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THE MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEXES.

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The Mental Characteristics of the Sexes.

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MEN and women are not alike. Such a statement of course does not have reference to the organs or functions of reproduction, for on these differences the classification of the sexes is founded, but the assertion implies that there are other differences—the functions of other organs differ—and these differences, while not as distinguishable as the purely sexual, are nevertheless sufficiently distinct to mark the sexes.

The workings of the muscles and the exhibitions of cerebral action are not alike in the two sexes. These departments of action are probably farthest removed from purely sexual functions; they are those departments usually considered of highest rank, and are those in which the adjustability of the individual to the environment is executed, and are those in which we would suppose men and women would not differ; still, their differences are such that the sexes can be readily distinguished by means of them. Men and women do not have the same methods of thinking, nor do they have the same methods of running or walking. While in these departments of action there are the same general plans of structure and of function, still there are usually sufficient differences to readily render the sexes distinguishable. In those finer distinctions, that we generalize under the head of character, for instance, our ideals of the best types of man and woman are different. A typical manly character differs from a typical womanly character. "Venus de Medici" is not like "Apollo Belvedere" in the statue; and our ideas of Portia are not like those of Julius Cæsar; the Maid of Orleans was not a warrior like Napoleon; nor are Mrs. Hemans's writings like Shakespeare's.

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Why there should be sexual differences of these kinds is a pertinent question to ask, and many have been the answers given to it.

The explanation most frequently given and the one that has in it much of truth and plausibility, is, such differences have arisen and are maintained by the subjugation of woman by man. Most writers go back, as a corner-stone from which to start, to the statement that woman has constantly been held in servitude, more or less abject, by man, which fact is sufficient reason why she is not as fully or similarly developed in these particulars. The burden of their argument is, that, if allowed in society the same latitude of action as men, by the men, the women would in time develop into human beings with similar brain and muscle capabilities. Their constant servitude is what has kept women back.

Whether the differences between the sexes in their specialties of muscular and mental action are those of superiority or inferiority it is not the object of this paper to assert, but recognizing that there are such sex differences, I think we can find other broader and deeper reasons to assign for them than those mentioned. Nor do I think that the fashionable Darwinian principles "sexual selection, that is, through the contest of rival males," or "natural selection, that is, from success in the general struggle for life"—the "survival of the fittest" principle—will account for sex differences except in a few particulars. Why the males vary more than the females these principles do not fully explain. There are certain subjective causes beneath the influence of these principles.

The origin of the sexes is one of the results in the evolution of the methods of reproduction. In studying the animal kingdom, as in everything else, there is a regular gradation in the methods of reproduction, from the simpler to the more complex. And I think if we will study the evolutionary history of reproduction we will find the fundamental causes at work that produce sex-differences, such as I have been describing.

The simplest method of reproduction is by *segmentation*, in which the parent individual merely divides into two or more parts or segments. This was probably the original method; all the others are variations or modifications of it. Another method, probably a step higher, is by *gemmation*, where the second individual is a bud or offshoot from the body of the parent. A third method is by *minute cells*. Many animals low in the scale of life propagate by detachment of minute cells, and all those of the advanced orders of life do.

Omne vivum ex ovo is not strictly true in the sense in which it was first meant, though in a very large proportion of cases microscopically minute cells, ova, begin the new being. The essential part of all genetic cells seems to be a central portion usually called the nucleus, protoplasmic in appearance, which has the property, or is specialized to reperform or repeat the *modes of action* of its ancestry. Such a repetition is a simple process in low forms of life, but it is a long and complex chapter in high life. Soon after detachment, the protoplasmic nucleus begins the repetition of ancestral life. Starting from the bottom of the ladder as protoplasm it quickly begins to repeat in more or less accurate detail all the morphological and physiological evolutionary acts of its ancestry, in the assumption of parts, organs and functions. Those early chapters of evolutionary history that have been repeated over and over again millions of times, the genetic cell of an animal of a high order will condense into a few weeks or months of embryonic and fœtal life; those modes of action of more recent acquisition, it repeats more slowly.

Gestation, or the function some animals have acquired of carrying within the body of the parent, for a longer or a shorter period, their genetic cells, until they reach a degree of development or growth sufficient for them to maintain a separate existence, was a very valuable acquisition in evolutionary life. It led to more successful modes of living, more advanced races—was an advantageous acquisition in race progress.

Many forms of animals, some of them not so very low in the scale, gestate *singly* their own genetic cells. Such animals Seibold a number of years ago designated *partheno-genetic*, from *parthenos*, a virgin. The offspring of such animals arise from single genetic cells. Another step higher in animal evolution was the assumption by certain individuals of the faculty of *not gestating* their own genetic cells, but of turning them over to others to gestate for them in combination with their cells. The offspring of such animals arise from combined cells. In this way were evolved the sexes. The original, antedating habit was probably partheno-genetic and partheno-gestation probably antedated sexed gestation. Single-cell-genesis antedated combined-cell-genesis.

The female of sexed races therefore more nearly represents the original type, and the male is a modification or variation from it.

Partheno-gestation was an advantageous step and led to to more rapid advance than gemmation and segmentation.

In those races of animals where gestation is a very lengthy process, so far as race progress is concerned, it is very evident sexed-gestation was another advantageous step, very advantageous compared with partheno-gestation.

The males, having acquired the faculty of not gestating their own genetic cells, are not limited and confined by the weight of gestation or by the maternal care of the young, consequent to it. In those races, the human species for instance, where gestation is a very lengthy and weighty process, and infancy a tedious one, as well as childhood, requiring constant and long-continued effort on the part of the mother, the female is very much restrained in her actions by such functions. We can readily see how the male in such races, possessing the faculty of not gestating his own genetic-cells, being at greater liberty than the female, and thereby meeting a more varied environment, gains new modifications faster than she does.

The combined cell of sexed animals, the offspring, the second generation, is the result of the modes of action of two parental lines, and in this way has an advantage over any partheno-genetic offspring. It receives its heritage from two sources instead of one, and is thereby doubly liable to receive the advantages of new modifications. The offspring has an additional advantage also in decidedly sexed animals. It has one of its parents more at large than the other, in more frequent conflict with new surroundings, and more frequently a transmitter of new acquisitions. The successful modifications of the male parent are more frequent than those of the female because of his larger experience. Adjustments to new experiences are more frequent with him than with her, hence race progress with sexed animals is a more rapid process than with partheno-genetic. The highly advanced animals we witness are all sexed, and we may readily see how they have reached their prominence by being sexed.

The evolution of the sexes and of the sexed races, studied in this light, gives us the proper or the more fundamental key to the explanation of the differences between the sexes.

We readily see now how the male all through the animal kingdom is the more varied member. Naturalists have long noticed the greater frequency of male variations compared with female. In allied species of animals the males are, as a rule, more unlike than the females. The females among birds and insects of allied species are often very much alike, while the males are very different.

New organs of battle, horns, spurs, tusks; new varieties of color and new growths of hair and feathers; new notes of voice, musical, calling and challenging are, as a rule, first acquired by the male animals. The young of all animals are more like the females than the males. Young males are like young females, and more like adult females than adult males. When the young males begin to put on their sexuality, they take up the variations of the race and become unlike females.

These facts, which could be abundantly illustrated, all point to the generalization of the statement that the male is the more variable; and to my mind, there is no better explanation than it is because he has acquired the habit of non-gestation. Sexuality is a grand natural "division of labor," and was a highly advantageous acquisition.

In those lines or departments of action in which the race of animals is progressing or modifying, we most generally find the male to lead and the female to follow. From all this we may then generalize the statement that the female is the more stable, fixed and conservative of the two, a more true representative of original race characteristics; the male is a representative of the recent variations of the race. The one in her habits of action is more conservative; the other is more alterative and progressive.

With such an understanding of the evolutionary origin of the sexes, and of the evolutionary growth and acquisition of sex characteristics common to all the animal kingdom, we can much more advantageously approach the subject of the sexual differences between men and women in the human race.

Cerebral development and cerebral functions are the specialty of the human species. In the muscular system and in the functions of other organs man is very much like other animals—is not superior to many of them. The department of mental acquisitions, on the other hand, is the direction in which he has far outstripped the others. I think it can be shown that in this department also, the same general rule holds true, the male leads, the female follows; the male is variable and progressive, the female typical and conservative.

Herbert Spencer says, "Women are less modifiable than men." Again he says, "The relative conservatism of women, their greater adhesion to established ideas and practices, is manifest in many civilized and semi-civilized societies." Another writer says, "Man's characteristic is to make new adjustments and to modify old ones." Says

Van de Warker, "Mentally she is the plastic material which takes its form from the protean phases of life around her. She is spiritually the resultant of her moral atmosphere." Romanes says, "The inferiority (of woman) displays itself in a comparative absence of originality;" again he says, "For it is a matter of ordinary comment that in no one department of creative thought can women be said to have at all approached men." Women seldom make inventions or discoveries. Established customs, rules, habits, usages of society, women are more inclined than men to hold to and observe. They are more influenced by public opinion, and by rules of decorum and propriety. For this reason woman is more moral than man. "Propensity to crime defined by actual commission is four times as great in man as in woman," says Van de Warker. He deduced this statement from criminal statistics. Says he again, "Woman wields a sort of moral inhibitory power. * * * The moral influence of woman upon society is powerful, but it is negative rather than positive."

Woman is more ready than man to accept rules of conduct because they are the established customs of society. Custom and fashion are her objects of study, not to modify them, but to adopt, observe and teach them. Public opinion and the sentiments of others environ her and she assumes her character from them as she finds them. She does not reason to vary; a woman's argument is, "It is so because it is so." Says Lecky, "They very rarely love *truth*, though they are passionately fond of what they call *the truth*." This means woman does not study truth in the abstract, as an object to be sought with a purpose, if necessary, of modifying existing opinions into new ideas, but she speaks of "the truth" as an entity already fixed, to be studied as a matter of fact. Her idea of right conduct is the observance of the rules already established. Hence she is more moral, more religious than man. Conservatism in many particulars is an excellent trait: in her conservatism woman is better than man. She does not

try to change as much as he. She is very much more ready to take advice than man, and makes the opinions of others more largely her rule of conduct. She does not study to modify the methods of work or duty assigned to her; she follows the instructions more faithfully; she more generally studies to please; she cooks, dresses or labors to please others' tastes; she has more tact and aptitude in learning and in observing the niceties of politeness and decorum; she "behaves," therefore, better, as a rule. In their sexual relations towards each other man is the aggressive, woman the passive party; man the courting, woman the courted; man the seducing, woman the seduced.

Woman is more intolerant of wrong conduct in others and has no patience, particularly with her own sex, in failures "to do right." Because of her shaping her judgments from the opinions of others, in one case she will be an excessively austere judge, in another, a too sympathetic one.

Erring young women are spoken of as "giddy-headed," meaning they have proved weak in their consistency to rule. Erring young men are spoken of as "fool-hardy," meaning they have proved faulty in judgment. Man is supposed to reason out his rules of conduct; woman is supposed to accept hers already made. Excellence on the woman's part therefore means excellent observance. Good judgment with her means capacity in compiling and selecting and observing. On man's part good judgment means capacity in his variations. Her sins are those of omission; his sins are those of commission. There is more malice-aforethought in his viciousness than in hers.

From the natural, the scientific, the evolutionary standpoint, it is very evident that woman holds her peculiarities from other than conventional or social reasons. Her characteristics are more fundamental than to be the result of human society alone. She holds them under the same general plan as females of other sexed animals.

The truth is, she is the typical member, while man is the variable. Writers, in considering sex differences usually start out with the assumption that man is the typical member. They even call woman an incomplete and undeveloped man, and reasoning from man as the type of the race they attempt to account for the peculiarities of woman as variations from his standard. On the other hand, reasoning from abundant analogies throughout all Biology and Zoology the very opposite is the case—man is the variation and woman is the type.

Whatever vocation woman may take as a means of making a living, and no matter how much liberty of choice and latitude of action is allowed her, these fundamental principles will always prevail; she will be a woman still. Race continuance and race progress will have to be worked out along the channels of previous action, so that she will have to continue in her maternal sphere. There is no way of daughters being born but of a woman, and female traits are matters of hereditary descent.

In pursuing the so-called men's vocations,—and they are called and are naturally more men's than women's, because they are aggressive and competitive,—in some lines or some departments of them womanly ways of thought and action may prove very efficient; for instance, any pursuit in which there is routine work requiring deftness, docility and constancy, the woman will be very expert. In medicine she will be a routinist and empirical, her writings and teachings will probably be excellent as compilations and expositions of current literature. In law she will not succeed in the competitive field, though her opinions may be excellent as exhibitions of rule and precedent, not as generalizations containing new ideas or thoughts. In the pulpit she is sure to be religiously orthodox. Study of past history and of present conditions of society all tend to confirm the statement that among men, as among all other animal species, race progress is principally worked out by the males.

Another observation I believe will bear ready proof; that it is well, as a race characteristic, to see the sex-differences well marked. The men should be manly, the women should be womanly. I have but to use the terms to be understood, and in the understanding of them is what I have been describing. Womanly means conservation, constancy, devotion, dutifulness, intuitive reasoning. Manly means aggressiveness, progressiveness, modifiability, argumentative reasoning. By reason of habits founded on the human method of reproduction, the one is more fixed, hence less adventurous, the other more at large, hence more adventurous. Excellency of judgment on the part of one leads to hesitancy in taking risks, conservatism; we sometimes call it timidity or fear. Excellency of judgment on the part of the other leads to successful adventures, well-planned changes; hence race and society progress. To learn the past history of a race study the women; to learn its future prospects, study the men. If the race is advancing you will see exhibited in the women firmness and constancy of conduct, fidelity to the standard of conduct already achieved. In the men you will see these same traits, with additions of excellent variability—they are progressive. A highly evolved, highly civilized race has excellences of this kind, and when the race is at its best—most progressive—these sex differences will be most marked, most decided. When the race declines, becomes non-progressive, the men become effeminate,—the men and women together less true and constant to race acquisitions and raits. "They forget the traditions of their fathers." Degeneracy means this in the individual and in the race. The men degenerate first and draw the women and children after them.