VICTORIAN LITERATURE
2015-16
PASSAGES FROM VICTORIAN ESSAYS

Authors (by date of birth)

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)
Sarah Stickney Ellis (1799-1872)
Thomas Macaulay (1800-1859)
John Newman (Cardinal) (1801-1890)
Harriet Martineau (1802-1876)
John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)
(Lady) Caroline Norton (1808-1877)
Charles Darwin (1809-1882)
Fanny Kemble (1809-1893)
Karl Marx (1818-1893) & Friedrich Engels (1820-1895)
John Ruskin (1819-1900)
George Eliot (1819-1880)
Queen Victoria (1819-1901)
Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)
Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)
Thomas Huxley (1825-1895)
Isabella Bird (1831-1904)
William Morris (1834-1896)
Walter Pater (1839-1894)
Millicent Fawcett (1847-1929)
Roger Casement (1864-1916)
From *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*: The Hero as Man of Letters. Johnson, Rousseau, Burns [Lecture V, May 19, 1840]

Hero-Gods, Prophets, Poets, Priests are forms of Heroism that belong to the old ages, make their appearance in the remotest times; some of them have ceased to be possible long since, and cannot any more show themselves in this world. The Hero as Man of Letters, again, of which class we are to speak to-day, is altogether a product of these new ages; and so long as the wondrous art of Writing, or of Ready-writing which we call Printing, subsists, he may be expected to continue, as one of the main forms of Heroism for all future ages. He is, in various respects, a very singular phenomenon.

He is new, I say; he has hardly lasted above a century in the world yet. Never, till about a hundred years ago, was there seen any figure of a Great Soul living apart in that anomalous manner; endeavoring to speak forth the inspiration that was in him by Printed Books, and find place and subsistence by what the world would please to give him for doing that. Much had been sold and bought, and left to make its own bargain in the market-place; but the inspired wisdom of a Heroic Soul never till then, in that naked manner. He, with his copy-rights and copy-wrongs, in his squalid garret, in his rusty coat; ruling (for this is what he does), from his grave, after death, whole nations and generations who would, or would not, give him bread while living, — is a rather curious spectacle! Few shapes of Heroism can be more unexpected.

Alas, the Hero from of old has had to cramp himself into strange shapes: the world knows not well at any time what to do with him, so foreign is his aspect in the world! It seemed absurd to us, that men, in their rude admiration, should take some wise great Odin for a god, and worship him as such; some wise great Mahomet for one god-inspired, and religiously follow his Law for twelve centuries: but that a wise great Johnson, a Burns, a Rousseau, should be taken for some idle nondescript, extant in the world to amuse idleness, and have a few coins and applauses thrown him, that he might live thereby; this perhaps, as before hinted, will one day seem a still absurder phasis of things! — Meanwhile, since it is the
spiritual always that determines the material, this same Man-of-Letters Hero must be regarded as our most important modern person. He, such as he may be, is the soul of all. What he teaches, the whole world will do and make. The world’s manner of dealing with him is the most significant feature of the world’s general position. Looking well at his life, we may get a glance, as deep as is readily possible for us, into the life of those singular centuries which have produced him, in which we ourselves live and work. 

(...)

**Sarah Stickney Ellis (1799-1872)**


From *The Women of England* (1839)

How often has man returned to his home with a mind confused by the many voices, which in the mart, the exchange, or the public assembly, have addressed themselves to his inborn selfishness, or his worldly pride; and while his integrity was shaken, and his resolution gave way beneath the pressure of apparent necessity, or the insidious pretences of expediency, he has stood corrected before the clear eye of woman, as it looked directly to the naked truth, and detected the lurking evil of the specious act he was about to commit. Nay, so potent may have become this secret influence, that he may have borne it about with him like a kind of second conscience, for mental reference, and spiritual counsel, in moments of trial; and when the snares of the world were around him, and temptations from within and without have bribed over the witness in his own bosom, he has thought of the humble monitress who sat alone, guarding the fireside comforts of his distant home; and the remembrance of her character, clothed in moral beauty, has scattered the clouds before his mental vision, and sent him back to that beloved home, a wiser and a better man.

The women of England, possessing the grand privilege of being better instructed than those of any other country, in the minutiae of domestic comfort, have obtained a degree of importance in society far beyond what their unobtrusive virtues would appear to claim. The long-established customs of their country have placed in their hands the high and holy duty of cherishing and protecting the minor morals of life, from whence springs all that is elevated in purpose, and glorious in action. The sphere of their direct personal influence is central, and consequently small; but its extreme operations are as widely extended as the range of human feeling. They may be less striking in society than some of the women of other
countries, and may feel themselves, on brilliant and stirring occasions, as simple, rude, and unsophisticated in the popular science of excitement; but as far as the noble daring of Britain has sent forth her adventurous sons, and that is to every point of danger on the habitable globe, they have borne along with them a generosity, a disinterestedness, and a moral courage, derived in so no small measure from the female influence of their native country.

It is a fact well worthy of our most serious attention, and one which bears immediately upon the subject under consideration, that the present state of our national affairs is such as to indicate that the influence of woman in counteracting the growing evils of society is about to be more needed than ever.

**Thomas Macaulay (1800-1859)**


From *History of England* (1848, Ch 1)

Yet, unless I greatly deceive myself, the general effect of this chequered narrative will be to excite thankfulness in all religious minds, and hope in the breasts of all patriots. For the history of our country during the last hundred and sixty years is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement. Those who compare the age on which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only in their imagination may talk of degeneracy and decay: but no man who is correctly informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present.

I should very imperfectly execute the task which I have undertaken if I were merely to treat of battles and sieges, of the rise and fall of administrations, of intrigues in the palace, and of debates in the parliament. It will be my endeavour to relate the history of the people as well as the history of the government, to trace the progress of useful and ornamental arts, to describe the rise of religious sects and the changes of literary taste, to portray the manners of successive generations and not to pass by with neglect even the revolutions which have taken place in dress, furniture, repasts, and public amusements. I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors.
The events which I propose to relate form only a single act of a great and eventful drama extending through ages, and must be very imperfectly understood unless the plot of the preceding acts be well known. I shall therefore introduce my narrative by a slight sketch of the history of our country from the earliest times. I shall pass very rapidly over many centuries: but I shall dwell at some length on the vicissitudes of that contest which the administration of King James the Second brought to a decisive crisis. 1

Nothing in the early existence of Britain indicated the greatness which she was destined to attain...

John Newman (Cardinal) (1801-1890)

From *The Idea of a University* (1852, section 9)

Useful Knowledge then, I grant, has done its work; and Liberal Knowledge as certainly has not done its work,—that is, supposing, as the objectors assume, its direct end, like Religious Knowledge, is to make men better; but this I will not for an instant allow, and, unless I allow it, those objectors have said nothing to the purpose. I admit, rather I maintain, what they have been urging, for I consider Knowledge to have its end in itself. For all its friends, or its enemies, may say, I insist upon it, that it is as real a mistake to burden it with virtue or religion as with the mechanical arts. Its direct business is not to steel the soul against temptation or to console it in affliction, any more than to set the loom in motion, or to direct the steam carriage; be it ever so much the means or the condition of both material and moral advancement, still, taken by and in itself, it as little mends our hearts as it improves our temporal circumstances. And if its eulogists claim for it such a power, they commit the very same kind of encroachment on a province not their own as the political economist who should maintain that his science educated him for casuistry or diplomacy. Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principles. Liberal Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. It is well to be a gentlemen, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life;—these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects
of a University; I am advocating, I shall illustrate and insist upon them; but still, I repeat, they are no guarantee for sanctity or even for conscientiousness, they may attach to the man of the world, to the profligate, to the heartless,—pleasant, alas, and attractive as he shows when decked out in them. Taken by themselves, they do but seem to be what they are not; they look like virtue at a distance, but they are detected by close observers, and on the long run; and hence it is that they are popularly accused of pretence and hypocrisy, not, I repeat, from their own fault, but because their professors and their admirers persist in taking them for what they are not, and are officious in arrogating for them a praise to which they have no claim. Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man.

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet_Martineau

From *Autobiography* (I am in truth very thankful for not having married at all) - after narrating the death of her ‘friend’ and possible fiancée:

(...) I am, in truth, very thankful for not having married at all. I have never since been tempted, nor have suffered any thing at all in relation to that matter which is held to be all-important to woman,—love and marriage. Nothing, I mean, beyond occasional annoyance, presently disposed of. Every literary woman, no doubt, has plenty of importunity of that sort to deal with; but freedom of mind and coolness of manner dispose of it very easily: and since the time I have been speaking of, my mind has been wholly free from all idea of love affairs. My subsequent literary life in London was clear from all difficulty and embarrassment —no doubt because I was evidently too busy, and too full of interests of other kinds to feel any awkwardness,—to say nothing of my being then thirty years of age; an age at which, if ever, a woman is certainly qualified to take care of herself. I can easily conceive how I might have been tempted,—how some deep springs in my nature might have been touched, then as earlier; but, as a matter of fact, they never were; and I consider the immunity a great blessing, under the liabilities of a moral condition such as mine was in the olden time. If I had had a husband dependent on me for his happiness, the responsibility would have made me wretched. I had not faith enough in myself to endure avoidable responsibility. If my husband had not depended on me for his happiness, I should have been jealous. So also with
children. The care would have so overpowered the joy,—the love would have so exceeded the ordinary chances of life,—the fear on my part would have so impaired the freedom on theirs, that I rejoice not to have been involved in a relation for which I was, or believed myself unfit. The veneration in which I hold domestic life has always shown me that that life was not for those whose self-respect had been early broken down, or had never grown. Happily, the majority are free from this disability. Those who suffer under it had better be as I,—as my observation of married, as well as single life assures me. When I see what conjugal love is, in the extremely rare cases in which it is seen in its perfection, I feel that there is a power of attachment in me that has never been touched. When I am among little children, it frightens me to think what my idolatry of my own children would have been. But, through it all, I have ever been thankful to be alone. My strong will, combined with anxiety of conscience, makes me fit only to live alone; and my taste and liking are for living alone. The older I have grown, the more serious and irremediable have seemed to me the evils and disadvantages of married life, as it exists among us at this time: and I am provided with what it is the bane of single life in ordinary cases to want,—substantial, laborious and serious occupation. My business in life has been to think and learn, and to speak out with absolute freedom what I have thought and learned. The freedom is itself a positive and never-failing enjoyment to me, after the bondage of my early life. My work and I have been fitted to each other, as is proved by the success of my work and my own happiness in it. The simplicity and independence of this vocation first suited my infirm and ill-developed nature, and then sufficed for my needs, together with family ties and domestic duties, such as I have been blessed with, and as every woman’s heart requires. Thus, I am not only entirely satisfied with my lot, but think it the very best for me,—under my constitution and circumstances: and I long ago came to the conclusion that, without meddling with the case of the wives and mothers, I am probably the happiest single woman in England. Who could have believed, in that awful year 1826, that such would be my conclusion a quarter of a century afterwards!
John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

From The Subjection of Women (1869)

The equality of married persons before the law, is not only the sole mode in which that particular relation can be made consistent with justice to both sides, and conducive to the happiness of both, but it is the only means of rendering the daily life of mankind, in any high sense, a school of moral cultivation. Though the truth may not be felt or generally acknowledged for generations to come, the only school of genuine moral sentiment is society between equals. The moral education of mankind has hitherto emanated chiefly from the law of force, and is adapted almost solely to the relations which force creates. In the less advanced states of society, people hardly recognise any relation with their equals. To be an equal is to be an enemy. Society, from its highest place to its lowest, is one long chain, or rather ladder, where every individual is either above or below his nearest neighbour, and wherever he does not command he must obey. Existing moralities, accordingly, are mainly fitted to a relation of command and obedience. Yet command and obedience are but unfortunate necessities of human life: society in equality is its normal state. Already in modern life, and more and more as it progressively improves, command and obedience become exceptional facts in life, equal association its general rule. The morality of the first ages rested on the obligation to submit to power; that of the ages next following, on the right of the weak to the forbearance and protection of the strong. How much longer is one form of society and life to content itself with the morality made for another? We have had the morality of submission, and the morality of chivalry and generosity; the time is now come for the morality of justice. Whenever, in former ages, any approach has been made to society in equality, Justice has asserted its claims as the foundation of virtue. It was thus in the free republics of antiquity. But even in the best of these, the equals were limited to the free male citizens; slaves, women, and the unenfranchised residents were under the law of force. The joint influence of Roman civilization and of Christianity obliterated these distinctions, and in theory (if only partially in practice) declared the claims of the human being, as such, to be paramount to those of sex, class, or social position. The barriers which had begun to be levelled were raised again by the northern conquests; and the whole of modern history consists of the slow process by which they have since been wearing away. We are entering into an order of things in which justice will again
be the primary virtue; grounded as before on equal, but now also on sympathetic association; having its root no longer in the instinct of equals for self-protection, but in a cultivated sympathy between them; and no one being now left out, but an equal measure being extended to all. It is no novelty that mankind do not distinctly foresee their own changes, and that their sentiments are adapted to past, not to coming ages. To see the futurity of the species has always been the privilege of the intellectual élite, or of those who have learnt from them; to have the feelings of that futurity has been the distinction, and usually the martyrdom, of a still rarer élite. Institutions, books, education, society, all go on training human beings for the old, long after the new has come; much more when it is only coming. But the true virtue of human beings is fitness to live together as equals; claiming nothing for themselves but what they as freely concede to every one else; regarding command of any kind as an exceptional necessity, and in all cases a temporary one; and preferring, whenever possible, the society of those with whom leading and following can be alternate and reciprocal. To these virtues, nothing in life as at present constituted gives cultivation by exercise. The family is a school of despotism, in which the virtues of despotism, but also its vices, are largely nourished. Citizenship, in free countries, is partly a school of society in equality; but citizenship fills only a small place in modern life, and does not come near the daily habits or inmost sentiments. The family, justly constituted, would be the real school of the virtues of freedom. It is sure to be a sufficient one of everything else. It will always be a school of obedience for the children, of command for the parents. What is needed is, that it should be a school of sympathy in equality, of living together in love, without power on one side or obedience on the other. This it ought to be between the parents. It would then be an exercise of those virtues which each requires to fit them for all other association, and a model to the children of the feelings and conduct which their temporary training by means of obedience is designed to render habitual, and therefore natural, to them. The moral training of mankind will never be adapted to the conditions of the life for which all other human progress is a preparation, until they practise in the family the same moral rule which is adapted to the normal constitution of human society. Any sentiment of freedom which can exist in a man whose nearest and dearest intimacies are with those of whom he is absolute master, is not the genuine or Christian love of freedom, but, what the love of freedom generally was in the ancients and in the middle ages—an intense feeling of the dignity and importance of his own personality; making him disdain a yoke for himself, of which he has no abhorrence whatever in the abstract, but which he is abundantly ready to impose on others for his own interest or glorification.
From “English Laws for Women in the 19th Century” (1854)

And now let me ask,—is there any reason why attention should not be called to the defective state of Laws for Women in England, as attention has been called to other subjects:—namely, by individual effort? Is there any reason why (attention being so called to the subject) Women alone, of the more helpless classes,—the classes set apart as not having free control of their own destinies,—should be denied the protection which in other cases supplies and balances such absence of free control? Are we to believe that the gentlemen of Great Britain are so jealous of their privilege of irresponsible power in this one respect, that they would rather know redress impossible in cases which they themselves admit to be instances of the grossest cruelty and baseness, than frame laws of control for themselves such as they are willing to frame for others?

Will they eagerly restrict the labourer or mechanic from violence and brutality in his wretched home, and yet insist on their own right of ill-usage as a luxury fairly belonging (like the possibility of divorce) to the superior and wealthy classes? Is there,—in the disposition of those who are to legislate,—an insurmountable barrier to fair legislation on this subject? and if not, is there any reason why (to plead the cause of the inferior sex as humbly as possible) the laws and enactments for their protection should not undergo as much revision, with as fair a chance of beneficial alteration, as the regulations affecting the management of pauper children,—insane patients,—and the tried and untried prisoners who occupy our gaols?

I forget; I might plead yet more humbly; I might drop yet one great step in the social scale, to find a more exact parallel with the legal position of women in this country. (NOTE: Norton discusses then slavery)
Charles Darwin (1809-1882)

From The Origins of Species (1859)

(...) Let it also be borne in mind how infinitely complex and close-fitting are the mutual relations of all organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life; and consequently what infinitely varied diversities of structure might be of use to each being under changing conditions of life. Can it then be thought improbable, seeing that variations useful to man have undoubtedly occurred, that other variations useful in some way to each being in the great and complex battle of life, should occur in the course of many successive generations? If such do occur, can we doubt (remembering that many more individuals are born than can possibly survive) that individuals having any advantage, however slight, over others, would have the best chance of surviving and procreating their kind? On the other hand, we may feel sure that any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed. This preservation of favourable individual differences and variations, and the destruction of those which are injurious, I have called Natural Selection, or the Survival of the Fittest. Variations neither useful nor injurious would not be affected by natural selection, and would be left either a fluctuating element, as perhaps we see in certain polymorphic species, or would ultimately become fixed, owing to the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions.

Several writers have misapprehended or objected to the term Natural Selection. Some have even imagined that natural selection induces variability, whereas it implies only the preservation of such variations as arise and are beneficial to the being under its conditions of life. No one objects to agriculturists speaking of the potent effects of man’s selection; and in this case the individual differences given by nature, which man for some object selects, must of necessity first occur. Others have objected that the term selection implies conscious choice in the animals which become modified; and it has even been urged that, as plants have no volition, natural selection is not applicable to them! In the literal sense of the word, no doubt, natural selection is a false term; but who ever objected to chemists speaking of the elective affinities of the various elements?—and yet an acid cannot strictly be said to elect the base with which it in preference combines. It has been said that I speak of natural selection as an active power or Deity; but who objects to an author speaking of the attraction of gravity as ruling the movements of the
planets? Every one knows what is meant and is implied by such metaphorical expressions; and they are almost necessary for brevity. So again it is difficult to avoid personifying the word Nature; but I mean by nature, only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and by laws the sequence of events as ascertained by us. With a little familiarity such superficial objections will be forgotten.

**Fanny Kemble (1809-1893)**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_Kemble

From *Journal of Residence in a Georgia Plantation in 1838-39*

Philadelphia: December 1838.

My Dear E———. I return you Mr. ——‘s letter. I do not think it answers any of the questions debated in our last conversation at all satisfactorily: the right one man has to enslave another, he has not the hardihood to assert; but in the reasons he adduces to defend that act of injustice, the contradictory statements he makes appear to me to refute each other. He says, that to the continental European protesting against the abstract iniquity of slavery, his answer would be, 'the slaves are infinitely better off than half the continental peasantry.' To the Englishman, 'they are happy compared with the miserable Irish.' But supposing that this answered the question of original injustice, which it does not, it is not a true reply. Though the negroes are fed, clothed, and housed, and though the Irish peasant is starved, naked, and roofless, the bare name of freeman—the lordship over his own person, the power to choose and will—are blessings beyond food, raiment, or shelter; possessing which, the want of every comfort of life is yet more tolerable than their fullest enjoyment without them. Ask the thousands of ragged destitutes who yearly land upon these shores to seek the means of existence—as the friendless, penniless foreign emigrant, if he will give up his present misery, his future uncertainty, his doubtful and difficult struggle for life, at once, for the secure, and as it is called, fortunate dependance of the slave: the indignation with which he would spurn the offer will prove that he possesses one good beyond all others, and that his birthright as a man is more precious to him yet than the mess of pottage for which he is told to exchange it because he is starving.

(...)

I am rather surprised at the outbreak of violent disgust which Mr. —— indulges in on the subject of amalgamation; as that formed no part of our discussion, and
seems to me a curious subject for abstract argument. I should think the intermarrying between blacks and whites a matter to be as little insisted upon if repugnant, as prevented if agreeable to the majority of the two races. At the same time, I cannot help being astonished at the furious and ungoverned execration which all reference to the possibility of a fusion of the races draws down upon those who suggest it; because nobody pretends to deny that, throughout the South, a large proportion of the population is the offspring of white men and coloured women. In New Orleans, a class of unhappy females exists whose mingled blood does not prevent their being remarkable for their beauty, and with whom no man, no gentleman, in that city shrinks from associating; and while the slaveowners of the Southern States insist vehemently upon the mental and physical inferiority of the blacks, they are benevolently doing their best, in one way at least, to raise and improve the degraded race, and the bastard population which forms so ominous an element in the social safety of their cities certainly exhibit in their forms and features the benefit they derive from their white progenitors. It is hard to conceive that some mental improvement does not accompany this physical change. Already the finer forms of the European races are cast in these dusky moulds: the outward configuration can hardly thus improve without corresponding progress in the inward capacities. The white man's blood and bones have beogen this bronze race, and bequeathed to it in some degree qualities, tendencies, capabilities, such as are the inheritance of the highest order of human animals. Mr. --- (and many others) speaks as if there were a natural repugnance in all whites to any alliance with the black race; and yet it is notorious, that almost every Southern planter has a family more or less numerous of illegitimate coloured children. Most certainly, few people would like to assert that such connections are formed because it is the interest of these planters to increase the number of their human property, and that they add to their revenue by the closest intimacy with creatures that they loathe, in order to reckon among their wealth the children of their body. Surely that is a monstrous and unnatural supposition, and utterly unworthy of belief. That such connections exist commonly, is a sufficient proof that they are not abhorrent to nature; but it seems, indeed, as if marriage (and not concubinage) was the horrible enormity which cannot be tolerated, and against which, moreover, it has been deemed expedient to enact laws. Now it appears very evident that there is no law in the white man's nature which prevents him from making a coloured woman the mother of his children, but there is a law on his statute books forbidding him to make her his wife; and if we are to admit the theory that the mixing of the races is a monstrosity, it seems almost as curious that laws should be enacted to prevent men marrying women towards whom they have an invincible natural repugnance, as that education should by law be prohibited to creatures incapable of receiving it. As for the exhortation with which Mr. --- closes his letter, that I will not 'go down to my husband's plantation prejudiced against what I am to find there,' I know not well how to answer it. Assuredly I am going prejudiced against slavery, for I am an Englishwoman, in whom the absence of such a prejudice would be disgraceful. Nevertheless, I go prepared to find many mitigations in the practice to the general injustice and cruelty of the system—much kindness on the part of the masters, much content on that of the slaves; and I feel very sure that you may rely upon the carefulness of my observation, and the accuracy of my report, of every detail of the working of the thing that comes under my notice, and certainly, on the plantation
to which I am going, it will be more likely that I should some things extenuate, than set down aught in malice.

Yours ever faithfully.

Karl Marx (1818-1893) & Friedrich Engels (1820-1895)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_marx

From *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)

In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole? The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to the other working-class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement. The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole. The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement. The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat. (…)

Nevertheless, in most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable.
1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all rights of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the populace over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children’s factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, &c, &c.

John Ruskin (1819-1900)

From Sesame and Lilies, “Lilies: Of Queen’s Gardens” (1865)

But how, you will ask, is the idea of this guiding function of the woman reconcilable with a true wifely subjection? Simply in that it is a guiding, not a determining, function. Let me try to show you briefly how these powers seem to be rightly distinguishable.

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the “superiority” of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give.

Now their separate characters are briefly these: The man’s power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever was is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman’s power is for rule, not for battle,—and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the
qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise: she enters into no contest, but infallibly judges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial: to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offense, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled; and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offense. This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home: so far as thee anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea,—so far it vindicates the name, and fulfills the praise, of home.

And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glowworm in the night cold grass may be the only fire at her foot: but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermilion, shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless.

This, then, I believe to be,—will you not admit it to be,—the woman's true place and power? But do not you see that to fulfill this, she must—as far as one can use such terms of a human creature—be incapable of error? So far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise—wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service—the true changefulness of woman. In that great sense—"La donna è mobile," not "Qual piúm al vento": no, nor yet "Variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made"; but variable as the light, manifold in fair and serene division, that it may take the color of all that it falls upon, and exalt it.
George Eliot (1819-1880)

From “Silly Novels by Silly Lady Novelists” (1856)

(...) For it must be plain to every one who looks impartially and extensively into feminine literature that its greatest deficiencies are due hardly more to the want of intellectual power than to the want of those moral qualities that contribute to literary excellence—patient diligence, a sense of the responsibility involved in publication, and an appreciation of the sacredness of the writer's art. In the majority of woman's books you see that kind of facility which springs from the absence of any high standard; that fertility in imbecile combination or feeble imitation which a little self-criticism would check and reduce to barrenness; just as with a total want of musical ear people will sing out of tune, while a degree more melodic sensibility would suffice to render them silent. The foolish vanity of wishing to appear in print, instead of being counterbalanced by any consciousness of the intellectual or moral derogation implied in futile authorship, seems to be encouraged by the extremely false impression that to write at all is a proof of superiority in a woman. On this ground we believe that the average intellect of women is unfairly represented by the mass of feminine literature, and that while the few women who write well are very far above the ordinary intellectual level of their sex, the many women who write ill are very far below it. So that, after all, the severer critics are fulfilling a chivalrous duty in depriving the mere fact of feminine authorship of any false prestige which may give it a delusive attraction, and in recommending women of mediocre faculties—as at least a negative service they can render their sex—to abstain from writing.

The standing apology for women who become writers without any special qualification is that society shuts them out from other spheres of occupation. Society is a very culpable entity, and has to answer for the manufacture of many unwholesome commodities, from bad pickles to bad poetry. But society, like “matter,” and Her Majesty’s Government, and other lofty abstractions, has its share of excessive blame as well as excessive praise. Where there is one woman who writes from necessity, we believe there are three women who write from vanity; and besides, there is something so antisptic in the mere healthy fact of working for one’s bread, that the most trashy and rotten kind of feminine literature is not likely to have been produced under such circumstances. “In all labor there is profit;” but ladies’ silly novels, we imagine, are less the result of labor than of busy idleness.
Happily, we are not dependent on argument to prove that Fiction is a department of literature in which women can, after their kind, fully equal men. A cluster of great names, both living and dead, rush to our memories in evidence that women can produce novels not only fine, but among the very finest—novels, too, that have a precious speciality, lying quite apart from masculine aptitudes and experience. No educational restrictions can shut women out from the materials of fiction, and there is no species of art which is so free from rigid requirements. Like crystalline masses, it may take any form, and yet be beautiful; we have only to pour in the right elements—genuine observation, humor, and passion. But it is precisely this absence of rigid requirement which constitutes the fatal seduction of novel-writing to incompetent women. Ladies are not wont to be very grossly deceived as to their power of playing on the piano; here certain positive difficulties of execution have to be conquered, and incompetence inevitably breaks down. Every art which had its absolute technique is, to a certain extent, guarded from the intrusions of mere left-handed imbecility. But in novel-writing there are no barriers for incapacity to stumble against, no external criteria to prevent a writer from mistaking foolish facility for mastery. And so we have again and again the old story of La Fontaine’s ass, who pats his nose to the flute, and, finding that he elicits some sound, exclaims, “Moi, aussi, je joue de la flute”—a fable which we commend, at parting, to the consideration of any feminine reader who is in danger of adding to the number of “silly novels by lady novelists.”

**Queen Victoria (1819-1901)**


From *Letters*, Queen Victoria to the Prince Albert.

Buckingham Palace, 31st January 1840.

... You have written to me in one of your letters about our stay at Windsor, but, dear Albert, you have not at all understood the matter. *You forget, my dearest Love, that I am the Sovereign, and that business can stop and wait for nothing. Parliament is sitting, and something occurs almost every day, for which I may be required, and it is quite impossible for me to be absent from London; therefore two or three days is already a long time to be absent. I am never easy a moment, if I am not on the spot, and see and hear what is going on, and everybody, including all my Aunts (who are very knowing in all these things), says I must come out after the second day, for, as I must be surrounded by my Court, I cannot keep alone. This is also my own wish in every way.*
Now as to the Arms: *as an English Prince you have no right, and Uncle Leopold had no right to quarter the English Arms, but the Sovereign has the power to allow it by Royal Command: this was done for Uncle Leopold by the Prince Regent, and I will do it again for you. But it can only be done by Royal Command.*

I will, therefore, without delay, have a seal engraved for you.

You will certainly feel very happy too, at the news of the coming union of my much-beloved Vecto [The Princess Victoire of Saxe-Coburg, cousin of Queen Victoria] with Nemours. It gives me quite infinite pleasure, because then I can see the dear child more frequently.

I read in the newspaper that you, dear Albert, have received many Orders; also that the Queen of Spain will send you the Golden Fleece....

Farewell, dearest Albert, and think often of thy faithful Victoria R.

**Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)**


From *Cassandra* (1860)

Then comes intellect. It wishes to satisfy the wants which intellect creates for it. But there is a physical, not moral, impossibility of supplying the wants of the intellect in the state of civilization at which we have arrived. The stimulus, the training, the time, are all three wanting to us; or, in other words, the means and inducements are not there.

Look at the poor lives we lead. It is a wonder that we are so good as we are, not that we are so bad. In looking round we are struck with the power of the organizations we see, not with their want of power. Now and then, it is true, we are conscious that there is an inferior organization, but, in general, just the contrary. Mrs A. has the imagination, the poetry of a Murillo, and has sufficient power of execution to show that she might have had a great deal more. Why is she not a Murillo? From a material difficulty, not a mental one. If she has a knife and fork in
her hands for three hours of the day, she cannot have a pencil or brush. Dinner is the great sacred ceremony of this day, the great sacrament. To be absent from dinner is equivalent to being ill. Nothing else will excuse us from it. Bodily incapacity is the only apology valid. If she has a pen and ink in her hands during other three hours, writing answers for the penny post, again, she cannot have her pencil, and so ad infinitum through life. People have no type before them in their lives, neither fathers nor mothers, nor the children themselves. They look at things in detail. They say, “It is very desirable that A., my daughter, should go to such a party, should know such a lady, should sit by such a person.” It is true. But what standard have they before them of the nature and destination of man? The very words are rejected as pedantic. But might they not, at least, have a type in their minds that such an one might be a discoverer through her intellect, such other through her art, a third through her moral power?

Women often try one branch of intellect after another in their youth, eg., mathematics. But that, least of all, is compatible with the life of “society”. It is impossible to follow up anything systematically. Women often long to enter some man’s profession where they would find direction, competition (or rather opportunity of measuring the intellect with others) and, above all, time.

**Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Arnold](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Arnold)

From *Culture and Anarchy* (1869)

- three classes of society: Barbarians, Philistines, Populace

I often, therefore, when I want to distinguish clearly the aristocratic class from the Philistines proper, or middle-class, name the former, in my own mind, the Barbarians: and when I go through the country, and see this and that beautiful and imposing seat of theirs crowning the landscape, ”There,” I say to myself, ”is a great fortified post of the Barbarians.”

It is obvious that that part of the working-class which, working diligently by the light of Mrs. Gooch’s Golden Rule, looks forward to the happy day when it will sit on thrones with Mr. Bazley and other middle-class potentates, to survey, as Mr. Bright beautifully says, ”the cities it has built, the railroads it has made, the
manufactures it has produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen,"—it is obvious, I say, that this part of the working-class is, or is in a fair way to be, one in spirit with the industrial middle-class. It is notorious that our middle-class liberals have long looked forward to this consummation, when the working-class shall join forces with them, aid them heartily to carry forward their great works, go in a body to their tea-meetings, and, in short, enable them to bring about their millennium. That part of the working-class, therefore, which does really seem to lend itself to these great aims, may, with propriety, be numbered by us among the Philistines. That part of it, again, which so much occupies the attention of philanthropists at present,—the part which gives all its energies to organising itself, through trades’ unions and other means, so as to constitute, first, a great working-class power, independent of the middle and aristocratic classes, and then, by dint of numbers, give the law to them, and itself reign absolutely,—this lively and interesting part must also, according to our definition, go with the Philistines; because it is its class and its class-instinct which it seeks to affirm, its ordinary self not its best self; and it is a machinery, an industrial machinery, and power and pre-eminence and other external goods which fill its thoughts, and not an inward perfection. It is wholly occupied, according to Plato’s subtle expression, with the things of itself and not its real self, with the things of the State and not the real State. But that vast portion, lastly, of the working-class which, raw and half-developed, has long lain half-hidden amidst its poverty and squalor, and is now issuing from its hiding-place to assert an Englishman’s heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes, and is beginning to perplex us by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes, breaking what it likes,—to this vast residuum we may with great propriety give the name of Populace.

Thus we have got three distinct terms, Barbarians, Philistines, Populace, to denote roughly the three great classes into which our society is divided (...)

But in using this new, and, I hope, convenient division of English society, two things are to be borne in mind. The first is, that since, under all our class divisions, there is a common basis of human nature, therefore, in every one of us, whether we be properly Barbarians, Philistines, or Populace, there exists, sometimes only in germ and potentially, sometimes more or less developed, the same tendencies and passions which have made our fellow-citizens of other classes what they are. (...)

The second thing to be borne in mind I have indicated several times already. It is this. All of us, so far as we are Barbarians, Philistines, or Populace, imagine happiness to consist in doing what one’s ordinary self likes. What one’s ordinary self likes differs according to the class to which one belongs, and has its severer and its lighter side; always, however, remaining machinery, and nothing more.(...)
Thomas Huxley (1825-1895)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Huxley

From “The Interpreters of Genesis and the Interpreters of Nature” (1885)

The antagonism between science and religion, about which we hear so much, appears to me to be purely factitious—fabricated, on the one hand, by short-sighted religious people who confound a certain branch of science, theology, with religion; and, on the other, by equally short-sighted scientific people who forget that science takes for its province only that which is susceptible of clear intellectual comprehension; and that, outside the boundaries of that province, they must be content with imagination, with hope, and with ignorance.

It seems to me that the moral and intellectual life of the civilised nations of Europe is the product of that interaction, sometimes in the way of antagonism, sometimes in that of profitable interchange, of the Semitic and the Aryan races, which commenced with the dawn of history, when Greek and Phoenician came in contact, and has been continued by Carthaginian and Roman, by Jew and Gentile, down to the present day. Our art (except, perhaps, music) and our science are the contributions of the Aryan; but the essence of our religion is derived from the Semite. In the eighth century B.C., in the heart of a world of idolatrous polytheists, the Hebrew prophets put forth a conception of religion which appears to me to be as wonderful an inspiration of genius as the art of Pheidias or the science of Aristotle.

"And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

If any so-called religion takes away from this great saying of Micah, I think it wantonly mutilates, while, if it adds thereto, I think it obscures, the perfect ideal of religion.

But what extent of knowledge, what acuteness of scientific criticism, can touch this, if any one possessed of knowledge, or acuteness, could be absurd enough to make the attempt? Will the progress of research prove that justice is worthless and mercy hateful; will it ever soften the bitter contrast between our actions and our aspirations; or show us the bounds of the universe and bid us say, Go to, now we comprehend the infinite? A faculty of wrath lay in those ancient Israelites, and
surely the prophet’s staff would have made swift acquaintance with the head of the scholar who had asked Micah whether, peradventure, the Lord further required of him an implicit belief in the accuracy of the cosmogony of Genesis!

What we are usually pleased to call religion nowadays is, for the most part, Hellenised Judaism; and, not unfrequently, the Hellenic element carries with it a mighty remnant of old-world paganism and a great infusion of the worst and weakest products of Greek scientific speculation; while fragments of Persian and Babylonian, or rather Accadian, mythology burden the Judaic contribution to the common stock.

The antagonism of science is not to religion, but to the heathen survivals and the bad philosophy under which religion herself is often well-nigh crushed. And, for my part, I trust that this antagonism will never cease; but that, to the end of time, true science will continue to fulfil one of her most beneficent functions, that of relieving men from the burden of false science which is imposed upon them in the name of religion.

Isabella Bird (1831-1904)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabella_Bird

From Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains (1879)

Thanksgiving Day. The thing dreaded has come at last, a snow-storm, with a northeast wind. It ceased about midnight, but not till it had covered my bed. Then the mercury fell below zero, and everything froze. I melted a tin of water for washing by the fire, but it was hard frozen before I could use it. My hair, which was thoroughly wet with the thawed snow of yesterday, is hard frozen in plaits. The milk and treacle are like rock, the eggs have to be kept on the coolest part of the stove to keep them fluid. Two calves in the shed were frozen to death. Half our floor is deep in snow, and it is so cold that we cannot open the door to shovel it out. The snow began again at eight this morning, very fine and hard. It blows in through the chinks and dusts this letter while I write. Mr. Kavan keeps my ink bottle close to the fire, and hands it to me every time that I need to dip my pen. We have a huge fire, but cannot raise the temperature above 20 degrees. Ever since I returned the
lake has been hard enough to bear a wagon, but to-day it is difficult to keep the water hole open by the constant use of the axe. The snow may either melt or block us in. Our only anxiety is about the supplies. We have tea and coffee enough to last over to-morrow, the sugar is just done, and the flour is getting low. It is really serious that we have "another mouth to feed," and the newcomer is a ravenous creature, eating more than the three of us. It dismays me to see his hungry eyes gauging the supply at breakfast, and to see the loaf disappear. He told me this morning that he could eat the whole of what was on the table. He is mad after food, and I see that Mr. K. is starving himself to make it hold out. Mr. Buchan is very far from well, and dreads the prospect of "half rations." All this sounds laughable, but we shall not laugh if we have to look hunger in the face! Now in the evening the snow clouds, which have blotted out all things, are lifting, and the winter scene is wonderful. The mercury is 5 degrees below zero, and the aurora is glorious. In my unchinked room the mercury is 1 degrees below zero. Mr. Buchan can hardly get his breath; the dryness is intense. We spent the afternoon cooking the Thanksgiving dinner. I made a wonderful pudding, for which I had saved eggs and cream for days, and dried and stoned cherries supplied the place of currants. I made a bowl of custard for sauce, which the men said was "splendid"; also a rolled pudding, with molasses; and we had venison steak and potatoes, but for tea we were obliged to use the tea leaves of the morning again. I should think that few people in America have enjoyed their Thanksgiving dinner more. We had urged Mr. Nugent to join us, but he refused, almost savagely, which we regretted. My four-pound cake made yesterday is all gone! This wretched boy confesses that he was so hungry in the night that he got up and ate nearly half of it. He is trying to cajole me into making another.

(…)

This life is in some respects like being on board ship—there are no mails, and one knows nothing beyond one’s little world, a very little one in this case. We find each other true, and have learnt to esteem and trust each other. I should, for instance, go out of this room leaving this book open on the table, knowing that the men would not read my letter. They are discreet, reticent, observant, and on many subjects well informed, but they are of a type which has no antype at home. All women work in this region, so there is no fuss about my working, or saying, "Oh, you mustn’t do that," or "Oh, let me do that."
William Morris (1834-1896)

From *Signs of Change* (1888), “The Aim of Arts”

(...) Perhaps it is difficult to explain to the non-artistic capacity that this definite sensuous pleasure is always present in the handiwork of the deft workman when he is working successfully, and that it increases in proportion to the freedom and individuality of the work. Also you must understand that this production of art, and consequent pleasure in work, is not confined to the production of matters which are works of art only, like pictures, statues, and so forth, but has been and should be a part of all labour in some form or other: so only will the claims of the mood of energy be satisfied.

Therefore the Aim of Art is to increase the happiness of men, by giving them beauty and interest of incident to amuse their leisure, and prevent them wearying even of rest, and by giving them hope and bodily pleasure in their work; or, shortly, to make man’s work happy and his rest fruitful. Consequently, genuine art is an unmixed blessing to the race of man.

But as the word “genuine” is a large qualification, I must ask leave to attempt to draw some practical conclusions from this assertion of the Aims of Art, which will, I suppose, or indeed hope, lead us into some controversy on the subject; because it is futile indeed to expect any one to speak about art, except in the most superficial way, without encountering those social problems which all serious men are thinking of; since art is and must be, either in its abundance or its barrenness, in its sincerity or its hollowness, the expression of the society amongst which it exists.

First, then, it is clear to me that, at the present time, those who look widest at things and deepest into them are quite dissatisfied with the present state of the arts, as they are also with the present condition of society. This I say in the teeth of the supposed revivification of art which has taken place of late years: in fact, that very excitement about the arts amongst a part of the cultivated people of to-day does but show on how firm a basis the dissatisfaction above mentioned rests. Forty years ago there was much less talk about art, much less practice of it, than there is now; and that is specially true of the architectural arts, which I shall mostly have to
speak about now. People have consciously striven to raise the dead in art since that time, and with some superficial success. Nevertheless, in spite of this conscious effort, I must tell you that England, to a person who can feel and understand beauty, was a less grievous place to live in then than it is now; and we who feel what art means know well, though we do not often dare to say so, that forty years hence it will be a more grievous place to us than it is now if we still follow up the road we are on. Less than forty years ago — about thirty — I first saw the city of Rouen, then still in its outward aspect a piece of the Middle Ages: no words can tell you how its mingled beauty, history, and romance took hold on me; I can only say that, looking back on my past life, I find it was the greatest pleasure I have ever had: and now it is a pleasure which no one can ever have again: it is lost to the world for ever. At that time I was an undergraduate of Oxford. Though not so astounding, so romantic, or at first sight so mediaeval as the Norman city, Oxford in those days still kept a great deal of its earlier loveliness: and the memory of its grey streets as they then were has been an abiding influence and pleasure in my life, and would be greater still if I could only forget what they are now — a matter of far more importance than the so-called learning of the place could have been to me in any case, but which, as it was, no one tried to teach me, and I did not try to learn. Since then the guardians of this beauty and romance so fertile of education, though professedly engaged in “the higher education” (as the futile system of compromises which they follow is nick-named), have ignored it utterly, have made its preservation give way to the pressure of commercial exigencies, and are determined apparently to destroy it altogether. There is another pleasure for the world gone down the wind; here, again, the beauty and romance have been uselessly, causelessly, most foolishly thrown away.

Walter Pater (1839-1894)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Pater

From The Renaissance (1868), from “Conclusions”

TO regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought. (…)

(…) Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has
ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be
without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his
isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.
Analysis goes a step farther still, and assures us that those impressions of the
individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in
perpetual flight; that each of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely
divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it being a single
moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly
said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly re-
forming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic
more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself
down. It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions,
images, sensations, that analysis leaves off—that continual vanishing away, that
strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.

(...) Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills
or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual
excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us,—for that moment only. Not the
fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses
only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is
to seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to
point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces
unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in
life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all,
habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of
the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts
under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to
knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any
stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of
the artist’s hands, or the face of one’s friend. Not to discriminate every moment
some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the very brilliancy of their gifts
some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun,
to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of
its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch,
we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch.
What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting
new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte, or of Hegel, or
of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of
criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us.
“Philosophy is the microscope of thought.” The theory or idea or system which
requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some
interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not
identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon
us.
From “Introduction” (1891) to Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*

It need hardly be said that Mary Wollstonecraft anticipated the change that has come about in the public mind as to what is needful in the education of women. How great that change has been forcibly illustrated by a passage quoted in "The Vindication" from a writer who propounds the view that the study of botany is inconsistent with the preservation of "female delicacy." This might well provoke another "sickly qualm" in its essential coarseness of feeling and degrading conception of the works of Nature. Mary Wollstonecraft brings this indelicate delicacy to the right touchstone when she says: "On reading similar passages, I have reverentially lifted up my eyes and heart to Him who liveth for ever and ever, and said, 'O my Father, hast Thou by the very constitution of her nature forbid Thy child to seek Thee in the fair forms of truth ? And can her soul be sullied by the knowledge that awfully calls her to Thee?'"

In another all-important respect Mary Wollstonecraft was ahead of her time, and may be regarded, though opinion has moved in the direction in which she pointed, as ahead of ours. In numerous passages she points out the inseparable connection between male and female chastity. One would have thought the fact so self-evident as to need no asseveration; but as a matter of experience we know that even now the mass of people mete out to the two partners in the same action an entirely different degree of blame, and judge them by entirely different standards; the one who is condemned the most severely is not the one who has had the advantage, generally speaking, in wealth, education, experience, and knowledge of the world, and on whom therefore, if any difference be made, a greater responsibility ought to rest; "the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks" on him, and reserves all its terrors for her who stands at a disadvantage in all these respects. An action that is one and the same is regarded as in the last degree heinous in one of the actors and as quite excusable in the other. Against the essential immorality and injustice of this doctrine and practice Mary Wollstonecraft protested with her whole strength. She exposes the insincerity of those who profess zeal for virtue by pointing the finger of scorn at the woman who has transgressed, while her partner who may have tempted her by money, ease, and flattery to her doom, is received with every mark of consideration and respect. "To little respect has that woman a claim ... who smiles on the libertine while she spurns the victims of his lawless appetites and their own folly." The injustice of the
attitude of mind is as conspicuous as its hypocrisy; and in the different measure meted out by the world to the partners in each other's degradation Mary Wollstonecraft perceives a fruitful source of immorality. The two sexes must in this, as in nearly every other respect, rise or sink together. Unchastity in men means unchastity in women; and the cure for the ills which unchastity brings with it is not to be found in penitentiaries and in Magdalen institutions, but in a truer measure of justice as regards the responsibilities of both sexes, in opening to women a variety of honourable means of earning a living, and in developing in men and women self-government and a sense of their responsibility to each other, themselves, their children, and the nation.

In many respects Mary Wollstonecraft's book gives us a pleasing assurance that with all the faults of our time we have made way upon the whole, and are several steps higher up on the ladder of decency and self-control than our forerunners were a hundred years ago. She speaks of the almost universal habit in her time among the wealthier classes of drinking excess, and of what is even less familiar to her readers of the present day, "of a degree of gluttony which is so beastly" as to destroy all sense of seemliness. She also states that so far from chastity being held in honour among men, it was positively despised by them.

In all these matters the end of the nineteenth century compares favourably with the end of the eighteenth; and one great factor in the progress made is the far greater concession of women's rights at this time compared with that. The development of the womanliness of women that comes with their greater freedom makes itself felt in helping to form a sounder public opinion upon all forms of physical excess, and with this a truer and nobler ideal of manly virtue.

In one other important respect Mary Wollstonecraft was ahead of her own time in regard to women, and in line with the foremost thinkers on this subject in ours. Henrik Ibsen has taken the lead among the moderns in teaching that women have a duty to themselves as well as to their parents, husbands, and children, and that truth and freedom are needed for the growth of true womanliness as well as of true manliness. But Mary Wollstonecraft anticipated him in teaching that self-government, self-knowledge, and self-respect, a worship of truth and not mere outward observances, are what women's lives mainly need to make them noble.

(...)

I have endeavoured to consider the character of the initiative which she gave to the women's rights movement in England, and I find that she stamped upon it from the outset the word Duty, and has impressed it with a character that it has never since lost. Women need education, need economic independence, need political enfranchisement, need social equality and friendship, mainly because without them they are less able to do their duty to themselves and to their neighbours. What was false and unreal in the old system of treating women she showed up in its ugliness, the native ugliness of all shams. That woman must choose between being a slave and a queen; "quickly scorn'd when not ador'd" is a theory of pinchbeck and tinsel; it is difficult to discover its relation to the realities of life. Upon this theory, and all that hangs upon it, Mary Wollstonecraft made the first systematic and concentrated attack; and the women's rights movement in England and America owes as much to her as modern Political Economy owes to her famous contemporary, Adam Smith.
Roger Casement (1864-1916)

From *The Casement Report on Congo* (1904)

I visited two large villages in the interior wherein I found that fully half the population now consisted of refugees... I saw and questioned several groups of these people... They went on to declare, when asked why they had fled (their district), that they had endured such ill-treatment at the hands of the government soldiers in their own (district) that life had become intolerable; that nothing had remained for them at home but to be killed for failure to bring in a certain amount of rubber or to die from starvation or exposure in their attempts to satisfy the demands made upon them... I subsequently found other (members of the tribe) who confirmed the truth of the statements made to me.

... on the 25th of July (1903) we reached Lukolela, where I spent two days. This district had, when I visited it in 1887, numbered fully 5,000 people; today the population is given, after a careful enumeration, at less than 600. The reasons given me for their decline in numbers were similar to those furnished elsewhere, namely, sleeping-sickness, general ill-health, insufficiency of food, and the methods employed to obtain labor from them by local officials and the exactions levied on them.

At other villages which I visited, I found the tax to consist of baskets, which the inhabitants had to make and deliver weekly as well as, always, a certain amount of foodstuffs. (The natives) were frequently flogged for delay or inability to complete the tally of these baskets, or the weekly supply of food. Several men, including a Chief of one town, showed broad weals across their buttocks, which were evidently recent. One, a lad of 15 o so, removing his cloth, showed several scars across his thighs, which he and others around him said had formed part of a weekly payment for a recent shortage in their supply of food.

... A careful investigation of the conditions of native life around (Lake Mantumba) confirmed the truth of the statements made to me—that the great decrease in population, the dirty and ill-kept towns, and the complete absence of goats, sheep, or fowls—once very plentiful in this country—were to be attributed above all else to the continued effort made during many years to compel the natives to work india-
rubber. Large bodies of native troops had formerly been quartered in the district, and the punitive measures undertaken to his end had endured for a considerable period. During the course of these operations there had been much loss of life, accompanied, I fear, by a somewhat general mutilation of the dead, as proof that the soldiers had done their duty.

. . . Two cases (of mutilation) came to my actual notice while I was in the lake district. One, a young man, both of whose hands had been beaten off with the butt ends of rifles against a tree; the other a young lad of 11 or 12 years of age, whose right hand was cut off at the wrist. . . . I both these cases the Government soldiers had been accompanied by white officers whose names were given to me. Of six natives (one a girl, three little boys, one youth, and one old woman) who had been mutilated in this way during the rubber regime, all except one were dead at the date of my visit.

[A sentry in the employ of one of the concessionary private companies] said he had caught and was detaining as prisoners (eleven women) to compel their husbands to bring in the right amount of rubber required of them on the next market day. . . . When I asked what would become of these women if their husbands failed to bring in the right quantity of rubber . . . , he said at once that then they would be kept there until their husbands had redeemed them.