfully” coming into every sentence, however inappropriate.

As regards facts chiefly relating to the Church, but, of course, connected with education, I have just read the following statements: “The confirmation-lists show a marked decrease since 1896, a slight decrease of the members of communicants’ classes, a perceptible diminution in the attendance at Sunday-schools and Bible-classes, in the number of Sunday-school teachers, and in the temperance branch”; and it is added: “It is impossible not to feel some anxiety.”

And the subject of the sad increase of smoking in boys and lads—and may I not add women also?—I must name as one of the matters in which we have not improved. It is indeed sad, both from a physical and moral point of view, and why is it never spoken of in schools, week-day or Sunday? When I meet one of ten years old or less with a cigarette in his mouth, I stop him to ask if he has ever thought what he will spend in this way by the time he is sixty—enough, I tell him, to provide a pension for his old age. And I must say I find my remonstrance civilly received. But, again, why do not the parents interfere in a matter like this? For reasons of physical development, the German Emperor forbids smoking under a certain age, all boys being trained for the army.

It is a modern innovation of which I can remember the beginning, even amongst *men* of the upper classes.

If I have seemed to be too fault-finding with regard to the present as compared with the past, I should like to give my cordial sanction to the improved methods of dealing with the poor now more generally adopted, partly through the influence of “Charity Organization” principles, which are, in fact, an extension of the old “Mendicity Society’s” plans, so long successfully carried out. The development of “settlements” and “homes” for men and women workers is one of the excellent results of the present day, now multiplying in all parts of London and the suburbs, and this is the more interesting to me because I felt the want of some such plans long years ago, before they were thought of as practicable.

It was in the “fifties” that I wrote on the subjects of “Parish Homes” and “Unmarried Daughters” (now coming again into warm discussion) as meeting the two wants acknowledged by all. Miss Martineau had written (I think in the

*Daily News*) on "Associated Homes for Women" who lead lonely and unhappy lives in solitary lodgings, and I wrote also to suggest the *work* that might be found for them in the various spheres of philanthropy. Thus, more than forty years ago were plans floating in the air which are now carried out in numerous localities with assured success as "settlements" and "homes" of happy and busy workers, who are diffusing light and comfort throughout their different spheres.

On the subject of "Mothers' Meetings," of which I remember the beginning,<sup>1</sup> I cannot help expressing my high opinion of their usefulness, especially in regard to the reading at them. After nearly twenty years have elapsed since I left the parish where I held them, I continue to receive testimony as to the pleasure those meetings, held in my own house, gave. The mission woman says: "It was very nice the other day to hear one of our 'old mothers' who used to come there regularly say, 'I could always reckon upon one hour's peace and rest in the week; it seemed like being shut in from the troubles of the world.'" Another spoke of the reading, and said she had never forgotten "A Noble Life," though twenty years had passed since she listened to it. I found Miss Yonge's, Miss Sewell's books, and even some of Tennyson's poems, were highly appreciated by these working women, and I should like to express my conviction that it is a great mistake to read to these women childish, or even wholly religious, books, our object being to raise them to a higher level, not to descend to their lower one. Readings and lectures by the National Health Society are also most important, in view of the enormous mortality amongst children owing to the total ignorance of feeding and all other sanitary measures in the mothers. Such teaching is keenly appreciated, and how far better would prevention be than cure in these matters!

Though I have not considered that politics enter into the scope of these thoughts, I must name one object which I suppose may be said to come under this head, though I am inclined to connect it more distinctly with social work and reform—I allude to the bestowal of the Parliamentary franchise on women, which has from the first claimed my warm support. To suppose that women *can* be excluded from politics at the present day is impossible, for when they are universally employed as canvassers and promoters of the objects of both parties, who can consider it desirable that they should be? When "Primrose Leagues" and "Liberal

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<sup>1</sup> I believe I am correct in saying that the first of these was held by my sister, who worked among the poor of Claremarket as long as sixty years ago, and a "penny bank" was started at the same time.

Federations" are to be seen and heard on every side, why are women to be debarred from the privilege of helping to obtain the results they are asked to strive for, and when the illiterate, who cannot even sign their names, are admitted to the privilege? If women are not to "meddle with politics," as has been hitherto said, then let them abstain altogether from doing so; but surely it is most inconsistent to proclaim and preach this abstention and yet employ them in the mere drudgery part of it, as is now the case. I need hardly point out the numerous social questions which have to be decided by the House of Commons seriously affecting women as well as men, and which they would help to solve in a right and just spirit; the first breach in the wall of prejudice having been made by their admission to vote in municipal matters, and for some public Boards, makes us confident that in time, whether short or long, this too will be granted, and thus almost the last of "Women's Disabilities" be done away with. That the reversal of the permission for women to sit on Vestries has been effected with regard to the new Borough Councils is indeed a lamentable and retrograde step, which we hope and believe cannot long be maintained. At the end of the year 1900 I had the satisfaction of holding a few meetings at my house with some ladies (amongst whom was the former Vestry-woman of five years' standing in Kensington, who had done excellent work), to endeavour to bring the matter before the present candidates and voters as one desirable for immediate consideration in Parliament, our action being taken in conjunction with the Women's Local Government Society, which does good work in all these questions. The only other remark that I wish to make verging on politics is, as I believe, my increasing dislike of "party spirit," as seen so strikingly in our present Parliaments, impeding so much good work, and which must make us objects of derision, or worse, to other countries, especially to those which do not adopt our system of Government. It makes one long for the time when none should be "for a party," but all "for the State," leaving, of course, room for every difference of opinion as to measures and methods, but avoiding the terrible temptation to recriminate and abuse those who differ for the object of party alone, even though all may have the same objects at heart. I cease to wonder that Russian and other statesmen glory over their immunity from the scenes they read of in our Parliaments.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The country understands quite well that it is the want of earnestness in the House about everything except the party game which makes useful work nearly impossible. It is not the closure, but the unlimited toleration of frivolity—of foolishness, of empty verbosity, and of wilful

The intrusion of politics into all elections at the present time, whether of municipal, School Boards, or Guardian work, is, to my mind, one of the most regrettable signs of the times.

While naming the desirability of women's suffrage as the greater means of extending their influence in social work, I should like to add some of the posts which they are well qualified to fill in largely increased numbers at the present time. First in the list must come that of inspectors of work-houses—an appointment—which, strange to say, though begun twenty-five years ago (and which lapsed through the sad death of the first woman appointed, Mrs. Nassau Senior, after her inspection of Poor Law schools), has only been renewed recently by one for the Metropolitan District alone, although, as far as our knowledge goes, that needs her services far less than the country districts. I need not name all the reasons why women are pre-eminently qualified to inspect these institutions, now almost wholly occupied by the sick, the aged, and children, as it must be obvious to the common-sense of all that the plan is desirable, and even necessary. But I wish to extend the list of institutions far beyond these of the Poor Law; in prisons and lunatic asylums it may be said to be an urgent need for the women's departments, where, it is well known, the presence of men is not desirable. May I add that, as the present excellent inspectors of workhouses are not medical men (with the exception of two for all England), it is hardly suitable for them to be called upon to examine into the state of the sick, both as regards their personal condition and the care bestowed upon them by the nurses; and, besides these duties, there is the domestic economy of all these large institutions, which will surely be acknowledged by all to be "women's work."

Women are now being called for to act as relieving officers, for which duties they are admirably qualified as visitors to the homes of the poor, and by patient investigations of their condition; and it is most desirable that their work should be extended in this direction, as well as for inspectors of factories and for sanitary work, and on the new Boards of Education. The greatest need of all may perhaps be said to be that of our hospitals (including those for incurables and children), where efforts have been made during many years to obtain the admission of women, as members of the board of management, in the interests of both patients and nurses, who are represented at present by the matron alone to the managers or governors.

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obstruction—that has lowered, and is steadily lowering, the House in the eyes of the nation."—*Times*, July 23, 1901.

Another reform in social work which I have desired to promote is the extended employment of women as matrons at police-stations, to which women and girls of all ages are taken and placed in cells, chiefly at night, and often in a state of intoxication. We desire to see a resident matron in all such stations, as common-sense and decency demand, instead of being, as at present, in many places fetched at the discretion of the police. When this matter was brought before Parliament the reform was pronounced to be "too costly," but we hope and believe that some good has been done.

After twenty-five years of good work done by women on Boards of Guardians (now numbering one thousand), I am confident as to similar results in other spheres, and can only express surprise at the delay in bringing about this change.

Another matter for which I have been working during twenty-five years has been the discouragement of the method of election by voting in charitable institutions, a system which dies hard, but, at any rate, is now limited to old institutions, and which no new undertakings would dare to start with. I earnestly wish the society which does this good, patient work more speedy success than it has hitherto obtained. At a recent meeting the Duke of York said: "The Royal Albert Orphan Asylum was founded to provide an institute where no canvassing was required, and where cases are considered on their actual merits, and not on the activity and personal influence of the candidate's friend. I am sure that this arrangement must commend itself to everyone."<sup>1</sup>

Another object for which I have striven for many years, but which, alas! is still unpopular, is to show the unsuitability of all such methods as bazaars for objects of charity, to which its spirit is wholly opposed, frivolity and amusement of all kinds being thought necessary to draw out the generosity of the unwilling givers. Having written tracts on this subject many years ago, I still distribute them; but, with the sanction and patronage still granted by the highest classes, there is little hope at present that much impression will be made, though I am thankful to know that many among the clergy are cordially with me in this matter. Having alluded to this subject in connection with charity, or, as it might more appropriately be called, the collection of funds, I cannot resist saying a few more words upon it, my convictions having remained un-

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<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to give details in support of these opinions, but two facts may be named. At a recent election 30 candidates were chosen out of 149 applicants; in another, for pensions for the blind, 50 from 263 were successful; while the widow of a clergyman stood at six half-yearly elections, polling only 153 votes. Her name was consequently struck out, notwithstanding that each effort had cost her £5 for canvassing.



changed for many years. I once had the privilege of writing an article upon it in *Murray's Magazine*, and a short paper contributed to the *Charity Organization Society's Review* was reprinted nearly twenty years ago, and has been largely circulated. Notwithstanding this, the plan, or system, continues not only to be carried on, but to grow and spread, England being the only country, I have reason to believe, where it prevails. I am at a loss to know why, in a wealthy and pre-eminently charitable community, it should be so general and so fashionable; for even those who carry it out speak of the trouble it entails, with a too frequent failure of results, the expenses sometimes absorbing all, or nearly all, the receipts.

That it falls in with the present love of excitement and amusement is probably the cause of its popularity, but that a certain amount of public opinion has been raised against it is shown by the almost entire abandonment of the term "bazaar," that of "sale of work" being substituted for it, in the hope that it will be supposed the articles are supplied by those who can give their time, instead of money, to the cause. Some of the most objectionable features, such as raffles and other inducements connected with the gambling spirit, have been in some measure, but not wholly, given up. Still, the one objection underlying all such methods is the false principle of obtaining an equivalent for what is given, which strikes at the root and idea of charity, the very essence of which is to receive nothing in return, whereas excitements of amusement, beside the actual goods purchased, are the inducements held out.

There is one other matter connected with these shows which is a puzzle to me, and I fail to find an explanation of it. Palmistry, or fortune-telling, is now common, and apparently a popular addition; but what distinction is there between these performances of fashionable ladies and those of other persons who are fined or sent to prison for doing the same thing?<sup>1</sup>

Since this was written I have been told of another extraordinary development in this direction, which it seems hardly credible should be seriously carried out, as I am assured it is: I allude to the practice of consulting crystals, as, I suppose, fortune-tellers, in the same way as hands are considered such. Can it be possible that in this twentieth century we are returning to the witchcraft of our heathen forefathers?

There are, I imagine, few persons who have had the oppor-

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<sup>1</sup> I may mention here that I welcome the publication of a recent little volume of sermons on "The Power of the Spirit of God" (Elliot Stock), by a Yorkshire clergyman, which ably sets forth the objections to these so-called "charitable" methods now being almost universally adopted.

tunities I had in seeing and reading upwards of one hundred letters and appeals—a mere tithe of what had been received—sent to a well-known firm, asking for gifts of their manufacture for these sales, the bribe being in many instances an advertisement of the same goods. The letters were from all churches and denominations, Roman Catholic and Protestant, and from high and low, and hardly ever have I felt such indignation and contempt as in their perusal. Truly may it be called the degradation of charity, and it would have helped to convince many who now condone or advocate the practice. It is only of late years that the clergy have condescended to join the ranks of such advocates of ends justifying all means, and sad it is to see how heartily many now favour such plans for building churches and similar objects. Perhaps the climax of all such unbecoming—may I not say shocking?—efforts was the recent circulation of hand-bills and posters, placarded throughout the parish, announcing a “screaming farce,” to be performed by amateurs, members of the congregation, for the completion of a grand new church, in which reverence was to be inculcated as the first of virtues! An almost equally unbecoming announcement has recently been made of “a successful little entertainment,” consisting of music and dancing, having been given for a home, or hospital, “for the dying.” With these crowning and striking facts I will leave the subject.

LOUISA TWINING.

*(To be continued.)*

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ART. VII.—“THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.”<sup>1</sup>

THIS volume forms part of that “History of the English Church” which has been planned and edited by the Dean of Winchester and Mr. Hart. Four volumes are out, and three are as yet unpublished. It is not easy to divide such a series into volumes, because the necessities of size and uniformity do not always correspond to the realities of history and facts. The first volume contains the story of our Church from its foundation to the Norman Conquest—that is, a period of about five hundred years. The next volume takes us from the Conquest till the end of the thirteenth century—that is, about two hundred and thirty years. The third volume displays the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

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<sup>1</sup> “The English Church in the Sixteenth Century, from the Accession of Henry VIII. to the Death of Mary.” By James Gairdner.