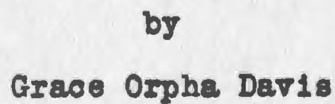
Bernard Shaw's

Interpretation of Women.

A thesis submitted to the faculty
of the Graduate School of the
University of Minnesota



by

Grace Orpha Davis

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

June 1913.

Table of Contents.

I. Introduction.

II. Bernard Shaw as a Disciple of Freedom.

III. Love and Marriage.

IV. The Life-Force.

V. The Women of the Plays.

VI. Conclusion.

JUL 24 1913 B70

132770

-BIBLIOGRAPHY-

Balfour, Edith: "Shaw and Super-Shaw." Nation, Vol.46.

Barnicoat, Constance: "Counterfeit Presentation of Women"; Fortnightly Review, Vol. 85; Mr. '06.

Beerbohm, Max: Saturday Review, Vols. 85, 87, 89.

Chesterton, Gilbert K.: "George Bernard Shaw"; Washington, New York, 1909.

Dell, Floyd: "Women as World-builders", Chicago, 1913.

Ellis, Havelock: "The New Spirit", London, 1890.
"Social Hygiene", New York, 1912.

Filon, Augustin: "Bernard Shaw et Son Theatre"; Revue des Deux Mondes, Vol. 192.

Gerrard, J.: "Marriage and George Bernard Shaw": Catholic World, Vol. 94; Jan. '12.

Hale, Edward Everett, Jr.: "Dramatists of To-day", 102-125; New York, 1911.

Hamon, Augustin: "Le Molière du Vingtième Siècle: Bernard Shaw"; Paris, 1913.

Henderson, Archibald: "George Bernard Shaw: His Life and Works"; Cincinnati, 1911.

Houghton, Bernard: "Immorality and the Marriage Laws": Westminister Review, Vol. 168.

Huneker, James: Essay on Shaw in "Iconoclasts"; New York, 1905.
"Bernard Shaw and Woman"; Harpers' Bazar, June 1905.

Jackson, Holbrook: "Bernard Shaw"; London and Philadelphia, 1907.

Key, Ellen: "The Century of the Child"; London and New York, 1909.

Rogers, Prof. A. K.: "Mr. Bernard Shaw's Philosophy"; Hibbert Journal, Vol. 8; July '10.

Saleeby, C. G.: "Parenthood and Race-Culture"; New York, 1909.

Scott, Temple: "Shaw the Realizer of Ideals": Forum Vol. 45; Mr. '11.

Shaw, George Bernard: Plays; New York (Brentano):
Arms and the Man.
Candida.
Caesar and Cleopatra.
Captain Brassbound's Conversion.
Dark Lady of the Sonnets, The: Red Book Magazine, 1912.

Shaw, George Bernard: Plays (cont.).
Devils Disciple, The.
Doctor's Dilemma, The.
Fanny's First Play (Excerpts) Harpers' Weekly; April, 1913.
Getting Married.
How He Lied to Her Husband.
John Bull's Other Island.
Man and Superman.
Man of Destiny, The
Major Barbara.
Mrs. Warren's Profession.
Overruled.
Philanderer, The
Press-Cuttings.
Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet, The
You Never Can Tell.
Widowers' Houses.

Shaw, George Bernard: Prefaces.
Better than Shakespear?
Epistle Dedicatory.
First Aid to Critics.
Mainly About Myself.
On Censorship.
On Diabolonian Ethics.
On Doctors.
On Marriage.
"Revolutionist's Handbook, The"
To Volume II, "Pleasant Plays".
To "Three Plays by Brieux".
Why For Puritans?

Shaw George Bernard: "The Quintessence of Ibsenism".

INTRODUCTION.

The keynote of the present age is the social good. The cry of individual rights which penetrated the thought and writing of the last century is fast giving way to the call for social betterment. The individual has rights if these correspond and do not interfere with the rights of those around him; he has further duties to society which are being emphasized more and more.

But there is another note, that of the age which is just beginning to dawn. For a long time it has been sounding, the inevitable result of the exalting of the individual, and curiously blended with the chords of social unrest: the keynote of the future is the emancipation of woman. This seems like an old and hackneyed phrase but there is a wealth of meaning in it that many women are only now waking up to, and that millions have not grasped at all. It took longer for woman to realize that she might have a complete

individuality of her own; her life and training had always emphasized her duty to man and to man's children. The Christian philosophy, received everywhere as the expression of a Divine command, included woman in its brief scheme of things only as a necessary evil, and assigned her a definite rôle as a subject under her lord. Witness a few of Paul's words to the early church: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, because of fornication let each man have his own wife, *** yet I would that all men were even as I myself;"[1] "*** the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man;***. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man."[2] "Let the woman keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law."[3]

No one had ever assumed that woman was capable or desirous of any other life than the one planned for her by her "reasoning" mate. There are still many good

1- I Cor. 7:1, 2, 7.
2- I Cor. 11:3, 8, 9.
3- I Cor. 14:3,4.

people who reiterate with smug conviction: "Woman's sphere is the Home!" But they say it without realizing what they are saying, and because it corresponds with their selfish desires. It may be that woman's sphere is the home; it is my belief that the woman of the future will find her great glory as a mother and an educator. But she has a right to realize it for herself and not to be set down arbitrarily as in a doll's house; she has a duty to free herself from the shackles of convention and forced inferiority, to expand into the larger strength which Nature meant her to have. Whether her work will be in the field of labor or politics or the bearing and rearing of children in the home, wherever it is, her toil will be free and honored,- she will have with man the open sky for her domain. If the home be the world she chooses for her work, it will be a far different place from her so-called "sphere" to-day. She will bring into it a life worthy to give her children, and, in the words which Ellis puts into the mouths of the German women of to-day, she will "lay down the laws of her world."

If we look a very little farther into the future we shall see that in the time to come, not the individual, nor even society, will be closest to man's heart; the race will be all-important. The new science of Eugenics, which tries all institutions and theories by the touchstone of the welfare of the race, is the science of the future. Havelock Ellis has said: "The question of eugenics is to a great extent one with the woman question."[1] Everywhere men and women of character and vision are voicing the belief that the future of the race is in the hands of the women. With this realization, modern science has come to the front with the discovery that woman is inferior, in her weak body and in her stunted mind, poor in creative power, imagination and critical capacity.[2] Modern sociology replies with the knowledge that woman began all the useful arts, and evolved the ideas of beauty and morality; and that above all she has been the conservator of the human race, and holds within her wonderful possibilities for its future development. As long ago

1- Havelock Ellis, "Social Hygiene" - Introduction.
2- Floyd Dell, "Women as World-builders" Chap. I.

as 1890,[1] Havelock Ellis, the great authority on the development and manifestations of sex, said these startling words: "The rise of woman *** to supreme power in the near future is certain. Whether one looks at it with hope or despair, one has to recognize it. For my own part I find it an unfailing source of hope." He justifies this hope by the belief that the world cannot advance much farther with the aid of masculine genius alone.

To those who fear the invasion of woman into various departments of work as they would an influx of barbarians, Ellis replies that women will bring a reinvigoration to our economic and national life as complete as any brought by invading hordes of barbarians to an effete and degenerate civilization, not so much poetic genius as a genius for practical social organization. He concludes: "Our most strenuous efforts will be needed to see to it that women gain the wider experience of life, the larger education in the full sense of the word, the entire freedom of development, without which their

1- Havelock Ellis: The New Spirit (Essays on Heine, Tolstoi, Ibsen, etc.)- Introduction.

vast power of interference in social organization might have disastrous as well as happy results."

Bernard Shaw as a Disciple
Of Freedom.

At a time when woman's condition and future are being increasingly recognized as of the utmost value to the race it is not surprising that a man of the keen vision and strong "social passion" of George Bernard Shaw, should be, among scores of great minds, a contributor to the solution of her problems. Indeed, this is one of the most important phases, one might almost say the chief significance, of his work. As with all human nature, he sees with piercing insight the weakness of woman and some of the causes of this weakness in the institutions and prejudices of the day. In his plays he reveals these needs and gives his ideas concerning woman, love, and marriage,- yet not his, he assures us, but only the thought of his day. It is certainly part of the thought of his day;

his part is to point out the wrongs, and this he does with such enthusiasm and earnestness that he is often misunderstood. Shaw is unique in the way he portrays women; they are women the like of which were never seen before in literature. To appreciate his interpretation it is necessary to know his ideas of life and of the mission of literature.

It is impossible to read a play of Bernard Shaw without seeing at once that he looks at life in an unusual and very modern way. His is not a new romance based on the old notions of conduct and feeling; it is rather that view of life which strips away the veils of convention and hypocrisy and looks squarely at the reality. It seeks to analyze and determine the value of these realities not under their given names of love, duty, modesty, and morality, but as they really are, and so prepare to build a new morality which shall have sincerity as its foundation-stone, and facts and unbiased truth as its pillars and beams. Augustin Filon has said of Shaw: "All his theatre is only a campaign against our poor old

institutions, and against the principles on which they repose, both good and bad; against marriage, the family, individual property, against morality and even against the idea of duty."[1] If this is true, Shaw is indeed a public sinner, an enemy to truth and purity, and a perverter of the young.

But this critic is one of those very souls who has bowed low to the old conventions and failed to see that they no longer embody true morality; therefore his words are truer even than he knows. Shaw does transgress all the "virtues", but only because they are no longer what their names signify, but rather shields for crime and hindrances to the development of true virtue. As Temple Scott says, many of the "virtues" prevent human happiness, interfere with one's freedom to assert his best self, and really asphyxiate all the finer emotions; as such they are not virtues but damnable vices. Life, freedom, and happiness do not follow in the wake of present institutions and morality, but misery, sorrow,

1- Augustin Filon: "Bernard Shaw et son Theatre" in "Revue des Deux Mondes", Vol. 192.

poverty, disease and death.[1] Shaw says practically the same thing in his preface to the Pleasant Plays: "I can no longer be satisfied with fictitious morals and fictitious good conduct, shedding fictitious glory on overcrowding, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, infant mortality, and all the other commonplaces of civilization which drive men to the theatre to make foolish pretences that these things are progress, science, morals, religion, patriotism, imperial supremacy, national greatness and all the other names the newspapers call them."

It is not the idea alone but the way the idea works out in practice that is important to the modern mind. Science regards the reality alone, not the ideal far removed from truth, as a legitimate basis for theory. It takes far more courage and optimism to be hopeful about human nature after one has penetrated clear-sightedly into its petty shams and pretences, but it is the only optimism which an honest mind can countenance. Moreover, the realities may be unpleasant to a romantic mind, but to the

1- Temple Scott: "Shaw the Realizer of Ideals" in Forum Vol. 45.

social scientist they are sacred and significant because they are true. Shaw's idealism is firmer and higher, in the few glimpses of it which he gives us unconsciously, because it reaches down deeper. He has stated his position in his usual clear and forceful way in the preface to "Three Plays for Puritans": "I do not see moral chaos and anarchy as an alternative to romantic convention; and I am not going to pretend I do to please less clear-sighted people who are convinced that the world is only held together by the force of unanimous, strenuous, eloquent, trumpet-tongued lying. To me the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imagination by our half-satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history."

The search for truth, then, is behind all the art of this dramatist; but even truth for its own sake is too narrow an aim for his attempt to

dissect human motives and institutions. It is because George Bernard Shaw has a great passion for the welfare of his brother-man and sister-woman that his anger is poured out upon the things which keep them from the realization of that divine self which, with an idealism surpassing that of the angels, he sees in every human creature. Sometimes he goes too far, often he is not logical and judicial, or even trying to be, many times he ignores the other side of his case, and fails to reason things out to their logical conclusion; but all these are faults of his earnestness and not of his motives. He has certain ideas which he knows are true and he is earnestly trying to hammer them home. Shaw has not formulated a perfect scheme of things; he is only helping to prepare the way for it, in line with many others whose genius extends in different directions where his is lacking. His is the gift of "normal" vision, where most other people's vision is abnormal.[1] He is sincerely conscious of this

1- Shaw: "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant", Vol.I, Preface.

gift and seriously convinced that it is his mission to make people see and think clearly as the first requisite of individual and social betterment. He has caught a glimpse of the great world-plan, and has taken his place with joy as the one who contemplates and understands life.

Shaw sees that much of the sin of the world is blind and stupid, a mere waste of energy, and that conventional ethics causes much of the confusion. There is discord in our lives between what we want and what we think we ought to want.[1] We forget that the idols are man-made, and we think they must be eternally right and our own instincts wrong. So we put down our desires, and kneel to the idol, thinking that we are acting morally.

The gravest evil is that human nature is too strong to be so subdued, and so "we find excuses for doing what we want not by confessing our desire but by cloaking it in the garb of duty."[2] we even deceive ourselves into thinking that we are doing

1- Professor A. K. Rogers: "Mr. Bernard Shaw's Philosophy" in Hibbert Journal. Vol. VIII.
2- Ibid.

things we want to do from a high and noble principle.[1] And this is a double hypocrisy. Why not be strong and calm enough, says Shaw in effect, to see your real ideals, to stand off and look at yourself in all your selfishness and conceit; after you have taken the measure of your own strength, then and then only will your vision be clear enough to see the real problems and difficulties to be faced and you will be able to face them without having your "interest tickled through conventional or personal emotional appeals.[2]

Romance is only another name, more highly colored with emotion, for the conventions with which we deceive ourselves. Shaw says that we bait our energy with emotion because we are too lazy and cowardly to think and work without it. We think we are enthusiastic when we are only excited, and we exalt and remember and long for the emotion, regardless of its practical value. I do not think he would have us abandon our feelings entirely, as some of his

1- See the part concerning British "patriotism" in the Man of Destiny; "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant". Vol. II.
2- Rogers.

characters seem to do, but rather cease to worship them; "he detests sentimentality and gush and so he says more than he intends."[1] He does not emphasize the emotional side of life because he feels it is already emphasized out of all proportion and a disproportional emphasis on intellectual activity is necessary to bring about a harmony of view.[2]

Shaw especially attacks the romanticism which clings about the relations between the sexes, and the attitude toward woman. He would have us look at love as a natural human fact, realizing that it is not the whole of life. Literature is disposed to flatter us into a highly inflated conception of our own desires and our relations with one another, and this will lead us into all kinds of troubles. In literature, ideals of life cast

1- Ibid.
2- See Preface to Three Plays for Puritans, p.20: "The pleasures of the senses I can sympathize with and share; but the substitution of sensuous ecstasy for intellectual activity and honesty is the very devil."

their shadows before.[1] If these are valuable, humanity improves accordingly, but, as Shaw believes for all art, "a persistent misrepresentation of humanity in literature gets finally accepted and acted upon".[2] Therefore he made up his mind to have no characters in his drama to harmonize with the ideals of romance, but true representations of human nature as he saw it. To those who find them "unpleasant", he replies: "No doubt all plays which deal sincerely with human nature must wound the

1- Havelock Ellis in "Social Hygiene" has called attention to the change in the literary ideal of woman from the women in David Copperfield to the women of Meredith.

2- In the Preface to the "Three Plays for Puritans" p. 18, Shaw goes on to say: "If the conventions of romance are only insisted on long enough and uniformly enough, *** these conventions will become the laws of personal honor. Jealousy, which is either an egotistical meanness or a specific mania, will become obligatory; and ruin, ostracism, breaking up of homes, duelling, murder, suicide and infanticide will be produced (often have been produced, in fact) by incidents which, if left to the operation of natural and right feeling, would produce nothing worse than an hour's soon forgotten fuss", etc.

monstrous conceit which it is the business of romance to flatter."[1]

This romance has been the chief hindrance to the development of woman, and it is only now that she is becoming emancipated from its silken bonds. The leaders of the woman-movement are rejoicing in the knowledge that the attitude toward woman is becoming steadily unromantic. But it seems a sacrilege to many that the old idealization of woman is vanishing. Let us consider for a moment what it implied. In the mediaeval tradition woman was either above or below man, never on the same plane with him. She was a being outside his sphere, to be worshipped when she satisfied his demands for a virtue greater than he could attain, and to be cursed when she fell from her high pedestal into the dust. This made the "double standard" possible. If she had been his equal such extremes of view could never have existed. Moreover this ideal of chivalry implied weakness on the part of the woman; her

1- Preface to Vol. I; p. XXIX.

beauty and helplessness were emphasized, in fact she was treated "as a cross between an angel and an idiot."[1] But as civilization has advanced, force has become less dominant, and conventional chivalry becomesan offer of services which it would be better for women to do for themselves and to which they are in no way entitled. Further, it was apt to be tinged with the assertion of power over woman rather than in her behalf. It degenerated into an empty convention implying contempt rather than respect, which could be turned to very unromantic uses.[2] It implies weakness in woman in a day when intelligence and skill are more important than muscular strength.

There can be no development of the woman in such a partnership, where she performs her work in the world by being a female creature. In a brief sketch of the work of various leading women, written by a man, the author informs us that his book (date 1913) is to be devoid of Romance.[3] He then proceeds to define romance as that attitude

1- Havelock Ellis: "Social Hygiene"; Introduction,p.58.
2- Ibid: Chapter: "Emancipation of Woman from the Ideal of Romantic Love.
3- Floyd Dell: "Women as World-Builders". Chap. I.

toward woman which accepts her sex as a miraculous justification for her existence, as a virtue in itself, in short, woman-worship. "That reverence for woman as virgin, or wife, or mother, irrespective of her capacity as friend, or leader, or servant- that is Romance." There is sound commonsense in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's bold statement that it is not enough for a woman to be a mother - "an oyster can be a mother-" a woman must also be a person, able to know and do.[1] There is no place in modern society for a woman who does not fill some useful place, who is a mere parasite. It is not a very "chivalrous" attitude, considering the many charming ladies who are parasites, but it gives women a right to win respect on their merits, without qualifications: it is "square".

It is this "ungallant" but eminently fair attitude which Shaw takes toward woman. Sincerity is, or should be, the foundation-stone of morality, sincerity with one's self and with others.

1- Ibid: Chapter II.

Shaw not only believes it is his duty to tell people the truth, but he thinks it is an insult to them to declare that it is kindness which shields them from the truth. He thinks too much of woman, he has too big a place for her in his scheme of things to deprive her of her right to the truth. He is ashamed for her of the mean and silly things which women do and will continue to do as long as male courtesy protects them from being told what they are. Shaw purposes to expose these very faults; and so he shows woman to herself in her true colors, in Blanche and Julia, and Judith and Raina, not without sympathy and comprehension of what has made her ugly, and stunted, and weak, and artificial. He wrote "Mrs. Warren's Profession" to show society the shameful economic conditions which force women to sell their affections to some man, whether in marriage or not. He is the firm champion of woman's economic independence, because, with Olive Schreimer, he sees in "honored and socially useful human toil *** a

savior of woman from the degradation of parasitism."[1] With Mrs. Gilman he is the enemy of that "base domesticity and degrading love" which makes "women's souls like dirty kitchens."[2] In speaking of the "unsocial" influence of middle-class family life upon the men, he says. "The women, who have not even the city to educate them, are much worse: they are positively unfit for civilized intercourse- graceless, ignorant, narrow-minded to a quite appalling degree." It is because the present marriage conditions bear so hardly upon the women that Shaw has tried his hammer on the present laws and ideals which make such oppression of women possible.

Shaw has also given us many admirable women and from these examples we can catch a glimpse of his ideal. Candida walks beside her husband, far stronger than he in practical sense and splendid realism, the very qualities which special students of the psychology of the sexes are discovering to be woman's genius. However little we may admire

1- Floyd Dell: Chapter IV.
2- Floyd Dell: Chapter II.

Ann or believe in the truth of this picture of predaceous womanhood, we must admire her belief in her own will, her power to know what she wants and "go out and grab it". Lady Cicely expresses the actual practical value in the struggle for existence of a sweet disposition and a tactful manner, a heart rightly tuned to human relations. Her conduct during the whole trial is an amusing example of the influence woman's hand will have in moulding formal institutions to bring out real truth and justice. All the women Shaw pictures mean something- if they are not true pictures of typical women in life, they are embodiments of characteristics, good or bad, or phases of his ideal . In his reaction from romance, Shaw tries to make reason control in all his treatment of woman, but at times he contradicts himself, as in the character of Lady Cicely, and half-admits, in "Man and Superman", that emotion cannot be entirely ruled by reason. He recognizes the subtle and overwhelming power of sex, but he prefers to treat

it as a fact of human history and without the romantic embellishments which we have been accustomed to associate with love between the sexes. This leads to queer and, to some, revolting pictures, as in the love scene between Valentine and Gloria.

Nevertheless Shaw's attitude is in the line, if not in the van, of modern thought. Ellis has said that the fast disappearance of the "unhealthy ideal of chivalry *** is matter for rejoicing", and that "wherever men and women stand in each other's presence the sexual instinct will always ensure an adequate ideal halo". But Shaw seems to disregard even this natural halo. His ideal of love must be considered in connection with his philosophy of marriage.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

Shaw's attitude toward marriage shows a quite natural mixture of the social and individual points of view. His attention has been forcibly called to the fact that marriage is not fulfilling its purpose as a social institution. It is failing to provide and train children to carry on the race; and since its great natural end is being lost, it is destroying the race by the evils it allows. The evils are social, but they are caused by the abuses that endanger individual morality and happiness.

Here, again, Shaw is putting his finger on the sore spot, anxious to have people see the wrongs as the first necessity to reform. In his preface to one of his first plays,[1] he says that modern marriage is to some "that worst of blundering abominations, an institution which society has outgrown but not modified, and which 'advanced' individuals are therefore forced to evade." Shaw

1- Vol. I; Preface, p. XXX.

believes in the sacred fact of man's ability to grow, to enlarge his institutions to suit his needs, rather than in the necessary eternal truth of any institution.

He is not afraid, therefore, to speak about the evils of marriage which cry for remedy, for he has recognized that "Decency is indecency's conspiracy of silence."[1] The cause of all the evils he finds in the binding restrictions which make it so hard for two people to become released from each other, once they have been joined, the worst form of this being the indissoluble marriage of the Catholic Church. These legal ties on liberty and property are solely on account of the children, and if there are no children why have mere slavery and allow people to buy a "certificate of respectability for personal indulgence!"[2] "Married people suffer more from intemperance than the libertines they stigmatize as monsters of vice."[3] They seem to think that marriage is absolved from all the laws

1- Shaw: "Revolutionist's Handbook".
2- Shaw: Preface to "Three Plays by Brieux".
3- Preface to "Getting Married."

of temperance and health, not realizing that law is as necessary to avoid tyranny and slavery in a community of two persons as of two million.[1] Many celibates do not marry because they hate to be supposed to live as marriage is ordinarily conceived. Two people may be very unhappy together, yet they are forced to stand it or risk publishing all their disagreement and endanger their reputations forever. Indeed, they may not be able to obtain release at all except for certain reasons, and some of the gravest offenses are not recognized as "reasons". The vile poison of social disease may enter the home, but that is not ground for separation, though the lives of future generations may pay the price. Indeed, marriage makes legal the outrage of forcing that disease upon another person. One or the other of the couple may refuse the duty of parenthood, yet that is not ground for divorce. And yet the world brands as immoral that person who dares utter a word against marriage, that ideal, sacred, holy in-

1- Preface to "Getting Married".

stitution. It no longer permits freedom and happiness, but binds his finer self with no escape except at a great price. Still, instead of asking what is wrong with the idol, human nature evades and disregards it and does what it wants to do surreptitiously, and so makes hypocrites and sneaks and humbugs of us all.[1] As Temple Scott says with grim sarcasm, we hang the marriage certificate up for an ornament where we can nod and approve of it, and then we fill our cities with prostitution.[2]

The cause of such misery and evil in marriage Shaw finds, as stated before, in the impossible restrictions imposed upon it. He believes that these have sprung from a false idea of sex. It is the most violently insane and transient passion, and the one least able to be retained permanently, and yet we take two people under its influence and "make them swear that they will continue in that excited, abnormal and exhausting condition until death do them part", and if they are false to this "holy vow"

1- Temple Scott: "Shaw the Realizer of Ideals", Forum, Vol. 45.
2 -Ibid.

they deserve no sympathy.[1] This means an entire misunderstanding of the nature of sex, an exalting and attenuating of it to include the whole of life, when it cannot possibly occupy more than a fraction of the time of any reasonable creature. When people say they are in love "all the time", says Shaw, a large share of what they call love is either kindness and affection, or appetite. It is simply impossible to remain on the summit of Mount Blanc very long, though it is joyous and wonderful to be able to attain these heights for a brief moment.

Shaw is out of patience with literature, especially drama, because it gives us a false conception of sex-love.[2] It tells us absolutely nothing about the passion itself, and yet makes it the motive for every action. Shaw created Dick Dudgeon to show us a man who was not to be turned aside for lust, (as his Puritan heart frankly calls love of another man's wife), and who could do a brave act from the laws of his own nature and not for love, just as many people

1- Preface to "Getting Married".
2- Preface to "Three Plays for Puritans". pp. 10-20.

do in life only it is not recorded.

Another reason for the false conception of sex, says Shaw, is that we do not realize that it is entirely impersonal, and has no connection whatever with many other things such as congeniality of tastes, class, habits, money, etc., with which it has been confused. It is a blind, impersonal, unreasonable appetite, violent and transient when gratified, and we have no right to make it the basis for contracts. Moreover it is not only less, and more impersonal than we consider it, but it is also greater. Its "great natural purpose quite transcends the personal interests of any individual or ten generations of individuals." It is a kind of blasphemy to turn it to account by exaction in any way. "To make marriage an open trade in it with everything, personal slavery and eternal exclusive personal sentiment as the price, is not decent."[1]

Shaw's remedy for this artificial condition is education in healthy opinions on the subject

1- Preface to "Getting Married."

of sex, to develop in young people a knowledge of the impersonality and great natural purpose of sex. Now they are given false knowledge which conceals all its dignity and honor and sacredness. They should realize just what is this thing in their lives which they connot explain; its power and its dangers, its significance to their own development and to the life of the race. They must learn that the marriage service is not a spell which will so change two people that they will forever be congenial if they are not so before.

Shaw believes also in education concerning the pathology of sex-relations; disease and the way it comes should be known, for protection. We have already had Shaw's opinion of silence in regard to so-called "indecent" subjects for speech and writing. Every device is used he says, especially on the stage, to make the trade of immorality alluring, and "decency" protects it with silence. It is "indecent" to warn young people of the horrible punish-

ment which may descend on innocent and guilty alike. "Mrs. Warren's Profession" has not a single indecent word in it, nor has "Damaged Goods" by Brieux; they have both been denounced, yet they contain a warning against the vice of society which fills one with a sick loathing of it, and a great desire to find the way to cure it and blot it out forever.

Shaw gives a large consideration to the position of woman under the present marriage laws. He believes that the economic condition of woman forces her into marriage or other relations. Mrs. Warren explains the situation very clearly to her daughter in Act. II of "Mrs. Warren's Profession". She shows how the miseries of honest poverty force a girl "to be good to some man who can afford to be good to her" in order to get bread to eat and clothes to cover her body. Even respectable girls, says Mrs. Warren, are brought up to catch some rich man's fancy and gèt the benefit of his money by marrying him "as if marriage could make any difference in the right or wrong of the thing." It is no bed of roses

for the poor girl who is trying to please some man she doesn't care two straws for, when he's worrying and disgusting her; her life is just as hard and degrading as before and yet she is "respectable" and is help up as a model of virtue. And they must suffer, these wretched married women, because there is nothing else for them to do.

In his Preface to Brieux's three plays, Shaw shows his sympathy with the woman's position. Often her only hope of affection and self-respect is in her children, yet because of the ambition of her husband she may be used as a mistress and a housekeeper, with no price paid. As the laws stand, the woman is the chattel of the man; she is classed by the law along with his ox and his ass according to the tenth commandment. She suffers the most from the indissoluble bonds of marriage. Disease, infidelity, childlessness, or excessive childbearing may be forced upon her, yet there is no other place for her to go.

All this would vanish, Shaw believes, if women were economically independent, because they would not have to marry, or if they were unhappily married they could break away and work for themselves. New places must be found in the labor world for women. Then all unemployed wives and mothers could find employment, and marriages maintained on an economic basis alone would dissolve. Women should be able to take care of themselves until they found a mate they could love. Then would come the need of improving marriage so that it would be as eligible as any other life.

Shaw realizes as perhaps no other writer ever did, how important motherhood is to a woman. To be sure, he analyzes her feeling from the outside, and so his idea is exaggerated and untrue in certain aspects, but he certainly has grasped the large truth and gone out to fight for it. He has shown this belief in his plays. As Hamon has said very beautifully, all the love which he puts into his feminine characters is "teinté de maternité." That is the way they love men. That instinct in their natures completely swal-

lows up all lower feelings. As we shall see, in considering Candida, it is the weakness in men which arouses their protective instinct, and the strength which they admire in the fathers of their children. So it is sexual love but ennobled by the pure fire of the mother-passion. In this one play Shaw has expressed an ideal of love fully abreast of his time.

It is every woman's right, then, the sex-experience and bearing a child, and Shaw rebels with her against being made a servant of man in so completing her experience. However, there are more women than men. This brings him to the discussion of monogamy, which depends, he says, on the relation of the numbers of the sexes. He says if woman had her say she would choose one-tenth of a first-rate man to be the father of her child rather than a "comparatively weedy weakling". This is carrying the eugenic maternal instinct in woman to a ridiculous extreme. Accordingly, to pursue Shaw's argu-

ment further, women would desire polygyny and men polyandry, but the other nine mediocre of each sex would object because they would be left out. His solution of this difficulty would be to raise the quality of the average man and woman so that each person will be a reasonably good father or mother, and monogamy will be the only thing. Further, it will take care of itself in that the "real modern marriage of sentiment can't be shared by more than two people; no one has room in his or her life for more than one real marriage at a time". This is one of the few concessions which Shaw makes to love in marriage.

Still there are not enough women for two wives for each man, even if every man were desirable, so there is no way to give every woman her rights of motherhood but by legitimizing the children of unmarried women. It is not only her right, but the advantage of the state that the motherhood of the many splendid women who do not wish to marry

should be conserved. Miss Lesbia, in "Getting Married", is a fine old maid, an English lady who says she would be a good mother; the state could afford to pay her for it. But she doesn't like men and she couldn't marry honorably, so she is obliged not to have children. Shocking, is it not, such a common-sense view of the case instead of the disappointed sentimental old maid with a secret longing?

In "Man and Superman", Shaw expresses, through John Tanner, his high ideal of the mother and also the way he knows his ideas would be received in actual practice. Violet is to have a child by a man whom she has married secretly; but she wishes to keep her marriage a secret and refuses to divulge the man's name. As soon as it is discovered the family are mortified and chagrined and insist that the "scoundrel" shall marry her. Tanner rages at their pig-headed morality, which regards her as worse than dead when she is fulfilling her "great natural function". He says the important thing of

the moment is a happy mother and a healthy baby, instead of how to hide her and conceal her shame. When Violet enters, he tells her that he admires her and congratulates her for defying convention and completing her experience. Surprise again! This is more than she can stand; she proudly informs them that she is married (they hadn't asked her, but assumed she wasn't) and not "one of those vile creatures" which Tanner thinks her. He gives up in despair.

Another reason for Shaw's hatred of the tight bonds of marriage is because it causes and promotes prostitution, as a "necessary breakwater of marriage", to protect the sanctity of the home. One must admire the brotherly love which Shaw would extend toward the poor dregs of womanhood. In one place he says, with reference to subjects called "ordure": "When the word is applied to my own plays I can laugh: and I think the world will laugh with me. But to apply it to the woman of the street,

whose soul is of the same stuff as our own and whose body is no less holy, and then to go home and look your own womenfolks in the face and not go out and hang yourself afterward- that is not among the list of pardonable sins." One cannot believe that such a man regards women lightly.

Shaw is one among many earnest people who are realizing that the "ostrich-like attitude of the conservative", weakly acquiescing in vice or ignoring it, can never advance the morality of our civilization one step.[1] I wonder how many women would preserve the sanctity of their homes (if a home can be sanctified when the father and brothers are not!) at the price of the bodies and souls of sister-women! When one thinks of a woman's being forced into such slavery by poverty; sometimes, oftener than is ever known, duped through her pure love to take one false step, and then down forever, "trampled on and degraded, *** bullied and beaten through the whole land, always under the law, ***

1- Bernard Houghton: "Immorality and the Marriage Laws"; Westminister Review, Vol. 168.

hoping for nothing from the courts, nor daring to cry for help, because that means exposure and infamy, and yet scattering a horrible revenge"[1] on the society that tolerates such exploitation, and even upon the innocent women whom her exploiters say she protects- one wonders if this is civilization, and and one feels that something must be changed in our laws and in our lives so that such a scourge may vanish from the experience of the race. If the marriage-laws are the cause, they must be changed. Freer unions and economic independence for woman, say those who know the situation, would abolish prostitution, because they would give an opportunity for freer and more independent sex-experience for both men and women.

Shaw believes that giving women the vote will result in enforcing the laws of sex-morality which now do not act upon men. They will find the ascetic side of morality taken seriously- both men and women will have to behave morally in sex-matters-

1- Preface to "Getting Married".

and then they will scrutinize the laws. They will find that the laws now "fit roughly a state of society in which women are neither politically nor personally free, in which they are womanly only when they regard themselves as complements to men. If they decide on the present system they will have to change their behavior to correspond with the laws; if they decide it is unbearable tyranny, without even the excuse of justice or sound eugenics, they will reconsider morality and remodel the law."[1]

In the meantime, his remedy for the evils of marriage state lies in easy and cheap divorce, with mutual consent. This will abolish much of the unhappiness and evils now multiplying because of the indissoluble bond. It will be absolutely necessary to the continuance of marriage as soon as women are freed from their economic slavery. It will be really favorable to marriage; the sense of bondage will be removed if the door is always open; people will be on their good behavior if their union de-

1- Preface to "Getting Married".

pends on congeniality and inclination. Easy divorce is absolutely necessary to preserve the integrity of the personal, sentimental basis of marriage. "Divorce", says Bernard Shaw, "should be permitted as a sacrament when the inner and spiritual grace no longer corresponds with the outward form."

Such is the substance of Shaw's argument concerning marriage. It is a very delicate and complicated subject, and one which demands a broad view and experience. It is necessary and very difficult, too, to free oneself from the conventional point of view toward marriage and sex-relations, and try to think honestly about the real morality of the question. As the artist in "The Doctor's Dilemma" says to a group of shocked conventionalists: "Why don't you learn to think when you come up against anything you're not accustomed to, instead of bleating and baahing like a lot of sheep?"

The attitude toward sex and marriage is changing with the development of woman and the broadening interest in society and the race. The relation of the sexes, says one earnest writer, is the discreditable fact of our civilization. That primitive conception which regards woman as either for property or pleasure (he goes on to say) in culture is veiled by a decent gloss or veneer.[1] Shaw's criticisms of marriage are founded in truth, and many of the reforms he suggests are a crying need, though he does seem to lose sight of many of their dangers, and fails to emphasize the ideals necessary to conserve certain values to the race. There is always danger that the "contempt for many of the artificial and archaic survivals which still cling like barnacles to the marriage-law" will bring about a disregard for the social essentials of marriage.[2]

Shaw's idea of divorce is valuable and important. There are few of the leading thinkers on this question, even the most conservative, who

1- Houghton.
2- Ibid.

do not advocate this much-needed reform in marriage as it exists to-day. Ellis is one of those who believes that the path of progress lies mainly in the direction of the reform of the present institution of marriage. He records a ballot taken in 1910 among the leaders of the Women's Co-operative Guild in England, in which eighty-two out of ninety-four registered in favor of divorce with mutual consent.[1]

Many others recognize the evils of the present system. Ellen Key says that marriage is an accidental social form for the living together of two people, and the ethically decisive factor is the way they live together; it is a matter of character not form. The proper attitude toward the relation of man and woman can exist as well outside as in marriage and often does; the freer form is preferred by many noble and earnest people as the more moral one. Away back in 1792, the German Humbolt voiced the conviction that the state control of marriage is positively hurtful to a relation which depends,

1- "Social Hygiene".

in its purity, on inclination. It was argued that all family relations might be disturbed; he replied that this might be true in particular cases but not in general, because "where the law has imposed no fetters, morality most surely binds."[1] Inclination and the sense of duty are apt to be stronger if they are free. This assumes a natural tendency toward a permanent monogamic union, "which may be preceded in most individuals by a more restless period of experience."[2] This is the danger of freer marriage. These writers assume a high grade of human nature, strong spiritually; but what of the many loose-minded individuals who would rush into marriage with no thought but only emotion, and who would flit from one union to another for the mere delight in change? And what of the children which might result from such unions? The State must see to it that the mother is provided for, says Shaw; the State should take a lively interest in the future citizen. But what if the mother fails to perform her duties? The

1- Cited by Ellis; "Social Hygiene", Introduction.
2- Ellis.

State can take charge of the children. But the state cannot provide motherhood, that element which eugenics declares is the one most to be valued and preserved in our civilization.[1] Nor can the state make up for the loss of fatherhood, that other force which has been evolved through the ages for the protection of motherhood,[2] and in its evolution has developed that flower of life, the spiritual magic of sex.

Other great thinkers of the day have ways to prevent the evils which would result from the very things that make love freer and nobler. They insist that love must be free from the restrictions of force and vanity, cruelty and blind passion, in order to develop in absolute independence and absolute unity.[3] They insist further that freedom is no danger to fidelity; the fidelity which has been required, has produced hostility, dishonesty, and loss of respect in the worship of love; when the external supports of fidelity are removed the power re-

1-C. G. Saleeby, "Parenthood and Race Culture". Chapters IX and X.
2- Ibid.
3- Key.

quired for it will come from the inner life.[1] But people will change and make mistakes. Some higher ideal than Shaw expresses is necessary to develop a greater seriousness and beauty in the sex-relation. I believe that Shaw has this ideal, because of his great respect for what he names the Life-Force, and because he has undoubtedly expressed it in "Candida". But, either because he believes that reason is the force which should control life, or because he thinks that emotion is already too much emphasized, at any rate, he surely discounts the value of the emotional side of life and fights against his own emotional nature. He has realized with bitterness, like Vivie in "Mrs. Warren's Profession", what vile things are done in the name of love, and he would wipe away these stains before he lauds its name.

The ideal which will build up the glory and greatness of the love between the sexes is that of care for the future of the race. Shaw has a great passion for the race and he realizes that

1- Ibid.

mutual love is sacred to its development. He points his finger at the things that are soiling and degrading that sacred thing and he assumes that it exists and will develop if the hindrances are removed. This is true idealism but it does not allow for the imperfection of average humanity. Love is vital to the development of our civilization, so vital that it must be constantly insisted upon; the ideal, ever richer and more valuable, must be constantly held up before the eyes of men and women.

Shaw's presentation is lacking in almost every case. He reiterates the biological fact of sex, but in the mass of his discussion he deprives it of the spirituality (not romantic convention) which has developed with the developing mind and soul of man. In his anti-conventional attitude he seems to support an "impatient materialism of sex" that has sprung up especially in America, that sex is an animal function no more sacred than any other animal function, and much over-estimated.[1] He says

1- Floyd Dell: Chapter VII.

with coarse half-truth, that conjugation is not necessary to marriage; as domesticity is; that conjugation is essential to nothing but the propagation of the race, and congenial marriages do not always bring the best citizens.[1] But why propagate the race at all if it is purely a physical process; if it is not to conserve the best that we have to give to the happiness of coming generations?

It must not be denied that there is value in Shaw's interpretation of the sex-relation. The physical passion is a fact; education in a healthy attitude toward sex with sincerity in thought and speech, is the only way to avoid suffering and lay the foundation for a higher type of sex-morality; the sooner it is recognized the better it will be for the youth of the land. Again, his objection to the romantic exaltation of love to include the whole of life is serious common sense. One cannot be in love all the time, with all the intensity of adoration and ecstasy which that signifies. Marriage

1- "Revolutionist's Handbook".

is a practical human fact. One discovers that the beloved is just another human being with very earthly failings; this comes to a mind steeped in romanticism as a shattering of ideals, and he feels impelled to seek another vision, as Goethe sought his Frederica.

The scientific aspect of the sex-relation is only part of the truth. Sexual life is lowering if it is accompanied by a feeling of shame as a characteristic of animal life, or even as a duty to the species. That would be the result of a diminution of the significance of love.[1] The new type of love must be the antique love of the senses united with the modern love of the soul; the union of these two must be recognized as the only possible moral basis of the relation between man and woman. But the element which will make the love of one man for one woman at once the most beautiful in its intimate personal aspect, and the most valuable for the race, will be a new reverence for the child as the representative of the generations which are to come.

1- Key.

Many of the problems of our age and especially those of marriage will be solved by the use of this factor. Education in the lofty ideals of race-betterment will bring a new regard for the purpose of marriage; marriage lightly entered will be a crime and the seducer who disturbs its happiness will be regarded as the worst of criminals. Young people will plan with reverence for their future duties; it will be a sin to "squander their spiritual and bodily obligations in unions formed thoughtlessly, without fidelity and without responsibility." Thus Ellen Key would solve the problem of the "light" union which is to many the chief danger of freer marriage laws. Moreover, she goes on to say, they would learn that "it is a still greater wrong to call forth the life of a child with cold hearts in a worldly or discordant marriage maintained on moral grounds". This is her word as to the value of love to the child. "Reciprocated love alone", she concludes, "can keep young people from falling." It is also the only

thing that can keep the race from degenerating into hard animalism.

The economic independence of woman, which Shaw preaches so earnestly, should make a big difference in the conditions of marriage. The dominant type of marriage, says Ellis, is, like prostitution, founded on economic considerations. Then artificial barriers between the sexes will be removed, and men and women can seek a mate under the freer conditions of life and love fitting to an advanced civilization. The economic independence of woman and the new reverence for the race will result in the conservation of motherhood. Ellis and Ellen Key both say that no woman should be debarred from the child-bearing class, because to live a complete life every normal woman should have at least once in her life, the experience of her supreme function of maternity.[1] All motherhood will be holy if it is entered with the deep emotion of love and if it calls forth deep feelings of duty.[2] Illegitimate children, often richly en-

1- Ellis.
2- Ellen Key.

dowed by nature, will no longer be sacrificed.

All this sounds well as a theory. Just as with Shaw, it starts with a high ideal of humanity and a reverence for woman and her glory of motherhood. It is impossible to believe that Shaw's motives are anything but pure. He is not advocating a "free-love" policy. It is rather his protest against the good material that is wasted in the form of healthy children branded through life as bastards. He is not an apostle of illicit relations, as witness his plays, absolutely free of any hint of adulterous love. His dramas are unique in present-day literature in this respect; he is a very Puritan of the Puritans. If he is not bound by the ideal of sexual constancy, he is sternly loyal to the bonds of fraternal honor. Dick Dudgeon and Sinjon in "Getting Married" express, directly and indirectly, his feeling of obligation to his fellow man. It is rather because he would remove the stigma from the child born outside of marriage and from its mother, for the sake of the child, and

indirectly for the nation and society.

But he does not consider the full consequences of such a doctrine. The high ideal of love which they have tried to convince us is necessary, is possible only with monogamy. As Chesterton says, love means marriage, it cannot be distinctly thought of without singleness of devotion, fidelity and constancy.[1] Where will such a love come from for the unmarried mother and her child, without wrecking the love of some other family? Sex is not the impersonal thing Shaw would have us believe, at least not in women. With women whose motherhood is valuable enough for the state to bother about, union with a man they could not love, or loving could not marry, for the sake of a child, would be impossible. How can the child of the lone woman pass on to the race those precious influences of the home? The home needs a father almost as much as it needs a mother. The evolution of the race has been entirely away from a condition such as Shaw would bring about

1- Gilbert Chesterton: "George Bernard Shaw".

by legitimizing the children of unmarried women. It might bring happiness to individual women, but it would bring misery to others, and although it might increase the numbers of society, it is doubtful that it would make for increased harmony and efficiency.

A few sentences from a prominent eugenist will clinch the matter: "*** we have in marriage not only the greatest instrument of race-culture that has yet been employed *** but also an instrument supremely fitted *** for the conscious, deliberate and scientific intentions of modern eugenists. *** it is this last (monogamous family) that preeminently justifies itself on the score of its services to childhood and therefore to the race. Its survival is a matter of absolute certainty, because of its survival-value. Neither Plato nor Mr. Shaw, nor any kind of collectivist legislation will permanently abolish it. *** Marriage is invaluable <u>because</u> it makes for the enthronement of motherhood

as nothing else ever did or can *** it is that form of sex-relation which involves or is adapted to common parental care of the offspring- the support of motherhood by fatherhood."[1]

Shaw gives illustrations of his theory on the subject of marriage again and again in his dramas. Sometimes, as we have noticed before, they emphasize the very thing whose value he pretends to depreciate. Candida is united to her husband by a love at once free and strong, physical and spiritual, a sacred bond, but above all free. M. Hamon[2] calls attention to the fact that Mrs. Dudgeon is the result of a loveless marriage; she is "the woman she is" only because she quieted her heart when it spoke of the scapegrace she loved. The experience of Mrs. Clandon in "You Never Can Tell", is a plea for independence and inclination in forming sex-unions. In "Arms and the Man" is an example of romantic, artificial pretensions to"the higher love" which only half-deceive the two "lovers", and give way instantly before the natural

1- Saleeby: "Parenthood and Race Culture". Chapter X, "Marriage and Maternalism".
2- "Le Molière du Vingtieme Sièole: Bernard Shaw".

attraction of a dominant man and a strong-willed servant-girl. In "Getting Married" there are Leo and her husband, resorting to all sorts of farcical subterfuges in order to get their divorce under the present laws in England. Others will be noticed in studying the women of the various plays.

In general, Shaw is attempting to rout all convention and artifice connected with this most important and sacred of human relations, and found a new morality based on scientific truth. So far, he is working for a better love, but he must emphasize the spiritual aspect of it, which he really values, in order to present a harmonious ideal which will prevent his disciples from going astray.

The Life-Force.

We have seen that Shaw places great emphasis on the maternal instinct in the nature of woman. This is explained by his philosophy of the universe, mystic and idealistic, embodied in the doctrine of the Life-Force.

Bernard Shaw does not believe in a personal God, but he has a very vital religion, which is the social good. A Divine principle is working for good in and through the universe, struggling to express itself in more and more perfect forms. It is not omnipotent because it has made many mistakes and it is powerless to work except through the organisms it has created. It is not a perfect God, beginning by creating something lower than Himself, but a power working always up. The evil in the universe is God's unsuccessful attempts; man is his last creation to combat this evil. Blanco Posnet expresses this doctrine with quaint simplicity, when he says that God made a mistake

when he made the croup. "It was early days when He made the croup, I guess," says Blanco, in his moment of vision. "It was the best He could think of then; but when it turned out wrong on His hands He made you and me to fight the croup for Him.You bet He didn't make us for nothing; and He wouldn't have made us at all if He could have done His work without us- By Gum, that must be what we're for! *** He made me because He had a job for me."[1]

In "Man and Superman" we reach the climax of Bernard Shaw's philosophy; "that spirit which dominated his other plays here becomes more conscious of its own importance."[2] The mystic third act is a dissertation on the subject of life, death, and God. There he explains the aim of the Life-Force. If its aim had been love or beauty, says Don Juan, it would have stopped with the birds, but it was not. Its aim is for brains, to make itself self-conscious and self-understood, a kind of "mind's eye" in the process of evolution so that

1- "The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet", p. 441.
2- Holbrook Jackson: "Bernard Shaw".

the individual can see the purpose of life and work for it instead of baffling it with short-sighted personal aims.[1]

The guide to conduct is to get in harmony with the Life-Force. One accomplishes this not by negation but by expressing his real self, his real instincts, which are his share of the Life-Force. Here is the explanation of Shaw's hatred of shams and conventions. The only thing which can put us in harmony with the Divine principle is the real true part of us. This assumes that at heart we are trustworthy, every one of us; that we know what is right and wrong; that our instincts are divine. In the words of Holbrook Jackson, this new being Shaw has made or rather the natural fact he has discovered is "instinct directed by will at the dawn of the consciousness of its own power."[2]

Such a doctrine is entirely optimistic and brings with it an exuberant joy and faith in the importance of living. It is a mystic philosophy

1-"Man and Superman", pp. 114, 115.
2-"Bernard Shaw": p.193.

but it is also a practical working ideal of life. Life is not selfish, each one must become part of the great world-plan, "what less sophisticated generations were wont to call the plan of God."[1] The joy of being used for a mighty purpose is the true religious ecstasy. Bernard Shaw finds his joy in studying the reality of things which is to him the only Divinity. As Chesterton says: "though he covered it with crude new names *** he was on the side of the good old cause; the oldest and best of all causes- the cause of creation against destruction, the cause of yes against no, the cause of the seed against the stony earth and the star against the abyss."[2]

This is not the place to show the defects in Shaw's philosophy. It is the centering of his principles about woman which makes his theory of life important in this discussion. Woman is incarnate Life-Force, "the potent instrument of that irresistible, secret, blind impulse which Nature wields for her own transcendent purposes, heedless

1- Rogers.
2- Gilbert Chesterton: "George Bernard Shaw."

of the feelings, welfare, or happiness of individuals."[1] She is the great principle of fecundity in the universe, life perpetuating itself. The view of woman which endows her with purpose and vitality and conscious seeking to fulfill her "biological imperative" also culminates, in "Man and Superman", in Ann Whitefield, whom Shaw pronounced "that most gorgeous of all my female creatures". Ann is possessed of a great deal of "vitality", which means with Shaw the power of pursuing and capturing a man! This sounds like a huge joke at first but it is corroborated by sound argument from many sources. Man is no longer the victor in the duel of sex, says Shaw, and it is doubtful if he ever really has been. Man's aim is nutrition and woman's is marriage and children; both are necessary for the race, and both are usually of first importance in any civilization. But when society reaches such a stage that a man must be rich at all costs and a woman married at all costs *** this produces poverty, celibacy, infant mortality,

1- Archibald Henderson: "George Bernard Shaw: His Life and Works".

*** and the things wise men most dread."[1]

Havelock Ellis points out that all through the animal kingdom, even before the vertebrates, love, in the form of sex-selection has moulded the race to the ideal of the female. Theoretically, woman should be the controlling factor in the sex-equation. Ellis goes on to say that the situation of the animal world is somewhat reversed in civilized man; it is the woman who by her attractions competes for the favour of the man. The decision finally rests with the man.[2] The physical attractions have changed sides, surely, but has the deciding voice been taken away from the woman? To be sure, as Ellis says, the change had its origin in economic causes; the "demands of nutrition have overridden the demands of reproduction", and a woman under the present economic conditions, has to have someone to support her, and has to take the one who comes to her. Ellis thinks it is by no means an advantageous change for civilization, since it has replaced sexual selection with natural selection.

1- Preface to "Man and Superman"; p. 16.
2- Preface to "Man and Superman"; p. 16.

But is it so much a change as this writer thinks? Shaw says that sex is the woman's business. Men, to protect themselves from a too aggressive prosecution of it have set up a feeble romantic convention that the initiative in the sex-business must always come from the man, but "it doesn't fool anyone even on the stage." When one stops to think of it, many love stories take on a new aspect. Think of the women of Shakespeare whom Shaw says always hunt down the man.[1] They seem to be natural, "ladylike" young women, and yet Rosalind, in boy's attire, sallies forth into the wild wood to follow her lover, and Ophelia goes mad when she is frustrated in her love. We recognize this fact in the philosophy of present-day love-making, perhaps unconsciously. The woman charms, the man is occupied either with resisting or enjoying her power over him. Such phrases as "setting her cap" and "making a good match" express society's comprehension of the woman's initiative in the marriage-business.

1- Preface to "Man and Superman"; p. 16.

Woman still selects, says modern sociology, she still controls the situation in all but exceptional instances. "A girl shouldn't be too easy to win", said my lady-like little aunt; "A man cares more about a girl if he has to work to get her." Who held the controlling cards in that "hand"? "My brother was engaged to Mary", said a young woman, gleefully, "but he went to another town and Stella went after him harder than Mary had, and she got him!" Two days ago I sat in a lecture class listening to a prominent sociologist as he voiced opinions strikingly similar to Bernard Shaw's "freak"doctrine. "The man thinks he is making love to the girl," he said with quiet conviction, "and then when he asks the momentous question, she's 'so surprised'; it's 'so sudden' ! Why, she had him selected before he ever turned the corner! He <u>thinks</u> he does it, but he doesn't."

It is certain that Mr. Shaw is profoundly right in his principle. It is only the method of

the Life-Force that he has exaggerated so that people refuse to consider the large truth which underlies his presentation. Here, again, in his enthusiasm to show the fact he has exaggerated to drive his point home. He has shown the Life-Force in woman as impersonal, unscrupulous to the point of deliberate and intricate lying, calculating its end and every move toward that end. Ann is really a personification of the Life-Force, and therefore shows traits that every woman possesses in some degree, enlarged and intensified. As Shaw himself said: "Every woman is not Ann, but Ann is everywoman."

When his theory is attacked as immodest and revolting, and absolutely untrue to the facts of everyday ocular experience, Shaw defends it in a splendid way. "Vitality in woman", he makes Tanner warn Octavius, "is a blind fury of creation. She sacrifices herself to it: do you think she will hesitate to sacrifice you?" There is a great difference between man's selfish pleasure enslaving

woman and the whole purpose of nature embodied in woman enslaving a man. To the power in woman man is only an instrument. To be sure, man never admits that his is a secondary place. "We throw the whole drudgery of creation on one sex," storms our writer, "and then we imply that no female of any womanliness or delicacy would initiate any effort in that direction. There are no limits to male hypocrisy in this matter." At times, however, the man's comparative sex-immunity is brought home to him with humiliating distinctness, as in the terrible moment of birth with its "supreme importance and superhuman effort and peril," when he is "dwarfed into the meanest insignificance." But afterwards "he takes his revenge, swaggering as the breadwinner, and speaking of Woman's 'sphere' with condescension, even with chivalry, as if the kitchen and the nursery were less important than the office in the city."[1]

Woman herself is only an instrument in the hands of Nature. Tanner tells his susceptible friend: "*** woman's purpose is neither her happiness,

nor yours, but Nature's." Ann says with trembling voice at the last moment of her strength: "It will not be all happiness for me. Perhaps death."[1] And yet she is willing, eager, to sacrifice "freedom, honor and self" because of the power that is in her greater than herself. Gloria, in spite of all her intelligence and self-control, is swept along in the current of the Life-Force.[2] "And yet we assume," reasons Shaw triumphantly, "that the force which carries women *** through perils and hardships, stops abashed before the primnesses of our behaviour for young ladies. It is assumed that the woman must wait motionless until she is wooed. Nay, she often does wait motionless. That is how the spider waits for the fly. But the spider spins her web. And if the fly, like my hero, shews a strength that promises to extricate him, how swiftly does she abandon her pretence of passiveness, and openly fling coil after coil about him until he is secured forever!"[3]

Sometimes the Life-Force does adopt these

1- "Man and Superman": p. 172.
2- "You Never Can Tell."
3- Preface to "Man and Superman": p. 19.

aggressive tactics, but even when it is aggressive it is less self-conscious than Shaw shows it to be. Everyone will admit that some women know what they are about when they "set their cap" for a man. But more often the ensnaring web is spun of unanalyzed impulses and instincts, of subconscious and mysterious arts of allurement which the woman feels keenly but only half-divines. "She snares with perfectly legitimate charms and trickery," said the sociologist quoted before, and he adds emphatically: "She doesn't plan it all out; her instincts are a much better guide than other people's judgment in the interests of improving the race."

It is the way Shaw interprets the methods of the Life-Force that must be criticised. Even when one sees the underlying truth, one feels the exaggeration of the picture. The exaggeration is the cause, I believe, of the absolute repudiation of Shaw's theory on the part of some critics. As Mr. Henderson says, his women are "too blatant,

too obvious, too crude", they are not normal women but a picture such as Shaw's philosophy of the conscious Life-Force would require.[1] Mr. Max Beerbohm says that Shaw's women regard themselves with comparative modesty as the automatic instruments of the Life-Force. "They are wrong", he declares, with offended masculine pride. "The Life-Force could find no use for them. They are not human enough, not alive enough."[2] Mr. Huneker goes so far as to "call them names." "Mr. Shaw has invented a new individual in literature", he says, "who for want of a better name could be called the Super-Cad; he is Nietzsche's Superman turned 'bounder'- and sometimes the sex is feminine".[3]

The Life-Force goes about its business," says Mr. Henderson, "*** not openly and with a blare of trumpets, but by a thousand devious and hidden paths." It is far more diplomatic and unobtrusive than Shaw would have us believe. It uses that very maiden modesty and the man's desire to believe him-

1- Henderson: pp. 82-83.
2- Nation 96:330.
3- James Huneker: "Iconoclasts", p. 234.

self the aggressor, as means of conquest. The "artless simplicity" which a lover adores is often only a touch of finest, and instinctive art. "You may boss me all you want to," said an independent girl to her fiancé, and his face beamed with relief; "But I'll 'manage' you", she added, with dangerous frankness. Ann might well begin to doubt if Tanner were really a clever man; in the things she understands he is "a perfect baby". Ann need not have been so shameless in her methods, but the principle which underlies her character is quite, quite true. Open your ears and you will hear it demonstrated in life every day.

It is perhaps not amiss, to remark, incidentally, that, if it fulfills Nature's purpose that woman shall capture man, Shaw's notions about romance are a little inconsistent. All the romantic lies about sex which lead men and women on, are justified if they bring us into Nature's trap. They are no longer artificial but natural.[1]

1- Chesterton: p. 226.

There is another stream of the Life-Force which is as powerful in its way as that which is embodied in woman. The force of genius is interested in developing the intellect of man, to provide the brains for the life which woman is interested in perpetuating. The man of genius is not strongly sexed, and therefore not in so great danger of capture by woman as the ordinary man; nor does the woman of genius share the ordinary woman's specialization as a channel for the Life-Force. He regards it only as a means to obtain broader experience of his own mind and the minds of others. It is the artist's work to give the world knowledge of itself, to create new mind. He is "to women half vivisector, half vampire;" he gets into intimate relations with them because they can rouse him to greater creative ability and inspiration; they are to him only a means to an end. He is as "ruthless as the woman, as dangerous to her as she to him, and as horribly fascinating. Of all human struggles there is none

so treacherous and remorseless as the struggle between the artist man and the mother woman."[1]

The artist or philosopher must therefore live for his own ends, and not for those of woman. This is contradicted in a measure by history. Investigations have been made concerning the difference in achievement between married and single men. Men who do not marry, some authorities say, live unnatural lives; they may do more work but they give out sooner. True genius, however, is not governed by the laws which govern ordinary men. Perhaps the spark of genius must burn briefly as well as alone. Tanner illustrates the struggle of the ordinary man with brains to preserve his energy for other ends than home and babies. The defeat of Octavius is another form of triumph of the Life-Force, because the poet must teach the world to think and to dream. The Poet in "Candida" is the man of genius who sees that his world is not to be one of domesticity and woman's love; he goes out gladly into a world of stars and visions.

1- "Man and Superman"; p. 22.

The Women of the Plays.

I.

That the women George Bernard Shaw has depicted in his plays are very different from those usually seen on the stage, is evident when one learns the impression they make on the various critics. No one is quite familiar with Shaw's characters, as yet, except, it may be, M. Hamon, who has thought enough about him to get over the shock and form a serious judgment. The other critics have been startled into the most conflicting opinions. In one paper Huneker says that Shaw writes brilliant and enjoyable debates, but he fails in characterization; because he cannot build a true play and true characters he will therefore not last.[1] In another place he says that Shaw was the first to dare to depict the unpleasant girl; and he has done this with such accuracy that they seem kodaked from life.[2] M. Hamon has said of Shaw's characters: "Ce sont des femmes et des hommes, en chair et en os, avec leurs qualités

1- Metropolitan Magazine.
2- "Bernard Shaw and Woman", Harper's Bazar, June,1905

et leurs défauts." On the other hand Mr. Max Beerbohm writes: "Because Shaw doesn't see flesh and blood he thinks they do not exist and wishes to be accepted as a realist ***. His serious characters are just so many skeletons who do but dance and grin and rattle their bones."[1] The same writer's opinion that Shaw's philosophy rests on a "profound ignorance of human nature" is opposed by the statement of an earnest woman-writer who believes that Shaw can cut down to the beats of the heart, that he can open up the brain and extract the quivering nerves.[2] It is evident from this conflicting evidence that Shaw's place as a painter of men and women is not yet decided. He is beginning to be understood but it will be some time before hasty opinions are entirely superseded by sane unbiased judgment.

The explanation of the variety of criticism which Shaw's characters have received lies in part in the fact that they are not conventional

1- Saturday Review 85, 679.
2- Edith Balfour: "Shaw and Super-Shaw", Nation 46,1040.

stage characters. Julia and Blanche are not typical "heroines"; Sylvia and Dolly are not conventional soubrettes; Nora is almost the exact opposite of the Irishwoman of fiction. They do not act according to out preconceived notions of how they should act. The unexpected is always happening, and so they are thought unnatural, but they are really "natural" as distinguished from conventional. "They do what they like to do and what they can do for their own reasons and not in the ordinary romantic way in deference to some ideal."[1]

Huneker says that as a rule we are always pleased with women on the stage; that is, they may be either angels, adventuresses or empty society dames, but they satisfy our demands of the type. Therefore when Shaw shatters the fiction of the "gallant" Anglo-Saxon race, that a woman is "either angelic or heroically diabolic *** either Ophelia or Lady Macbeth", and paints women who are simply unpleasant in a most lifelike way, it makes us

1- Jackson, 189.

extremely uncomfortable. "Shaw has no sympathy in his interpretation of woman", says a woman critic, "and sympathy is necessary in drawing even the worst character." If they are bad let them be of strong stuff. One can abide a good black lie but not everlasting half-truths; coarser and greater vices but not such mean and petty ones.[1]

Here is the Anglo-Saxon notion that Shaw ridicules and condemns. Women are not all good, nor all bad, any more than men; they are all more human and more divine than such a classification would indicate. When one stops to consider the women one knows, there are very few entirely lovable ones; there are many more whose weaknesses we overlook because we have found some other quality in them worthy of our attention. Most of the faults of women are petty and mean. The most beautiful woman often has some "unladylike" and unlovable trait of character. Yet we are angry with the "meanness" which reveals that deplorable weakness on the stage. Shaw says that is

1- Constance Barnicoat: "Counterfeit Presentation of Woman", Fortnightly Review, 85,516.

why Hedda Gabler was so unpopular with the masses, though her character was recognized and applauded by women of the wealthy class. It was not because of the things she did, for other pretty heroines have done worse and have been applauded for their heroic suicides; but it was her "unladylike attitude toward life" which could not be forgiven her.

The women of Shaw are contradictions but so are living women. In the worst type of woman Shaw finds something worthy. From what I can learn of "Fanny's First Play", as yet unpublished, Dora, the "daughter of joy" is found to be not half so bad as that type is usually painted. Feemy, a common woman of the town in "The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet", is ready to swear to a lie against the man she hated, but she flinches and owns up when she hears that his heart was touched by a sick baby's hands. She is a failure as a bad woman. Continually Shaw gives us the purest psychology, but we are so entrenched in lies about human nature that we see insincerity and

inconsistency where there is only sincerity and truth.

It is always a delicate matter to determine whether a writer paints individuals or types. Shaw's women are not types from different classes of society; they are rather individuals personifying some trait of feminine character. They are all living, breathing, people; but they represent not merely their own nature, as do Ibsen's Hedda, and Hilda Wangel, but scores of women whom one may meet in life. Such psychology is more difficult to present than the strictly individual kind. It is the kind of psychology that Moliere employed, says M. Hamon, and is superior to that of Ibsen which shows us individuals and not types.[1] In his men Shaw presents professional, class or caste types, but his women are embodiments of universal feminine faults or virtues.

In such characterization there is necessarily some degree of untruth, because one trait

1- Hamon, p. 211.

is emphasized and the others temporarily ignored. But it is a justifiable artistic exaggeration, because one trait is often more prominent than others in a personality. Characters like Shaw's may not exist in their entirety in nature, but the beginnings of them are in everybody. If there is any exaggeration, it is not because they are abnormal, but rather because they are more normal than the norm, as M. Hamon paradoxically phrases it. The natural traits of the normal man and woman are intensified. Sometimes this gives the effect of caricature, but one can easily recognize the ordinary individual under the personage caricatured.

The characterization in these plays of Shaw is very clear-cut. The characters say all they think and show what they really are at every moment. All the principal characters are free of convention, and keenly "conscious of the critical value of their own actions and those of others."[1] There are examples of all personalities in Shaw's

1- Hamon, p. 112.

"galerie étonnante". As M. Filon says: "Nous avons la rageuse, l'hypocrite, la sensuelle, la philosophe, la positive, la romanesque, la tragi-comique, *** avec bien d'autres nuances pour lesquelles les adjectifs ne manqueraient."[1] M. Hamon has mentioned in addition, "la calculatrice, "The Lady"; l'intuitive, Candida; l'âpre du gain, Mrs. Dudgeon; la femme d'affaires, Mrs. Warren and Vivie; and la mère, Candida. They are all true and intensely living, but never completely beautiful, hateful, good, or bad. Huneker declares that Shaw is a misogynist and delights in depicting the petty faults and weaknesses of women. Knowing his philosophy and the value he gives to woman's work and personality one is obliged to believe that it is only the follies of women that he despises. He would have us laugh them out of court; but laughter is only his literary method. He is not laughing; he is terribly in earnest.

1- Filon, p. 431.

II.

The Heroine of Shaw's first play, "Widowers' Houses", is one of his most unpleasant young ladies. Shaw was entirely disgusted with the pretty empty heroines he had been seeing in the theatres. Blanche is everything that the ideal heroine ought not to be, and alas! what too many women are. She is attractive to be sure, but only because she is a woman, which, together with capturing Harry Trench, seems to be her sole mission in life. Her pettiness and ungraciousness are revealed from the first moment she appears. In her first conversation with her lover she is impatient and sharp in her manner, subtle and jealous, calculating the effect of her anger, her pathos, even the touch of her hands. We learn that Blanche "gave him the lead" at their first encounter on the steamer, and in this scene she is struggling to extract a proposal or some sort of promise from him. When the others interrupt just when she has her claws on her prey, she politely "suppresses

an oath!"

In the second act we learn more of Blanche's temper through the testimony of her father and the shrinking little parlor-maid. Blanche breaks off her engagement in offended pride and then tells her father that Trench did it. After they are gone this furious vixen rages at the maid. Blanche is disgusted with her tears of "wounded affection and bodily terror", and hurts her with harsh words and tigerish hands at her throat. Her father begs her to control her temper and she answers, panting: "No, I can't. I won't. I do my best. Nobody who really cares for me gives me up because of my temper." One wonders what beside makes anyone care for her. Evidently her love is as passionate and selfish and feral as her hate.

Selfishness is the root of all her feelings. She pretends to be anxious about her father, but it is only self-pity, because she doesn't like the idea of having no one to pamper her. Immediately after-

wards when she learns of the source of his money she cries: "If only a girl could have no father, no family, just as I have no mother." Of the poor, whose sufferings she has just learned about, she says: "Turn them out; *** I hate the poor *** if they must be provided for let others take care of them. I don't see why I should be made to suffer for it." She tells her father that she loves him because he brought her up to something different, and adds, under her breath: "I should hate you if you had not."

The last scene, even more unpleasant in its deeper significance, shows the young man unable to live up to his ideals, giving way to the primary sex-appeal and this violent creature with no gleam of nobility about her, exerting her wiles upon him. There is nothing to attract him to her but her sex and personal beauty; even her tenderness is furious. Ugly, selfish, absolutely useless, a parasite giving in return for her existence

not even a pleasant disposition, there is bitter truth in every word. Here is an example of waste of energy, for the only thing that can be said in favor of Blanche is that she is positive, she is of strong stuff. Shaw would call the attention of society to this narrow-minded "unsocial" result of "home" life and the lack of serious work in the world.

The problem of analysis is not quite so simple in "The Philanderer". Shaw satirizes the old-fashioned code of "womanly" conduct as it is superseded, in theory, by the Ibsenesque doctrine of liberty, equality, and fraternity for women. One of the women is a sincere and honorable example of the true advance; the other is a slave of the old training and habits of mind, struggling to free herself and attain self-respect under the new ideal. It is a vivid and pathetic picture. Julia is an oversexed, passionate woman of the feral type. She is a "beautiful, dark, tragic-

looking woman," the kind that appeals to the"old-fashioned" man who judges a woman as he would a fine animal. Paramour and Cuthbertson agree that Julia is a splendid fine creature, "every inch a woman." The older man feels his protective "manly" instincts aroused, and says: "A woman like that wants a real Man."

Before she appears upon the stage, Charteris informs us that Julia was the "first woman who had the pluck to make him a declaration." He has been trying hard, even brutally, to free himself from her, but she insisted that it was not his better self speaking, read his letters carefully and sent them back "unopened". Later their conversation gives evidence that Julia had entered the friendship with Charteris under the advanced views, namely, a free engagement with no view to marriage, because it is a degrading bargain. With her, however, it was a mere ruse; her jealous passion for him demands that she have full and undisputed possession of him-

one man her own, to marry! Here is "the Ann Whitefield of a more natural, less self-conscious phase."[1] Her conduct throughout the play proves her to be violently fond of Charteris, and bent on holding him, but she is not so conscious a beast of prey as the "mighty huntress of men."

Our first meeting with Julia is when she storms into the apartment where Charteris is making love to Grace Tranfield, his latest love; she makes straight for Grace, struggles with Charteris and strikes him in the face as she frees herself. She hurls vituperation at them both, and bewails with great frankness her own unhappiness and his cruelty. After Grace has gone she ceases her dramatic doutburst and says "with the most pathetic dignity" and with questionable truth: "O, there is no need to be violent." Then she tries to argue her claims on him, and he shows her the fallacy of mingling advanced and conventional views. Then she gives up and pleads her

1- Henderson, p. 299.

love for him in language which leaves no doubt as to the reality and pathos of her passion. Julia begs Charteris to marry her; she has always been treated as a plaything, won't he give her a chance to prove that she can become a companion? He refuses again and another violent scene follows; she is dramatic and gushing and pathetic by turns. Her jealousy is not made attractive or justifiable in the least; it is rather an "egotistical mania", a revolting mental disease survived from savagery.[1]

Yet this pitiful character is not wholly despicable; Shaw has succeeded in making us sympathize with her. Julia is the result of woman's practice of playing her personal charms unscrupulously and of man's practice of treating woman as a pretty doll.[2] In a way she represents the tragic struggle of the awakening soul in thousands of useless and "womanly" women, in the sense that word carries in Shaw's plays. The contest in Julia's soul between her genuine love for Charteris and

1- Preface to "Three Plays for Puritans", p. 18.
2- Henderson, p. 296.

her impulse to cast him off and attain her self-respect, is the real human drama involved. In the last act she rises to dignity in her rebellion against the attitude men have always assumed toward her, as if she were a "Persian cat". Paramour says: "You! who are loved at first sight by the people in the street as you pass. Why, in the club I can tell by the faces of the men whether you have been lately in the room or not." And Julia replies, shrinking fiercely: "Oh, I hate that look in their faces." The last scene is really touching; we feel Julia's real sorrow and despair with her position.

In startling contrast to the tempestuous figure of Julia Craven stands the calm Grace Tranfield. She has been called an icicle, lifeless and unemotional, but she appears so only by contrast. The best type of the advanced woman, demanding equality of opportunity, and rejecting the "lord and master" theory, she keeps her self-respect

even to the extent of giving up her lover. She is dignified and independent, and yet warm-hearted. Her sincere and tender affection for Charteris is contrasted with his flip, light-hearted attitude. She sternly disapproves of his philandering; it makes her ashamed of him and herself. With all her affection, she wishes it to bring out the best that is in her, and she keeps herself so well in hand that he "reproaches her every day for her coldness." We are told of the quiet good taste and independent style of her dress; she is "habitually busy", surely a necessity for any woman who wishes to make her life count. She has a keen sense of the critical value of every situation in which she finds herself. Always Grace penetrates Julia's shams and is not afraid to tell her so. She despises Julia's appeal to men, and yet in the last scene all traces of animosity and bitterness are absent from her manner. It is Grace Tranfield, Julia's hated rival, who takes

her hand and comforts her, trying to buoy her up and awaken her self-respect. Grace is the only one who appreciates how hard it is for Julia to face Charteris; as he approaches she draws near to strengthen her by sheer force of sympathy, and takes Julia in her arms as her strength fails. There is no coldness about her in this scene; she is only strong and sweet, a true sister-woman. She was made to be a companion to man, as well as a wife, demanding no favors because of her sex, but only a chance to work by his side. Even this calm poised woman has an element of the pursuer in her make-up; Charteris says his coyness with her was sheer coquetry, he fled only that she might pursue. Shaw could not omit this touch from his ideal woman, because, as we have seen, he believes it is right and true.

Sylvia Craven occupies a more minor position, but she is a crisp, vital little figure, and an enjoyable youngster, "the model for many

of Shaw's sparrow-like soubrettes, smart little demons in petticoats who drive their elders to distraction with their chatter."[1] Sylvia has entered the new movement with all the enthusiasm and seriousness of a child. Her dress is tailored as near like a man's as possible without spoiling the prettiness of the effect. She has an exaggerated notion of the rights due her in the new role as one of the "fellows" in the club which has an amusing effect on the men. Easy comradeship and frankness of speech characterize her relations with men, yet she is never bold or vulgar. Charteris likes to humor her, indeed Sylvia thinks the secret of his "success" is that he doesn't coddle a woman but treats her like another man, his manner free from the superiority which the chivalrous ideal implies. "You can't think how sick they get of being treated with the respect due to their sex", says Sylvia, with Shavian frankness expressing the "fair and square" doctrine of the new woman. Some might say Sylvia is a child in her

1- Huneker.

feelings, but a child is only unconventional, and that is her distinction. She is not heart-broken about her father's fate, nor does she pretend to be, only sincerely sorry, and later glad, when the mistake is discovered. She has a child's delight in criticising her sister Julia, teasing and angering her. Sylvia is just enough younger than Julia to be in a different age; she has therefore been naturally attracted to Grace Tranfield as a model. Grace has lived in the same time as the elder sister, but after all, the new woman is only the best of the old.

"Mrs. Warren's Profession" is unpleasant in a more serious and significant way than the other two bitter and satiric attacks upon present-day morality. This play touches a problem of vital importance to woman. It expresses Shaw's belief that "any society which desires to found itself on a high standard of integrity of character in its units, should organize itself in such a fashion as to make

it possible too for all men and all women to maintain themselves in reasonable comfort by their industry without selling their affections or their convictions." Some critics say that Shaw fails in making great tragedy of this play because he has put in the crucial place a girl with whom we cannot sympathize; if Vivie had been human the play would have aroused genuine devotion. To my mind that is the whole significance of her extreme and almost unfeminine character. It throws the attention immediately back to the problem; we are not allowed to waste heart-throbs and tears over an individual person whom we have come to love. The effect of horror and social wrong are brought home to the intellect; we are obliged to think, and in much the same way that Vivie does after she had recovered from the first effects of the shock to her instincts. It affects her personally little more than it does us. Aside from the fact that it gives her no name and family, why should it break

her heart? She has been brought up to do without home and family, in a most unromantic and unsympathetic environment. She has had to live her own life and she has learned to rely on herself. Law and mathematics, her chosen career in college, obliged her to give up everything else; as a consequence she is decidedly and avowedly limited. Is it any wonder she is vigorous and self-possessed, with no liking for holidays or romance or beauty, and an intense contempt for the wasting, shifting habits of life of her mother's friends? Practically orphaned from birth, with no pleasure or grief or human relations to soften her, she has had the training of a professional man. Would we be shocked to hear most lawyers tell of their liking for work and money, cigars, whiskey and a good detective novel? Would there be anything odd in such a man's dislike for art and music?

Given the type Vivie is not unreal in her actions in this play. Her mother's sad story and

evident sincerity move the girl when her tears and appeals do not. She is ready to forgive and respect her mother, and even, for the moment, to show conventional affection for her, though it seems, as Frank says, like a "second-rate thing" and unlike her usual straightforwardness. We feel a little the creeps that Frank describes when he sees her "attitudinizing sentimentally with her arm about her parent's waist." The fits of childishness, when she becomes "Vivvums" have the effect of making her more real if not more likable. The pistol episode is melodramatic; but given Frank and the pistol and the shock she has experienced after thinking she knew the worst, we can appreciate Vivie's almost impersonal wish to have "some sharp physical pain tearing through her vitals".

She goes away; it is her decisive act in this part of her life and the momentous question is why? Disgust with her mother's trade is surely one of her motives; when she is trying to tell Praed

and Frank about it she becomes almost hysterical. This alone would be motive aenough, but her mother has not only persisted in her evil trade through it all; she has worn the scarlet letter and the "white flower of a blameless life" on top of it. Hypocrisy is the one thing Vivie cannot forgive; she may be hard and unnatural but she is not "two-faced". M. Hamon says that she leaves because she decides that she can get along better without them. It is certainly to her best interests however one looks at it, and Vivie is not to be governed by falsely sentimental motives.

The last curtain is wonderfully in character. After the final break with her mother she goes at her work with a plunge, and soon becomes absorbed in her figures. This is what she would have done, at first;- one strives to follow the drama of that human soul after the whip of experience has lashed it.

Mrs. Kitty Warren is a remarkable low-

life study, a real psychological character as Mr. Archer defines it, an excursion into a hitherto unexplored field of human nature. She is not strictly "of the day" as are the women in the previous plays, but is "as old as the Old Testament, 'for she hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her; her house is in the gates of hell, going down into the chamber of death'."[1] Representing a universal world-old problem, yet she is keenly individualized. Though she has hardly known her daughter during the twenty years of her life, she immediately adopts the conventional domineering and patronizing manner of a mother with her grown-up daughters. She assumes that Vivie will love and respect "her own mother" whether she has done anything to merit it or not. "I know how to treat my own child", she tells Praed, and scoffs at the idea of showing respect to her daughter. She is angry that Vivie should have any ideas of her own. "Don't be a fool, child," she says among other ir-

1- Chesterton, p. 134.

ritating remarks, "*** your way of life will be what I please, so it will." Vivie rebels against this even before she knows the facts of her mother's life. Then follows the breathless interest of Mrs. Warren's confession. As it stands, it excites a kind of admiration for the woman, and brings to her daughter a temporary relief. But we soon learn the distinction that makes a world of difference. If she were only a "nice woman who had gotten into trouble" we could sympathize and give her a chance; but we feel with Frank that she is "ever so rowdy" and "a wicked old devil, up to every villainy under the sun." The "creeps" which Frank experienced so vividly attack us with increasing horror during the scenes of the third act; we are anxious to get Vivie away, away- anywhere, so that she may not touch this unmentionable creature.

Some critics object to the disgusting presentation of Mrs. Warren. If she has business ability, they say, she ought not to be so mean and revolting.

The answer to this objection is that Mrs. Warren's business ability is her one good point; she has no character to direct her energy or she would not have invested it in such a trade. Her sentiments and feelings are entirely vicious and hypocritical; therefore in the zone of those feelings, where her relations with her daughter lie, she is no match for Vivie, who is wholesome and honest to the last degree. At the end we see her canting, cringing, whimpering, demanding her daughter as her natural right, cursing her, and wishing she could bring her up again "in one of her own houses." It is a realistic and revolting picture.

It is a relief to turn to the Pleasant Plays, which, though lighter and more entertaining, nevertheless give food for thought on the problems of the day. "You Never Can Tell" is the last serious of the four, yet it contains several contributions to the "woman question." Mrs. Clandon is the

only mother in the plays whom her children love and respect; this is because she has been broad-minded enough to give them a realistic, scientific education, with freedom to develop their own personalities aided by lessons rather than forced by orders.[1] As an emancipated woman she contradicts the notion that such a person is new and wild; Shaw is "young enough to see that the emancipated woman is already old and respectable."[2] Her nature is intellectual rather than emotional; it has never been deeply stirred by love and so she is curiously undemonstrative and embarrassed with her children's caresses, though she cares for them deeply. All her passion has been given to the Cause of Humanity. There is an echo of Shaw in this; his social passion, governed by his public conscience, does perhaps offer rewards "which far transcend the selfish personal infatuations and sentimentalities of romance." Mrs. Clandon does not bore one with her views. She is matronly and serene, with a pardonable weakness for her mon-

1- Hamon.
2- Chesterton.

key of a daughter whom she is occupied in quieting most of the time.

Dolly, one of the two "enfants terribles," is one result of the realistic education of a 20th-century mother. "The twins" says the writer who styles himself "M." in his introduction to the Pleasant Plays, "illustrate the disconcerting effects of that perfect frankness which would make life intolerable." Dolly is of that mischievous and lovable kind who is adorably clever when she is poking fun at some one else, but who, when she is puncturing one's own cherished conceits, is positively diabolical. She holds up Gloria and her mother's famous system to ridicule; but her family are used to her. Valentine and William find her delightful because they are philosophic "onlookers" themselves. She immediately wins the heart of the pompous and thundering Bohun. But McComas and Crampton find it a hard and irritating struggle to get used to her.

Gloria is the most significant woman in

the piece, representing as she does the helplessness of reason in the grip of the Life-Force. As M. Filon says,"she is a proud girl whose apparent coldness melts, like a glacier in May, under the first kiss". Even the early twentieth century education does not include instruction in the subject of sex. Gloria's intellect has been trained but she has a passionate temperament which her mother knows nothing about and could not understand. She tells her father that Mrs. Clandon is high heavens above them both in knowing what is right and dignified and strong and noble and doing it, while she, Gloria, also knows but doesn't always do it. Her "miserable cowardly womanly feelings" are all on his side; and he is satisfied with that apportionment. With all her advanced ideas for her work in the world, Gloria feels that her mother has told her nothing, and when she succumbs to the mysterious influence which leaves her helpless and wondering, she feels only "shame, shame, shame!"

This play is important to our subject

because of the love-story, which is the conventional scarlet thread binding it together but is a new sort of romance. Chesterton criticises it severely. "Love in an extravaganza may be light love or love in idleness but it should be hearty and happy love. In Gloria's collapse before her bullying lover there is something at once cold and unclean; it calls up all the modern supermen with their cruel and fishy eyes." Frankly, I do not see it in this light at all. To me it is remarkable in the way it portrays the sex-attraction divested of convention, in its own peculiar romance. Let us trace briefly the progress of their love-affair. Valentine, although he is much attracted to Gloria at first sight, pretends to be scientific in order to reassure her and pierce through her unsentimental exterior. He tells her that she inspires him, oxygenates his blood, braces his muscles. When he sees that she is uneasy, he asks her if she too feels the dread of a strange power. Dread and helplessness are foreign to her experience but he makes

her feel as if they were both in Nature's hands; after allowing them to go along reasonably enough for years she is taking her two little children up by the scruffs of their little necks to use them for her own purpose. The account of how his attraction toward her affects him is unique and fascinating. He tells Crampton that he has never been in his real senses before, he is capable of anything, grown-up at last. When the older man asks him if he is in love with Gloria, he "tumbles his words out rapturously": "Love! Nonsense, it's something far above and beyond that. It's life, it's faith, it's strength, certainty, paradise-"

In the love-scene he emphasizes the fact that it all depends on her naturally liking him. She decides that she does like him, very much; then he realizes that liking is not what he wants after all, and she says, wonderingly: "I'm sorry." And then he bursts out, in passionate poetry: "Oh, don't pity me. Your voice is tearing my heart to

pieces. Let me alone, Gloria. You go down into the very depths of me, troubling and stirring me- I can't struggle with it- I can't tell you-" Is it any wonder that Gloria breaks down and says: "Stop telling me what you feel. I can't bear it." Then his "moment of strength" comes and he kisses her boyishly, glad that the conquest is over.

After this Gloria is quite changed. Her opinion of herself has received such a jolt that she sympathizes with her crabbed old father, and hardly dares to trust herself to act sensibly. She is cross to Valentine for a whole act, and tells him that if he were really in love he would not be foolish: it would give him dignity- earnestness- even beauty. Valentine voices a Shavian anti-romantic notion when he replies: "Love can't give any man new gifts- It can only heighten the gifts he was born with." From this point on the chaser is captured in his own net. He begins to feel worried and frightened and to realize that he was only jesting

with Nature when she was in earnest. He practically proclaims woman's mental inferiority when he says: "I didn't respect your intellect. I've a better one myself; it's a masculine specialty." It is what she calls her "weakness", that is, her emotional nature, that is the only thing he loves in her. She touches his shoulders and says only a few words, but he feels the spell of her will, urging him, pulling him her way. It is all very frank and buoyant and breathless. In the end Valentine is cast aside without a partner in the dance; he "might as well be a married man already". There is a forecast of John Tanner in the captured, second-hand feeling which is so soon beginning to steal over the captured Duellist of Sex, and there is a hint of Ann in Gloria, as indeed in most of Shaw's women, and in every woman.

"Candida" is Shaw's treatment of the "French triangle"; that a normal woman is more apt

to love her husband than some other man, is its teaching. It is hard to say too much in praise of this beautiful play, and the serene, poised woman who dominates it. Yet it has excited varying comments; Candida is so far above the rest of the world in strength and freedom that few people can understand her. Filon treats the whole play as a farce and Candida as "l'incarnation d'un paradox d'auteur." Huneker, that impressionistic critic who, in proving that all Shaw's women are "unpleasant" says that "even the smiling Candida has a sub-acid quality that leaves a bad taste in the memory," is obliged to change his mind after he gets acquainted, and in "Iconoclasts", he eulogizes the play and the personality of "honest Candida" in no mean terms.

In analyzing the character of Candida one finds her a practical, mundane person, ordinary from the intellectual point of view without "grand esprit".[1] She is "quite unpoetic as with rare exceptions women are prone to be," with rather a genius for managing

1- Hamon, p. 143.

the affairs of everyday life. But she has a "grande âme", which reads into souls and sees things bare in their reality.[1] There is internal strife in all the rest of the characters. Candida alone has a serene soul. Eugene idolizes her with a poetic devotion which places her up among the rosy clouds; she is the "stuff of which poems and dreams are made" though she is practicality itself.[2] Candida realizes that she is far from being his ideal, and also that no woman ever could attain it. That is why she disillusions him lest some weaker woman cause him greater pain.

In still other respects is Candida the woman of to-morrow. She is emancipated from conventions of every sort including those of duty and marriage. Her relation with Morell is absolutely free; it is her love alone that binds her to him. Neither Eugene nor Morell understands this. Her husband sees that if she does not love him he must go, but he does not realize that if she did not love him she would

1- Hamon, p. 143.
2- Introduction to Vol. II, p. 25.

not be there at all. The choice is therefore a farce to Candida, although to Eugene and Morell it is a moment of anguish. In the famous "shawl" speech, the fundamental truth and purity of her nature scoffs at the conventions: "Ah, James, how little you understand me to talk of your confidence in what you call my goodness and purity! I would give them both to poor Eugene as willingly as I would give my shawl to a beggar dying of cold, if there were nothing else to restrain me. Put your trust in my love for you, James, for if that went, I should care very little for your sermons***."

Such a plea for love for its own sake in one of Shaw's characters is surprising. It proves his belief in the freedom of love, not free-love, but a burden to be equally borne by both partners in the yoke.[1] Nothing, "not heaven, nor purity, bolts, nor bars, will keep Candida with her husband if the hour strikes the end of her affection."[2] Here is Shaw's ideal of marriage; for him no re-

1- Huneker, p. 251-2.
2- Huneker, p. 253.

lation is beautiful per se; it must be made so. In marriage, in business, and in parenthood, "handsome is as handsome does." "Shall a man have his wife's love without working for it and deserving it?" is the question he answers with a decided negative. The farce bidding for Candida's hand drives home to every married person the insistent question. "Would he, or she, choose me of his own free will?" "Are you worthy of your wife? Is she worthy of you?" he demands in effect. "If your love is not mutual, then better go your ways, you profane it."[1]

In "Candida" Shaw has touched on some fundamental realities of marriage, and especially the "normal wife's attitude to the normal husband."[2] The play is human and general, not just English middle-class. Contrary to the "triangle" notion, a woman's favorite lover is most apt to be her husband. This is not a romantic fancy but a human fact. As Chesterton says, a woman's devotion to her husband is "not romantic but is still quite quixotic, in-

1- Huneker, p. 251.
2- Chesterton, p. 121.

sanely unselfish and yet quite cynically clear-sighted.[1] Candida is devoted to her husband but not prostrate at his feet; she sees his faults and his weakness, and that is why her love goes out to him. Another fundamental truth is emphasized by Morell when he says that people cannot dwell on the high summit very long; the poet believes that is the only place to dwell, and so it is, for him, alone. But the preacher, or rather the man, explains that the supreme moments of love must be earned by toiling on the plains of life, in the scullery, or in the pulpit "scouring cheap earthenware souls". Every hour of happiness must be paid for with hard unselfish work to make others happy.

Candida is Shaw's universal maternal spirit, the "femme-mère" Hamon names her. She loves both men, Eugene as she would a child and Morell as a child and as a man, the father of her children. Some have said she has never been in love with her husband, probably because she does not talk romantically about it all the time. This is absolutely

1- Chesterton, p. 121-2.

wrong; there is affinity of sex between them which does not exist between her and Marchbanks. Morell's fine qualities attract her love and yet he is the weakest one of her children because his spirit is clouded by a host of conventions. In this respect Eugene is stronger than Morell, but he is in the bonds of romantic convention. Because she loves Eugene she undeceives him; "her mission is *** not only to bruise hearts but to heal them." Eugene suffers because his delusion is gone; he has learned something and "that always feels as if you had lost something." Candida is not a woman of dreams but a very ordinary little housewife caressing her husband, "her great baby". But Eugene is stronger; all his life he has thought for himself and been alone; he sees that as a poet he must walk alone. Morell, splendid fellow that he is, needs just what she has given him, a castle to keep out little vulgar worries, the care for onions and paraffin and blacking, and the thousand things a woman joys in doing because

they mean happiness for a loved one. The paradoxically domestic part of Candida is after all no paradox. It is simply another manifestation of her feeling of motherhood. She is an ideal wife because she is an ideal mother. It is not hard to see why Morell worships her; she is a saint on earth, with the eyes and brow of a madonna, and warm human lips and cheeks, and kind ministering hands.

Nor is it hard to see why Proserpine, hot-tempered, fiery, emotional, gets tired of hearing people talk about Candida's goodness. Mr. James Morell's wife is so serene and perfectly suited to him that any woman of spirit, especially a cross-grained little spitfire like Prossy, secretly adoring the genial handsome clergyman, must be a little impatient at the harmony of relations which gives her not a point of superiority. Her starved little heart is touched by Eugene's piercing questions, but she is still conventional as the only way to defend herself. She is frank about everything but the

thing that means most to her. "Prossy's complaint", as Candida explains good-humoredly to Morell, is what many other people feel toward the dominant, splendid fellow. Just to admire him secretly and serve him in every way is the only happiness in Prossy's clouded soul. She is a clear figure and a convenient one in this play, presenting a contrast to Candida in her peppery temper, and to Eugene in her conventionality. The pathetic boy with the universal hunger for love in his heart and his words laden with the "tears of things" stretches out his hand as to another lonely human soul only to have it pierced by this "fagot d'épines."

"Arms and the Man" is concerned only incidentally with woman and her follies and vanities. Raina, whom Mr. Huneker calls a "thorough-going humbut, a sweet and fickle liar", embodies the delight in romance which puzzles and amuses the comfortably realistic mothers of young girls. When Bluntschli

surprises her romantic notions by explaining with good-natured directness what most soldiers are really like, she is wounded and revolted, but secretly much attracted by his absolute naturalness and reality. Raina's character is revealed with keen and amiable satire; her pretensions to culture typical of the nouveau-riche the world over; her striving for effect in listening around the corner until the most impressive moment for her to appear; her assumed disgust at the "coarseness" of the story of her own actions; her solemn pretensions to "the higher love" and "fine manner", so different from the "real manner"; her elaborate and nonchalant fibbing as occasion requires- all are singularly real and human.

The gradual disillusionment of Raina is artfully accomplished; she allows her real self to peep out in an impulse to shock Sergius, but quickly recovers her artificial manner in her fine talk about lying and gratitude, and "the one really beautiful

part of her life." Then she drops very suddenly from the heroic to the familiar when she finds that the Swiss soldier sees through her as no one else ever has; she really enjoys her disenchantment, and she is certainly more enjoyable when she is saying what she feels. "Hush, mother, you are making me ridiculous," is her final word concerning pretensions. With the "magerful" man she has captured, she will find a real happiness which will charm by its very novelty.

Catherine is a good secondary figure, this wife of a mountain-farmer, with her fashionable airs, her amusing delight and importance over the library and the electric bell, her romantic tendencies and inconsistent bursts of common sense. Louka, the proud, handsome serving-maid, dominant and wilful, with "a soul above being a servant", is quite the most attractive figure in the play. Clever and penetrating in her analysis of Raina and Sergius, she is quick to recognise and acknowledge sham and true

worth, especially in herself. She is another of Shaw's "natural" people, delightful in her frankness of speech, her quick, witty replies, her ability to attract the man she has "set her cap" for, and to find the sensitive parts of his romantic armor. Her character is attractive for its energy and individuality and for its meaning to the servant-problem. That people dominant mentally and physically are the type most attractive to the opposite sex is proved by the success of Bluntschli and Louka.

Of the women in the Pleasant Plays there is left only the "Lady" in the one-act piece called "The Man of Destiny". Although created to expose Napoleon's character, she occupies a place quite her own in the memory of the play. The Lady is "the right age" which seems to be the interesting one of thirty. Before she enters we have an account of her clever "managing" of the genus homo, though disguised as a boy. The Lieutenant con-

fesses that he was touched by the young man's remarks about his eyes, and his love-affairs, by his "generosity" in buying wine, and the confidence the young man placed in him. The Lieutenant denounces the coaxing, fawning, effeminate ways of the "young hound", and yet these are the very things which appealed to "the better side of his nature". The weakness and inconsistency of man under the influsnce of a clever woman, is held up to gentle scorn. Then the Lady enters and we are given an attractive picture showing Shaw's keen and artistic appreciation of beauty in a woman's dress and person.

The Lady tries her usual tactics on Napoleon, but finds that this bluff, unconventional fellow, treating her almost as he would another man, requires a new set of weapons. At first she is all at sea, but gradually he relaxes so that she can read his personality. Then she is prepared and leads the conversation a roundabout way to reach his vanity. In the long talk about fear and true courage she

pretends to discover that he is only a "womanish hero" because he wins battles for his country and humanity and not for himself. In her definition of such a hero she describes the courage of the Life-Force in woman: "My courage is mere slavishness: it is of no use to me for my own purposes. It is only through love, through pity, through the instinct to save and protect someone else, that I can do the things that terrify me." This ideal of self-sacrifice could not apply to anyone but a woman; a man would scoff at it; the "virtues" of the world, says the Lady, namely truth, unselfishness and the rest, are"only a want of being really, strongly, positively oneself." This is her master-thrust for Napoleon as Shaw conceives him; after the success of her intellectual appeal she feels safe in using the emotional weapons of flattery and worship of the Emperor. Near the end of the piece when a definite young man is about to be involved in trouble, the real woman comes to

the rescue and saves him. Even when it is unnecessary the Lady finds it impossible to resist flattering the Lieutenant; he is so easily pleased! It is fascinating to watch the play of the strong, well-matched personalities, each one gaining victories over the other. There is subtle and overpowering magic in the atmosphere as the two pairs of eyes are irresistibly drawn together over the burning letter- and the curtain steals down and hides them.

In the "Devil's Disciple" Shaw attacks several kinds of romantic lies and in so doing creates several interesting feminine personalities. Mrs Dudgeon should perhaps not be styled feminine; she lacks any element of grace or charm which might be supposed to cling to that word. She is the particular kind of devil that indulges in the bitterest ugliness, selfishness and cruelty under the names of duty and righteousness. Discomfort, denial and un-

happiness are the only virtues she can tolerate in others. Little can be said of her as a representative type of woman. It is an exaggerated and overdrawn picture of the severe Puritanic matron. Yet Shaw has good sense on his side when he says that even the most beautiful relation in life must be treated with respect to the facts. And how many women there- I know at least one- who hector and nag and bully their husbands and children and regard their family as depraved and themselves abused if their wishes are not complied with and affection poured upon them! The mother-child relation is a most delicate and sensitive thing requiring tender care. Shaw hints that her life and that of her children was warped and soured because her heart belonged to the scape-grace brother of her husband; hers was the far-reaching tragedy of a loveless marriage. It is the one redeeming touch in her character, but as one writer suggests, if her affection had been real surely some of it would have gone out to

his child, the poor little "motherless lone."[1] Hatred and jealousy and greed have choked any heart-throbs she might have been capable of in younger days.

Essie, the little outcast, is drawn with truth and sympathy. Her thin little body and hungry heart are both being starved and bruised in this "house of children's tears." She is so afraid and unhappy when anyone scolds or even patronizes her as Judith does that one writhes with anger and sympathy and loves Dick for his sweet manner with the child. Essie's dog-like affection for him, the one true soul she has known, is pathetic and beautiful. Even this little thumb-nail sketch seems to prove that Shaw has come under the spell of a child.

Judith is the weak, conventional heroine of this first of the Plays for Puritans. "Vitâlity", which troubles most of Shaw's women characters, is not one of her endowments. At first she regards Dick as the bold, bad man who will soil whatever

1- Barnicoat.

he touches; so she looked down upon him a little more than she does on everyone else. From this barely civil attitude she changes rather suddenly when her husband runs away much like a coward- and Shaw has made his conduct look very foolish at this point- she is disgusted with him, and her admiration instinctively goes out to Richard in his heroic act. She cannot imagine why a bad man should be a hero unless he is redeemed by love. Her impulses triumph over her religious beliefs and even over her marital tie and she tells Richard that she will fly with him, thinking that he is sacrificing himself for love of her. At this he says quite sternly: "If I said- to please you- that I did what I did ever so little for your sake, I lied as men always lie to women *** I had no motive and no interest *** I have been brought up standing by the law of my own nature; and I may not go against it, gallows or no gallows."

Here is a man who can do an heroic act without a "red-hot" motive to bring out his virtue.

It is Shaw's protest against the perpetual playing on the motive of sex. As Chesterton says, his key to most situations is "Ne cherchez pas la femme." When Anderson returns in the nick of time, Judith's love goes back to him in a flood, another example of the human facts of the "triangle" situation. She feels very foolish and makes Dick promise not to tell. It seems very true and "everyday".

An interesting phase of woman as Shaw sees her is worth noting. Dick is repeating his purpose to go through with the hanging to show his grit and loyalty. "That is the only force that can send Burgoyne back across the Atlantic and Mmake America a nation," he finishes, and Judith says with impatient practicality: "Oh, what does all that matter?" Do women receive as much inspiration from principles as men? Shaw says, through Dick Dudgeon, that they see the folly of these "notions". "Women have to lose those they love through them" is Judith's answer. Woman is more moved by the present human

agony and danger, than by a distant patriotic glory. Through the ages she has been the guardian and conservator of the life of the race; if she had forgotten it and gone off by herself to dream dreams, it would have perished. The primitive woman speaks through Judith in terms of stern and necessary realism.

One of the few women that inspires the admiration of every sensible critic of Shaw, is Lady Cicely in "Captain Brassbound's Conversion." Chesterton speaks of the "bottomless beatitude" of her character and proclaims her "one of the most living and laughing things that her maker ever made." All the enjoyment and moral of the play are in the contrasts and surprises and fulfillments in the charming manner of Lady Cicely. She carries with her a marvellous vitality and humanity that floods about her and envelops every human soul within radius of her bright face and confiding handshake. She informs every possible

enemy that he has a "nice face", or "a frank and truthful manner" or such "fine eyes"; how could he possibly have any evil designs? "I've been among savages", Lady Cicely tells us gaily, "cannibals and all sorts. Everybody said they'd kill me- But when I met them, I said Howdyedo? and they were quite nice. The kings always wanted to marry me." Everyone around her is convicted, almost against his will, of generosity, thoughtfulness, and general nobility. Everything goes her way because no one dares to resist her "obstinate sweetness, her imperturbable confidence, her caressing authority."[1] To her "all men are children in the nursery."

This optimism and philanthropic love is not wholly the result of her disposition. She is a clever woman, and realizes the power of a tactful, trustful manner. As she sits tranquilly sewing throughout a heated and dangerous discussion she chooses her weapons for the conversion she is to effect. Her care for the under-arm seams of the coat, her touching

1- Filon, p. 430.

the sore spot of Brassbound's family likeness for Hallam, her penetration of his "filial" devotion, and finally the ineffable kindness to the starved, warped soul of her ministering woman's hands as she adjusts his coat,- all are weapons in the triumph over his vengeful nature. When his heart is torn she is ready with the healing of her love and voice to remind him of the good deeds he has done. In his interest again, and in the interests of real truth and justice she winds Sir Howard around her finger with consummate art, and gets him to let her tell "the whole truth". She is unscrupulous counsel and unscrupulous witness combined, in carrying out this mission, and later tells Brassbound, with philosophic sweetness that "women spend half their lives telling little lies for men and sometimes big ones."

The secret of her success in bringing people around to her way of thinking, and loving them out of their meanness, she gives at the end: "I've never been in love with any real person. How could

I manage people if I had that mad little bit of self left in me? That's my secret." The only time she is not mistress of herself is when she is letting her thoughts turn to love and her own future. In losing herself she has found her great power.

The character of Cleopatra, remarkable as it is, has little significance in the study of Shaw's interpretation of woman. As an attempt to tell the truth about a history-distorted figure it compares well with the revivifying of Caesar in the same play. Cleopatra was sixteen when Caesar went to Egypt, more developed than an occidental girl would be at that age, but a queen, uneducated and pampered, and therefore still very much of a child. The superstition and nervousness and lust for power in her nature are all adolescent traits,but they are heightened by the ignorance and crude passion of the hot-blooded Oriental. The power of Shaw to analyze human nature at a very delicate age in a far-away country is proved by this picture of the child-queen, quivering with superstitious fear, awakening to a

consciousness of her own power to execute the merciless cruelty dormant in her nature, and- afraid of the dark! "The childishness I have ascribed to her", says Shaw, "as far as it is childishness of character and not lack of experience, is not a matter of years. It may be observed in our own climate at the present day in many women of fifty." In spite of her youth and her oriental nature, she exhibits at times qualities which are eternally feminine. Ftatateeta is a good "tragi-comique", an amusing yet sinister figure, uglier and more fearful in her wickedness than the darkest of villains.

"Man and Superman" is literally packed full of interesting comments on woman and her problems; it is the climax of Shaw's theories. Many of these have been touched upon in the discussion of marriage and the Life-Force. The play must be read and re-read many times to be fully appreciated. The much questioned Ann Whitefield is Shaw's every-

woman, a part of the primitive order of things in a modern world, dominant, elemental, knowing what she wants and going after it. To accomplish this end she fabricates most elaborate systems of lies; puts the responsibilities of all her acts and opinions on her helpless mother, in the role of dutiful, affectionate daughter; does everything she wishes to do without taking other people's feelings into account; charms men by a subtle power they can neither define nor resist,- and is termed, and with some truth, too, liar, bully, coquette, hypocrite, vampire and beast of prey.

For all that Ann is not unattractive. There is a certain satisfaction in seeing the primitive selfishness that lies at the core of most of us, without the veneers of feminine virtue. One has a gleeful sympathy with Ann at certain moments, as when she admits Jack may be unwilling, "but then no man is really willing when you go after him." She anticipates great fun in overcoming Tanner's

unfavorable impression of her; sometimes she will really enrapture him. Her appreciation of Tavy's simplicity is contagious; she advises him to keep away from women and only dream about them; she herself has sense enough not to want any illusions to disappoint. Then she tells Tanner to his great dismay that dominant men like him get married and romantic genuises like Tavy do not. It is some such remark that precipitates the following dialogue:

Tanner (explosively) Ann: I will not marry you. Do you hear? I won't, won't, won't, won't, WON'T marry you.

Ann (placidly) Well, nobody axd you sir she said, sir she said, sir she said. So that's settled.

An interesting forecast of Ann's future life is given by a member of her own sex.[1] She ridicules the idea of Ann's acting from maternal instincts. "Maternal fiddlesticks! If Ann ever does have any children *** Mrs. Whitefield will

1- Barnicoat.

bring them up, Tanner all the while talking ***
or they will be neglected. She will hound Tanner
to an early grave, taking care to preserve her own
youth and charm and seeing that everyone else is
virtuous though she is not *** As a widow she will
cast her nets for another, ***." As Shaw has endowed Ann, this is certainly not an impossible picture.

Besides the discussion of the more weighty
questions of love, marriage, and the Life-Force, the
Don Juan scene throws additional light on Shaw's
ideas of romance. Juan tells how the idealization of
woman, aided by her cunning silence, led him into her
clutches, and once there she took good care of her
prey. In the tense moment of love, says Juan, as
did Valentine, all his illusions were gone, his
dreams empty, his brain clear and "saying No on every
issue" and yet life seized him and threw him into
the woman's arms. Tanner and Ann are at least
agreed that marriage is not romance whatever else
it may be. Ann tells Tavy that if he is to love

her he must lose her. Tanner advises him to get his inspiration from Ann at a distance as did Dante from Beatrice, and Petrarch from Laura; if he marries her, at the end of a week he will find no more inspiration in her than in a plate of muffins. "You think I shall tire of her!" exclaims Tavy, and Tanner says, "Not at all: you don't get tired of muffins." However cynical it sounds this is sound human truth.

Mrs. Whitefield is a singularly human old lady. A peg for Ann to hang responsibilities on, she knows she is silly and negligible, and, though she cannot assert herself and expose Ann as she deserves, at least she never submits in silence. She is only one of the victims which Ann has "smashed and nonentitized." When Ann is not around she expands almost into shrewdness with Tanner and Octavius. She and Jack agree that Ann is a highly objectionable young lady; but when Tanner remarks that she detests Ann she is horrified that he should think her so wicked and unnatural. "We can't help loving our own

blood relations." Nevertheless she complains that other people's children are so much nicer to her than her own; Violet pets and comforts her and allows her to prattle away out of sight and hearing.

Violet is a cool, practical business woman, not unemotional, as witness her unconventional love and marriage, but once her husband is captured, determined to secure all the property that is coming to her. She has to keep a tight rein on sentimental Hector and manage his father very tactfully. She is not sweet nor lovable, but her character is not entirely at fault. Ann says she is as hard as nails, but it is a compliment in her estimation. Violet can get what she wants without making people sentimental about her; alas, poor Ann! When Tavy says: "Oh I am sure Violet is thoroughly womanly at heart," Ann turns on him with this practical thrust: "Is it unwomanly to be thoughtful and business-like and sensible? Do you want Violet to be an idiot?" To be sure, these are valuable assets, but they need

not make her entirely cold and lacking in charm. Even her kisses and passionate words seem mechanical.

That Shaw knows how to paint charming women is proved again in "The Doctor's Dilemma" by the attractive creature whom he endows with the quaint Cornish name of Jennifer. Something of the beauty and wild grace of the sea and coast of Cornwall is built into her face and figure. Ridgeon, who is extremely susceptible to beauty in woman (and is not Shaw?) is only one of the many men whom quite unconsciously she brings under her spell. If anyone believes that Shaw sees only "wiles" in womankind, let him meet Jennifer, and Candida and Cicely, to feel this writer's sense of a bright, beautiful woman's great natural charm. There is not a particle of deceit in Jennifer's make-up; she is frank in showing her likes and dislikes, joy and disappointment. Her intuition is strong and true in judging the doctors; in all her ways she is as

fresh and naîve as an unspoiled child. Her faith in her husband is not to be shaken. His superiority and cleverness are hers in a way, because others are distracted by his peculiar ideas about money and morality. In a way everyone knew him better than she did, yet no one could say a word against him to her. Her beauty and faith were shields against such wounds. She will not even believe that mere vain doctors could have power over so pure a light; it was God's will. And one wonders if she is perhaps not nearer the true interpretation of his character than any of the others. The man of genius uses her love and care for his own highest ends, just as she wants him to. He is not selfish; as he himself says: "Art is too large for that." He does not stoop to sacrifice for: "Women know," says Jennifer, at once child and seer, "that self-sacrifice is vain and cowardly." And yet there is love between the Artist and the child-woman, of the most romantic and enduring kind, though perhaps unevenly divided. In her

love and beauty and brightness, he will have his hold upon the world, the only kind of immortality he wants. She is able to bear in her face and garments, the beauty of all the pictures he has never painted and the memory of the happiness he gave her. She is forever blessed by the "Art that made these hands blessed." His presence remains with her even more definitely after the poor white clay is gone. Life and death are forever more beautiful to her because of his life. The immortality of love and beauty and high aim are the lessons taught almost incidentally by Shaw's play for doctors.

"Getting Married" has been referred to several times before. It is a veritable plum-pudding of ideas concerning marriage. Almost everyone in the piece represents some phase of the marriage-question. Miss Lesbia and Leo, Mrs. Bridgenorth who took naturally to marriage and found one of those ideally happy ones; Edith and Sykes, the

young couple realizing all the inconsistencies and absurdities of the present customs of marriage yet in the end sneaking off and getting married in spite of it all; Collins and his tiresome domestic spouse, "such an out-an-out wife and mother that she's hardly a responsible human being outside of her house." Mrs. Collins never allowed him any liberties nor any women friends, and would not understand that "married people must have vacations from each other to keep them fresh."

Mrs. George is the one real character in the play, and one of the oddest and most striking that Shaw ever depicted. Mrs. George, unlike Mrs. Collins, has had several vacations from her husband, and men friends of all sorts and ages, "and it certainly made her interesting and gave her a lot of sense." At the last, in the wonderful scene where she becomes "mesmerized" and speaks "like the whole human race giving you a bit of its mind", the soul of universal woman cries out in

the sublime poetry which Shaw sometimes attains. Here is a woman whose soul was awakened to love and life by a preacher's voice. She was not afraid to be herself and at last she has risen above her own earthly nature.

"I am become a voice for them that are afraid to speak,

A cry for the hearts that break in silence."

Then the world-woman speaks, in language as rhythmic and beautiful as this "couplet" I have quoted, of the glorious inspiration her love gives to a man. After this priceless gift, this depth and height of ecstasy, the knowledge of the stars and winds of heaven, paradise and eternity, must the woman be also the drudge of man, to give him her body and mind and toil, and bear him up in her arms? The men listen to her in amazement, wondering according to their different creeds, if she is a saint or a devil or a queer puzzle. Her last words reveal the tragedy of all these attitudes:

"Take me as I am; I ask no more *** I am a woman: a human creature like yourselves. Will you not take me as I am?" We feel, with Mrs. George and her maker, that all this was "just bursting to be said." What women need more than they need marriage is what the church calls "Christian fellowship."

In his last book, containing "John Bull's Other Island" and "Major Barbara", Shaw was busy with other questions than those pertaining to romance and woman. He could not create women who were not significant, but they are less important to this study. Nora, in the first of these two plays is a pale, delicate-looking little old maid of Ireland, the very opposite of the usual stage Irish-woman. To Broadbent, that most unreasonably insufferable Englishman, she is attractive because she is so much more "ethereal" than the buxom English ladies. To Doyle, her countryman and former playfellow, she is "an everyday woman fit only for the eighteenth

century, helpless, useless, almost sexless, an invalid without the excuse for disease, an incarnation of everything in Ireland that drove him out of it". Shaw should know the real Irish woman as she is at home, and it is probably a true picture. In the moonlight scene the Englishman is far more poetical and fanciful than prosaic Nora, who takes gallantry as a matter of course, and persuades him that he is drunk! She is endowed with a sense of humor which, in this play at least, is not distinctively Irish, but rather un-English. Nora has some ideals of purity which perhaps are a little overdrawn but are not unworthy; Broadbent says he must feed her up, "she's weak and it makes her fanciful!" Nora is more than once disgusted with his silliness and coarseness; the bargain she is dragged into at the end seems unreal. The only ray of light is the fact that there is a real life ahead of her instead of a moping, shut-in life of dreams. But - life with Broadbent!

The last of the longer plays contains the woman who is the best-loved of all Shaw's female characters, Major Barbara, the gentle idealist of the Salvation Army. She is admired, by most critics I believe, because she exhibits Christian sweetness and power, and - she has no unconventional views about life. The critics can draw a deep breath and enjoy her. Yet she is by no means an "old-fashioned" woman. Barbara is the only one of the family who is not to be awed by her mother. At the end of the first scene, after we have revelled with Shaw in the depiction of the domineering Lady Britomart, she tells us that Barbara "has developed a propensity to have her own way and order people about that quite cows me sometimes. It's not ladylike: I'm sure I don't know where she picked it up. Anyhow, Barbara shant bully _me_." And we look forward to Barbara!. Her earnestness and happy common-sense in religion are thoroughly enjoyable. Her penetrating kindly, humorous manner with the men who have

drifted into the shelter, and the steady, soothing voice that never "lets go", make one feel that salvation of souls is a practical, beautiful thing in spite of all the shouting and frenzy of the street demonstrations.

Barbara's faith in her work in the world and in her Father, whose work it is, shines out even stronger and wiser at the end. Serene and true, she faces the facts, the acceptance of tainted money showing her the weakness of the Salvation Army tactics. She sees that poverty must be wiped out first - God expects that - and then there are still souls to be saved. "Let God's work be done for its own sake: the work he had to create us to do because it cannot be done except by living men and women. When I die, let him be in my debt, not I in his." And later she says, overjoyed at the recovery of her belief in life and its work: "Oh, did you think *** that I, who have stood in the streets, and taken my people to my heart, and talk-

ed of the holiest and greatest things with them, could ever turn back and chatter foolishly to fashionable people about nothing in drawing-rooms?" The new woman of the best type, with greater worlds than that of "society" or even the home, with a heart big enough for humanity's problems, speaks through Barbara in these last words.

CONCLUSION.

After studying Shaw's ideal of woman and her place in the social order as expressed in the various plays and prefaces, one cannot cast it aside as insignificant and unworthy of notice. In every woman character, he had a truth to express concerning the women of the world and the work they should be doing. Sometimes this is a warning, an exposure of faults and weaknesses large and small; sometimes the fundamental truth he has discovered, for instance woman's really active part in "love-making", is so emphasized in the presentation that it seems untrue; and always Shaw's hatred of sham and hypocrisy and his respect for honest impulses, color his pictures of men and women. They may express their thoughts and feelings more freely than they would in life; but be sure it is true human nature.

Again, Shaw has studied the beauties of

both face and character in the women he has known, and has put these into the children of his pen, together with his ideal for woman's larger growth and development. And then we have the serene mother Candida, and Cicely the warm-hearted friend, Jennifer the self-sacrificing idealist, and Barbara, embodying the happy Christian spirit. And always they are developed with such skillful touches of life in motives and manners that the character is real, the ideal a human possibility.

Stevenson, writing to William Archer concerning one of Shaw's novels, added in a whimsically shocked postscript: "But I say, Archer; My God! what women!" There is not alone masculine shrinking from unromantic truths about woman-kind in the solitary comment of that wise, sensitive soul; it expresses also an unconscious, almost startled admiration of the splendid vigor and reality of these women. They may be unpleasant- one may want to deny them one and all - but they

are not to be ignored; one is obliged to think about them once he has given them a hearing. And then one must admit that Shaw's motive is absolutely pure and high. To dispel all so-called chivalrous notions about woman that seem to elevate her but really do not, and to place her in her rightful place far above romance to work out her own salvation side by side with man, is Shaw's purpose in the women of his plays. Directly and indirectly they express his high ideals, like those of the truest men and women of his time, for the womanhood of the future. x