
The World Needs Justice, Not Charity

**GENTLEMEN:
THE LADIES.**



**A BANQUET SPEECH BY
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MY "LOVE" OF WOMAN.



SAID once in a public meeting that I loved women. I said it simply because it was true, because to me the truth was so obvious. But there was a poor, benighted brother in the meeting, and he laughed.

¶ Now, between my frank, simple statement and his ill-timed snigger there lay whole ages of hypocrisy, falsehood, prurience, and mean morality. That poor strayed and deboshed brother did not understand the meaning of two of the most vital and holiest words in our language: "love" and "woman."

¶ But the next day a whey-faced, simpering he-saint said to me: "Of course, Mr. Blatchford, when you say that you love women your meaning depends upon the sense in which you intend the word love to be understood."

¶ I was feeling rather sore at the time. Our poor brother's laugh had stuck in my throat, and I was not in the mood to jingle small-talk with prudes. So I stared at my questioner with my most impudent, piratical stare, and said with slow incisiveness: "I mean the word 'love' to be taken in every sense

in which it can be taken. Without exception, in every sense." That did it. The poor little gentleman swooned away and was removed on the ambulance. What a world!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?

¶ This address, dearly beloved, is by way of parenthesis. I digress because I feel in my bones that it is imperatively necessary at the outset of our consultation to understand exactly what we mean when we say that we love women.

¶ I know what I meant when I said it. I meant more than I said. For I might have said it in the same natural and simple way that I love flowers or stars or children; but that would not have meant all that I meant when I said I loved women.

¶ For not only do I love woman, but I honour woman, I worship woman. She is my goddess. I have given her wonder and worship and love in all its moods and tenses from the day when I sat, a wondering, wide-eyed child, at my mother's feet and adored her, to the present day when I lift my hat from my grim old grey pate to any woman, with a deepened sense of reverence and tenderness. That is what I mean when I say, "The Queen: God bless her!" That is what I mean when I say that I love women.

THE WRECK OF THE BERLIN.

¶ Some years ago Neil Lyons, who loves women as I do, sent me the account of the wreck of the Berlin. He marked the passage describing how the German ladies warmed the half-frozen hands of the seamen by placing them against their breasts, and he asked me to write about it. I wrote. Just think of it gentlemen! The cold, wet, horny hands of the common seamen! “In your delicate white bosom, these!”

¶ Now dearly beloved, what those blessed and noble German women did for the seamen is just what woman has been doing for man for a million years. I should despise myself for a mongrel cur if I feared to say so, or if I could be guilty of such black ingratitude as to forget what I owe to woman. Ah, my sweet goddess, queen, mother, sister, daughter, wife and friend:

A star hath fallen upon the spot
Where thou art singing—
Thy bracelet's ringing
Keeps all the birds awake.

¶ Oh, I know very well what I mean when I say that I love women. I use the word “love” in all its meanings, in all its senses it can have for a man. Our poor brother who laughed did not understand.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

¶ Now, what do we mean by the word “women”? When a man looks the world straight in the eyes and says he loves women, what does he mean by women? He does not mean what our poor brother meant by his cackling laughter.

¶ He means first and most of all—Mother! Is there any word in any tongue more holy? There is much motherliness in any real woman's love for any man. Do not our wives mother us? Is there not the soft mother note in any woman's friendship for any man? What in Heaven's name should become of us poor grown-up male babies were our women not so motherly? Julia said a while ago that a woman's love for a man was mostly pity. That is true of all love; of man's love for woman as of woman's love for man. We men and women are as children strayed and bewildered in a perilous and arduous world: our heaven is blurred, our ideals withered; we have lost our fairies, so in mutual love and in mutual pity we clasp each other by the hand—babies in a sere wood where the black shadows crowd upon us and the howl of the wolf sounds awfully amongst the distant trees. Our dear brother who laughed had not thought of this. He had never realized

the idea of this rocky bomb-shell of a world tearing through the void and made habitable and human only by the mutual love and pity of women and men. From the lewd story, from the obscene print, from the flaring casino he had gathered enough of dirt to make a slut, and to him that slut was woman. He had forgotten Joan of Arc and Lady Godiva and Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale and Kate Barlass and Flora Macdonald and Iseult and Penelope and Nausicaa and the mother of the Gracchi. He had forgotten that his own mother was a woman. Let us, dear brethren, remember.

WOMAN NATURE.

¶ What is woman? Just a fairer, sweeter, gentler, kind of man. A mother and more than a mother, a sister and more than a sister, a friend and more friendly than a friend. Woman is so loving and so lovable; so desirable and so delightful; of such a beauty and fragrance that we have no figures of comparison in any language fit to do her honour. Roses and violets, stars and sunsets, gems and jewels, birds and lutes—what are all these but foils and ornaments for the Queen? That is why we sang that hymn of Masefield's:

I have heard the song of the blossoms and
the old chant of the sea,
And seen strange lands from under the
arched white sails of ships:
But the loveliest things of beauty God ever
has showed to me
Are her voice and her hair, and eyes, and
and the dear red curve of her lips.

¶ We are reticent, we English, and that is well; but if our poor cacchinary brother imagines that behind our shy reserve we do not love and worship women in our blood and in our bones, he does not know what it is to be a man—a man born of woman, with mother's milk in his heart and in his soul an ideal of the Queen as some day she will be.

THE MANNER OF REAL LOVE.

¶ How does a true man, a real man, love a woman? As a son loves a mother, and as a father a daughter, and as a child its nurse or playmate, and as a brother his sister, and a lover his mistress, and a husband his wife, and a friend his friend.

¶ And more also. For we love woman as an artist loves beauty, as a poet loves romance, as a musician loves music. And yet more: for we love her as a dreamer loves dreams and as a seer loves the ideal. And still, that the love may be more whole and sacred, we love her in the spirit with a puri-

ty so tender and austere that while the gracious body is clasped in our arms the wonderful woman soul is as high above us as the serene unsullied glory of the Milky Way. This may be strange talk to our poor clucking brother, but to a man it is a bald statement of the miracle called sex love.

¶ I mean to say that unless a man loves a woman's soul more than he loves her body, unless he recognizes in her a poem in being, a picture animated, a living melody, an imperfect divinity, he has no right to say that he loves woman.

¶ Some will call this romance. I call it sound sense—the higher sense: the sense of the soul. And I am not writing as a callow youth dizzy with the glamour of a dream, but as a responsible, serious, middle-aged husband and father.

NOT ANGELS.

¶ Let us understand: I do not mistake woman for an "angel." I have nothing to say to angels. An angel is a ridiculous, sexless, bloodless monster invented by man. One frail, strong, brave, shrinking woman soul in a body of womanly glory is worth a cohort of angels.

¶ Man invented angels: they are a sterilised,

effete copy of woman, drawn by an unskilled artist during an acute attack of indigestion.

MYSTERIES OF WOMANHOOD.

¶ But who invented woman? She is a creature mysteriously evolved from the fire mist and the stardust, by way of the salt sea deeps, through the jelly clot and the quadruped and the ape. She is more beautiful than any flower, sweeter than any song. She is the goddess, the queen, the mother.

¶ Is there, or was there, ever in the wide world anything like a woman's smile? No man ever smiled like a woman. No man ever had eyebrows like a woman. Do you remember Swift's line, "Only a woman's hair"?

¶ Once in a hospital I heard a young lad utter a deep sob of agony. By his side a nurse stood, a tall refined lady, beautiful beyond any power of pen to tell. She held the boy's hand, and she looked down at him and said, "Courage, sonny." No man ever had that note in his voice. The boy closed his eyes and pressed the woman's hand. Mother—the Queen.

HER FAULTS—AND YET

¶ Of course I am not ignorant of the fact

that most women have faults. Surely the cynics have made them prominent! And, of course, I know that women can be marred and soiled and perverted. Bah! Dust on the grand piano; glue marks on the Stradivarius; the music is there. I met a hobble-skirted, bushel-hatted, wabbling figure of fun coming out of the Cecil Hotel. It was a woman: a woman disguised in trappings of vanity. I have no doubt that lady was shallow, affected, foolish. But I would swear that under the mummy-like swathings of folly and convention there was a being lovelier than anything else in nature—unless another woman. I once heard two girls in the Strand curse a labourer in terms such as I could never have invented. And I talked to those girls a while after, and found them quite gentle and womanly and full of a wistful sweetness which only women (and perhaps one man in a million) ever possess.

TWO CASES IN POINT.

¶ A. M. Thompson will perhaps remember a little incident in London. It was a beastly winter's night, and we went into a bar for a drink. The barmaid was coldly supercilious, and froze us with her icy glare. And there came in a tiny beggar girl to sell matches. I

lifted her up on the seat and asked her name. All she would answer was, "I'm Nelly's girl." I gave her some money and a pat on her cheek, and said, "Go home, dear, and give Nelly this." When the child had gone Thompson and I turned to the counter. The barmaid was translated. She beamed upon us; she came and chatted to us. We might have been stockbrokers. And what made the change? The little incident of the child. It was mother who had awakened. In short, the frigid barmaid was a woman. Under the armour was the wonderful soft breast. It is always there.

¶ Victor Grayson and I saw a girl dragged away to the police office during a Suffragette raid. Grayson will never forget that face, nor I. It touched us like a flame. It was the light of the woman soul, we saw: the light of battle. Just that light shown through the eyes of Jeanne d' Arc when she led her storming party. It was not the fierce battle-light that shines in the face of a man: it was the glad battle-light that glorifies the face of a woman. Grayson and I put up a prayer. We had glimpsed the Queen.

OUR DUTY TO HER.

¶ I fear I am doing this very badly; but it is

a most difficult thing to do. It is almost like trying to reason with a stranger in a language of which he knows but a few words. When I say woman is my goddess, some men may raise their eyebrows and doubt my sanity. But I say it. She is the only goddess I know. Only woman can save the race; only woman can uplift the world. We must save her that she may save us. We shall have to begin by loving her and trusting her and giving her complete equality and perfect freedom. For untold ages woman has been saying to man:

Take the flower from my breast, I pray thee,
Take the flower, too, from out my tresses
And then go hence; for see, the night is fair;
The stars rejoice to watch thee on thy way.

¶ And man has taken the flower and gone his way, and left his better, purer self to stand under the cold constellations, thinking only of his safety and his greatness.

¶ I am a grisly old veteran, and have seen much water pass under many bridges. I have held women in love and wonder from childhood; but age and experience have led me to perceive or to believe that woman is lovelier and better than in my more ardent days I knew. I believe in her. I am not afraid of her.

¶ Gentlemen, the Queen: God bless her!

THE MODERN SCHOOL

¶ A **MODERN** ideal—not traditional.

¶ Today's schools are not modern. They are nine-tenths "classic" full of "standard", "customary", "sacred", unusable, impractical, time-wasting studies. They undertake the fool-performance of "fitting" all boys and girls for Colleges when everybody should know that not one in 100 ever gets there, and only one in 20 ever gets to High School. And even if they got to either, more than half their time would be wasted over things that would never bear on their lives.

¶ The sham must be shown. 12 years in the abstractions of Mathematics to get thru High School! And only 3 to 6 months in the daily, living necessities of Physiology! Years on dead languages, spelling and grammer quibbles, and not an hour on sexology, parenthood or domestic science! Expose the pretence.

¶ Learn the **Ferrer Idea**. Write the Francisco Ferrer Association, 6 St. Mark's Pl., New York City. Or write Geo. N. Falconer, Sec. Modern School, 1767 Logan Avenue, Denver, Colo.

¶ By one who has had a surfeit of the "standard"—Duren J. H. Ward, A. B. and S. T. B., Hillsdale College; A. M. Harvard; and A. M. and Ph.D., Leipsic.

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