

promise with old standards, whose prophet must pass with their passing, because he lacks, for the most part, the gift of æsthetic discernment where-with an adept in this New Cult will urge his claim to a place in its Hierarchy.

The genius to perceive that typic Beauty is the culmination of all that in human thought and aspiration is worthy to persist made of Da Vinci the profound mystic he was, and enabled him to express, in a world-picture so magnificent as the lost "Mona Lisa," the innate nobility of that most wondrous age. This sense of rhythm, of the mystic correspondence of all realities, impelled him to secure, also, from where they lay rotting in the mire of misapprehension, the frayed remains of the true Christian teaching, and with them to weave and for all time fix the type of the Christ Himself, a type which brings an appeal so forcible, so instant, to our "imaginative reason" that we cannot doubt for one moment the verisimilitude of the portraiture. Leonardo's Christ is the true Messiah, not of the Gospels, but of Saint Francis of Assisi, of Tolstoi, and of the Wilde of *De Profundis*.

It will be remembered how Walter Pater sets Flavian pondering the incidence of poetic epochs, with the melancholy foreboding that the period whereon his own talents were fallen would not appear, in retrospect, as of the highest among them. This was the prescience of approaching death, for the young Flavian, had he lived, would have been in advance of his time; and the tendency to precede, in thought even, the epoch of which he himself was so essentially a product, gave birth to the conviction, to be confirmed thereafter, that he was possessed of genius in excess of the time's requirements. Or, more truly, he was aware of a Fate impending that would not delay to strike so soon as a discrepancy appeared. It is sound warranty for the high quality of rhythm in the art of Pater himself, that, having seen Flavian thus pondering, we are able to predict on the instant, as a thing inevitable, his all too early end.

But it is the naïve consistency of Life, the entire absence of *chance*, that is so amazing and of such comfort to the Mystic, who, while appreciating Pope's cry of "All that is, is right," will add, on his own impulse, remembering the demands of rhythm, "But all that remains unchanged till then will, as surely, be wrong to-morrow—nay, even a moment hence." Or, with Browning, so long as his Deity be more dynamic than would appear from that Poet, he may proclaim: "God's in His heaven; all's right with the World." Though for this, of course, as one who would seem to wait upon Destiny, he shall be named "reactionary," since among his critics will be found a few at least (one may be forgiven for supposing) to whom he will be "difficult" and "obscure." But if he shall assert that the lengthening of Flavian's life, by so much as a moment, the brain of a Machiavelli, the madness of a Nietzsche, the martyrdom of a Maria Spiridonova, the dramas of a Hauptmann, the *Life of the Bees*, the cobwebs so common to the critical mind, the tides in their seasons, the spindrift on the strand, or the vagaries of a climate so consistently out of season—if he shall affirm that the smallest of these is as needful to the Scheme of Things as the force of gravitation to the Solar System, or the postulate of three-dimensional space to the intellect—if, with the assurance whose sanction is in that self-sincerity whereon Flavian raised the whole fabric of his Euphuism, he shall aver that the failure of the least of them would suffice to bring down the Roof of the World upon us, then will they, the critics, in their blind-eyed arrogance, fill a final sponge for him with the gall of idiocy which (they think) is the last

insult to the intellect, and cry: "Behold! here is one who has said, by the liberal implication we love so well, '*Credo quia absurdum est!*'" Precisely! Only, to whom absurd? To him that has striven to express his vision, or to him of "muddy brain," who says there can be no vision, because himself has not discerned—what he is precluded from seeing by his own so limited perception? Let this one question himself; let him say: "If, as may be proven, many of the things which I had thought realities are only illusions, is it not possible, nay, certain, that some few, at least, of the things I have called illusions may exist in very fact?"

Because there are certain exigencies of thought which unfold by antithesis to a more successful issue, I have dwelt upon what is a typical attitude of criticism, hoping that the more salient principles of Mysticism might appear in the process, and so help us to see how Beauty may be conceived as the soundest criterion of progress. For, as I have said elsewhere, an age may be barren of all type, but the equation between an epoch and its expression must of necessity be solved, so that we may, at least, take hold upon what appears noblest, because most beautiful, in our own times, and, by a minute observance of causality, strive so to foster and diffuse the conditions whereunder it has thriven, until, at length, that special measure of goodness shall have been universally achieved, at which time we shall be conscious of a keener vision for the perception of ideals still nobler, and of a new will to attain. Meantime, let the Poet guide us, for he stands poised on highest Parnasse; while, that we may have light, the Artist steep his Soul in the dark waters of Lethe, and is content.

SELWYN WESTON.

## The Aëthnic Union.

UNDER this name there has grown up a young organisation, which those who are interested in it believe corresponds to a real necessity of modern life.

It has nothing to say about sex in itself. But it recognises that upon the fact of sex there has been built up a gigantic superstructure of artificial convention which urgently needs to be swept away. And it does not see how it is to be swept away unless sex is resolutely ignored. The bands of custom are so interwoven with it that they cannot otherwise be broken. The admission of the idea of sex inevitably carries with it a whole flood of associations which rivet on the soul the fetters of a warped ideal. It submerges the mind in a wave of that autocratic sternness which one has been taught is the ideal of the masculine, or of that narrow triviality which one is (less successfully) taught to consider the mark of the feminine. In a word, it degrades the soul. Incidentally, it creates an iron barrier between individuals.

The one essential thing that any human being can do for the world is to approach as near perfection as possible. All lesser benefits to the world are summed up in that. The outward benefits which a heroic spirit showers on mankind are only the imperfect and clouded expression of itself. An evil nature cannot give good gifts. It can at best be the channel of them.

And that is why the members of the Union resent and repel the attempt of Convention, speaking sometimes in the name of virtue and sometimes in the name of vice, to force conventional defects upon their nature by thrusting upon them the idea of these two castes, each with its inveterate faults. They have had enough of Tristan and Isolde, of



Fairy Prince and Princess, of Pelleas and Melisande, of Hero and Leander. They will not be content with less than liberty to follow an ideal which shall have all the openness of Tristan with all the sweetness of Isolde. It shall fuse all that is best of Prince and Princess. It shall irradiate Hero with the freedom of her lover. Their ideal will be Penthesilea, Sappho, Pallas Athenê.

Strange, and full of meaning, that the Greek should have no specific word for sex! There are *genos*, *phyle*, *ethnos*—but *genos* is also, and oftener, a “kind”; *phyle* is also, and oftener, a “tribe”; *ethnos* is also, and oftener, a “race.” From the last term the Aëthnic Union takes its, perhaps barbarous, name. It hopes to accomplish at least this purpose. A fire is lighted in our midst—innocent, let us grant. But on it are piled deadly branches and evil incense, which are spreading a poisonous miasma throughout the land. The Aëthnic Union is not hopeful of clearing the air by pulling out a few embers. Clearly and definitely, it aims at extinguishing the fire. That is, it will not recognise the differentiation which warps its ideal.

As things are, that insistent differentiation drags in its weary trail at every turn. In the dress they wear, in the games they play, in the occupations they follow, in their very food and drink, it is constantly borne in upon people that they must assimilate themselves to one or the other imperfect type. They are never permitted to be themselves. They are forced to strangle their own free development. From that soul-murder the Union would liberate them.

The Union is not disturbed as to “what will become of the world.” It is of opinion that the world will go on for many generations yet. It holds that the work of upholding an unbroken ideal for the race is for those who have glimpsed that ideal, infinitely more urgent than any other. It will be enough for the future to consider its own problems. A sufficient succession of people ready to be transfigured by the idea of a soul undwarfed by sex, is plainly secured by the fact that we ourselves exist on the stage of the world and have thankfully received it. It may be the specific work of Aëthnic spirits to polish the jewels which are produced in another matrix. It would be a pedant who should assign to all beings the same function, or who should assert that the phenomena of heredity are exempt from the laws of evolution.

Is there not a thrill, an ecstasy, an intoxication of delight, in the realisation that you are devoted, beyond recall, to the brilliance of Eternal and Absolute Splendour, free from the arbitrary and not too clean fetters which were perhaps ornaments, or armour, in a long-past age? T. BATY.

#### A BOOK FOR MARRIED WOMEN.

By DR. ALLINSON.

The information contained in this book ought to be known by every married woman, and it will not harm the unmarried to read. The book is conveniently divided into twelve chapters. The first chapter treats of the changes of puberty, or when a girl becomes a woman. The second chapter treats of marriage from a doctor's standpoint; points out the best ages for marriage, and who should have children and who not, and furnishes useful information that one can ordinarily get only from an intelligent doctor. The third chapter treats of the marriage of blood relations; and condemns such marriages as a rule. Chapter four treats of the signs of pregnancy. The fifth chapter tells how a woman should live during the pregnant state. The sixth chapter treats of mishaps and how to avoid them. The seventh chapter treats of material impressions, and shows that birth marks are not due to longings on the part of the mother, but rather to her poor health. The eighth chapter teaches how to have easy confinements. Certain people believe that women should bring forth in pain and trouble, but the hygienic physician says that confinements can be made comparatively easy if certain rules are obeyed; these rules are given. The ninth chapter treats of the proper management of confinements until the baby is born. The tenth chapter tells how to treat the mother until she is up and about again. The eleventh chapter treats of sterility; gives the main causes of it, how these may be overcome and children result. The last chapter treats of the “change,” a most important article for all women over forty. The book is full of useful information, and no book is written which goes so thoroughly into matters relating to married women. Some may think too much is told; such can scarcely be the case, for knowledge is power and the means of attaining happiness. The book can be had in an envelope from Dr. T. R. Allinson, 381, Room, 4, Spanish Place, Manchester Square, London, W., in return for a Postal Order for 1s. 2d.

## AN APPEAL.

WITH this issue THE FREEWOMAN will have completed the first three months of its existence. The record and prospects of the paper have just been carefully gone into, and the proprietors of the paper, Messrs. Stephen Swift & Co., in view of the living interest which the paper has aroused amongst thinking men and women, have decided that the existence of THE FREEWOMAN shall be continued. This continued existence, however, constitutes a very considerable financial loss each week. This, perhaps, is what might be expected in the early life of any journal of serious import, but the editors feel that in view of the remarkable interest which has been shown, there is no real justification for the weekly loss continuing. In view of the financial support accorded us by our publishers, a support but rarely extended to philosophic journals of a revolutionary nature; in view of the contributions so readily given for the sake of their message; and in view of the energy which has been unflagging on the editorial side, we feel we are justified in making a very special appeal to the fourth party concerned in the paper, *i.e.*, the general reader of THE FREEWOMAN. We ask that every existing reader should get at least two new subscribers, and so break the strain which at present weighs upon our financial resources. We ask for this individual effort because it is not possible, even were the means to hand, to adopt conventional methods of advertisement, as THE FREEWOMAN can never find its readers among the general public. We feel that the only feasible method is to rely upon individual recommendation of the merit of the paper. As we have complaints daily from readers regarding the difficulty of getting the paper regularly and promptly, we beg that those who have difficulty in securing the paper will become direct subscribers from the publishing office. Those to whom it is not possible to become subscribers, we ask to become more persistent in their demands upon the bookstall and newsagents.

### SUBSCRIPTION FORMS.

Subscription Forms and Contents Bills for display will be forwarded with much pleasure to any reader who is able to help in this manner. Such help will be very greatly appreciated.

### “FREEWOMAN” CLUBS.

It has been pointed out to us by friendly critics that THE FREEWOMAN contains each week matter so highly debatable, and of such serious human import, that it is difficult to digest all that it contains, and to find one's bearings, in view of the many articles which express opposing points of view. It has been suggested, therefore, that FREEWOMAN clubs, or informal gatherings of men and women, should be started for discussions, of which the weekly FREEWOMAN would form the basis. Of this suggestion, coming from several readers, we highly approve, and pass it on to other readers for their consideration.

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