

What is "FEMINISM"?

BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN.

WHAT indeed? Here is a question as big as the better half of the world, and as small as the tightest little hard-boiled prejudice of the meanest mummified relic of an ancestral mind, an inherited mind, a mind that never takes a step of its own volition, or sits, immovable, as it was carefully instructed to sit.

Feminism, really, is the social awakening of the women of all the world. It is that great movement, partly conscious and more largely unconscious, which is changing the center of gravity in human life. We have had, all these ages, a man-made world, a world in which women were loved as a sex, valued as mothers, and exploited as servants. Outside of being loved, being valued, being exploited, they had no existence. Talk of "the submerged tenth"—they have been the submerged half. "Feminism" is their emergence.

Women are coming out, coming up, coming forward, by millions and millions. What is the nature of this movement?

It is as manifold as modern life, and as simple as any other process of nature. Women are going through, in a century or so, swiftly, and in large measure voluntarily, the same steps of social progress which men have been struggling through in hundreds of thousands of years.

Man's Mistakes and Successes. We have to thank men for all their magnificent achievements in this long period of social evolution; for all their inventions, discoveries, manufactures; for art and science, religion, education, and politics—as we find them.

We have to blame men for an unconscionable delay in all this; for spending 99-100 of their time in fighting over what they made, invented and discovered; and for saddling the growing world with huge unnecessary evils, such as war, intemperance and prostitution.

We have to thank men for all the loving kindness, the wise helpfulness, the justice and generosity which has been given to women; and we have to blame men for a long black record of rank injustice, cruelty and the most violent and unfair opposition to every step of women's upward progress.

Feminism covers each of these steps. It is the movement for education of women, for higher education of women, for professional and industrial education of women and for their full economic independence.

It covers the physical vigor and freedom of women; their mental activity, their larger moral influence, the new demand for chastity in

men that they may be fit for nobler fatherhood.

It includes the suffrage movement as one of its manifestations and is clearly expressed in the enormous growth of women's clubs and societies, federated into world organizations.

This steady forging ahead of women has been necessarily observed from the beginning. It was no hole and corner enterprise. Every woman who so strove and expanded "made herself conspicuous"—at first. She who was supposed to be utterly out of sight, and out of mind, unless wanted; she whom the Oriental husband designates as "the mean one"—or worse; who was expected to efface herself always, has been coming out of her seclusion by every door and appearing in increasing numbers in every department of life.

She has become so numerous, so solidly established on these new grounds, that a woman who holds the wholly ignorant, helpless and subordinate position so common a century or more ago is now the conspicuous one.

All this, and more, is the world-movement for which we have so recently coined the word "feminism."

The Fear of a Word.

This being what it is, we should look with scientific interest at the painful picture of it held by those who cry aloud of its dangers. What do they think it is, these timid souls who so readily accept a change, who are so satisfied with the world as it was, and its rate of progress?

Their first horror is that it is taking woman out of the home, and this seems the ultimate evil to many. They are so immovably convinced that women are "house-hoos"—house-beasts—domestic animals, and that they have no legitimate human relations outside that house. Then, chased by their own terrors, they imagine that if women do have outside interests and activities they must therefore unavoidably neglect the home, neglect the husband, neglect the children; and so, in hideous downward rush, forswear all decency, all right personal relations, and plunge with a miraculous double action into preferred celibacy and free love.

Those who thus fear Feminism seem equally convinced of both these evils. It would appear, judging from what they dread, that women, given freedom, either hate men, or have the most unlimited demand for them. If that is so, what a pleasant picture it presents of "the home," with the woman compelled to remain in it!

Who believes that women do not, by nature, love their homes or their children; that they will cease to do housework as soon as they can do nothing else; and therefore, we can only judge that in all this worldfull of "happy homes," there are but hopeless women slaves, women who prefer celibacy forced into unwilling marriage, women who prefer free love forced into submission to one master.

The feminists do not say this; the anti-feminists say it, in their frantic fear of freedom for women. They are so pitifully wrong!

They have not the faintest knowledge of what the female sex really is. Listen now:

First, the female is the race-type—not the male. The male is the sex-type, especially, and then human—as far as his masculinity allows. His being a male is desire, combativeness, and that impulse to self-expression which puts the tail on the peacock, makes the



rooster crow, and the nightingale—and tom-cat—sing. These essential masculine characteristics have survived all the changes of human life, through all these struggling ages, and are still visible. No Direct Change. Learn then, O trembling anti-feminists, who seem to feel that whereas women are a sex and nothing but a sex, give 'em the least chance to be anything else and they at once leave off being women, that the sex distinction of women is the Fact in life—namely Motherhood. It will not come off. Women will always be mothers, and

will become far better mothers than they are now. Women will always love men. They always have, even with the kind of men the past has given them, even the kind of "treatment they have had to bear. With that fact in mind need we doubt that they will love the wiser, cleaner, nobler men who come? Women will always love children, not only as well, but better, far more wisely and potently; the past and present treatment of children in the world only shows how helpless were their mothers. As for housework, it is quite true that women of the 20th century will refuse to be contented with a grade of work parallel to bronze knives and wooden ploughs, but they will learn to fulfill the same needs, better, more economically, in more modern ways. Now, as to the pet bugaboo of the anti-feminists—Free Love! It is true that some women are licentious, and changeable. They are not a drop in the bucket compared to men so affected, but there are some. It is true, further, that among millions of women in the feminist movement there are some of this kind, and it is in the nature of those morbid and dissatisfied in sex relation to make a great deal of noise. People who are happily mated do not talk, write, or sing about it all the time. They are just happy, and go on about their business. But with comparative freedom of action possible to women today, and the unlimited freedom of speech, one poor misnamed, unmated or overmated woman makes more discussion than a thousand comfortably married—or comfortably single ones. What is so weakly contemptible in those opposed is to pick out this tiny percentage of sex-malcontents, and classify by them the upward march of millions upon millions. There are some such women among the highest classes of "society"; is all "society" branded thereby? There are some such women in the lowest grades of industry; is all industry branded thereby? Feminism, step by step, makes possible closer union, deeper attachment between men and women because it develops in the women the broader human characteristics; it means comradeship, friendship, a larger love. It is going to remodel the home, take it off man's shoulders, bring it up abreast with our scientific management and modern life. It is going to reduce its outrageous cost, improve its methods. It is going to lift the race with speed and thoroughness, by a more rigid selection of men, better born children, and far wiser education for all. So that a horseman's feet can be warmed in cold weather, their hooves shaved, stirrups with a respectable bar of iron or other heat-producing substance.

work in every branch and detail is entirely constructive." "Does this organization include in its membership only women who are mothers of children in school?" Mrs. Schoff was asked. "By no means! We want the interest and co-operation of every one interested in working to promote the welfare of the childhood of the world, and as the parent-teacher association does not get the mother until the child is six years old, nor does it especially appeal to the mother whose children have grown up, two different circles have been created by the Congress, which enlists the activity of these women. "One, designed to fit the needs of mothers with infants and little children under the school age, is called the mothers' circle. Now the various parent-teacher associations throughout the country have committees whose work is to look up every mother of a baby in their respective communities and send her name and address to the bureau of education, so that she may receive the free bulletins issued by the children's bureau, public health service and Agricultural Department relative to child care, etc. Already 40,000 women are engaged in this work. "The other is for the woman with grown children and the childless woman who wants to work for children. This is the child welfare circle. These are all affiliated with the national congress through the parent-teacher organization, if there is one; otherwise they may affiliate directly with the national. "Co-operation is the secret of success, and all groups of women forming themselves into any of these three classes of work for child welfare should affiliate with our body through their local state branch, both in order that their weaknesses may be stimulated through this connection with the national, and also that they may obtain official recognition. "The congress has a large score of worth-while achievements to which it points with pride. One of the greatest of these was the establishment of a department of home education in the Bureau of Education, which was effected in 1913 as a result of many years of efforts on the part of Mrs. Schoff and her earnest helpers. "As there were no funds and no salaries for this division from the Government, generous members of the congress donated money to pay the salary of a secretary to conduct the new office of which Mrs. Schoff was made director, under the supervision of Dr. P. P. Claxton, September 15, 1914. The home education division of the Bureau of Education was opened with Miss Ellen C. Lombard as secretary. There is also a stenographer on salary and these two are the only salaries paid in the entire machinery of this gigantic organization. Great strides have been made through this new office, which has sent letters out to all the superintendents of schools all over the land asking for the names of women and organizations interested in working for promotion of child welfare in the home and school. This bureau sends out the literature prepared for free distribution by the dif-

men, will make the world a home we can be proud of.

Feminists are women, plus plus full human endowment and activity. Anti-feminists are men who misname their attitude; who want women to be "female" and nothing else; or are women—minus.



What is "Sleet"?

WHAT is sleet? This is what the United States Weather Bureau is trying to find out. What is the cause of ice deposits on telegraph, telephone and electric transmission wires; a phenomenon to which the expression "sleet" is now very commonly applied in this country.

The bureau states that a search of dictionaries and of large amount of technical and non-technical literature reveals the following facts:

In England "sleet" means usually, though not invariably, a mixture of raindrops and snowflakes.

In the United States the term "sleet" has nearly always been applied by meteorologists to some form of water (other than snow) that is in a frozen state before reaching the ground, viz: either small particles of clear ice (often mingled with rain or snow) or little snowlike pellets, differing from true hailstones, but often called "winter hail" or "soft hail." (The latter form of precipitation is called graupel in German, and under the influence of German writings, American and English meteorologists have used this word to some extent. The French equivalent is *grésil*.)

Non-meteorological usage in this country varies. The uses noted above are more or less common, but there is also another, in accordance with which the term "sleet" is applied to a coating of ice formed on terrestrial objects by rain which freezes after contact with such objects.

In England such an ice coating is usually called "glazed frost," and this term has been adopted for official purposes by the British Meteorological office. Another name for such a deposit is "silver thaw." This curious expression has been known in both Great Britain and America for a very long time. It occurs in Cartwright's Journal (1792) with reference to the prevalence of the phenomenon in Labrador.

Last, but not least, when the deposit is heavy, and especially when it results in the breaking of telegraph wires, the phenomenon as a whole is very commonly called in this country an "ice storm." The Weather Bureau itself has generally identified sleet with frozen raindrops.

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She Leads A Hundred Thousand Women

Mrs. Frederic Schoff, National President Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, Tells of Work.

OF the many women's organizations in existence the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations is one of the most unique, progressive and influential. At its head is Mrs. Frederic Schoff, of Philadelphia, who has literally grown up with it, since she was the first vice-president. Today, after being elected and triennially re-elected its president for 15 years, she leads a membership that goes beyond a hundred thousand women, scattered throughout 26 states, while more than a score of foreign nations have enrolled under its standards and are following its precepts.

This progressive organization started its career of usefulness in 1897, when Mrs. Theodore Birney, of Washington, being convinced that for the childhood of the Nation to be conserved mothers should be organized, sent out a plea to the mothers of the land to meet in the capital city and form a congress of mothers.

A number of mothers did respond and, under Mrs. Birney and Mrs. Phoebe A. Hearst of New York and California, formed the nucleus of the president. Mrs. Schoff was first vice-president, and in 1902 succeeded Mrs. Birney in the presidency, which office she has since retained.

The officers of the Congress of Mothers comprise the leading women in the states, and its advisory council and heads of departments include the names of men who are famous the world over. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt has never relaxed his interest nor his co-operation, and he aided Mrs. Schoff most materially in planning and conducting the first International Congress of Child Welfare, held in the White House in 1905.

Some of the other prominent men who serve this body in an official capacity are: Dr. M. V. O'Shea, of the University of Wisconsin; P. P. Claxton, Rev. Josiah Strong, G. Stanley Hall, Ph. D., Elmer Ellsworth Brown, William E. Bryan, Ph. D., and Dr. William P. Wilson. Women of such strength as Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, Mrs. Kate Waller Barrett and Lady Aberdeen are also working with the congress.

Annual conventions are held, and triennial elections. The next one of the latter will be held in Washington this coming Spring. This will make the ninth assemblage of this body to be held in the capital city, including the three great international congresses of child welfare. Washington now has a branch of this body, with 500 members.

To get the exact plan of the work of this organization, and also its ideals and achievements, the writer sought out Mrs. Schoff, to whose untiring efforts and splendid business ability so much of the growth and success of this organization is due, and found her in her spacious Philadelphia home, which is in reality the working headquarters of this organization, though it maintains a headquarters in Washington

solely for the purpose of mailing out its literature.

In her big cheery office, which occupies the room formerly the nursery of the seven Schoff children, who were the real reason for their mother's vital interest in all matters concerning the welfare of children, Mrs. Schoff was found.

"What is the object of this Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Association? What is it doing and what has it done?" the caller asked.

"Now, that question is going to take a little time to answer," smiled Mrs. Schoff, "because the aim of the congress is so comprehensive that it includes every problem that affects the welfare of children, and its achievements have extended over a period of 19 busy years. The work of the congress is purely civic work in its broadest, highest sense, since it is to raise the standards of home life, to develop better trained parents, to give young people, ignorant of the proper care and training of children, opportunities to learn this, that they may better perform the duties that come with parenthood.

"It also aims to bring into closer relations the home and the school, so that the parent and the teacher may be able to co-operate intelligently in the education of the child. It plans to surround the childhood of the whole world with that loving, wise care in the impressionable years of life that will develop good citizens instead of law-breakers and criminals. It aims to carry the mother love and mother thought into all that concerns or touches childhood in the home, school, church and state.

"The great effort of the congress is being expended in trying to interest men and women to co-operate in this work for purer, truer homes, in the belief that to accomplish the best work men and women must work together. It is also endeavoring to secure such legislation as will insure that the children of tender years may not be tried in ordinary courts, but that each town shall establish juvenile courts and special officers whose business it is to look for that care which will rescue instead of confirm the child in ways of evil and wickedness.

"The congress is also working for the effecting of such probationary care in homes instead of in institutions. It is working untiringly to rouse the whole community to a sense of its collective duty and responsibility to the blameless, dependent and neglected children, and there is no philanthropy which will so speedily reduce our taxes and the expenses for prisons, reformatories and houses of correction.

"That is a summing-up of the aims and purposes of this organization, each department of which is an able machine with which to work. What are our departments?" She repeated the question in surprise.

"Why, there are quite a few and each one has a most efficient chairman to



Mrs. Frederic Schoff, President National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Assn.

direct its work: Child hygiene, child labor, education, books for mother, books for children, child welfare circles, child welfare legislation, child welfare magazine, country life, home economics, finance, juvenile court and probation, kindergarten extension, loan papers on child nurture, membership promotion, parents' association in churches, parent-teacher associations, press and publicity.

"Through these splendid departments or divisions we hope to promote universally a better knowledge of child nature and childhood needs and a clearer understanding of the inefficiency and real injury of some of the measures designed to help children, which will gradually bring about a guidance and a guardianship that will make childhood happy and at the same time prepare these children for their duty as adults."

"How do the parent-teacher associations figure in the Congress of Mothers' programme of work?" the caller inquired.

"As our organization started out to help every mother and every child, and every person standing in the parental relation to a child, a plan had to be devised whereby they could be reached and all that is only possible to reach them individually. So the congress evolved the idea of putting a parent-teacher organization into every school — to double the work of the school by educating the parents as well as the child. This was a sort of National university for parents on the extension plan, whereby the attention of the nation is given to parents to better educate themselves for intelligent home-making and child nurture.

"The scheme enables parents to learn what the schools are doing, the methods employed and what is expected of the child, so that they may enter into effective co-operation with the teachers and the school. Then, also, this parent-teacher association gives parents the opportunity to study the conditions of their particular community that bear upon the welfare of the children, and it arouses their individual interest and sense of community responsibility, toward the care of the young.

"Had you realized that the Congress of Mothers is the most democratic organization in the world?" asked Mrs. Schoff, impressively. "Its democracy is one of its strongest features. Its membership was never drawn on lines of wealth or poverty. Its work is only educational, and education recognizes no money lines; so, you see, crude women are not only welcome but desired and sought. The crude woman made us, and we want them with us.

"This work is not for social diversion, but to open the way for the mother or the child of six years and older to learn to work with the teacher for the best interest of her child. Any other idea belittles the great purpose behind the whole fabric of our body.

"No friction is ever necessary. If the women abide by the laws of our congress, no difficulty can arise. We are not there to run the schools, nor to interfere with the work of either superintendents or teachers, and as a rule the attitude of the teachers is one of cordial welcome. Indeed, in many cases the first steps toward the formation of one of these home and school associations are taken by the teachers. It must always be remembered that our

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