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# CUPID JOINS THE WAR

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## PREFACE

No two men are born equal, brought up equal and die equal. The workings of heredity deal to each of us different cards with which to play the game of life. And in this game hunger and love are the King and the Queen. To earn our morsels and our damsels we must struggle—and have to struggle to the bitter end for our very existence. In other words, if you want to exist as long as you are ordained to by Nature, you must struggle—you must fight—you must assert your rights.

Pugnacity is in our very blood, it is our instinct, it is one of our chief heritages of "acquired character." We have acquired it traditionally from our forefathers—nay from the lowest of the lowly ancestors. It is an ever-recurring atavism that you cannot wash off with the water of the seven seas, burn out with the largest prairie fire, nor can you sublimate it with the best sermons of Jesus, Confucius and the Buddha or the best secular education at Eton and Harrow.

The psychanalysts have taught us the law of ambivalence; i.e., if you want to love you must learn to hate, if you want peace at heart you must fight with your fists. All contradictory emotions and impulses are present in our mind in pairs—one set in the conscious and another set in the unconscious realm and constantly exchanging places with the change of circumstances and environments. So if we ever consciously go to war, we unconsciously cry for peace, and vice versa.

As long as there is life there is strife. You cannot eradicate it in spite of the wonderful inventions, pheno-

menal progress and high cultural outlook of the modern age. The same environment for all and the best one at that will hardly improve matters and attenuate the force of inheritance just as a dog brought up in the National Gallery will scarcely develop a taste for fine art or a cat reared in a beauty parlour for plastic surgery.

We have war at every step on the path of our life—from the cradle to the coffin; war on the playgrounds, in the schoolroom, the debating society, the palace, the hovel, at home and in the office, the Councils, the the Cabinets and the Houses, in the church and the synods, the theatre, the court, the camp, and where not! Then we have the war of the elements, the war of the senses, the war of the sexes and the war of the nations, tribes and communities—and lastly war of opinions, doctrines and sentiments. Like T. G. Masaryk, the statesman, philosopher and founder-president of Czechoslovakia every sane man conscious of life's realities will aver—"Humanity is not pacifism at all costs."

Thomas Payne in his *Rights of Man* was mortified to find that "age was going to workhouse and youth to the gallows", and he attributed this poverty and wretchedness to the perpetual system of war and enormous burden of taxation it necessarily involved. The money wasted on war and the stupendous preparations for war, in the opinion of Mr. Payne and other pacifists of his group, deprived civilization of its abundance and ground the poor down to the extremest poverty.

It is true; but can they deny with all their good

intentions and specious arguments that war is a biologic necessity and an inevitable political principle and lastly a potent instrument of state policy? What would the pacifist do if some lonely girl in a dark night were attacked by a drunken ruffian in the street? Would he like to rush along to her rescue or turning a deaf ear to her heart-rending cries sneak away through a bye-lane for the sake of peace?

As there are records of the rape of Lucrece and Sabine women in history, there are instances of rape of races and nations. Everybody knows that of late years there has been rape of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Albania, Norway and France, and their freedom trampled under the boots of the Nazi hordes on the plea of *lebensraum* and *anschluss*. War is an offence of the strong and a defence of the weak. And sometimes matters come to such a pass in the life of a nation that there remains no other alternative than to go to war. It is a collective will to die in honour rather than to live in dire dishonour.

War is abominable—war is cruel—war is inhuman. Yes, that is war. It always presents as ugly a sight as the process of defecation and micturition. But still it is irresistibly a useful process like the latter. Moreover, we feel the hand of Providence behind all these atrocities just as we feel the lancet of the surgeon's hand on a painful abscess. It is perhaps a blessing in disguise.

Try as we would, we cannot fully humanise war just as we cannot completely humanise a patent baby food or asses milk. War is war and peace is

peace ; and both have their distinguishing features and distinctive facets, highlights and dark shades. Even a pacifist like Ruskin who saw incalculable sufferings in war and wanted to put a stop to it for good at least among all the Christian nations, had to admit that the most beautiful characters are formed in war, all great nations are warrior nations and lasting peace may prove detrimental to the expressions of heart and head.

"War is a very ancient institution", Delisle acknowledges, "older than slavery, older than kingship, older than any of the religions now in existence. War has its mysteries, its rituals, its code of manners, its sacred symbols." And it is above all invested with—in the words of Lecky—"a certain moral grandeur", a spirit of "heroic self-sacrifice."

There is no gainsaying the fact that the temptations to vice are infinitely greater in the army than in civil life and opportunities are comparatively more frequent and easy to fulfill. The soldier's moral lapses are to be viewed with certain extenuation and not without some justification whenever we bring ourselves to consider that loosened from all domestic and social bonds and forced to a life of abstinence it is not possible for him to cultivate decency, decorum and prudential virtues to the degree of our expectation. An awakening of his animal instincts is needed in the interest of the war, and it will be folly to bring his divine qualities to the forefront amidst an orgy of murder, oaths, wounds, privations and agonies.

In this monograph we are concerned with the study of a few dark shades of military life—an attempt to

assess the role of sex in war and with special reference to the last Great War. The task is stupendous and the subject is as educative as interesting. But even to do a partial justice to the subject, several volumes would be required, which is not possible for us with our scanty intellectual and economic resources and under the present distressing spell of the second World War so near our home.

At the outset we can only claim that the work comprises but a fairly representative outline of the history of military morals of almost all the nations from the dawn of civilisation down to the last Great War of 1914-18. The time is not yet ripe for writing anything about our subject in relation to the present war, though we are collecting and inviting materials and data from "those who know" for a future monograph contemplated by us.

In the compilation of the last five chapters we had materially to depend upon Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's *Sexual History of the World War*, the only authentic and comprehensive work on the subject and a host of war novels and memoirs written by those who actually participated in the last War. We must acknowledge our indebtedness to the Panurge Press, New York and C. B. Mosby & Co., St. Louis for the four plates reproduced in the book. Any suggestion for further improvement will be thankfully received and considered.

49, Cornwallis St., Calcutta }  
12th July, 1944. }

THE AUTHOR

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## CUPID JOINS THE WAR

### CHAPTER I.

#### COURTESANS AND WAR IN ANTIQUITY

Asia Minor which saw the birth of three great religious orders of the world can as well boast of being the cradle of the three forms of prostitution—the sacred, the guest and the professional. In ancient Phoenicia, Babylonia, Media, Lydia, Syria, and at Hellespont, Zela, Comana, Susa and Ecbatana people had embraced with a fanatic ecstasy the cult of the Venus and Adonis which gave them ample scope for carnal pleasures. This Adonis at the hands of the Hebrews gradually turned from a legendary hero of the chase into the Creator of the world (*Adonai*).

In the temples of Venus that changed her name without changing her spirit in different lands and under different climates, festivals were held in every season in honour of this goddess of beauty and pleasure. During these festivals women of all ages and all strata of society sacrificed in devoted frenzy their modesty and with that their chastity to all male worshippers that thronged there from every corner

of the country to offer their votive presents to the mute goddess and her eloquent daughters.

### **The Lydian Daughters and King Gyges**

It was specially in Lydia that sacred prostitution attained its highest perfection side by side with professional lechery. To the Lydians pursuits of lustful pleasures were never forbidden by the law of the land whether under religious sanction or under simple biologic necessity. The Lydian daughters, if we can lend any credence to Herodotus, gained their marriage dowry by prostituting themselves in their fathers' house and augmented it by continuing the vile commerce even after marriage, if their husbands so desired.

*En passant*, we had better mention here another interesting fact about Lydia. Among the ancient kings who laid their diadems at the feet of their favourite concubines King Gyges of Lydia perhaps stands foremost. This foolish king many centuries before Christ being bereft of his loving mistress perpetuated his mourning and his love by causing a magnificent pyramidal mausoleum erected so high that one could perceive it from all points of his kingdom. The Lydians had in their armies a train of female dancers and musicians marvelously adept in pleasing the coarse senses and sensuality of the soldiery. The dancing girls by means of the lascivious undulations of their lusty hips, of their lyre,

tambour and flute and of their heart-lifting songs not only amused their own people-in-arms but also tried to capture the heart of the brave in the opposite camp.

### **The Persian Kings and their**

#### **Musician Concubines**

The Lydians when at last were subdued by the Persians did not take long to communicate to them the virus of debauchery with all its diabolic concomitants. Wine became the greatest adjunct to adultery with the ancient people of the Near East ; and in all the functions whether in society or in the battlefield the voluptuous votaresses served beauty in one hand and the inebriating nectar in the other. The early Persians and the Parthians, whether in peace or in war, all learnt to abandon themselves unreservedly to the allurements of woman and wine. The kings of Persia had thousands of musician-concubines attached to their gynecium. Permenio, the general of Alexander of Macedonia found in the wake of Darius three hundred and twenty-nine handsome and accomplished maidens that had been detained there after the defeat at Arbela together with 277 cooks, 46 crown-plaiters and 40 perfumers.

### **The Romance of Alexander and Thais**

Perhaps very few know that Alexander the Great himself was none the less admirer of commercialised beauty. He was as brave a lion among lancers as

among women at the time of amorous combat. He had a connoisseur's taste for Athenian beauty and Ionian flute-players. He took along with him a whole host of them on his Asiatic expedition. History could not fight shy of recording the fact that some of his clever lady-favourites insinuated themselves so much into his adoration that he was obliged to marry them. Thais, the refined Athenian courtesan who knew philosophy as much as the artifices of love, accompanied the Macedonian hero in every war, and hand in hand with him walked into the very gates of death.

This astute, witty and winsome Athenian hetaira once laid a wager that she could easily vanquish and stoop down the austere sage Aristotle who feigned aversion to woman. It was this courtesan that saw very little difference between a philosopher and a harlot. "If there be any," said she with amusing seriousness, "It is only the means he employs in persuading people. But the object of both the sections is the same : To receive lovers."

It is a proven fact of history that the handsome young boys both of the foreign slaves and the Athenian citizens by their natural grace and acquired seductiveness vitiated the taste of the whole Greek nation high and low. Most of the thinkers, reformers and sophists and some of the plutocrats became unredeemably addicted to the wanton vice of homosexuality. A few of the famous philosophers did

not blush to offer themselves as passive auxiliaries to this most abominable form of prostitution. Plato dreamed of raising the most invincible army in the world by recruiting sturdy young men of Athens and their beautiful boy-lovers.

But that is another story to which we had better not digress. Now to return to Thais and Alexander.

On the eve of the burning of Persepolis, a banquet was given by the generals of Alexander in honour of his victory in the magnificent palace of Xerxes and Darius. Plutarch vouchsafes that here "was assembled some fine courtesans of his familiars who with their friends tarried at the banquet, and amongst them was that famous Thais....." It was at the fag-end of this victory celebration that Thais wrung out of her royal lover an order to make a bonfire of the proud palace and the city.

Dryden vividly paints Thais and the banquet in his famous poem *Alexander's Feast*. A few lines are reproduced below :—

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won

By Philip's warlike son ;

Aloft in awful state

The god-like hero sate

On his imperial throne.

His valiant peers were placed around,

Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound ;

(So should desert in arms be crowned.)

The lovely Thais by his side  
 Sate like a blooming Eastern bride  
 In flower of youth and beauty's pride.

Happy, happy, happy pair  
 None but the brave,  
 None but the brave,  
 None but the brave deserves the fair.

\* \* \* \* \*

The prince unable to conceal his pain,  
 Gazed on the fair  
 Who caused his care,  
 And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,  
 Sighed and looked, and sighed again;  
 At length with love and wine at once oppressed,  
 The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast....

After the death of Alexander, Thais who was all but deified by him did not hesitate to give herself away in marriage with Ptolemy, one of Alexander's generals, afterwards king of Egypt.

### The Story of Lamia and Demetrius

Now we must recount the love episodes of Lamia and Demetrius. Lamia was the daughter of an Athenian gentleman Cleanor by name. She acquired a wonderful talent for music from her childhood and left her father's roof to display her flute-playing acumen before the King of Egypt. She pleased Ptolemy so much so that he at once offered her a most lucrative post in his court, which she willingly

accepted. From the life of a court musician and courtesan of the courtiers Lamia wormed her way into Ptolemy's harem and then his heart, thus throwing the middle-aged Thais into the shade. She reigned over Ptolemy and his Egypt peacefully for a number of years.

Demetrius had become the King of Macedonia after Alexander. He picked up a quarrel with Ptolemy and set out for Egypt with an armada. King Ptolemy did not forget to take Lamia and her flute along with his fleet. A naval action took place near the island of Cyprus in which the Egyptian fleet was put to the rout and Lamia fell into Demetrius' hands. The Macedonian victor instantaneously fell headlong into love with the unfortunate flute-player who was at this time about forty years old. But what Lamia's waning charm could not, her flute could.

Demetrius had a number of young, beautiful and accomplished mistresses. But their worth and importance waned as soon as Lamia appeared on the horizon. One night at the supper-table when the King was listening to the melodious flute-playing of Lamia surrounded by her rivals, he suddenly in ecstatic exuberance turned to Demo, one of his concubines, crying, "Look Demo, how finely she plays the flute!" Demo promptly served the retort, "Yes, I see. If you spent the night with my mother, she would have shewn you a finer flute." Demetrius could not add a rebuttal.



At night Lamia forced her lover to admit that she was without a rival in the applied art of erotics. At day when ruthlessly separated from the king she wrote him most inspiring epistles and received suave responses from his busy court. In the evening she wiped off his day's tedium by the witchcraft of her flute. Athenæus has handed down to posterity a spicy description of some of the bed-chamber sports of this pair. Lamia often forgot, according to Athenæus, that she was sporting with a princely lover and would hold him immobile and panting within her warm alabaster hands and plump legs to which Demetrius could but adduce sorry response. All over his body she inflicted in passionate frenzy more wounds with her teeth than he ever received from swords in war.

Once on returning from a long voyage he ran to his old father and embraced him in such an enthusiasm that he could not but laughingly remark, "Spare me such a hard squeezing, sonnie; one would think you were embracing Lamia". It is said that of all the rich perfumes that Asia knew to prepare from the leaves of hena, jasmine and rose, none was so invigorating and exciting as the foul secretions from Lamia's body (*cum pudendum manu confricuisset ac digitis contrectasset*).

Demetrius invaded Greece with a large force, Lamia all throughout acting as her cicerone and counsel. When the combined army of Athens and

Sparta was overthrown at Ephesus, Lamia celebrated the victory in the tent with her magic flute alternated with singing :

The lions of Greece at last to us  
Have become foxes at Ephesus.

When Demetrius became the tyrant of Athens, he imposed a fine of 250 talents (equal to about Rs. 10,00,000/- in modern India currency) on the Athenians on pain of ransacking the whole city. And when the amount was collected with singular severity, Demetrius caused it to be presented to Lamia for the expense of her soap. The Athenians exclaimed among themselves that the wicked woman must have been gathering dirt on her body since her birth.

In the festival of Aphrodite, when death suddenly descended on her, Demetrius lost all sense of decorum and publicly wept like a child for her. The Athenians forgetting all she had done to their detriment erected a temple in her memory installing a new deity under the appellation of Venus Lamia.

### Aspasia, the Greatest of the Greek Courtesans

Now we must speak something about Aspasia, whose name stands out in the annals of courtezans as one who doled out her much-prized favours to Pericles, Socrates and Alcibiades, the three well-known figures in classical Greece in the fifth century before Christ. This Aspasia in search of better



fortune moved from the small township of Megara to Athens when she had just passed out of her teens. At this young age she had become not only fairly educated in all the branches of art and philosophy that every decent Athenian aspired to but also well-versed in all the conceivable artifices of a charming hetaira. Plutarch says that she kept a boarding school for beautiful maidens of free citizens to initiate them into the mysteries of the most profitable pleasures and persuasive pleasantries. To the tastefully decorated boudoir of this refined instructress of seduction and gallantry retired many notables of Athens after the day's toil and turmoil to hear her speak and laugh. It is here that Socrates not only taught his youthful idol, Alcibiades, the abstruse truths of sophism but passionately pleaded for his abject favours.

Pericles, the uncrowned king of Athens became enamoured of this accomplished adventuress to the point of madness; and Aspasia not only became her most adorable mistress but ultimately his second wife. He never went to or came back from the Senate without giving a kiss to this glamorous philosopher who still maintained her "house of scandal" and coterie of admirers. Aspasia was introduced by Pericles to the generals, orators, senators, poets and eminent personages of the Republic who went mad over her charming rhetoric. She gradually began to dictate laws to the Athenians, added zest to the national games, lent charm to the social functions,

set new fashions in women's dresses and gave original touch to the language and literature of the time.

It was Aspasia who fomented Pericles to declare war first against the Samians and then against the Megarians, her own countrymen. In these two wars she accompanied her husband and watched him lead the fight from the window of her own tent. She also carried along with her the seraglio of beautiful students who had by this time obtained their ignoble degree from the hands of Pericles. There was much love but little jealousy between these two lovers who even after their marriage freely relished new dishes from outside within the knowledge of each other.

The cause of dissension with Megara was as trifling as dishonourable. Alcibiades, the pampered disciple of Socrates and a favourite of Pericles had heard of the prepossessing charms of Simoethe, a courtesan of Megara. One day accompanied by a handful of intrepid compatriots, he entered Megara and forcibly carried off the courtesan declaring that they were acting under Pericles' orders. Soon after a band of Megarians by way of reprisal stealthily entered Aspasia's bordel and bundled off with two of her best understudies. Aspasia grew furious and spurred Pericles to march on Megara which resulted in the long-drawn Peloponnesian War. Aspasia by her own benevolent presence and guidance and that of her daughters of joy, kept up the morale of the

army chiefs. During the siege of the city of Samos, the beauty graduates of Aspasia carried their patriotic profession to such an excess that huge profits were gained by them, somuchso that out of them a temple of Venus was erected at the gates of the city. The city at long last surrendered after the Athenians spilled much of their blood and spent much of their hard-earned silver to the voluptuous votaries of Venus.

### Conditions in Rome

In classical Rome the influence of the concubines and courtesans prevailed from the Republican days. During Renaissance and even after Reformation public women were much in request in almost all the religious and public functions. Their beauty and course repartees were welcome treats in peace and inspirations in war. Martial, Juvenal, Propertius, Horace, Mathurin Regnier and Brantome have immortalised the names of many eminent courtesans of their time and some of these like Cleopatra went into the thick of war in the company of their gallant paramours.

Brantome knew a courtesan at Rome whose name was Isabelle de Lune, a Spanish adventuress. In her young age she having resided for a long time in Italy followed the armies of the Emperor and saw many heroic battles fought at close quarters. In her middle age she conceived a violent passion for

another courtesan of the city, Pandora by name, who was celebrated throughout the empire for her exquisite beauty. Isabella always lived above her means and as a result ran into debt. She owed a certain sum of money to a merchant who had supplied her with some articles of luxury. Being put off from day to day the merchant at last sued her in the court. She was found guilty and ordered to be remanded to prison till she paid the merchant in full. Even after paying the debt she was sentenced by the judge to be further awarded with fifty good lashes on a public highway in a naked state.

"Half Rome came on the day of execution," relates Bandello, "to witness the noble spectacle. She was hoisted on to the shoulder of a burly sergeant, and the public executioner doffing all her garments performed his duty more faithfully than he was ever accustomed to." After the flagellation she walked off without the least sign of shame or anguish on her face and looking like a guest fresh from the wedding feast.

## CHAPTER II

## HARLOTS AND WAR IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

In the early Christian Europe we seldom find any credible historical record that goes to show the existence of army-brothels or incidence of military prostitution. But the fact nevertheless remains that the victorious army from the earliest times in their passionate fury and as a result of long separation from their wives and mistresses indulged in sadistic revelries with the wives and daughters of the vanquished. Some of the Carolingian and Merovingian kings are known to have proceeded to battles with a handful of chosen concubines who were destined not only to pander to the lubricity of the kings themselves but also to please the captains of battalions when they showed acts of extraordinary bravery or signs of fatigue and ennui.

During the middle ages the morals of the civil and monastic life in many countries of Europe were far from being commendable. From the perusal of authentic works like *Histoire des Comtes de Poitu* by J. Besly, *Histoire* by Guillaume of Tyre, *Chronicles* of Lambert Schaffn, Raoul Glaber and Jean de Bayon, *Ecclesiastical History* by Orderic Vital, *Histoire de Paris* by Dulaure, *Histoire des Gaules* etc.

we can derive a first-hand knowledge of the nature and extent of the shocking inequities and immorality of the age.

## Shameless Debauchery of the Clerics

The most depraved state of morals existed among the clerics and bishoprics during the reign of the Carolingians and Merovingians. The councils and the synods, with their wise prescriptions and rigid proscriptions were unable to stem the tide of the shameless corruption of the monks. Hundreds of the contemporary histories of Europe testify in glaring terms to the gross vices of the clergy who believed that everything was permissible to them because they held the key to heaven in their "sacred" hands and were invested with the right of absolving sinners.

There was not a chapter in the medieval christian world in which the canons did not burn with the ardours of lust and did not indulge in the worst forms of vices. It is now a well-known fact that many weak-minded monks not only carried on infamous commerce with the loose women of the parish, but with the nuns of the convents. When these were not handy they were content with the body of the young slaves or the innocence of beautiful lads of their parishioners.

The depravity of the clergy was all but too readily emulated by the laity who sometimes far

lagged behind them in the flagrant breach of the commandments of Christ and his Apostles. The *Histoire des Gaules* ( Vol XI, p.445 ) paints in florid lucidity the manners and morals of France during the few centuries preceding and following the Anti-Christ year i.e. 1000 A. D. All writers of the time unanimously declare that drunkenness, rape, fornication, incest and sodomy were widespread among all grades of the people ; infidelity, heresy and profligacy reigned supreme in the manors of counts and barons as well as in the humble homes of the citizens and serfs ; they grew rampant in the solacing shadow of the cloisters as well as the chambers of abbots and archbishops. The unnatural vice had become so prevalent among the clergy and laity that the Abbot of Clairvaux wrote to Pope Alexander III in 1177, "Ancient Sodom is springing up from her ashes".\*

### The Norman Lust and Vices

Orderic Vital in a number of places in his *Ecclesiastical History* traces the recrudescence of the vice of homosexuality to the establishment of Norman races in the Gallo-Frankish Provinces, contagion of it being carried, however, to England by the soldiers of William the Conqueror. History is mute on the point as to whether this abominable

practice was a natural or an adventitious growth in Normandy and among its marauding hordes. But many historians suspect that the Normans discovered the utility of the practice during the Crusades and revived it in their society as a secret luxury for the rich and an open consolation for the poor. Paul Lacroix says that they "left it as a mark of their passage in all the places where they sojourned, either to take up their winter quarters or to await the return of their devastating hordes." But in the *Histoire de Paris*, and in the Epic Poem, *Siege of Paris* by Abbom, we are confronted with facts and figures that lead us to believe that this obnoxious vice was widely known among the Franks and Gauls too before the Normans or the Crusades.

When the Normans laid siege to Paris they observed the French lords were none the less addicted to this vice and almost everyone of them kept in their company effeminates and painted mollicoddles. If Abbom's poem contains any matter of historical value, we are to believe that the Norman hordes were inveterates in the unnatural practice and felt no shame or remorse in giving themselves mutually to it both in war and in peace. According to some chroniclers of the time, they made but a very moderate use of their women who were

\* *Histoire de Paris*, Dulaure ( 1837 ), Vol. II. p.40.

\* *Histoire de la Prostitution*, P. Lacroix, (Putnam's Tr., 1931 edn.) Vol I. p. 695.

constantly worried with pregnancy, child-birth and nursing and burdened with domestic duties.

But the Norman soldiers were no less ardent in regard to the foreign women, and they spared neither the men nor the women of the villages they captured for their savage salacity. They only honoured the old men and women and children whom, of course, they put to the sword without pity. They dragged the young and beautiful women along with them after the first onslaught when they moved to another theatre of war. Thus villages and small townships which had been flowing with milk and honey before the approach of the Normans were left desolate and depopulated when they had departed. Not only this, they left behind their trail a most hideous form of demoralisation which was readily imbibed by those who were miraculously saved from their swords.

These Normans, when they settled upon the soil of England, did not for at least a century treat the natives of the country with any more regard than they had shewn in the countries they depredated. They no longer massacred the old, but they abused the ladies and outraged the girls, "the noblest of whom served as playthings to the soldiers in the filthiest fashion imaginable." According to Orderic Vital, the Norman manners did not undergo any appreciable change before the lapse of two centuries of their conquest of England.

During the first few years of the consolidation

of their conquest and unsteady sojourn the soldiers and officers did not bring their families across to England to settle in. They knew how to go without their wives or without any women at all. During their long absence, their wives, nevertheless, being unable to withstand the enforced continence, sent *en masse* the message to their respective husbands that they would adopt new ones if their old ones did not return forthwith. A few, of course, did return to their restless wives within a short time; but the greater number stayed back in Britain where they found profuse means of distraction. If their wives did not all marry, at least many of them brought forth bastards for their heedless husbands.

### Morals in Medieval France

France has, during the later half of the middle ages and, even to a certain extent, in the modern age, stood as the *beau-ideal* of culture, manners and morals of all Europe. What France introduced today, Europe emulated the day following. So if we followed French history for any information pertaining to our subject, we could console ourselves with the presumption that we were encompassing other Western countries within our purview. Let us pass over to the twelfth and thirteenth century France and venture a peep into the civil and military

morals there. Only one book, *Histoire Occidentale* by Jacques de Vitry can furnish us with sufficient materials to serve our end.

A few lines from Jacques' monumental work will convince our readers of the state of morals obtaining in France at the time. The detestable vice of sodomy was so widespread and deep-rooted in the cities that he who kept one or two concubines was looked upon as a man of exemplary character. Public women who promenaded the streets at night and accosted prospective customers, would often jeer at those clerics that did not succumb to their temptations as veritable sodomites.

"In the same house," Jacques de Vitry proceeds to say in one place, "one finds schools below and places of lechery up above. On the first floor the professors give their lessons and on the second loose women ply their ignoble trade, quarrel among themselves and brawl with their lovers". The rectors of the schools and the provosts of the Universites in conformity with the spirit of the age did not meddle with the moral lapses of the students and never demanded of them leading the lives of innocuous anchorites.

### The Holy Crusades and the Unholy Crusaders

It was in this state of affairs that St. Bernard declared the second Holy War against the Muham-

madan usurpers of the Land of Christ and exhorted the whole Christian world to rise up in arms against the so-called infidels. Accordingly two armies under Conrad III of Germany and Louis VII of France were mobilised. Each army carried its retinue of prostitutes to spare the soldiers the pangs of separation from their family. The same thing happened when Philippe-Augustus of France and Richard Cœur de Lion of England jointly led the third Crusade and made peace with Saladin in 1192.

After Louis VIII, Louis IX, known afterwards as St. Louis, ascended the throne of France. His first duty to the state was to circumscribe and combat prostitution with the arms of law and the resources of charity. "Never", remarks Sauval, "have there been in the kingdom so many women of evil life, and never, on the other hand, have they been punished with more rigour."

Next Louis IX in fulfilment of a vow he made during a severe illness collected a vast army in 1248 A.D.—the holy army of the seventh Crusade—to lead them to Palestine to regain the land of the Holy Sepulchre. It cannot be gainsaid that the second and the succeeding Crusades, though they held out the finest opportunities for chivalry, exerted a direct and definite influence upon the public morals of the time. In spite of its holy zeal and fanatic ardour, the Crusade carried within its bosom the venomous germs of corruption. All the worst forms

of vice were prevalent in the militant pilgrim-hordes hailing from the distant provinces and lands. "The Crusaders", states Albert of Aix, "conducted themselves in a gross uncontrollable manner somuchso that carnal love came to extinguish in them the flame of divine love." They had in their ranks a throng of women who wearing the habits of men travelled all the way with them to the Holy Land and shared their tent and their bed without shame or remorse.

All the armies of the Middle Ages were as a rule followed by a regiment of unemployed fortune-hunters, unarmed adventurers, vagabonds and street prostitutes. The soldiers could not dispense with this vagabond band. The women served the salacity of the army to an extent they never knew before and the men helped it by carrying their tents, heavy bundles, rations and sinews of war and pillaging the places through which it passed. In the army of the Crusaders too a great many number of bullies, pimps, beggars and loose women took up the cross trusting to the chances of a frightful promiscuity and of earning a fortune to last them a life-time.

Joinville has given us a vivid description of the depraved morality of the Crusaders under St. Louis. "The pilgrims," he says, "did not abstain from illicit unions and the pleasures of the flesh ; they gave themselves without respite to the all the excesses of the table, diverting themselves with married women

or young girls who had left their hearth and home to give a free play to their suppressed lust under a holy plea." The readers who understand French are referred to the following racy excerpt from the original of Joinville :

*"Les barons, chevaliers, et autres, qui antres, qui deussent avoir bien gardé leur bien, et l'avoir esperné pour s'en secourir en lieu et en temps, se prindrent à faire grans banquets les ungs aux autres en habondance de viandes delicienses. Et le commun peuple se print a forcer et violer femmes et filles. Dont de ce advint grant mal. Car il failut que le roy en donnant congïé a tout plain de ses gens et officiers. Car ainsi que, le bon roy me dist il trouve jusques à ung gect de pierre pres et à l'entour de son paveillon plusieurs bor deaux, que ses gens tenoient. Et d'autres maulx y avoit plus, que en ost qu'il eust jamés veu\*."*

The vanity and audacity of the holy fighters and their vagabond retinue went to such an extreme that they did not feel the slightest scruple in dishonouring the hospitality accorded them by the Hungarians while the army was passing through their land. During their brief sojourn there, they violated the chastity of hundreds of married women, blasted the innocence of thousands of maidens and spoil the budding youth of innumerable citizens.

It was not without reason that the wrath of God descended upon the undisciplined horde who had

\* Joinville, *Hist. du Roy Saint Loys*, p. 32 (Paris 1668).



committed the most heinous sins in His eyes. About two-thirds of the pilgrims-in-arms were either killed by disease, pestilence and infidels, or deserted or detained in hospitals on the way; less than a third of the army soaked in all kinds of abominable vice ever reached Palestine to wage a holy war against the sturdy Saracens.

Paul Lacroix incidentally remarks, "The Crusaders did not renounce their military manners in vowing themselves to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre; and when women were lacking in Palestine, where the Mahammedan religion was opposed to all illicit commerce with the Christians, reinforcements of Christian women were sent forth from Europe, and these contributed in their manner to the triumph of the Crusades." An Arabic historian, Emdaduddin's reports in regard to the military morality of the third Crusade (1189 A. D.) have been quoted extensively by Hammer in his *Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*, where we find these lines: "Three hundred pretty French women who had been brought to the isles during the siege of Saint Jean-d'Acre, arrived upon a boat for the consolation of the French soldiers to whom they devoted themselves entirely. The French soldiers would not go into battle had they been deprived of women."

In another place, the same historian quoted by Hammer adds that the practice of retaining *filles des joie* in the European army spread contagion to the

Muhammedan enemy who did not know such a thing before. From that time on the captains and other lower ranks of the Saracens desired to have strumpets in their tents and at the halting stations. If we are to believe the contemporary chroniclers, each Crusaders' camp had its busy and populous brothel attached to it where "like latrines they could ease their nature as they pleased". This appendage of a multitude of women forming the rear-guard remained a *sine que non* of the French armies down to the end of the sixteenth century and even lingered long after the Reformation.

Geoffrey, a monk of Vigeois estimates roughly at fifteen hundred as the number of concubines that followed the main contingents of Philippe-Augustus' army in 1180 A. D. mainly for the pleasure of the king and his trusted few. The Chronicler no doubt alludes only to those women who were directly under ægis of the *roi des ribauds* and had been practising their vile trade in and about the royal house upon paying a fixed revenue to the above-named officer. About these *rois des ribauds* we will have occasion to speak later at some length.

When Philippe-Augustus started for the third Crusade in 1189 together with Richard the lion-hearted of England, the number of the unauthorised prostitutes with their pet bullies and pimps swelled at least twenty times larger. In the irregular armies sometimes they far outnumbered the soldiers them-



selves. Some of these vagabond contingents styled themselves as *Grandes Compagnies* who took part in pillaging the cities attacked by the regular army. Some of the war chiefs and generals, however averse they might be to this reprehensible army accoutrement, had most reluctantly to give way lest their troops should revolt and refuse to serve under one who was insensible to their biologic needs and physical comforts.

Thus we glean from the *Chronique de Modene* written by Jean de Bazano that a German General named Garnier who invaded the territories of Modena, Reggio and Mantua at the head of five thousand and five hundred lancers in the beginning of the year 1342 was accompanied by a force of one thousand prostitutes, effeminates and rogues of the worst type.

### Tragic Fate of St. Louis

Now let us once again return to the topic of St. Louis' Seventh Crusade. The Mussalmans of Syria, Egypt and Palestine in the mean time had far excelled their earlier European masters in the art of promoting army prostitution. The Saracen chiefs often brought their own harems near about the battlefield, and the other ranks and files depended chiefly on the sluts around the battlefield and slave-girls purchased in the local bazaar. This time the

Christian Crusaders perhaps imitated the Mussalmans in the matter and form of pandering to their sexual urge. Not content with their own women of joy they set up veritable harems packed like sardines with slave-girls purchased in the slave-markets of Syria and Palestine. It is easy even for a simpleton to imagine the extent of holy ardour with which its unholy militia fought for their Saviour. As a result the pious king Louis IX was made a prisoner by the Saracens.

Incarcerated in the dungeon the king repented his ever bringing these sinful hordes into Palestine for such a righteous cause ; he somehow or other led himself to firmly believe that divine wrath had fallen on him solely because some of his trusted Barons had set up brothels on a jutting rock near his tent and practised the vilest forms of lechery under his very nose. After paying an exorbitant ransom St. Louis recovered his liberty and dismissed some of his officers and meted out deterrent punishment to others.

While he was at Caesarea he judged according to the laws of the country a knight who was detected in a brothel. The guilty knight had to choose between two sentences passed on him. The woman with whom he had been found to be in illicit relation was to bind a cord to his genital parts and to lead him *en chemise* through all the camps. In the alternative he was to abandon his sword, armour and horse to the pleasure of the king and make an exit

from the army. The knight, of course, chose the latter course.

In all justice to St. Louis and of all the French kings in the pre-revolution days he was the singular man who tried to breathe in an atmosphere of purity and equity and to inspire an exalted passion for metaphysical beauty. But he failed and failed most hopelessly. In an attempt to lead a second (i.e. the eighth and last) Crusade in his advanced age with a band of ostensibly nobler and purer knights, all on a sudden an epidemic of plague broke out in his army. He died a martyr's death at Tunis from the fell disease with a great many of his companions.

### Jeanne d'Arc and Her Army Reforms

The only isolated instance of medieval soldiery bereft of light women in its trail is to be observed during the blackest days of Charles the Seventh's life, when the God-intoxicated shepherd girl, Jeanne d'Arc came to his rescue. This unblemished rustic heroine had a genuine horror for all women of easy virtue and sincerely believed that the presence of such women in her army would jeopardise the divine cause that she had been inspired to espouse. Jean Chartier in his *History of Charles VII* relates that she first ordered all her soldiers to go to the confessional and next purged the army of all infamous men and their concubines. Some of the better class

women patronised by the lieutenants and captains still hung on to the army in defiance of Jeanne's order.

Soon after when Charles was reviewing the army at Sanarre, Jeanne observed some of these women freely mixing with a few of the soldiers in the parade. At this she flew into such a rage that with her divine sword she fell upon them like a tigress and broke it over their shoulders. Charles was obviously annoyed at this excessive zeal and remarked that it would have been more becoming to take a cudgel to strike them with than to break such a precious sword that came to her by miracle.

Chartier and other contemporary chroniclers testify that Jeanne, who was at the time commonly known in France as Jehanne la Pucelle put on the garb of a soldier in order not to distract their mind. "It seems to me," she used to say, "that in this robe I shall better preserve my dignity among the soldiers and the purity of my thought and deed". And it may safely be averred that she remained a virgin both in regard to her thoughts and deeds till she was consigned to the burning stake by a mad, bigoted soldiery.

### Army Morals under Charles IX & Henry III

Charles IX after ascending the throne of France set about to reform French morals through stringent

legislation. His virtuous chancellor, Michel de l'Hospital lent his full-hearted support to his schemes—specially the one that sought to eradicate debauchery and prostitution in the civil and military life. By an edict dated the 6th August 1570, the king ordered that all vagabonds without masters and means of livelihood must within twenty-four hours vacate the precincts of the royal court under pain of being hanged or strangled without any likelihood of clemency or remission; that all prostitutes and immoral women should similarly vacate within the time as aforesaid under pain of lash and branding. It would have been much easier for them to efface from within the city all the dens of debauchery than to expel the daughters of joy from the court and the army. Many of the loose women, as historians attest, could not but remain unmoved by the promulgation of this law and to be lashed and branded. Charles tried helplessly to eradicate this evil as long as he lived.

Next Henry III followed suit and revived his predecessor's ukase in a slightly amended form. He proclaimed, "We enjoin not only the provosts of the marshals and their lieutenants but also our ordinary magistrates to drive out per force the prostitutes and blackguards if any be found to follow in the wake of our troops and to chastise them with the lash". It is almost certain that this ordinance could never be executed with any appreciable suc-

cess. Some time after he was obliged to allow only one harlot to every three soldiers\*, whereas barely one would have been sufficient to satisfy thirty and vitiate three hundred. Often the caprice of the army chief was responsible for a rigid enforcement or otherwise of this purging ordinance. Varillas has cited the example of the puritanic Marshall Strozzi who in his extreme enthusiasm to purge his army of this evil had 800 army prostitutes arrested and ordered them to be cast into the river Loire.

But army-reformers like Strozzi were few and far between in an age when everyone from priesthood to peasantry was steeped in the mire of unbridled adultery, incest, sodomy and blasphemy. In spite of well-meaning and rigorous reformation laws the *filles des joie* none the less thrived gayly among the Catholic soldiery.

Brantome in poetic ecstasy has described the redoubtable rear guard of the army of expedition that the Duke of Alba led against Flanders. Among 10,000 of his veteran troops there were 400 courtesans on horseback, handsome and brave as princesses, and 800 on foot similarly healthy and comely. It is reported that the duty of these embonpoint courtizans was to safeguard the honor of ladies and virgins on the scene of war.

But the vanity of these army idols stretched to such extent that they demanded a wage too

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\*Varillas, *Histoire de Henri III.* Bk. VI.

prohibitive for the purse of common soldiers. On a representation being made to the Duke, he caused a fiat to be proclaimed in his camps by the heralds-at-arms to the effect—

"That among them none should any longer dare  
Refuse a soldier who would pay a fare  
Of five sous for a night her bed to share."...

This was, we dare say, the minimum charge that a prostitute could demand of a common soldier. The others of the rank had to pay more in keeping with their position and prestige.

This necessary evil, however, has been rampant and more or less tolerated in every country of Europe upto the age of the Napoleons.

### Who was Kate Howard

In the comparatively young history of America, one can come by the name of a few women of easy virtue who began their career as camp-followers and pioneers in the army and ended by being notorious creatures of luxury. Kate Howard was one of the notables among such a fortunate coterie. Kate was on familiar terms with the mayor and most of the aldermen of the city of San Francisco in its rising days. From the well-known story by Bret Harte, *A Ward of the Golden Gate*, one can derive a somewhat florid but almost faithful view of the intimate life of Miss Howard.

A closely-veiled woman alights from a carriage and hurriedly enters the grand public edifice of San Francisco known as the City Hall. The woman with a stately gait ascends an iron staircase and enters an antechamber. She summons a porter and persists in seeing the Mayor in spite of the knowledge that he is busy at the moment. The secretary enters the Mayor's private office with an air of suppressed reluctance. At this point the readers may as well be introduced to Bret Harte's own description :

"The municipal dignitary of San Francisco, although an erect, soldier-like man of strong middle age, was seated with his official chair tilted back against the wall and kept in position by his feet on the rungs of another, which in turn acted as a support for another man who was seated a few feet from him in an easy chair. Both were lazily smoking.

"The Mayor took the card, glanced at it, said 'Hullo !' and handed it to his companion who read aloud 'Kate Howard', and gave a prolonged whistle.

" 'Where is she ?' asked the Mayor.

" 'In the anteroom, Sir.'

" 'Anyone else there ?'

" 'No, Sir,'

" 'Did you say I was engaged ?'

" 'Yes, Sir, but it appears that she asked Sam

who was with you, and when he told her, she said, All right ; she wanted to see Colonel Pendleton too.'

" The men glanced interrogatively at each other, but Colonel Pendleton, abruptly anticipating the Mayor's functions, said 'Have her in', and settled himself back in his chair.

" A moment later the door opened, and the stranger appeared. As she closed the door behind, she removed her heavy veil, and displayed the face of a very handsome woman of past thirty. It is only necessary to add that it was a face known to the two men and all San Francisco.

" 'Well Kate', said the Mayor, motioning to a chair but without rising or changing his attitude. 'Here I am, and here is Colonel Pendleton, and these are office hours. What can we do for you ?'

" If he had received her with magisterial formality, or even politely, she would have been embarrassed in spite of a certain boldness of her dark eyes and an ever-present consciousness of her power. It is possible that his own ease and that of his companion was part of their instinctive good nature and perception. She accepted it as such, took the chair familiarly and seated herself sideways upon it, her right arm half encircling its back and hanging over it ; altogether an easy and not ungraceful pose.

" 'Thank you, Jack—I mean Mr. Mayor—and you, too, Harry. I came on business. I want you two men to act as guardians for my little daughter.' "...

### **Theroigne—Heroine of French Revolution**

We cannot close this chapter without mentioning Theroigne de Mericourt—"The brown-locked, light-behaved, fire-hearted" woman who from her early youth lived in an intoxication of intense passion, of lofty ideas and of ephemeral pleasures. Seduced at the age of seventeen by a nobleman she became the centre of attraction for the secret innovators of the French Revolution of 1789. Next for a time she slipped from within their arms to fall into those of wealthy voluptuaries of Paris who, according to Lamartine, the author of the *Histoire des Girondins*, paid highly for her charms. She devoted most of her hard-earned hoards to the cause of the popular resurrection.

It was this patriotic harlot who consecrated her exotic beauty to serve as an ensign for the furious mob. The first in assault on the towers of Bastille, first in carrying off the cannon from the gates of Invalidés, in ruthlessness outdoing Brissac, Jourdan and Robespierre, this degraded daughter of France has earned an undying fame for herself in the history of revolutions.

### **The Duke and Darling Scandal**

The Duke of Marlborough whose name has come down in history as one of England's best generals and who could coolly set his face against the stoutest army in Europe, was a mere tool in his Lady's hands. It

was through her mercy and good office that he was made to sell commissions and promotions in the army. An N. C. O. could hardly aspire to a commission as much by dint of his merit as by paying successful court to this vainglorious virago. During the reign of George III, another scandal of this nature came to light. This was known at the time as "The Duke and Darling Scandal". It arose out of the illicit relation between the then Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief of the British army and Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke. He was openly carrying on with this mistress for several years and often present with her in the parade-ground during marches past and trooping the colours to the great chagrin of the old generals. Mrs. Clark was empowered by the Duke "to traffic in commissions and promotions not in the army alone but in the Church and diplomatic office as well. She had quite a levée of clergy who were soliciting and bribing her to procure livings and even bishoprics."

It was brought to the notice of the king and became the subject of a debate in the Parliament. Colonel Wardle, a militia officer, made startling charges against the Duke in the House which at once appointed a Committee of Enquiry to investigate into the conduct of the Prince, and if he were found guilty, to recommend his dismissal. Cassel in his *History of England* relates shortly the proceedings of this investigation. "Mrs. Clarke was called before

the House at the time appointed, and made her appearance at the bar with equal gracefulness of manner, of wit and impudence. Her obeisance to the House on her entry was declared to be in the highest style of the artificial grace and she seemed to take the members at once captive by her fascinations. These did not consist in youth or beauty, for she was no longer young, having lived for years under the so-called protection of one gentleman or other; some of whom she was said to have utterly ruined by her extravagance. It appeared that she was the daughter of a working printer, and the wife of a bricklayer or builder." The king was greatly distressed by this scandal and forced his son to relinquish the post of the Commander-in-Chief.\*...

From the dawn of the twentieth century, army prostitution has been regulated, circumscribed and relegated to the background. But curiously enough, on the foreground *Venus Lubrica* having changed her name and somewhat her spirit has taken unto herself a merciful form and a smart uniform!

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\* The Editor of "The Windham Papers", *The Wellesley Papers*, (H. Jenkins Ltd., London. MC MXIV) Vol. II, p. 41 and footnote.

## CHAPTER III

## THE KNIGHTS AND THE KINGS OF RIBALDRY

Now we must speak something of the knights and about the medieval chivalry. The age of chivalry so far as can be judged from historical evidence first dawned on England and Scotland and was in full bloom there before the Norman conquest.

## The Origin and Development of Chivalry

The slogan of chivalry gave birth to a system and a society of brotherhood of knights which required of all its members these qualifications: dignity, courtesy, generosity and bravery. From socio-religious order the system gradually tended towards military. Vowed to life-long celibacy and chastity the chief aim and mission of the knights of the middle ages was the defence of right against wrong, of the weak against the strong and of the honour and integrity of woman. During the second and succeeding Crusades knighthood became a distinct military organisation in defence of Christianity and underwent many subdivisions and surnames in order of importance. And it was from the Crusades that the noble knights learnt the lesson of throwing openly the cult of chastity and continence to the winds. The Crusades tolled the death-knell of chivalry.

## The Knights of the Garter

Most of our readers perhaps do not know the somewhat chivalric and, at the same time, shamefully romantic origin of the most noble *Order of the Garter*. According to authorities like Elias Ashmole, Hargrave Jennings and Paschal Randolph, it was at a state banquet in the year 1344 that the beautiful Countess of Salisbury with whom King Edward III was deeply in love accidentally dropped a thin piece of cloth from under her petticoat during a dance. In other words she dropped from above her left knee a strip of linen which at that time was either called *garder* (*Fr.* to look) or "guarder" and which men ought never to have beheld. Before she could fully realise her embarrassing position and others of the august assemblage could giggle up their sleeves, the king stepping forward, picked it up from the floor and exclaimed—*Honi soit qui mal y pense* (Evil be to him that evil thinks).

Paschal Randolph ventures this appreciative remark: "Edward acted the part of a true gentleman in preserving her from ridicule and shame by turning an accident into an incident commanding profound reverence and chivalric respect from all who pride themselves on being men\*". At the very moment the king established a new order of knighthood with 26 members from his guests. The knights

\* P. B. Randolph, *Eulis*, (3rd Ed. 1896) pp. 40—41.



were chiefly distinguished by a garter of blue velvet worn on the left leg below the knee and bearing the inscription in gold letters of the famous utterance of the king of England. Now the ensign of the order being in the form of a bracelet is worn on the left arm, perhaps to spare the wearers the memory of its disreputable origin.

### The Knights in Their True Colours

The knights in their flesh and blood could seldom approximate to the superb picture drawn by Chaucer, Spenser and Scott and framed in various ballads, sagas and poems. Even before the Crusades, most of the knights though vowed to life-long celibacy and chastity, did not for the matter of that shun the company of ladies when such opportunities came their way. They respected the honour of decent dames and damsels to such an extent that they did never ask of them any other vile favour than a few sweet and ephemeral kisses. Unlike Ivanhoe though many of them averted the temptation of falling headlong into love with a coy and beautiful maiden, they amply made up for the privations of the flesh by often conducting clandestine commerce with women of easy virtue and servant girls.

Others again did not disdain permitting themselves certain of the compensations of metaphysical libertinism. Those who fell in love generally did not go beyond the limit of soft touches and chaste

kisses; they rather took pleasure in over-exciting their carnal desires and at the same time making supreme efforts to conquer them. The other party was as a rule not a knight and could hardly resist the lure of the flesh. In consequence many maidens and matrons died in broken heart or became life-long invalids or gave themselves away to those who fully knew to fulfill their biologic needs. Platonic love had its peculiar short-comings.

It was even one of the customs of hospitality in the medieval France to keep a maid to wait constantly on a knight and to warm his bed at night if he so desired. Sometimes the mistress of a chateau would insist on his husband's sending a handsome woman to the solitary couch of a knight who had become their most honoured guest for a day or two. Troubadours did not blush to sing of the praises of such ladies as ministered unto all conceivable worldly needs of the knighthood. Lucerne de Saint Palaye has unearthed from the unpublished manuscripts of the French kings preserved in Bibliotheque Nationale Fonds du Roi a satiric poem of the 12th century in which an aristocratic lady in whose manor a knight has taken asylum cannot retire until she has been able to send him a good companion. A few of the lines if rendered in English would read like this:—

The Countess directs her valet

To keep a young woman ready,

Gentle, nice but not too steady,



To the girl she whispers aside :  
 Look hear, dear friend, my man will guide  
 You to the chamber where's the knight.  
 Sleep with him, satisfy his needs,  
 For he's a man of heroic deeds.  
 I'd have gone there myself I swear ;  
 But it's not safe, the Count is queer,  
 For he sleeps light and wakes again.

The knights who were mostly drawn from the nobility were for a time,—at least in England upto the reign of Richard I, really "a very virtuous race—full of chivalry in love and grace." They came to be distinguished by their regular habits and decent manners as ideals to the bourgeoisie and proletariat, till the Crusades threw open to them diverse opportunities to bring their suppressed animal instincts to the surface. It was under the reign of Charles VI that the decay in knightly manners became conspicuous ; and before the end of the fifteenth century knighthood passed into a subject of antiquarian interest.

### Ministerialis Palatini

Next we owe our readers some elucidation regarding the *roi des ribauds* or the king of ribaldry. In the eighth century Emperor Charlemagne introduced a singular post with a curious function under the title of *ministerialis palatini* who were assigned to the policing in a peculiar manner of the

interior of the royal household. They were required to keep the palace barren of suspects, vagabonds and prostitutes. Only, of course, the emperor's gynaeceum of courtezans was to be respected.

This provost of the palace had been vested with the right of life and death over such persons as caused disorder or fomented conspiracy and profligacy within the boundaries of the royal household. Thus Aimoin (Book V, Chap. 10) reports that a *ministerialis palatini* of the name of Louis-le-Debonnaire caused to be expelled from the palace a big multitude of nondescript women who were supposed to be attached to the service of the king and queen's sisters. Many delinquents were used to be fined and beaten with rods, thrown into prison or executed. Still the palace was never free from the presence of immoral women and ambitious vagabonds.

### The Origin of the Roi des Ribauds

For four centuries after Charlemagne this *ministerialis* remained more or less potent and with more or less dignity under different kings. During the reign of Philippe-Augustus, the minister of the palace received the new appellation of the *roi des ribauds* (king of ribaulds) with some new duties added to him. This officer of the palace was entrusted not only with the policing of the interior of the royal household but also with registering the names of and preserving law and order among the ribaulds of the

city. By the order of the king this officer was surrounded with a certain prestige almost equal to that of a Police Commissioner and in a way superior to him in that he exercised both administrative and executive functions. He was followed everywhere by a jailor and an executioner. With him there was no interval between trials, condemnation and execution; there was to have been no appeal from his tribunal.

### The Functions and Personality of a Roi des Ribauds

The *roi des ribauds* struck terror into the hearts of the ribaulds (which, of course included thieves, fugitives, beggars, tramps, gamblers, bullies, swindlers, idlers, the excommunicated, the street prostitutes and all those who had no ostensible means of livelihood), whenever he appeared on the scene or proclaimed his peremptory orders. His office came to be a very lucrative one, as apart from his regular salary derived from the royal treasury and by illegal gratification a certain percent of the revenues from the taverns, gambling dens etc. and criminal fines realised from the delinquent vagabonds and prostitutes openly came to his share. Every city in France from the eleventh to the fourteenth century prided itself on its possessing a distinct *roi des ribauds*.

### Ribaulds' Join The War

Philippe-Augustus conceived the idea of turning to his own profit an unavoidable evil. Instead of fruitlessly seeking to suppress the pestilence of ribaldry, he with the help of the king of ribaulds organised it into an order of camp-followers in war. Many of these ribaulds readily joined this new movement of the king. Some of them were promised a low pay and others drafted only as volunteers. Most of them received a hasty smattering of military training though denied heavy armours of the regular army. The king did not restrain them from taking with them to the field of action as many women as might be recruited for obvious reasons.

This band of vagabonds during the incumbency of Philippe distinguished itself in several battles by such marvellous feats of bravery and showed so many evidences of intrepidity that the king afterwards was pleased to create out of it a standing militia attached to his own person. These ribaulds were generally accompanied and captained by the *roi des ribauds* or his deputy. Guillaume le Breton has described in glowing terms the prowess of these riff-raff heroes who seldom recoiled before death and could make use of heavy armours.

When Philippe came to besiege Tours after subjugating Poitou, it was a ribauld captain who was entrusted by him to find out a ford across the river.

Loire. When the whole army had crossed the river, the *ribaldi regis* who were detailed to lead the van at once ran up the ladders to scale the walls of the city and spared the soldiers the trouble of sacking open the city-gates. They pillaged and ransacked the city like veritable sons of devil (*enfants perdus*) and collected a handsome booty for themselves and their king. Their female companions were as rapacious, relentless and turbulent as themselves and never feared to run into the thick of the war and plunder. They also prostituted themselves freely with the rank and file and earned a fat competence both ways.

The king in appreciation of the services of the ribaulds to the state did not demand of them the same disciplinary obligations as he did of the regular militia. When the majority of them were demobilised after a war, they had to fall back upon their old ways of living and spend their days in gambling, drinking, swearing, thieving and what not. But it was impossible for the king to condone all the crimes committed by them as otherwise it would have dislocated the whole administrative structure. Hence the king had to confide the supreme command of this vast multitude of disorderly wretches in the *roi des ribaulds* who had for the matter of that to be a redoubtable "bully of the bullies." It was necessary for him to swear and blaspheme like them, to play at dice, to be con-

stantly saturated with wine and attended by a pretty wench.

The number of this incorrigible parasitic horde had prodigiously inflated on the eve of the second Crusade and they struck more fear into the enemy than the army itself and left desolate every land they visited like a cloud of all-devouring locusts.

### The Decay of the Roi des Ribaulds

Historians divine that the military necessity of the ribaulds was at a discount after the death of Philippe-Augustus. The Corporation of the ribaulds fell into decay though the *roi des ribaulds* still remained their supreme lord. If the ribaulds figure in all the subsequent Crusades and in some of the wars and campaigns down to the sixteenth century, they were different in position and importance from what they had been previously. Most of them were unwelcome hirelings—not paid from the government treasury but promised a share of the booty by the regular soldiers. They were poorly clad and poorly fed, and often excessively oppressed by the *roi des ribaulds* who aspired to fatten himself at their expense. Cases are on record in which they were constrained to raise a standard of revolt against the administration of their peculiar chieftain. But soon they were quelled and disbanded.

This vagabond population, nevertheless, remained a menace to the city's safety and morals down to the

reign of Charles V. The power and prestige of the kings of ribaulds in the mean time gradually dwindled and largely arrogated by the provosts of the marshalls. This office even lingered after the reign of Henry II and is little heard of towards the end of the sixteenth century. Before this, the king of ribaulds saw helplessly the rise of many unauthorised replicas of himself from under the archways and round the street corners, hostelrys and brothels of the city. Each smaller *roi* had his own jurisdiction and gradually transcended the supreme ribauld-chief who was finally reduced to the status of a respectable gate-keeper of the palace. The only prerogative which the *roi des ribauds* enjoyed upto the last was to realise a fine of five sous in gold from every married lady of the court who was detected to have entered into an illicit connection with a man, and also to demand of the court-courtezans to make his bed each year throughout the month of May.

### The Lady Superintendent Of The King's Courtesans

Just on the smouldering ruins of the office of the *roi des ribauds* we find suddenly conspicuous a new post—that of the Lady-of-the-daughters-of-joy-following-the-court (*dame des filles de joie suireant la cour*). This post existed from the beginning of the fifteenth

upto the end of the sixteenth century. "It was a lady", according to Rabutaux, "and a great lady sometimes who remained charged with the policing of the women of the court." About 1535 a lady, Olive Sainte by name, happened to fill the post of the lady-superintendent of the court-ladies. She received from Francis I a gift of 90 pounds "to aid her and her daughters of joy". The duty of the lady-superintendent consisted in keeping a strict watch over the court-courtesans who were forbidden to go outside the royal house on pain of lash. They were never allowed to receive or lodge any man or woman from outside. They were enjoined upon strictly to follow their mistress in the matter of manners and morals and not to offer her any insult.

### What is a Chastity Belt

We can hardly pass through the middle ages without coming into contact with one of the most abominable contrivances that was ever engendered to safeguard the fidelity of married women. It was, as a matter of fact, a product of war-time emergency and its invention was hailed with grateful ecstasy not only by the warring chiefs but by the peaceful citizens as well. This contrivance is known as "chastity belts" or "chastity girdles." Historians even today do not agree on the point as to where and when this sign of shameful degradation for

woman originated. Most of them have, however, averred that it was in some form or other known before the first Crusade in the Muslim lands of Arabia, Egypt and Tunis, and afterwards imbibed by the Turks. It was from Syria and Palestine that the Crusaders first came to know of the existence of such a contraption that had been in extensive use in the harems of the rich war-like Mussalmans to keep female chastity unharmed in their absence. Some of the devout Christians brought home specimens of this curious chastity belt along with the scars and wounds of the holy war and their unholy orgies.

These so-called chastity belts were nothing but a pair of metal sheets (either of iron, copper or silver) which work on a hinge at the middle, and the outward rims of which are riveted on to a thick metal belt to be worn round the waist of a woman. Each belt was provided with a padlock and key, and in each frame were two holes in front of the anal orifice and urethral opening for obvious reasons. Some were provided with another small hole sufficient only for the purpose of eliminating the menstrual blood. This contrivance was made to be put on by the wife, and after locking it and depositing the key into his pocket the husband could go away from home for weeks and months with the complaisance that she was thus prevented from having any illicit intercourse.

### History Of Its Origin

It is related that during the Crusades a German Emperor (either Conrad III or Frederick II) first hit upon all by himself the idea of guarding the much-prized chastity of his Queen. He had an old and trusted blacksmith brought into his bed-chamber and had by him riveted an iron frame on the private region of his wife. Burdened with this subservient instrument the wife had to remain clean at least in body, if not in mind, till the glorious return of her husband from the gory war. Whether chastity girdles were indigenous in Europe or imported from the Near East, it remained all the same a fashion with the wealthier section in almost every country in Europe up to the end of the eighteenth century. Some authors state that mothers in primitive communities in Europe safeguarded their unmarried daughters in a similar manner as far recently as 1918. Many of these belts are exhibited today in the public museums in Europe and also in some curio-collectors' private cabinets.

We owe the information to Dr. Wall who says: "In Oriental harems when husbands permit a wife or odalisque to visit a friend and they have no eunuch slave with them as a guard, they fasten an arrangement on them which consists of a belt that goes about the waist; to the back of this is attached an iron or leather band that passes through

a hole in a round wooden stick about four or five inches from one end ; this end of the stick is pushed into the vagina and the band is brought up in front, tightly drawn up and locked to the belt so that the wood cannot be removed from the vagina. The lower end of the wood extends to the knees so that the woman is necessarily and uncomfortably reminded that she belongs to her husband or master."\*

According to Havelock Ellis and some authorities preceding him, the infamous girdle made its first appearance in Europe in the thirteenth century ; but one of the most noted authority on this subject, Caufenon pushes the date further forward to the fifteenth†. Paul Lacroix maintains that the usage of a course and simple form of chastity girdles dates back to the remote antiquity and was perpetuated among people whose religious and social codes justified the slavery of women. Some of the antiquarians suspect not without reason that primitive forms of this contrivance existed in some kingdoms of Italy, especially at Venice, even before the Crusades.

It was during the fifteenth century under the reign of Henri III, on the advice of some ill-bred Italians

\* O. A. Wall, M. D., Ph. M., *Sex and Sex Worship*, (Mosby Co., 1932) p. 84.

† Schulz, *Das Hofische Leben Zur Zeit der Minnesänger*, Vol. I., p. 595.

at his court that the king allowed the introduction of the girdles of virtue in France. Dr. Norman Haire, on the other hand, has astounded us with almost an incredible piece of information that some sort of protective instrument on the lines of chastity girdles was invented by a set of lecherous matrons during the Imperial Roman days to guard the "chastity" or virility of their subsidised gallants\*.

The girdle of female chastity, however, was known in Italy under the designation of *cingula Castitatis* and in France as *la ceinture de chasteté*. Some of the shrewd and refined French gentlemen gave it a grander and blander name as *la gardle de sûreté* and tolerated it in their passionate jealousy as a sure and deterrent method to keep their astute, audacious and passionate wives in check. Contemporary history of France does not forget to add that this custom gradually took root in all strata of society ; it was even welcomed by many faithful wives and by mistresses to boot, who would adopt the shameful instrument of servitude as a symbol of fidelity. Locking the belt with their own hands and presenting the key most willingly to their

\* "There existed, at the same time, male brothels, in which wealthy ladies had legions of young men reserved for their own use, keeping them "sealed" during the intervals between their visits in order to prevent them expressing their manhood elsewhere. To do this they used system similar to that of the chastity belts of the crusaders' women".—*The Encyclopedia of Sexual Knowledge* (1941 ), p. 425.

departing lovers they set the latter's mind at rest and won supreme satisfaction for themselves. Thus the girdle of surity instead of being an outrage on feminine character and modesty, came to be a delicate symbol of tender devotion.

From some of the passionate poems and letters that had passed between Guillaume de Machaut and Agnes de Navarre and have since been published, it becomes too evident that the chastity girdles was a self-imposed ornament with many women of the age we are referring to. In more than one poem and letter Machaut's mistress alludes to a secret "treasure-box" of hers the key of which she had handed over to her lover. A few lines from a poem relative to this fact are worth-quoting here :

*Adonc, la belle m'accolla...  
Si attainny une clavette  
D'or et de main de maistre faite,  
Et dist : "Ceste clef porterez,  
Amys, at bien la garderez,  
Car c'est la clef de mon tresor"....*

And then my lady gave to me  
A very cunning-fashioned key,  
A key of gold, of master make,  
And said, "This key, my lover, take,  
And guard it well for love's sweet sake ;  
For it is the key to my treasury.

(Putnam's translation)

Pierre Brantome (1527-1614), a renowned French

knight-errant and outspoken chronicler of his age, incidentally remarks in one place of his *Dames Galantes* : "In the time of king Henry there was a certain ingenious swindler who brought a dozen of these devices to the fair of Saint Germain, *pour brider le cas des femmes*. They were made of iron and in the form of a girdle, and which were closed below and locked with a key, so subtly made that it was not possible for a woman, once bridled with them, being ever able to overcome them for even a mild pleasure, the devices having a few small holes *pour servir à pisser*." And Brantome in reporting the fact does not in any way marvel at these instruments as if they were no new things to him.

Brantome further reports that many honest gentlemen at the court threatened the wicked sharper with death if he persisted in the manufacture and sale of those ignoble devices, and they obliged him to throw into the latrines all that remained of his stock. It is easy for us to surmise that though here and there the manufacture of these chastity girdles were discouraged and looked down upon by the law of the land, they continued to be secretly patronised by not a very small number of dissipated and jealous husbands.

Many strange and facetious stories had been put into circulation at the court and outside in regard to the futility and misuse of the girdles. Out of many others one anecdote was universally current



for a long time about a woman who prostituted herself to a locksmith to obtain a duplicate key for the girdle-lock. Examples of the continued use of these strange yoke down to the middle of the eighteenth century are to be amply found in the French law-reports of the time.\*

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIA THROUGH THE AGES

India, the much-maligned and much-adored country of the East has been all throughout her existence perfectly innocent of the ignominious embellishment of women, the girdle of chastity.

A company of selected strumpets frequently accompanied the army from the earliest times in India and its adjacent countries. Though ordinary prostitutes in large numbers were frequently debarred from joining the army, it had been the custom from time immemorial with the kings, war-lords and their chieftains to take their favourite queens, wives mistresses and a handful of winsome slave girls along with them in an expedition.

### The Ramayana

From the remotest antiquity down to the middle of the nineteenth century the prostitutes—at least the better and much more accomplished class of them called *ganikas* or courtezans formed more or less an inevitable part of the civic life and were looked upon as a necessary evil in war and peace. Thus we find at least in one place in the *Ramayana*, one of the two Great Epics of the Hindus and presumed to have been composed not later than the third

\* Fredier, *Playdoier Contre l'Introduction des cadanas on ceintures de Chasteté*, Montpellier, 1750.

century B. C., that Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhyā was issuing orders to his ministers to array a splendid division of soldiers for his eldest son, Prince Rāma, in which "women that live on their beauty and are skilled in melliferous words" should be conspicuous by their presence \*.

Again, when Rāma was returning victorious from Ceylon with his war-worn contingents, his beloved wife Sitā and faithful brother Lakshmana, on completion of the term of his fourteen years' exile, Bharata, his half-brother and so long the regent of the kingdom went out to accord him a reception befitting a king. Holy anchorities, the Brāhmanas, the nobles, the officers of the royal household, the panegyrists, musicians, singers, soldiers and *ganikas* were ordered to meet Rāma and his party on the outskirts of the capital. Bharata with this mighty host of citizens and soldiers in their best attire and sprightly mood marched outside the city to be in wait for Rāma. Near by stood the monastery of Rishi Bharadvāja. He invited this surging sea of loyal citizens with their royal leader into his hermitage to take their rest till the arrival of Rāma.

This holy man of Bharadvāja by his astounding supernatural powers gathered in a moment all the wherewithal to entertain this vast concourse and the travel-tired followers of Rāma. After treating

\* *The Ramayana*, Bombay Edition, ii, 36.

them to sumptuous dishes and refreshing drinks, the Rishi threw open to the warriors the gates of diverse amusements that by and by led up to shameful dissipation. Bharadvāja invoked the aid of the gods in heaven whereupon the whole host of heavenly courtesans came down to his monastery to minister unto the valiant sons of Ayodhyā. Seventy thousand lovelies of paradise were despatched down below by Brahmā the Creator; ninety thousand by Kuvera, the divine Chancellor of the Exchequer; and twenty thousand by Indra, the god of gods. When all these beauties fell far short of the unpremeditated desideratum, the creepers of the forest were by the magic incantation of the Rishi transformed into legions of enchanting maidens. Seven or eight of these enchantresses were deemed just sufficient to serve each of the sodden warriors who transcending all bounds of decorum turned the hermitage into a vast arena for Bacchanalian orgy\*.

### The Great Mahabharata

The Mahābhārata which presents more or less historical figures against a contemporaneous social background amidst, of course, a mass of spurious didactic materials added to it by a set of class-conscious Brāhmana scribes from time to time, contains passages that clearly show that trollops and daughters-

\* *Ibid* iv, 127.

of-joy formed one of the accoutrements of Indo-Aryan soldiery. The wives, concubines and mistresses of the kings and nobles occupied the centre of a moving army; the common whores made up the rear.

In *Arthashastra*, one of the oldest authoritative work on Hindu polity we get but a faint glimpse of the army prostitution. But *Kamandakiya Nitisara*, a subsequent work, ventures the opinion that a body of troops that includes a batch of loving and healthy girls can valiantly fight\*. Not that they were always and wholly absorbed by the army for the purpose of satisfying the wanton lust of the warriors, but at least some of the more accomplished of their class were often engaged to tour behind the front and buoy up the war-fagged soldiers with their songs, dances, comic skits and recitals. A small section, after a period of apprenticeship, were sometimes sent over to the enemy lines as spies to undermine his *morale* and glean valuable information from his camp.

### Women in the Battle of Kurukshetra

On the eve of the great Epic War in the spacious field of Kurukshetra, the pious Yudhishtira sends one of his envoys to the outskirts of the royal city "to ask after the welfare of the fair-decked, heavily-scented women of pleasure whose glances dart forth

\* *Kamandakiya Nitisara* (Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra's edition) Ch. XIV. S. 80.

amiably to all sides and whose speech glides forth so readily". The purveyors to the war on the Pāndava side were charged not only with supplying rations, uniforms, arms and conveyances, but also with a large number of beautiful and obliging women so that the heroes in the camp would never have to feel any ennui or monotony. On the other side, the Crown Prince Duryodhana did the same—rather a better arrangement at that. Over and above setting up camps for pleasure galore with bejewelled beauties, he had the wives of the princes, generals and nobles stationed a few miles away from the battlefield in a well-guarded fort where the weary husbands could retire for a brief period during a lull in the fight\*.

### The Wars of the Imperial Mughals

The same state of affairs prevailed all throughout the classical antiquity and the middle ages. During the hey-day of the Imperial Mughals in India, the courtesans, slave girls, danseuses, *begums* of the royal household and also the wives of leading warriors with all the paraphernalia and amenities of a life in peace formed the centre of attraction for military service. The ordinary soldiers during lucid intervals bought consolations for their forced abstinence at the way-side villages and market-places where open and clandestine prostitution ran rampant to cope with the enormous

\* The *Mahābhārata* (Bombay Edition), Udyoga Parva, Ch. CLI. Sls. 57-58; Ch. CLMXVI, Sl. 26.

demand of the famished soldiery. In a city taken by storm or after hard fighting the victorious soldiers still gory from their blood-bath and blind with passionate fury swept down upon the place; under the circumstances they could but make very little discrimination between young and old, high and low and above all, the chaste and the depraved.

The books of travel by Bernier and Tavernier and *Storia do Mogor* by Dr. Manucci have preserved for us many colourful anecdotes of the levity and depravity in the Mughal court and harem-intrigues as well as descriptions of war-time philandering in high life. Not to speak of Jāhāngir, Sāhjāhān, Kāmbaksh, Murad and Shuja, a staunch puritanic Emperor of the type of Aurangzeb did not fail to take along with him a part of his harem into the battlefield. The Rājputs and the Mārhattās on more than one occasion pillaged the ladies' camps and ransomed the veiled and closely-guarded inmates, to which the bigoted Emperor had meekly to submit. But he never allowed, a staunch Sunni that he was, any ordinary prostitute to accompany the troops in an expedition. Once he proclaimed throughout Delhi an order that enjoined upon every prostitute of the city to marry within a certain specified time. Some left the city without marrying and others went through a spurious marriage ceremony to evade the arm of the law.

When the Mughal Emperor Humāyūn was defeat-

ed by the valiant Pathan usurper Sher Shāh at Chausa and fled toward Delhi, Begā Begum, one of his beloved queens fell into the latter's hands. The queen was treated with all the decency and respect commensurate with her position and by the order of the chivalrous Pathan chief she was escorted back to Delhi headed by his trusted general, Khawās Khān\*.

### Shivaji's Chivalry

Almost an identical but more edifying event took place during the *blitzkrieg* of Shivaji's early military career. One of the wives of the Mughal Governor of the Province of Konkan had been captured in battle by one of Shivaji's sturdy captains; and as a faithful henchman he presented this surpassingly beautiful booty to his master for disposal. Shivaji, the swarthy Marhatta hero, making her an obeisance due to a highly respectable lady politely entreated her to uncover her face. Taking but a lightning glance at her spotless face he only exclaimed in poetic admiration, "Had I been fortunate enough to have a lady like her as my mother, I would not have been born such an uncouth-looking dwarf that I am." The lady who had been trembling like an aspen leaf all the while with the thought of how she would be dealt with at the hands of this relent-

\* *Humayun Badshah*, S. K. Banerji (Maxwell Co, 1941) Vol. II. pp. 38-39.

less enemy, was as much amazed as relieved to hear the apotheosis from such an unexpected quarter and see herself honourably acquitted.

### The Indian Minister of the Palace

As far back as the fourth century before Christ we find in India a male superintendent of the palace like the ministerialis palatini or roi des ribauds; they were called *antarvamshika*. Again there were *ganikadhyakshas* or the superintendents of the women of pleasure both in the royal house and the city. The inmates of the royal harems were directly under the orders of an officer known as *antarveshika* or *agarika*. The feudal lords, tributary chiefs and the landed aristocracy too indulged in the luxury of keeping harem superintendents.

The dancing girls and *ganikas*, each and every time they entered the royal household, had to undergo a thorough examination by the superintendent or his deputy assisted by one of the royal physicians. They had to be stripped naked in order to undergo a bath and a thorough massage with scented unguetums and to wear a brand new dress before they were admitted into the presence of the king. All men and women who entered or resided within the precincts of the palace were closely watched by spies and informers employed by the *antarvamshika* \*.

\* *History of Prostitution in India*, S. N. Sinha & N. K. Basu, (1933) pp. 202-6.

The king would not visit any of the newly recruited women unless and until their purity had been vouchsafed for by the elderly ladies or men who acted as the guardiaps of the harem \*.

It was during the reign of Emperor Asoka that the superintendence of the royal harems and courtezans was assigned to an old respectable lady who came to be called at the time and thereafter as *stri-adhyaksha-mahamatra* almost analogous to the *dame des filles de joie suivant la cour*. The historians believe that the post was in existence upto the end of the 7th century A. D. when Charlemagne and his *ministerialis palatini* were still unborn. Students of the Roman History will perhaps be able to recollect that in the early republican and triumvirate days there was an officer called the *ædile* who kept a regular register of and a close watch over the movements of all the vagabonds and prostitutes of the Capitolian city. During the reign of the emperors a sumptuously-paid officer almost akin to the *ministerialis palatini* and the *roi des ribauds* was entrusted with the policing of the royal household and also of the brothels and taverns in the city.

Some meagre details about the management of the royal household of the Turkish and Pathan emperors can be gleaned from contemporaneous histories like *Tarikh-i-Hakki*, *Tarikh-i-Ferishtah*,

\* *Kautilya*,—Prof. N. N. Bandopadhyaya M. A., pp. 96-97.

Riyaz, *Tarikh-i-Khan Jehan Lodi*, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, Stuart's *History of Bengal* etc. But a compendious elucidation of the private lives of the Mughal *Badshahs* of India has been furnished not as much by Abul Fazl, Mu'tamad Khān, Sadik Isfāhani, and other court-chroniclers or by Babar and Jahangir themselves in their autobiographies as by foreign travellers and ambassadors of the time. Among the latter group, the Venetian Physician, Niccolao Manucci who for forty years remained under the ægis of Mughal court stands foremost because of his power of keen observation, comparatively sound judgment and honest attempt at accuracy. Manucci mentions the existence of a Master of the Royal Household and also of an Inspectress of the seraglio of queens and concubines in the palaces of Delhi, Lahore and Agra. The male master who wielded some authority over the royal harems was, as a rule, an eunach, but one of good character and superior intelligence.

"He in particular who is called the *Nadar*" goes to remark Dr. Manucci in the famous memoirs, *Storia do Mogor*, "is the head of the Mahal (harem) and one of the first officers of the crown. His business is to maintain good order throughout the seraglio; he settles an exact discipline in it that he enforces by his severity. He regulates the expenses of the emperor's wives and daughters. He is the keeper of the treasure of the Imperial household and great master of

the wardrobe. In fine, the whole expenses of the seraglio, the clothing, the linen, the perfumes pass through his hands.... The expenses of the inner palace which the *Nadar* disburses yearly does not amount to much above fifteen millions yearly."

### The *Dāroga* and the Mughal Army

In another place of his stupendous work, Dr. Manucci observes that when the emperor (he refers particularly to either Jāhāngir or Shāh-jāhān) moved out from his capital towards a battlefield a prodigious number of sutlers, porters, slaves, petty merchants of all sorts and ruffians marched in the rear of the army to supply it with the necessities as were to be had in towns. Then there were about four thousand personal servants of His Majesty to look after his own comforts and those of his friends and harem. This mighty force of non-combatants was captained by an officer called *Daroga* who answers near enough to the *roi des ribauds* of medieval France.

On the other hand, the main body of the army did not only consist of elephants, artillery, cavalry and infantry, but families and friends of the Rājās and nobles who all followed it and encamped near the battlefield with a view to witnessing the fun of fencing and man-slaughter. According to the not-too-wild estimation of the Venetian Physician, the followers often rose up to four times the number of the soldiers. However badly off a soldier might be, he must

have to be luxurious enough to be accompanied by two or three servants who used to carry his kits, heavy armours and provisions and carry out his small behests.

When provisions ran short and pillage was a far cry, the servants grew often intractable. The soldiers had to suffer much insolence and nasty tricks at their hands. Should any one venture to take the law into his own hands or report it to the *Daroga*, the servant would show a clean pair of heels or have been driven from the army after a severe chastisement. In such a case the soldier himself would have to look after his own horse, camel, washing, cooking and carrying. Dr. Manucci, after all, assures us that if a soldier were accompanied by a wife and some negresses or aboriginal women with whom the servants invariably carried on intrigues, he could well hope to be well-served and had never to fall back on his own resources\*.

### The Mahratta Roi Des Ribauds

In a Māhrattā expedition, we come across the *Shodas* which literally means the scoundrels. They formed a regularly organised body which in modern military parlance can almost be identified with the Pioneer Corps. These *Shodas* on marching days assembled under the orders of their leaders to act as the army-chiefs' proters and camp-followers. At

\* *Storia do Mogor*, Dr. Niccolao Manucci, translated by William Irvine (John Murray, 1907) Vol. II., 75, 448.

seiges they digged the trenches, erected the batteries and carried the scaling ladders. They were also licensed thieves and robbers of the camp, and substantially assisted the soldiers at the time of looting and ransacking. From the fruits of these industries their leaders derived a considerable revenue.

But the shoda-chiefs' grand concern was the gambling houses over which they exercised absolute control and superintendence. Daulat Rāo Sindhiā who sacked and occupied Delhi and Āgra and led an expedition to Jaipur and Ajmere in the first decade of the nineteenth century had one of the most formidable army of these ribaulds whose king is said to be a Pāthān named Fazil Khan. These Indian kings of ribaulds were also superintendents of the camp-brothels which, as we have said before, formed an indispensable concomitant in an Indian expedition as elsewhere.

Colonel T. D. Broughton, the Commander of the Resident's escort at the court of Sindhiā and later an honorary Secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society in England accompanied the Māhrattā expeditionary force of Daulat Rāo Sindhiā that started from Āgra in December 1808 for Rājputana, and recorded the Māhrattā camp-life in some of the letters written to his brother in England. In his letter dated 14th January 1809, he gives a description of the disposition of the camp and the ambulatory emporia or *bazaar*. "The shops, called *Dokans*," he proceeds



to say, "are pitched in two lines running parallel to each other ; and thus form one grand street from the front to the rear of the army. The street often extends from three to four miles. The different chiefs encamp to the right and left of the principal street, generally, however, in the neighbourhood of some particular *bazaar*."

Next Col. Broughton proceeds to relate the various recreations resorted to by the war chiefs and their followers. The more sober set of the soldiery passed their evenings in smoking, singing and gossiping. "But such as think" he continues, "that life is bestowed for superior enjoyments, and have a taste for more spirited modes of whiling it away, retire, at the approach of evening, to the arrack shop or tent of the prostitute ; and revel through the night in a state of low debauchery, which could hardly be envied by the keenest votary of *Comus* and his beastly crew.\*"

### Maharaja Daulat Rao and Surjee Rao

From Broughton's epistles we can make a fair estimation of the character, morals and habits of the Mahārājā himself, his Ministers and satellites that joined the expedition. The Mahārājā had with him three of his wives, one of whom was confined on the

way and a few concubines, a troupe of dancing boys and girls. Juwāhir Bāi, a beautiful young courtesan and formerly a common dancing girl had been introduced to and, insinuated into the favour of Daulat Rāo Sindhiā by his own father-in-law, Surjee Rāo. After a short time when she was discarded by him, Surjee Rāo, who must have been on the wrong side of fifty at the time and had become his son-in-law's Finance Minister and a General of his fighting forces did not lose time in engaging the woman for his own pleasure. Juwāhir completely captivated his mind somuchso that Surjee Rāo felt extremely miserable when separated from her even for a short time and left nothing undesired for her. This much-prized mistress lived in his tent and accompanied him in a palanquin wherever he went—even during battles as near the firing line as possible.

Surjee Rāo, though a brave and intelligent commander, spoilt his career and his life by his notorious addiction to wine and women. Broughton did not fail to notice that this old general had so much impaired his constitution by excesses that he had constant recourse to restoratives and aphrodisiacs. The keen-observing Colonel remarks that to stimulate his failing sexual appetite "dishes of young pigeons and goat's flesh stewed down to rich jellies are daily served up at his table ; and the female or as she is generally termed, the queen, of the white ants, a sovereign remedy in cases of

\* *Letters Written in a Mahratta Camp during the Year 1809.*  
Col. T. D. Broughton (A Constable & Co., Westminster) p. 21.

exhausted vigour, is carefully sought after and preserved for his use.”\*

In another of his remarkable epistles, Broughton incidentally mentions that Koosalee Ram, a Minister Plenipotentiary of the Rājā of Jaipur when visiting Daulat Rāo Sindhiā for the first time brought among a variety of rich presents “two sets of *Nach* girls, the most beautiful and accomplished that Jypoor could produce.” And this present in particular, the Colonel believed, would “be more effectual in accomplishing his purpose with Seendhiya than the strongest pleas of justice or expediency.” It is said that Mahārājā Sindhiā’s greatest pleasure as well as plague of life was his favourite women, singing and dancing soirees, elephant fights and flying of paper kites. If we can fully rely on the testimony of the eye-witnesses of the type of Col. Broughton, we would be shocked to hear that during peace, war and seige, Sindhiā’s most favourite hobby was the quest for virgin charms which were daily furnished by his myrmidons and sacrificed upon the altar of his vile profligacy. “In the conclave of his wretched minions”, the colonel records in horrified agony, “scenes are said to be enacted for his amusement, so gross, and at the same time, so ridiculous, as would stagger belief...These miscreants are systematic in their infamy, their sports are regularly classed and organised.”

\* *Ibid*, p. 82.

During the expedition, Surjee Rāo who had already incurred the displeasure of the Mahārājā was one day murdered by some of the latter’s relatives. This incident lent sufficient excuse to the Mahārājā to order the apprehension of Juwāhir Bāi and confiscation of all her effects to the State. The queen, daughter of Surjee Rāo, had a natural dislike for and an old grudge against Juwāhir for obvious reasons. Notwithstanding her being in a state of mourning she had the disreputable woman dragged into her presence. By her order Juwāhir was mercilessly flogged and beaten with a slipper. In fine, as the rumour has it, the indignant queen herself administered slaps and blows. The Mahārājā appearing in the midst of this punishment threatened her with the loss of her ears and nose ; but actually did nothing of the sort but robbed her of all the jewellery and cash she contrived to amass during her comparatively short period of prosperity. Now he was generous enough to set her at liberty.

### Life Of Khairatun

A bosom friend of Juwāhir, Khairatun by name, well-nigh met with the same fate. This woman had a very eventful career since her infancy, when she was sold by her parents to the mistress of a dancing party. When she had just come of age, her exquisite beauty became the rage of Sindhiā’s capital. Before, however, the Mahārājā’s henchmen set eyes on her,

Bābā Patankar the handsome and prodigal nephew of Surjee Rao bought the first favours of this virgin beauty by paying a high premium to the dancing mistress, her foster-mother. A few years after she had begun the life of a full-fledged demi-mondaine with all the acquirements necessary in her profession, she came under the exclusive patronage and protection of Patankar.

Sometime before the historic march of the Sindhiā, Khairatun had secretly attached herself to Shahamat Khan, a Pāthān adventurer who one day decamped with the precious booty and married her. This Pāthān chief after a short service with the Sindhiā joined Holker with another Pāthān chief, Meer Khan, to assist him in occupying Ujjaini and to devastate the surrounding country. In the mean time Khairatun was left behind at Jaipur with her two children and a very slender resource to live by. She was soon obliged to take to her old profession in which in spite of her waning youth she still excelled.

At the commencement of negotiations with the State of Jaipur, Bābā Patankar caused a secret but formal demand to be made for the restoration of his former mistress. Accordingly she was willy-nilly despatched to the Māhrāttā camp from Jaipur and placed again under the tutelage of her first paramour. This news enraged Shahamat Khan to such an extent

that he swore vengeance against the whole of Sindhiā's camp and his perfidious wife.

With the fall of Surjee Rao, the principal members of his party and his relatives were either murdered or imprisoned or made good their escape. Whatever might have been the fate of Bābā Patankar, his beautiful nightingale was thrown into an iron cage. The Mahārājā issued an order to wrest from her all her belongings amounting to about a lakh of rupees. She had, however, already passed on a greater portion of her dresses and jewels secretly into the hands of the friendly merchants and bankers of the camp for safe custody.

Khairatun, anyway, loudly protested against the gross injustice of the Sindhiā in taking away from her what she called "the honest gains of her profession, amassed during twelve long years of constant practice." Finding to her despair that all her vociferous supplication came to no purpose, she sent with some difficulty a spirited appeal to the King, declaring that if she could but once gain access to his august presence, she would get the order of forfeiture rescinded by the stroke of a single captivating song.\* The king for once in his life took the counsel of prudence and did not condescend the favour.

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 127, 171, 172.

### **Troops of the East India Company**

The interior economy, management and exploits of the Anglo-Indian army and the native sepoys attached to it during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been extensively studied and reviewed by authorities like Thornton, Mill, Wilson, Murray, Sir John Malcolm, Colonel Wilks, Dowe, Beatson, Orme and others. But on their life in the barracks, and the billets between battles as also on their sex life few have ever ventured to make a systematic survey. From the despatches and memoirs of the Governor-Generals, army-chiefs and army-surgeons under the regime of the East India Company, we sporadically come across some meagre information regarding them. At least a highly interesting book from the pen of a certain captain stationed in India in the first half of the nineteenth century has furnished us with some valuable data in regard to the mode of military life in India.

Captain Rafter has with wonderful outspokenness dissertated on the life of the British troops in India and the native sepoys in addition, their relative advantages and disadvantages compared to those at home and in other lands. The situation of officers in the Company's service at the age we are alluding to, being looked upon as a sort of life-long exile, care had been taken by the authorities to hold out as many privileges and comforts as were unknown to the

Queen's officers at home. Describing in some detail the allurements of British military service in India—the pay of respective ranks, promotion, pensions, allowances, their cantonment life, their barrack life, their family quarters, mess-rooms, ball-rooms, theatre halls, racket courts, golf rinks, race-stands, games, private matches, hunting excursions etc., the captain proceeds to relate the extent and nature of their amenities and privations in the field of action.

The cumbersome luxury of medieval military camps persisted even during the centuries within our purview. The Company could not in a day reform the manners and morals of their militia in the East. The British soldier waxed reluctant to part with the additional and new privileges he came to enjoy here amidst the obvious disadvantages of a tropical climate, the plague, cholera, malaria, dysentery, chances of snake-bites, prickly heats and boils, the grave risks of an expedition and the calumny of a possible defeat, disaster or a most tragic end in a foreign land.

### **Marriage and Concubinage in European Society**

In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries thousands of Portugese pirates, merchants, soldiers and civil servants settled in India to live in open concubinage with low-born Indian 'tarts' or with native wives procured either by money or by persua-

sion or through missionary efforts. A few of the French and British sub-alterns, captains and majors, however, had their wives brought across from home and lived with them in the family quarters till the latter showed distinct signs of nostalgia. Others chose their mistresses or brides from either their own community here or from among the natives. After retiring from the service and at the time of departing for home, the cavaliers often left their Indian odalisques a small pittance to sustain themselves and their illegitimate offsprings with for a few months and then to shift for themselves. It was not rare in those days that the civil or military Burra-Sahib married an Indian lady of lower rank or an ambitious woman of easy virtue who had not agreed to live in concubinage with him, and settled peacefully in India for good with his parvenu family to swell the number and strength of the so-called Anglo-Indian community.\*

Cases are not wanting in which an European military or civil officer renounced his nationality and religion as a sequel to a romantic love with an Indian maiden. Many soul-stirring stories and episodes of love, adventure, treachery, sacrifice, seduction, murder, constancy and desertion of Western gallants and their Eastern mistresses have since been exhumed from within the pages of private diaries,

\* *India Through The Ages*, Flora Annie Steel (George Routledge & Sons Ltd., London, 1919) p. 345.

memoirs, reports of Court Martial \* and contemporaneous society journals. We cannot resist here the temptation to illustrate this statement by one or two examples, as the space at our disposal would hardly permit us a greater indulgence.

### Romance of Kirpatrick's Marriage

Lieut. Colonel James Achilles Kirpatrick's marriage under a most romantic circumstance has passed almost into a legend. But the fact was mentioned and adumbrated in Elphinston's *Diary* (Sept., 1801), though it has afterward been elaborated with colourful side-issues by Edward Strachey in *The Blackwood*, 1893, to capture the imagination of the story-loving public. The real history of Kirpatrick's marriage as far as has been ascertained runs briefly as follows :

Lieut. Colonel Kirpatrick of the Honourable E. I. Company's Military Establishment of Fort St. George who after filling many responsible civil and military posts, was assigned the distinguished station of a Resident at the Court of Hyderabad. One evening Kirpatrick was sitting alone on the balcony of the Residency building, when he saw an old lady alight from a palanquin in front of the gate and come into his presence. After the exchange of a

\* Cf. *Records of the Indian Command of General Sir Charles Napier*, compiled by John Mawson (1851).

few words he at once knew the lady to be one of the match-makers who have been, as a class, an indispensable factor in marriage negotiations in Hindu and Mahammedan society from a very early time. Curiously enough though on the the wrong side of thirty Kirpatrick was still unmarried. On this occasion, the match-maker said, she had sought his interview not only as a match-maker but a secret messenger. By and by she gave out that she had been deputed by Khairunnessa, the grand-daughter of the Nizam's *buxey* or paymaster-general. The bashful maid had not long before observed him through the nettings of the *purdah* during an entertainment at her grand-father's house and been desperately smitten with love for him. The old lady had come to ask him how he would entertain the idea of founding a family with a pretty Eastern bride. Kirpatrick was really in no mood to listen to such senseless confabulations; she was ordered rather in a persuasive tone to quit the place.

But a few evenings later another palanquin—more gaudy than the previous day's—was deposited before the porch of his house; and from it stepped out no less a person than Begum Khairunnessa herself. Walking straight into his presence and unveiling her face she threw herself at Kirpatrick's feet to his utter astonishment and embarrassment. The lovely maiden in the middle of her teens stated in her sonorous voice and an unsophisticated way that her fate was

linked to his and that she would be content to pass her days with him as the humblest of his handmaids. Upon this Kirpatrick had no other alternative than to give in to her, appreciating fully the adage that stout heart melts when beauty pleads.

Shortly after, the Resident sought the hand of Begum Khairunnessa from the Nizām, who communicated it to the young woman's father and grand-father. After much demur and finding her grand-daughter adamant in her resolution the *buxey* consented to the marriage; but he stipulated at the same time that the marriage ceremony should be performed strictly in accordance with the Mahammedan faith. The news of this extraordinary marriage startled the whole European community in India. Even the then Governor-General, Lord Wellesly and his immediate subordinates scoffed at the alliance, and set seriously to thinking whether he should be removed from that high diplomatic post. Lieut. Colonel Kirpatrick stolidly indifferent to the clamours of an abusive world lived happily with his Indian wife till his untimely death. They had two children of this union. Their daughter, Katharine Aurora, has been immortalised as Kitty Kirpatrick in Carlyle's *Renaissance* and as Blumine in *Sartor Resartus*.

Mrs. Fenton, twice the coveted wife of two military officers of high repute in India (1826-1830), mentions the case of her cousin, Mr. Frank Gouldsbury, the judge and magistrate of Maldah

who married a natural daughter of Mr. E-'s.... In this connection she does not omit to record that "Colonel Sale is most violent on the subject; he will not allow a soldier to marry a native woman, but laments he cannot prevent the officers disgracing themselves.\*"

This Mrs. Fenton had observed with her own eyes the degraded state of morals of the British soldiers and nurses in India. An English nurse, Anne by name, once attended her in sick-bed. She related to her in piteous candour how she had been reduced to that state from that of being a soldier's wife. At a certain place of her Journal Mrs. Fenton remarks: "All nurses are privileged gossips, and Anne's anecdotes of the régiments sometimes amused and often made me sad. The ladies did not stand high in her estimation."

### Attempts at Indian Army Reform

Marquis Cornwallis like some of his predecessors and successors tried heart and soul to bring about wholesale reformation in the British army. In one of his despatches addressed to Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas (Nov. 7, 1794) he deploras "the unfortunate propensity to intemperence which is so general amongst all the European soldiers in India", and suggests a reasonable retrenchment in their allowance in consonance with their position and prestige. In

the same despatch he sets down: "As I am strongly impressed with a conviction that it will be of essential importance to the interests of Britain that Europeans should be discouraged and prevented as much as possible from colonising and settling in our possessions in India, I look upon it to be highly expedient that it should be a fundamental principle in the new system, not only to relieve the corps of European troops frequently, but also to secure the return of all military men who may be entitled to any provision from the public to their mother country, by rendering all pensions and allowances to them after they are worn out, or may have been permitted to retire from the service, payable to those only who shall actually claim them in Europe."\*

Sir Henry Lawrence, too, who rose from a subaltern to the most coveted post of the Chief Commissioner and Brigadier-General of Oudh, was genuinely aggrieved to observe the abominable depravity of the British "boys" in the barracks and cantonments. What struck him most was the atmosphere of moral turpitude and bad examples in which the soldiers' children breathed and moved. They constantly saw and heard within their so-called homes what should not have been revealed to their tender senses. The singular freshness and beauty of puerile innocence was totally

\* *Selections from the State Papers of the Governor-General of India* edited by Sir George Forest C. I. E. (Basil Blackwell, Oxford), vol. II, p. 164.

\* *The Journal of Mrs. Fenton* (Edward Arnold, 1901) p. 69.



unknown among them. Henry Lawrence while yet a young man conceived the idea of rescuing these unfortunate children, body and soul, from the polluting influence of the barracks and to provide in future a healthy, happy and congenial home for these neglected souls\*. The conception of these "Lawrence Asylums" in some shape or other was afterwards crystallised. At least three charitable societies were established with Government grants-in-aid in three Presidency towns for taking care of the forlorn, discarded or pampered children of European officers and soldiers.

From Lieutenant-General Patrick Lawrence to General Neill all the well-meaning and high-souled army chiefs in India endeavoured to withdraw the inducements to hard-drinking, gambling and chambering in which the European soldiery of the time wallowed and to improve their morality and general efficiency, but it was crowned only with partial and temporary success†. The life of European soldiers, save and except the occasional hazardous tasks they were called upon to perform, flowed like a river in spring—happy and hilarious.

Let us once again return to the monograph of Captain Rafter. At one place while describing an

\* *Lives of Indian Officers*, John William Kaye, (A. Strahan and Co., 1867), Vol II, p. 285.

† *Ibid*, p. 356; also *Reminiscences of 43 years in India*, Lt General Sir George St. Patrick Lawrence, K. C. S. I., C. B.

Anglo-Indian army on march, he says that a moving bazaar is an indispensable appendage to it. "This consists of a whole camp of sutlers", he proceeds, "who provide and sell to the best advantage all the necessaries of life, which it would be highly inconvenient for the soldiers to carry about with them and which they cannot do well without. These bazaars are always established in the rear of, and at a little distance from, the encampment; and the market men with their families, Coolies, hackeries (carts), bullocks etc. etc. wonderfully increase the apparent numerical strength of an Eastern army."\*

Now we shall quote a few lines from another valuable treatise by Captain Munro and we have finished with the present chapter. "The preparations for war in India" reports Munro, "carry nothing hostile in their appearance, ease and comfort being far more studied upon these occasions than despatch. It would be absurd for a captain to think of taking the field without being attended by the following enormous retinue, viz, a dubash (an interpreter), a cook and a maty boy; if he cannot get bullocks, he must assemble fifteen or twenty coolies to carry his luggage, together with a horse-keeper and a grass-cutter, and sometimes a dulcinea and her train, having occasionally the assistance of a barber, a washerwoman, and an ironer, in common with the other officers of

\* *Our Indian Army*, Captain Rafter (David Boyce, London, 1855), p. 22,

his regiment. His tent is furnished with a good large bed, mattress, pillows etc., a few camp-stools or chairs, a folding table, a pair of glass shades for his candles, six or seven trunks, with table-equipage, his stock of linens (at least twenty-four suits), some dozens of wine, port, brandy and gin; with tea, sugar and biscuits, a hamper of live poultry and his milch-goat. A private tent for holding his servants and the overplus of his baggage is also requisite; but this is not at the Company's expense.

"In addition to the superabundant multitude of attendants, for all the officers have followers in proportion to the captain's, every sepoy in the army is accompanied to the field by his whole family, be they ever so numerous, who leave upon his pay and allowances of rice from the company. The wife shares the hardships of war with her husband in the most cheerful manner, and follows him wherever he goes."\*

But it is not a representative picture of the whole of India as far as the habits and modes of the native soldiers are concerned. To be accompanied by wives and concubines in battle was a time-honoured usage more with the *sirders* and captains of every European and Asiatic nation than with the common soldier. The average monthly pay of a native sepoy under the Company was in the neighbourhood of seven rupees with which it was hardy possible to maintain an

itinerant family even in those days of cheapness and profusion. Besides that the women of the higher three classes of the Hindus as also a majority of Mahomedans in the whole of Northern India observed strict purdah. They were naturally timid, coy and home-sick.

Ordinarily the wives of the poorer classes in addition to the bringing up children and performing all the household duties had to tend cattle, raise poultry and rear vegetable gardens and often to work in the corn-field during the harvest with or without their husbands in the interest of domestic economy. They would naturally fare ill in accompanying their husbands to war, specially the young mothers with their babies in arms and growing children, to court perils, imprisonment, molestation and death.

It was, we dare say, an old fashion with some of Madras and Marhatta warriors to take their wives with them as their assistants and conscience-keepers. This was only possible because the Hindu women in Southern India have been from the misty antiquity innocent of the influence of *purdah* and veil. In other places and among other Indian races it was only some of the barren and jealous wives of the landless soldiers, a handful of hoydens and indigent mistresses that trailed behind the army upto the middle of the last century for the sake of either love, adventure, romance or lucre.

\* Operations on the Coast of Coromandel, Captain Munro.

## CHAPTER V

## THE GREAT WAR AND WOMEN AT HOME

At last we come into the Great European War of 1914-18. "At last!" cried out Count Appanyi in ecstatic delight in the Hungarian Parliament when the news of war having broken out reached it. Millions of men and women all over Europe hailed the Great War as a boon—as a breaker of intolerable monotony—as a harbinger of world emancipation. The feeble voice of warning raised by the pacifist was hopelessly drowned in the paroxysm of kettledrums, bugles and hurrahs. Suddenly the slumbering fountain of patriotism surged up in gushing fury from the most self-centred heart; the philanthropic internationalist in a trice was awakened to a blazing hatred for other nations than his own. The whole nation that had been peacefully going through its day's routine with clock-like precision and shuddered at the idea of shedding a drop of blood, became firebrand overnight and rushed headlong into the mad march for a mass bloodshed.

## The Women and the Departing Soldiers

And this war ruthlessly dislocated all peace-time activities as much as it disorganised all social, economic, moral and political idealogies and institutions.

Above all, it brought the social emancipation of women a few steps forward and with it threw open a new avenue for tremendous emotional excitement that exercised in an unprecedented way a stimulating influence upon their social and sexual life. During the first days of war, innumerable French women floating on a spate of patriotism had given themselves recklessly up to the allied "boys" marching to the front. According to Dr. Huot and others this promiscuity should be diagnosed more as a war-time nymphomania than as an dynamic expression of their national feeling.

The famous journalist E. Erdely in an article drew a vivid picture of feminine morality in Budapest in the later half of 1914. We are quoting below a few lines from his article in support of the statement that the war and the sudden removal of all restraints on the women went a long way in arousing her sexual passion to a degree unknown before:

"In the first weeks of the great excitement and in the ensuing months, women fell into a feverish delirium of enthusiasm, as though the senses had, with one move, thrown off the repressive chains of all social and economic scruples. It seemed natural that the same emotional experience which expressed itself among men in the lust for murder, in women showed itself in the madness of corporeal surrender. No statistics were made on this subject, but the

consequences prove that enthusiastic girls jumped in an almost insane way into the arms of the men departing for the battlefield. For in those early weeks, every man who wore a uniform seemed to be the exalted betrothed of death. And who had the power to resist the supplicating word and the pleading glance of such a one? Never did women commit so many sins as in that autumn of mass delirium."

### Masculinization of Women

Bereft of almost all the able-bodied men every belligerent country in Europe had to engage for the first time in the history of human civilisation women in all sorts of masculine avocations—in the office, in the machine and tools shop, the chemical industries, the ordnance factories, the ambulance service, the transport service, railways, the tram cars, omnibuses—both at home and in the battlefield. Even the women of the half-world obtained from their favourite patrons in the War Ministry contracts for military construction and provisions. In France a member of the Chamber of Deputies vehemently protested against the employment of women purveyors of military supplies. A bumper business was for a time conducted by a set of harlots in Munich with ration-cards in its most deplorable days.

The active participation of women in the productive industries and in a wider economic sphere brought

forth the inevitable consequence of masculinization of the average female type—a fact which has been amply proved by Exner. The women as if with a proselyte's fervid vengeance imbibed the peculiar habits and manners of common men and wanted in a way to outdo them in matters of drinking, smoking and swearing. Exner has further pointed out that criminal propensities tended to increase in the women thrown outdoors in the exigency of war. Murder, assault, rioting, perjury, shop-lifting, burglary, theft, indecency, disorderly conduct, gambling etc. were more in evidence among women than among men at home.

On the other hand, women, at the outbreak of war, partly through patriotic exuberance and partly through the subconscious feeling of welcome relief from the subordination of men, readily sent away their brothers, husbands and sons to the battlefield. They were everywhere the aggressors in throwing the first stone at the aliens let out on parole in their lands. Over-time arduous task, insufficient food, scarcity of clothing, inflation and love of vice and low amusement on one hand and the news of the beloved ones' death or being wounded or made prisoners and the bitter self-reproach from it on the other, put a tremendous strain on their mind and told seriously upon their health from which many could never recover.

### The Malady of Marriage

The war-fever gave rise to another malady—yes, the malady of marriage almost in an epidemic form. Young warriors still within or just off their teens contracted hasty marriages with women of short acquaintance or of easy virtue; in many cases an intimate knowledge of a loving pair for a single night or a few was legalised in marriage in view of the evil consequence it might entail in the near future and in prospect of a war allowance for the wife. In France it came to be known that the majority of the women who came hand in hand with their prospective husbands for registration had been for years living as their mistresses. Even sometimes it was found the soldier husband had two, three or more children before the so-called marriage with his so-called bride was solemnised. "Very frequently a little patrol of children would run before these couples and look on the proceedings with great amazement with glee that papa and mama had come to get married".

During the first few months of war it looked as if there would be no bachelors and maids of marriageable age left in the warring countries. Scores of couples daily stood in double queue along the balcony of the municipal buildings to get their marriage registration certificates. The Church marriages were more than ever at a discount. All

the men in uniform clamoured in hectic impatience with their equally petulant brides locked in their arms: "To-day we want to get married anyhow, for to-morrow we're going to the front."

Blasco Ibanez, the world-famous Spanish novelist reported that half the Parisian lovers rushed to get married on the eve of their departure to the front. The rush was so great and the need appeared to be so pressing that by order of the Government the magistrate's clerks would receive twenty couples at a time into their office and perform wholesale marriages. These marriages, as we have already stated, were mostly contracted on gross selfish motives and encouraged more by the brides than by their irresponsible men and seldom out of any moral or spiritual consideration.

### Increase of Divorce and Infidelity

And it did not take long to educe the evil consequences of these hasty war-marriages. The two most terrifying reactions that resulted were—(a) the increasing number of divorces during and after the war, (b) infidelity of the wives. Thus in 1918 a single Berlin court issued about seven hundred divorce orders in the course of four months. In Vienna divorce cases became three times larger in number after the war than before. London and Paris presented none the less a happy picture. Sexual starvation on one hand and economic and other trying circumstances on the other induced not only the war-

wives but also many respectable matrons in the belligerent countries to sacrifice their moral scruples and their character at that.

In spite of the lofty opinions entertained and expressed by authorities like Prof. Vorberg, Dr. Frankel and others regarding the weakening of the feminine libido under the storm and stress of war, specially that of the German women, actual facts coupled with the police and court reports of the time gave the lie direct to them. It will be easy for one to fill volumes with many strange and dramatic stories of amorous escapades of the German, French and British wives during the fateful years of 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918. There is positive evidence to show that fear, uncertainty, nervous depression, overwork, anxiety and bereavements acted as contributory—rather acceleratory factors in making women more incontinent in times of war than of peace.

In May 1915, the Mayor of Vobach in Alsace-Lorraine could not but openly proclaim that the morals in all strata of society in the city had remarkably declined notwithstanding the great distress and suffering of the people. The most lamentable sign of degradation was visible among numerous frivolous married women whose husbands were shedding their life-blood in the battlefield. He caused a black-list to be prepared by the police and warned more than once the trespassers on public morality on pain of being apprehended and branded.

### A Cinema-House Incident

In the Catholic Magazine *Monika* (No. 24, June 12, 1915) there appeared a lengthy article under the caption of *Bloody Tears should Be Shed For Them* which *inter alia* gives a glaring incident of war-time immorality of the soldiers' wives. The manager of a cinema house on a certain night was obliged to rush helter-skelter into his auditorium amidst a show, and in the semi-darkness shouted tremulously to the audience: "Ladies and gentlemen! I am constrained to disturb you a little in the best interest of you and my house. It has been reported to me that outside the theatre a trooper is waiting to seek admission with the object of surprising his wife and her lover. As I do not happen to know this precious pair either by face or by name, I have taken this course to warn them from beforehand, as I wish to avoid a scandal and a row. I beg the pair concerned to quietly quit the house forthwith by the door at the right. Hurry up, please, for I have seen the husband seething with anger and muttering oaths buy his ticket at the box-office window." No sooner had he finished his harangue than there was a rustling rush for the door of deliverance and a platoon of twenty-three pairs disappeared outside in confusion. ...

There were hundreds of cases during the four years of war in which faithless wives were detected

in the midst of their clandestine love *flagrante delicto* and were meted out inhuman punishment by their soldier husbands. Many stories regarding the faithless wives and their unworthy cavaliers at home were concocted, and many ballads, limericks and epigrams were composed by a set of stoic but sprightly soldiers and circulated at the front. As for instance, there was current at the Austrian front a Magyar song which recorded the statement of a peasant woman who had a husband in the battlefield and a sturdy lover in the neighbourhood. She was brazenfacedly expressing that she would rather not have his husband return home because she was having such a jolly time with the far more desirable *locum tenens*. But the realities of life sometimes far transcended these droll stories and witty songs, and the reprisals of the husbands often threw the tales of Decameron into the shade.

### The Case of an Aggrieved Soldier's Vengeance

Magnus Hirschfeld has recorded an event that happened at Altofen, Germany, in July 1916. "One day a certain brave soldier, from whom no word had come for a whole year, returned home from the front. It may have been that his postal cards from the field of battle were miscarried or perhaps he could not write and had been unable to send any other messages. At any rate his wife sent both her children to the country and began to lead a right

merry life with a recently acquired lover. When the soldier came home and found his domicile locked he visited the neighbours. From them he learned that the children had been away from their mother for a long time and the latter generally returned home very late.

"From all these sources he was able to piece together the miserable story of his wife's frivolity and heartlessness. The soldier pretended that he did not quite believe those shocking reports and waited for his wife from two o'clock in the afternoon to nine in the evening. Finally she arrived and expressed great delight at seeing her husband again after the many months of absence. He showed pleasure at this demonstration of affection, smiled graciously, and kissed her tenderly as she fell upon his neck to the great astonishment of all the neighbours who had naturally expected quite a different reaction on her part. But for the moment she was, or pretended to be, the most loving wife in the world.

"The couple entered their home and everything was quiet. Towards midnight the neighbours were awakened by the most horrible screams which issued from the house of the soldier. They broke in the door and found the woman lying on the floor groaning and moaning in agonies of pain and the soldier getting ready to depart. What had happened? The deceived husband had lectured his wife on the subject of her infidelity and after a number of unsuccess-



ful denials she confessed. Thereupon the husband declared that he would not decide upon her punishment until he had dined as he had been travelling for sixty hours. The woman lit a fire in the stove until it was red hot. Then he tore the clothes from his wife's body and naked as she was, set her upon the stove three times.....She was brought to the hospital and he was brought before the military court."\*

### Suicides Of Sentimental Soldiers

Reports are not lacking in which we find that a good many brave soldiers who had been showing great promise in civil life and had been content with a loving wife and a warm-hearted family, when they received the news of their wives' infidelity at home, committed suicide in a most regrettable manner. Either they courted death by coming out of the trenches during intensive enemy bombardment, or shot themselves with a rifle or a revolver. These husbands were mostly sentimental and loved their wives to the point of apotheosis. They preferred *felo-de-se* to taking revenge on their wives as they thought the mental agonies and the memory of the past in a state of penal servitude would be too much for them to bear and only amount to 'death by dribblets'.

\* *Sexual History of the World War*, M. Hirschfeld (The Panurge Press, New York, 1934), pp. 39-40.

Wilfred Saint-Mandé, a distinguished British soldier and the author of one of the best books on the last World War, has adduced the case of such a tragedy in his Company. "Another man in my section," he ruefully records, "Anson, committed suicide by shooting himself with his rifle. He had been worried and morose for a couple of weeks, and confided to me that he had received a letter informing him that his wife was living with another man. Not without difficulty he obtained a few days' special leave and went home to investigate. Arriving at the house without warning, he was just in time to see his wife's lover disappearing over the garden wall, and in the dining room was an illegitimate child crying in its cot. Anson's first impulse was to murder his wife and her child, but he was able to resist it, and simply gave instructions for the house and furniture to be sold. When he returned, he seemed to be unable to think of anything but the loss of his home and happiness."\*

### The Virtuous also Pay the Price

During the Great War the double morality of the bourgeoisie society in fact wreaked vengeance on the descendants of its sponsors and perpetrators to an extent unknown in the annals of social evolution. The triumphal march of infidelity at home

\* *War, Wine and Women*, Wilfred Saint-Mandé (Cassel & Co. Ltd. 1933), pp. 390-91.

was but a natural repercussion of the abominable sexual life the soldiers were leading in the trenches, at the halting stations, in the hospitals and during billeting in the hinterland. The number of wives at home that put up a heroic fight with their excruciating carnal needs amidst an exposition of temptations, bad examples, undernourishment, loneliness, worries and terrors, was, nevertheless, far greater than that of the men at the front.

A good many number of the virtuous women were attacked with war psychoses, anxiety neuroses and hypochondria, and quite a legion roughed their way into the lunatic asylum. Suicides of young girls as a result of the death of their fiancés or at the news of their maimedness rose to such a fearful proportion in almost all the belligerent countries that the censors were at last compelled to withhold publication of these reports from the newspapers for fear of a country-wide contagion. During at least the first two years of the war a regular raging of suicidal epidemic was much in evidence among all classes of women. Those who were congenitally inured to the unilateral codes of feminine morality and meant to remain true to them at any cost, sometimes paid dearly for the suppression of their sex-hunger.

Apart from the incidence of suicides and psychoses, Dr. Burchard and Hirsch have shewn by citing innumerable cases that there was an abnormal

increase of dysthetic and dysthemic conditions in all classes of abstinent women, that resulted not only in their life-long invalidation but also in all types of menstrual disorders, premature menopause (cessation of periods), chlorosis, persistent frigidity, sterility and ~~de~~-lactation. The term *war-amenorrhœa* was coined by Dr. Dietrich during the war as a result of a fearful increase of cessation of menses among German women at the time. Afterwards it was known to have taken its toll among women of other nations too. Prof. Müller ascribed the increase of this disease to three principal factors: malnutrition, sudden change in the mode of life and the influence of war upon the mind.

### Abortions, Infanticides and Birth-control

This is one of the relieving features in the picture of war-time morals of the women at home, which had perhaps instilled at least a semblance of proud satisfaction into heart of the stout protagonists of female chastity. But we shall have to revert to the main items of the picture in order to study it in its true perspective. The moral condition of the period can best be judged by a study of the statistics of abortions and infanticides. In some big cities the rate showed an increase twice as much as the pre-war average. In Germany and Austria these crimes grew to an abominably fearful proportion. In Berlin, of one hundred

women who consulted a surgeon in his clinic for incomplete abortion, about eighty-nine were found to have used abortifacients to prevent illegitimate births.

Then again, in the opinion of Dr. M. Vaerting, the exigencies of war contributed largely to the employment of the contraceptive technique both among men and women and in the towns as well as villages. The medical crops gave methodical instructions on the technique of preventive intercourse and in almost every national army anti-venereal medicines and appliances were distributed. Many of these appliances can also be used for birth-control purposes. As such, they helped the soldiers both ways, and were more extensively patronised by the demi-mondaines and incontinent ladies. Still there were many slips between the cup and the lips; due to oversight, carelessness and misapplication, there were thousands of failures. In consequence, there was as much rise in the incidence of venereal diseases as in abortions and infanticides.

### War-Babies

Then there were illegitimate births. Every warring nation vied with one another in producing children by all manners and means, as if imbued with the idea that those children the moment they were born would be conscripted to act as its cannon-fodder. From 1916 every nation tried as much as

it could to condone the offence of adultery if it at all resulted in an illegitimate birth. France and Belgium stood foremost in the production of war-babies and their readiness in legitimising them.

The state offered all help and protection necessary to the innocent foundlings with nameless fathers—the glaring and concrete specimens of war immorality. Though society at first looked upon this procedure with its ancient horror, dismay and contumely, the state, more conscious of realities than age-worn ideology, could not but do away with all the difference between children born in wedlock and out of it. In Germany, however, society and the state concurred from the very first on this point. In response to a memorial of the League for the Defence of Mothers, the Reichstag, the then highest legislative body in the German Empire passed a resolution on as early as August 4, 1914, to the effect that federal war relief would be extended equally to illegitimate children.

Sponsored and subsidised by the respective Governments foundling homes and war-babies' relief centres were established in almost every city and township of France, Germany, Austria and England. Over a million of war babies through the generosity of the state and the connivance of society could thus be brought into the world, baptised, nurtured and sustained to make up in a way for the enormous loss in men on the battlefield. The normal output

of illegitimate births had been above 37,000 per annum in England alone\*. The rate doubled and trebled during the four years of war and the one following it.

### The Love-sick Lasses

There were innumerable town and country lasses who under a patriotic fervour and being suddenly released from all conventional restraints joined the V.A.D.S. and W.A.A.C. and had pleasures galore with the raw recruits, young soldiers, A.S.C. and R.A.M.C. men both at home and behind the front. Others that did not join the active service, at least tried "to do their bit" at home by volunteering their services in some safe war industries or venturing into the ordnance and ammunition factories with a decent pay and war-risk covers. In between their arduous jobs they did not lack opportunities or incentive to form intimate relationships with the "slackers at home" or sometimes a quaint shadow love for the unknown boys at the front.

Here is a small incident in the soldiers' billet behind the line as recorded by Saint-Mandé :

"Sands asked me how to spell 'enamour' and on being questioned admitted he was writing a love letter. We all roared with laughter ; the idea of being anyone in love with Sands was too much for our imaginations. 'What

th'ell are yer laughing at?' he demanded, 'can't I write to a tart, same as anyone else? All of you b—s 'ud like anyone of my girls, I'm telling yer.' He produced a bundle of photographs and letters which were passed round for inspection. The secret came out when Sands told us that, a few weeks before, he had been on fatigues opening ammunition boxes, and had found a slip inside each box from the girl who packed it. Each slip invited the soldier boy who opened the box to correspond (if single) with the sender whose name and address were given; Sands had been married for many years and had even, on his own confession, been in prison for failing to support his wife. In spite of that he wrote to a large number of girls, describing himself as young, tall, handsome and unattached. We began to understand why the rascal had been of late receiving so many letters and parcels. He was utterly shameless, and read aloud the amorous declarations of the trusting females, who, after exchanging two or three letters with the hero at the front, were longing to marry him."\*

The impetuously candid Saint-Mandé who joined the last war as a private, was wounded and mentioned several times in the despatches, decorated with medals and bars and had to retire from the service almost a maimed air-machine pilot, has thrown enough highlight on the morality of the wives and daughters at home and their fanatic yearning for the Khaki. He himself has confessed to making intimate acquaintances with at least half a dozen

\* *The Bystander*, April 21, 1915; *The Truth*, May 5, 1915.

\* W. Saint-Mandé, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-9.

such erstwhile decent and respectable wives and daughters, when home on leave. Making due allowance for personal equation, if we permitted ourselves to work up a total of these "hail-fellow-well-met" types of women on the basis of Saint-Mandé's figure, we wonder how many in the long run would have been left out of account! It was the same story all over the warring countries,—decidedly worse in France.

### **Saint-Mandé's First Acquaintance With Jean**

Now we shall follow Saint-Mandé for a while to obtain a scrappy but faithful view of the amorous escapades of this eighteen year old private who had just matriculated with distinction and been destined to shine brilliantly in the Oxford horizon. We shall summarise portions of his stories and quote his own description, wherever necessary, eliminating, of course, the unsavoury and banal details.

After finishing his training at Lanshore Saint-Mandé with his company was waiting to be sent over to the front. One day when he was cycling back alone to the barracks after exploring the countryside, he came by a pretty girl with an extremely ruddy complexion in a lonely lane. She was without a hat, had oval features, blye eyes and a small roughish mouth with soft coral lips. Her fair hair was thick and wavy. In her whole appear-

ance there was a stamp of purity, austerity and pride. Saint-Mandé dismounted from his bicycle and timidly asked whether she would mind if he walked along with her for a while.

On being interrogated why should he want to stroll with an absolute stranger, Saint-Mandé replied: "For two reasons, mainly. The first is that you are extremely attractive, and the second that I am a stranger in this part of the country and know no one outside the barracks."

"You know how to flatter at any rate," she replied with a laugh that showed her to appreciate the tribute to her beauty.

With this preamble they scraped an acquaintance with each other. After some such topics as possible consequences of marrying an empty-headed doll, the significance of plantonic friendship etc. they reached a house standing back from the road and covered with ivy. When the girl was on the point of taking his leave and going in, Saint-Mandé asked whether she could not possibly come out again, because her company gave him the most supreme pleasure of his life and he wanted to know her better.

After twenty minutes had elapsed the sweet girl whose name afterwards came out to be Jean, reappeared. They walked away down the lane. When they came to a stile Mandé took Jean's hand to help

her over, and retained it as they continued their stroll across a field through which ran a narrow path.

Now we are quoting from Mandé's :

"Some cattle were grazing in a meadow, and, to my surprise, my companion gripped my arm, whispering that she was in a blue funk whenever she saw a bull.

"I put my arm round her waist without resistance, and we sat on a gate watching a lamp twinkling on a distant hill.....I wanted to kiss her, but for a long time hesitated... It was only when the moon disappeared behind a big black cloud, and we were in complete darkness that I drew the upturned lips to mine and pressed them with unmitigated joy....I spread out my coat and in a few minutes we were laying locked in a close embrace. We kissed and kissed again, until our lips seemed merged into one. It seemed to me we had been lying there but a few seconds when a church clock chimed twelve. Jean was silent when we retraced our steps, then said suddenly :

" 'I wish I were a man.'

" 'Whatever for ?'

" 'Because a man gets so much more out of life.'

" We tarried long at the door, where I renewed my protestations of love and eternal devotion. We were kissing still when the village clock chimed one."

" 'If my pater knew there would be a terrible row. I really must go.'

" 'When may I see you again ?'

" 'I don't even know your name, and Mother Grundy would have a dozen fits if she knew how we met.'....

### The Merry Widow, Daphne

The most consoling feature, however, of this episode is that Saint-Mandé ultimately made Jean his bride after snatching away a few spells of hasty honeymoons with her during leave or convalescence from "the blighties". In the meantime Saint-Mandé had other more or less interesting encounters with a few young widows, street walkers, slatternly hussies, barmaids, the wife of a parson ( his father's friend ), waitresses and nurses both in England and in France. Let us pick out Daphne from the long list of his inamoratas and ring up the curtain on the first scene of the melo-drama in which she appears as the *prima donna*.

The venue is laid in the very heart of London, a side street near Piccadilly.

Saint-Mandé, with Greenling and Sampson, two of his soldier friends, are unloaded by a taxi-driver before a night club. After satisfying the scrutinizing eye of the janitor the three friends are allowed inside.

Going upstairs they enter a large brilliantly-lit hall where a nigger band is in full blast and several couples are fox-trotting. Others are sitting at small tables sipping champagne. Saint-Mandé orders for a bottle and they are soon approached by a couple of smartly-attired wenches with cockney accents who can easily be discerned as demi-mondaines. The two friends at once fall in with their invitation to

dance, Saint-Mandé staying behind all alone at the table.

From this point let us trail behind Saint-Mandé's own story as it runs in his book :

"I had my eye on a girl sitting alone in the opposite corner, and when she looked at me I smiled and she did not turn her head away. Encouraged by her glance I went over and sat beside her.

" 'How is it you are all alone ?' I queried.

" 'Why should I not be ?' she parried, toying with her glass and looking rather wistful.

" 'Well, it isn't usual for an attractive young lady to be unescorted', I murmured, trying hard to control my tongue that had a habit of wandering when I was fuddled.

" 'How much drink have you had ?' she asked with a smile.

" 'More than is good for me, I'm afraid'.

" 'How did you find this place ?'

" 'A taxi-driver brought us here'.

" I had to admit that it was my first experience of such places.

" 'How old are you ?'

" I tried to bluff but had to admit that I was not nineteen. My companion told me to call her Daphne and I did so with alacrity. She was tiny and dark, with a slender figure, and a face that would have delighted an artist.... The band struck up and we danced. Her body pressed closely against me and a rare perfume rose from her head. She was lissom and danced with ease and grace, while

I held her so closely that I felt her in every ripple of her flexible body and limbs.

"At the end of the dance we went to a small alcove and smoked in silence. Daphne placed her feet on a balcony rail in front and pulled back her skirt to avoid creasing it at the knee. The fine silk stockings emphasized the slender ankles and shapely calves. I kissed her while caressing the firm little breasts which stood out challengingly....Daphne suggested going to her flat and I needed no second bidding.....

"It was in Chelsea in a quiet avenue, and most tastefully decorated. On the mantelshelf was the picture of an officer in the uniform of the Scots Guards. He looked about thirty-six and was rather handsome.

" 'Is this your husband ?' I asked, turning to Daphne.

" 'Yes', she answered in a low voice, 'but he's dead'.

" 'Killed in war ?'

" 'Yes. He lost both legs at Le Cateau, and shot himself rather than live the life of a *cul-de-jatte*.'

" 'Why did you go to the club alone ? Surely it is dangerous for a girl to frequent such places unescorted,'

" 'I hadn't been there before. I usually go to the Carlton, but to-night I was alone and could not go there. So I asked the taxi-man to take me to some place where an escort would not be necessary. It was the same man that you had. I had been married only three months when my husband went to the front, and I never saw him again....I must have life, gaiety, wine and love.

"She ran her fingers through my hair and exclaimed petulantly : 'It isn't fair that such young boys should be sent out to be killed while the rotters stay at home'.



"Daphne went to the piano and accompanied herself while she sang some haunting melodies, which I think were sea songs of Hebrides. Then she came and we arranged cushions on a divan in front of the gas fire and nestled down among them."...

This young lady who confessed she was the daughter of a parson, then a chaplain in the army, who had spent three years at Newnham preparing for Honours in Philosophy and who adored Sophocles, Theognis, Swift, Shelley, Keats and Swinburne, spent consecutively two nights in passionate embrace with a stranger while the most tragic death of her loving husband was still fresh in her memory. "Daphne was a curious mixture", sums up Saint-Mandé, "of hedonism and determinism, believing the raptures and roses of vice to be infinitely preferable to the lilies and languors of virtue, and that 'eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die' is an honest dictum." It was not possible for Saint-Mandé to know as to how many flies were drawn in to the silken web of this enchanting spider to implement her honest dictum and feed her fleeting fancy after he had left her with a remorseful heart.....

### School Girls' Craze for Kisses

Then there were school girls in their early teens and belonging to respectable families—girls who had become "tantalising little devils" overnight.

They acquired a craze for rambles to the countryside at the week-ends either alone or with a trusted chum and frequently a boy-friend or two, for cinema and theatre, for autograph-hunting, for a tête-à-tête with the youthful territorials, and above all, for kissing the departing and wounded "boys". It was a craze that raged like a prairie-fire throughout the whole country so much so that the parents, teachers and governesses could not check it even by means of severest threats and chastisements. In all the big towns, on the railway platforms and at the station yards there was to be found always a crowd of women with a look of hero-worship in their eyes to welcome train-loads of wounded with a word of sympathy, a packet of chocolates and a shower of kisses.

Just conjure up the following picture for yourself: At a station yard the R. A. M. C. orderlies put down a stretcher with a wounded soldier for snatching a respite. A young girl who cannot be more than fifteen quickly steps forward, stops by his bed-side and presses her lips to his. The soldier sees the school-girl's face is very bright and happy, and she waves to him as he turns his head. She has kissed too well to entertain any doubt whether it has been her first kiss....

After a few days the same girl appears in the ward with tremulous steps and sits by his bed-side. She looks trim and beautiful. The soldier asks her to

kiss him again which she does with alacrity but not without a little flush in her cheeks. A nurse passing through the ward at the moment eyes them inquiringly.

"My sister, nurse. I haven't seen her for years", puts in the soldier in a faltering tone.

"There are a lot of sisters in the ward nowadays", retorts the nurse smilingly as she passes on.

The soldier is regularly visited thereafter by the admiring little beauty, whose kisses contribute immensely towards his convalescence. She is sometimes accompanied with a blue-eyed, golden haired child of fourteen "who in a five minutes' conversation has revealed an entertaining knowledge of the world which would have done credit to a woman of thirty."....

This is a common sketch drawn from actual life in war-time England; and almost a replica of it, anyway, occurs in a popular novel.\*

### Seduction of Men by Women

In his famous novel of the last World War, *The Class of 1902*, Glasier has recorded a number of cases which he attested as true, where unsophisticated lads and young men were seduced by soldiers' wives and merry widows. Reports of many such

\* *One Sunday Morning*, Geo. C. Foster (H. Jenkins Ltd. London, 1927), pp. 171, 179.

seductions found ventilation in the newspapers and not a few cases were sent up for adjudication in the courts of law. In the highly illuminating book by Dr. Hans Menzel, *The Rape of Men by Women*, one may find the most shocking elucidation of the fact how lack of men at home induced the German women to hunt madly for young boys for their carnal pleasure.

From the last-named monograph, Dr. Hirschfeld has quoted a very quaint instance of a feminine rape of a boy in his *Sexual History*. "Recently a woman", adduces he from the book, "came to one of the Breslau Municipal Information Bureau to inquire whether she was justified in recalling at once her sixteen-year-old son who was in service at a large estate in Silesia. The youth was unwilling to serve there any longer because he was continually being annoyed by two girls. The youth... reported that in addition to him there were three other servants on the estate—a man of about thirty, temporarily released from war, and two girls, twenty and twenty-five years old respectively. The older servant girl had a relationship with the other servant and the younger one was pursuing him. As he was offering strong resistance to her manoeuvres the other servant at first insulted and mocked him in the most indecent way. Finally they seized him one day, and while the others held him, the sex-hungry maid-servant who had been

pursuing him pulled off his trousers and grasped his organ. She then went through many vigorous gyrations until she was appeased by the terrified youth\*.

### Erotomania for Prisoners-of-War

When vigorous skulkers and sex-conscious adolescents were not easily available, there were prisoners-of-war. The most ignominious sympathy and sordid infatuation for the shackled foe became a typical phenomenon in Austria, Germany and Russia during 1916, 1917 and 1918. Wilhelm Stekel in an interesting paper of his has tried to analyse this queer psychology of women. He has shown that the psychic synthesis of women is eternally linked up with the poly-morpho-perverse feeling-attitude of the child and that feminine mind is ever yearning for a flight into the unknown—a communion with the novel, the mysterious, the extraordinary. There are certain women who can only be sexually aroused by men of strange appearance and alien body-odour. It is a well-known fact that many American women have a queer predilection for the Chinese and Negroes, while the French and Austrian women for the Senegalese, Moors, Bedouins, Ashantis and Magyars.

Delving deeper Dr. Stekel has explored the

remarkable psychic phenomenon which Weininger termed as "the War of the Sexes." The women who had lately been clamouring for economic emancipation and political suffrage used the War as a pretext to step into the shoes of the men and to do without their so-called near and dear ones. In their sex privations they thought of their faithless husbands whose life in the barracks and behind the trenches was anything but praiseworthy. Under a dark impulse to avenge themselves on their husbands and to taste the charm of novelty, many of them formed liaison with the prisoners-of-war.

In England, however, this shameless conduct was fortunately less in evidence. But in France and Germany it leapt up to frightful proportions. French women were actually sentenced to the gallows for aiding or abetting young German prisoners to escape. It is reported that in Leipzig alone in the first quarter of 1917 no less than twenty-five girls and women were punished for having sexual congress with alien prisoners. At Innesbrück during 1918 a society called *The Cowards' League* was established whose duty it was to ferret out and flog in public such women as had dishonoured themselves by carrying on with the prisoners-of-war.

### Lesbian Love among Prudent Ladies

To crown all, war furnished a loophole for a frightful recrudescence of lesbianism or homosexual

\* Hirschfeld. *op. cit.*, p. 49.

practice among the females. Auto-erotism and lesbian love as a substitute satisfaction became much in request among the lonely and famished women of all nations—women who sincerely wanted to avoid self-reproach, village gossip and illegitimate births.

Cases are on record, particularly in Germany, in which the wives once addicted to this form of vicarious sex relation could not return to the normal with their husbands when they returned home after the war. As a result there were many separations, divorces and open calumnies. Among them there were, of course, some true or congenital homosexuals who had never been happy with their husbands or male lovers, the state of courtship and marriage acting only as their defence-mechanism, and the others were pseudo-homosexuals who had never before known it or only practised it in their maidenhood as a passing experiment. In the Central European states there could be found many degenerated homologues of Sappho who could court death from the top of a cliff for the charming daughter of their neighbours or for the dowdy charwoman of their family.

Under peculiar circumstances they had learnt to do away with the bilateral necessity of sex, and homosexuality, fortuitously explored or temporarily revived, made them lifelong addicts like cocaine and hashish.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE EROTIC MOTIVE IN NURSING

The care of the sick is a duty which has been arrogated by the female members of a family since the days of Eve and Lilith. That the nursing of the wounded in or about the battlefield exactly fits in with feminine characteristic and disposition has long been recognised in all societies—civilised and barbarian. Man can shed blood as easily as woman can wipe it off.

#### A Hindu Legend re : War Nursing

There is a legend in the ancient Purāṇas of the Hindus that Indra, the king of the *devas* (gods) could not make out how his soldiers once wounded were unable to recoup so soon as he expected, whereas the *danavas* (the uncultured heathens) would return to the front soon after 'getting a blighty'. His ministers-of-war after making enquiries ferreted out the cause. They submitted to their august sovereign that the *dānavas* always brought their mothers, sisters and wives along with them in the war and the latter were as adept in nursing as in the proper application of herbal medicines. While the *deva* soldiers after being wounded would be carried away to the casualty clearing

station many miles behind the shooting line and then hurried up to the war hospital in heaven for treatment at leisure, the wounded dānava soldier would at once be picked up, dressed, tended and treated by their own women in the camps near the battlefield. ...

In fact the nursing of the wounded in the battlefield has been in vogue among the primitive people from time immemorial. Even apart from the witch-doctors and village midwives, many old women of the aboriginal tribes have known the adroit manipulation of the rudimentary surgical instruments and the proper use of different crude antiseptics, hemoplastic and other native medicinal plants.

### Rise of the Professional and Volunteer Nurse

The Thirty Years War in 1618 perhaps saw the origin of voluntary female nursing in Europe through the efforts of Protestant deaconesses. Thereafter the utility of the female nurses in war was acknowledged by all shades of opinion after Florence Nightingale had tended with selfless devotion and unwearied zeal the suffering soldiers in the Crimean War in 1854 with a small band of sisters of mercy. During the Boer War the Red Cross Society once more proved decisively the expediency of engaging highly-trained females for war nursing. Since then the hospitals all over the civilised world have almost

exclusively been employing female nurses either as professionals or as volunteers.

It was for the first time in the history of human civilisation that women of all ages and from all strata and grades of society were recruited and employed in large numbers in the International Red Cross, the D. A. V., the Q. A. I. N. S., the Q. A. R. the N. N. S., the T. N. S. and the W. A. A. C. during the Great War of 1914—1918. As a result of this the psychologists have been furnished with a mass of valuable data and contributions towards a deeper understanding of the complex mechanism of female psyche than it was possible ever before.

### Analysis of a Nurse's Psyche

It was proved in the blood-bespattered armageddon of Eastern France, Belgium, Galicia, Silesia and the Carpathian valley that most of the nurses did not join the war service either with a humanitarian or a patriotic motive as it appeared to be. The psychologists have found out after all that the so-called pity and charity of the female nurse are erotically tinged, and that not a few of the war-nurses and D. A. V.s were impelled by a suddenly released desire to make men entirely dependent on the weaker sex and also by a wish for adventure or for 'a flight into the unknown', as the psychoanalysts would like to call it. Many of these nurses,

according to the reading of the psychologists, were masked sadists, i. e. inwardly and in spite of themselves they loved to enjoy the sight of human suffering and therefrom derive a sort of vicarious sex satisfaction.

Weininger, the protagonist of the "war of the sexes" doctrine can be accredited with formulating the above theory based on limited observation long before the last war which no doubt, greatly enlarged its scope. "It is short-sighted", he goes to remark, "to hold a woman's nursing of the sick as a proof of her sympathy or pity, for the opposite conclusion seems rather to follow from the fact. Man is so constituted that he could never be an on-looker of the pains of the sick; he would always suffer so much under these conditions that he would be completely undone. For that reason the care of the sick would be impossible for him. Anyone who has observed nurses closely has noticed with astonishment that they remain unmoved and *tender* even under the most frightful agonies of a dying man."

The cult of a word of sympathy (often lip-deep!) for the wounded and of satisfying a morbid curiosity by observing their writhing agonies became a fashion with many women of the highest rank and, according to the French academician, Frederic Masson, it also became "an effective substitute for the five o'clock tea and the most titillating sort

of flirtation."...At every hospital for the sick and wounded and in every warring state respectable ladies and their lissom daughters during the years within our purview used to flock into the wards with bunches of flowers or boxes of chocolates or with a word of good-will on their lips, and above all, always with a willing heart to assist the professional nurses and make themselves useful to the soldiers. This manifestation of excessive care and solicitude on the part of the fair sex and being their mute cynosures, day in day out, often proved extremely annoying to the soldiers and got on their nerves. Then there were shower-baths of sympathetic kisses, sponging of the faces with vinegar water—in some cases more than a score of times during the day, feeding of boxfuls of chocolates and hailstorms of interrogations from dawn to dusk, to put up with.

### The Bright Side of the Picture

In all justice to war-nursing it must be admitted that there were at least some, if not many, cases where the care of and sacrifice for the wounded was the only conscious motive that prompted women in every warring state to wear the uniform of a sister of mercy. There were also cases in which genuine patriotism, loss of interest in life, despair in love, wish for self-immolation, desire for the expression of masculine traits of character and some such

general or personal motives urged the women forward to take to the occupation of war-nurses. Hundreds of professional nurses, anyway, were seen to be oblivious of their personal comforts and doing their duty in a true spirit of their profession and mothering back the wounded into recovery. Instances are not lacking where the D. A. V.s and D. S. and C. C. S. nurses showed exceptional bravery, tact and perseverance.

Many nurses in every warring country always pestered their superiors to get as close to the firing line as possible. Prof. Hohenegg and Dr. Huot are both unanimous on the point that constant bombardment, smoke, dust, squalor and above all, bloodsheds, wounds, death, sleepless night and anxiety induced in some neurotic women an abnormal erethic condition that filled them with a burning desire to serve on the front. Thus some of the volunteer nurses in Hungary, France and Russia were permitted to go to the trenches, and others slipped away in soldier's costume without the permission of the authorities to attend the wounded in the firing line.

When the Germans captured a detachment of Russian soldiers somewhere near the Naroc sea, they found among the prisoners a nurse of about nineteen years of age in a soldier's uniform. She had a revolver in her hand. On being interrogated why she was fighting by the side of men instead of doing her proper duty, she replied that as in Russia the

nurses had earned a very bad repute, she had preferred the other alternative.

Another Russian nurse, Iwanova by name, had been living in the trenches with common soldiers to buoy up their spirits. When the regiment one day in a hand-to-hand encounter was thinning away and the officers one by one fell, she snatched away a rifle and a bandolier from a fallen foe and rallied the prevaricating soldiers. She instilled in them a new courage and led them on to storm an enemy trench. The trench was captured, but she was killed by a bullet. A posthumous award of the George Cross was presented to her nearest relative.

### Masked Narcissism and Sadism

But the psychologists still look upon these instances of chivalry and self-sacrifice with distrust, and put forward the theory that all activities of women have their deep-seated root in the soil of eroticism and infantile fixation. Dr. Wilhelm Stekel in his monumental work, *Psychosexueller Infantilismus* has recorded among many curious case reports the following outstanding one of a nurse who has been identified with the narcissist type :

"These narcissists love only themselves but they are enamoured of the position of a *love-expendor* or *love-distributor*. During the war I could observe numerous examples of this type among the nurses.



A very intelligent nurse has given me the following description of her condition :

"I am forty-eight years old and I can very calmly confess to you that there is no joy as great for me as the sight of gratitude in the eyes of a man whom I am nursing. This joy is like an intoxication. It is the only orgasm which I have been able to feel in life. Love I have never desired but I have always yearned for gratitude....I have had numerous relationships but I have always given myself out of pity and out of a feeling that the man might be made happy. I confess, too, that I am proud, even vain of my talent as a nurse....I want to pass through the ward like a mild and generous fairy expending love and conferring happiness."

Last but not least, we have to adduce here the weighty evidence of Dr. Huot who was a French army surgeon in a very responsible position and as such had to come in close touch with nurses of all descriptions. Pertaining to the nurses under him he writes :

"Their eagerness for fire made insatiable demands that were only satisfied when they had one transport of wounded after another, and they were sad and jealous when the nearby service station had more customers than they....It was their highest desire to attend operations, and in this they were absolutely blind and deaf to the worst sorts of impacts upon their senses ; amidst the groans of the wounded and the moans of agony, they never for a moment lost

their cold-bloodedness or skill. With equal passion these young women and girls gave themselves to the bandaging of the most frightful wounds and the most grievously wounded without shuddering at a single contact with the most disgusting and exciting circumstances....But still another feeling must be emphasized—that mysterious feeling, that somewhat perverse disturbance which, when it arises, stirs up certain women with the prickling compulsion of a physical desire and impels them against their will to seek a nervous excitation which they have never yet felt, and which they hope to find in the odour of blood and in the sight and touch of palpitating male flesh."...

### The Dark Side

No doubt there were thousands of erstwhile street-walkers and prostitutes among the D. A. V. and nursing service, not to speak of the innumerable peasant women, char women, bar-maids, common maid-servants and factory girls whose main business became nothing short of earning money both ways and under a respectable garb. In the Northern France and Southern England many Belgian refugees claimed to have such class of so-called nurses amongst them, and regular police raids had been carried out over and over again as much for hounding out German spies as for isolating these

'merciful' women who were disseminating frightful infection of venereal diseases among the civil as well as the military population. A great number of Russian strumpets dressed as nurses were doling out care to the wounded and hiring out their bodies to those who were not. Iwan Bloch has reported that the same condition obtained in Germany, if not something worse. Often fake commercial enterprises and swindling practices went smoothly and unchallenged by an extensive employment of this immaculate uniform.

There were other love-lorn and adventure-hunting ladies and spinsters of bourgeoisie and high families—that consciously hoped to derive a novel experience of erotic pleasure or to get hold of a suitable husband, if possible, after experimenting with a legion. Many stories were put into circulation and many war novels were written during and after the war to show at their best the sacrificing spirit and tender devotion of the nurses for a wounded soldier of their liking that either culminated in death, desertion or marriage. But the actual fact went to prove that this kind of love formed between a nurse and a common soldier, army service man, a hospital surgeon or an army officer more often resulted in a deplorable tragedy than a commendable comedy. After having intimate relations to the point of cloyness and burdening her with an illegitimate child, the man broke away from her; the

woman died in ignominy in the course of inducing an abortion or pined away to death or committed suicide.

The common soldiers had but little respect or gratefulness for the sisters, because of the fact that the former were treated with some contempt or indifference by them. The nurses in general were actuated by a strange class-consciousness in that they always tried to identify themselves with the officer-classes. Jealousy was another factor that went a great length in the propagation of a derogatory opinion of the nurses by the ambulance men, Red Cross orderlies and the privates. This jealousy had their foundation in the caustic truth that the intrigues of the sisters frequently, if not always, were carried on with the officers either for prestige or for perquisites.

A much-discussed German war novel entitled *Hagen Im Weltkrieg* has devoted a few pages to the private lives of the Red Cross nurses and embodied a few proofs of the misuse of this noble profession. From the chitchats of the Hun soldiers in their dugouts on the front one can gather that in the psychopathic department of a garrison hospital, the soldiers were made to stand stark naked and wait for the physicians for half an hour or more, while the nurses fluttered by with "a significant smile on their impudent little faces." The soldiers themselves sometimes felt not a little shame at observing

daughters of respectable families ask them whether they had had a venereal disease and if so, how and where they had contracted it; and in many cases they would collect specimens of gonorrhoeal pus on a glass slide.

### Instances of Coprolagnic Fleasure

If we can believe the testimony of Lieutenant Federl who was captured by the French, it must be said that the nurses attending on them were brazenfaced to the extreme. The ladies of the Red Cross who were accompanying the German prisoners always insisted on his keeping the door of the privy wide open when any of them wished to visit it. Numerous similar stories of the vitiated taste and perverted feelings of the French ladies of the best social circles have been told by eye-witnesses with little or no exaggeration.

All *Quiet on the Western Front* by Eria Remarque, as everybody knows, is one of the most outstanding novels of the last Great War—pulsating with life and vibrating with realities. Remarque was a German counterpart of Saint-Mandé. He has embodied many of his personal experiences in the book and left us many valuable contributions to the many-sided activities of German fighting units during different stages of the war and under varying circumstances. Remarque has also taken a snapshot of the nurses in his country.

He and one of his comrades were riding homeward in a hospital train....During the night our hero wakes and turning to his comrade asks him where the closet may be.

Now we are reproducing the episode verbatim from his book:

" 'I believe that to the right you have the door.'

" 'I'll see'....It is dark. I feel for the edge of the bed and want to slip off carefully but my foot finds no support. I begin to slip. My plaster-cast leg is no help, and with a crash I am lying on the floor.' 'Damn!' say I.

" 'Have you bumped up against something?' asks Kopp.

" 'You could jolly well have heard the noise,' I growl back. The door opens behind us in the car, the sister comes in with a light and sees me. 'He has fallen out of his bed.'

" 'She feels my pulse and my forehead. 'You have no fever.'

" 'No', I agree.

" 'Were you dreaming then?' she asks.

" 'I suppose'.

"And so I again avoid asking my question. She looks at me with her blue eyes. She is so clean and lovely that it is impossible to tell her what I want. I am again lifted up and when she goes out I try once more to slip off the bed. If she were an old woman it would be easy for me to tell her, but she is very young—twenty-five at the most and I just can't bring myself to tell her what I want.

"Now Albert comes to my help and he isn't quite so

hesitant about the matter because, after all, it doesn't concern him. He calls the sister and she turns round.

" 'Sister,' he says, 'he wants—'. But Albert also is ignorant of the term to use, a term that will be decent and inoffensive. We have one word for it when we talk among ourselves but not here before such a lady. However, just then he remembers something from his school days and he finishes the sentence with 'He would like to leave the room, sister.'

" 'Oh, well,' answers the sister. 'Certainly he needn't have clambered out of bed with his plaster cast for that.'

" 'What will you have then?' she inquires of me.

"I am frightfully scared of the turn the conversation has taken and I have no notion at all how the things are termed professionally. The sister comes to my help by asking, 'Small or large?'"

"I sweat like an ape and mumble in my confusion, 'Oh well, a small one.'

"Well even this was somewhat lucky. I receive the bottle. After a few hours I was no longer the only one, and by morning we had all become accustomed to require without any shame that which we needed."

We owe the following piece of information to Dr. Hirschfeld who has reproduced it from a note scribbled in an Austrian soldier's war diary :

"It is quite undescribable how the ladies who received the wounded at the station in G— acted towards us. For the most part we were in a horrible condition, shot up and just worn out completely by the journey and among us there was one comrade who had to have a leg amputated

at once. Very frequently these women would insist that we undress although it wasn't necessary. Every two minutes we were asked whether we didn't have to satisfy any needs. Of course we had our own opinion on that subject but we were too tired to complain or to contradict."

### Saint-Mandé's Personal Experience

Now let us record some of the experiences of Saint-Mandé with the war-nurses. At one place he says : "There had been a pretty nurse in the ward, and one day she disappeared. An ugly colleague named Mary told me that Daisy, the pretty girl, had been sent home in disgrace as she was pregnant. All the men in the ward had been told the news in strict confidence....There was a hospital for officers near ours, and every night they were to be seen climbing the hill with pretty nurses and W. A. A. C.s. All restraints were broken down ; a spirit of licence was abroad."

On another occasion this young soldier was brought into an American hospital in Paris. The nurses were all Americans, most of them being pretty, forward, serviceable and of a good social class. The day nurse according to Saint-Mandé, was a charming minx who was having her Parisian enjoyments to the full when off-duty and was inclined to mild flirtations when on. The name of this nurse was Juliet with whom Mandé soon deepened his

friendship. When he had come round and could walk without a stick he used to take her to the cinema shows and to explore some of the beauty-spots round Paris. They tramped as far as Vincennes, Versailles and Saint-Denis.

This pretty sister from across the ocean took up nursing solely to tear herself away from a home "where it was a crime to laugh and where an ardent fundamentalist ruled his family with a heavy hand." Juliet was always in high spirits and threw off all control, which was most natural after such a Puritanic upbringing. Like many other educated girls of her time she wanted economic emancipation of her sex side by side with sexual freedom, and stressed the need of bilateral chastity—if the word 'chastity' were still to be employed in the erotic life of married people. Saint-Mandé accompanied by this American nurse visited the disreputable music-halls of Folies-Bergère and enjoyed to their heart's content the revues consisting of nude dances and lewd songs. They drank good champagne in little cafés and discussed every subject under the sun.

"Our last excursion," admits Mandé, "was to Moret at the side of placid waters, peaceful and altogether delightful. We spent the night there in a quaint old inn, and in the morning watched the mist rising from the ancient stones and crumbling arcades....We swore eternal constancy and I suppose we really meant it."...

It will be interesting to note that Saint-Mandé like many of his compatriots swore constancy of love and gave promise of marriage to each and every girl that satisfied his temporary lust and passing caprice.

We must record one more example of Mandé's fortuitous courtship with another volunteer nurse who, strangely enough for him, happened to be also an American. It was just after he had received a severe bullet wound in the lower jaw in course of destroying a dozen Jerries and was convalescing from ten gruesome operations that the whole allied press started ringing with the praises of his extraordinary gallantry and printing innumerable photographs of his mutilated face. At this time, on his own confession, he wore a beard six inches long under an awry chin. The bullet-hole had left a distinctly deep scar on the cheek and the skin was puckered up round it. The plate holding the lower mandible in its proper place and a few false teeth bulged out slightly on one side. All these went to make the facial expression extremely fierce with another old scar on the forehead and a mutilated ear. The press announcement, all the same, brought him consecutively for a few days shoals of congratulatory letters, mostly from flappers. His autograph was in great request and many love-lorn maidens sent him their photographs and small gifts.

Among the letters one came from Daphne, the

whilom merry widow who had since married an opulent numskull for his fat bank-balance and big luxurious car. Daphne came one day to give this brave cavalier a lift in her husband's "wheeled parlour" and drive him along to a lonely country-hotel. Saint-Mandé signed in the hotel register a fictitious name, pretending they were husband and wife. After dinner they took a stroll over the sand dunes by the side of a stream that gleamed in the moon-shine. On a rug spread on the sand they lay in ardent embrace while Daphne whispered rhapsodies of love into his ears....

But that is another story which we may as well pass by. On the day before Saint-Mandé was due to report to a camp in Yorkshire, a telephone call came through and an unknown feminine voice spoke over it asking him to meet her in town at a certain restaurant. Feeling sure that the owner of such a sonorous voice must be a winsome society lady and having no other engagement at the time, he accepted her invitation.

"When I walked in to the rendezvous," the hero of several battles frankly admits, "an extremely handsome woman came to meet me and escorted me to her table. She was American and most vivacious. From her I gathered that her husband was a wealthy banker but too busy to give his wife that love for which she craved. Naturally she tired after a while of twiddling her thumbs

at home, and took up nursing...After second or third glass of wine I inquired: 'Have we met before?'

"'No,' she answered, 'but I saw your photograph in the paper and decided I should like to know you.'

"'But whatever for?'

"'Because, to put it bluntly, you are a man, and it would give me pleasure to be loved by you.'

"'I regret to say that I leave town to-morrow.'

"'Well, we have to-day.'

These ladies, saturated body and soul with Epicurean doctrines and mad for wringing out the last drop of pleasure from the fleeting moments, would not flinch if you told them that you were going to leave the world to-morrow. Saint-Mandé had to give in, and her big car drove them to a luxuriously furnished bungalow at Maidenhead. She was pining for romance and proved to be a most voluptuous woman. She was about thirty (while the hero of the night was hardly twenty!), of medium height, with fair hair, a slim and smart figure. Her name was Stella (may be a false name like Mandé's false love and false teeth).

Now we shall again catch up the cue of Mandé's own story:

"Stella showed me photographs of her husband, and he was a typical American with big spectacles and clean-shaven face.

"'Why did you leave him?' I asked, as we lay smoking.

" 'Because he was too busy to love me. Our men are most loving as long as they are chasing a girl, but, as she is caught, they tire of her and return to the most fascinating game of all, which is making dollars.'...

" 'Still you have seen pictures of officers far more handsome than I with my stitshed and patched jaw; why did you not choose one with more experience of life and nearer you in age?'

" 'Well, the papers gave an account of your career since joining the army....An older man would have been blasé, whereas you are in the full flush of youth, and full of vigour in spite of your wounds.'....

Mandé does not forget to mention that both of them bathed in scented water before retiring for the night. Next morning when bidding him *au revoir* Stella promised to come up to Yorkshire once more to renew their intimacy. And she kept her promise....

### A Fiction Not Stranger than Truth

This time we are bringing a somewhat wholesome relief to our characterization of the nurses. We are changing our venue and switching on to the Italian front with a set of new *dramatis personæ*. Though the author of these characters and of the story woven out around them assures us that none of them is or was a living person, still we cannot forswear that these characters did not exist under some other names or some other garbs on both sides

of the Italian front during the gruelling years within our purview.

Here we find Mr. Frederic Henry, an American gentleman who has joined the Italian Ambulance Service as a van-driver more out of a love for adventure than for anything else. His lieutenant, a jolly young Italian, Rinaldi by name, introduces him to a young English nurse, Miss Catharine Barkley in a British hospital lately opened in a big villa. This D. A. V. sister had grown up together since her childhood with a boy and been engaged to him. The boy bloomed forth into a promising youngman, suddenly joined the war and was killed in action on the Somme last year. Barkley is still shedding tears over her lover's memory.

Next evening the Ambulance driver, Mr. Henry pays Miss Barkley a second visit. In the midst of such topics as the nursing business, the Italian manners, the war, the coming offensive etc., both of them are secretly drawn nearer to each other. Suddenly Henry is seized with an yearning to kiss her....And he holds her close against him and kisses her hard on the open lips.

"Oh, darling", she says, "You will be good to me, won't you?"

What the hell, he thinks. He does not harbour the faintest idea of loving her for long or at all, if he could. He only strokes her hair and pats her shoulder. She was crying.



"You will, won't you?" She looks up to him. "Because we are going to have a strange life.".....

This furtive kissing affair goes on for some days, till one day he is ordered to the firing line with his ambulance car. There he is wounded in the legs and on the head by trench-mortar fragments and bundled off to a field hospital. After a few days he is despatched to an American Red Cross Hospital at Milan for a major operation in the legs. Here he was lying bed-ridden with his swollen legs bandaged all over, when one day Miss Barkley comes to visit him. She looks fresh, young and beautiful. She sits on the bed-side and leans over and ardently kisses the patient. He in turn pulls her down and kisses her and feels her heart beating.

Here we had better reproduce verbatim the patient's own confession :

"I was crazy about her. I could not believe she was really there and held her tight to me.

" 'You mustn't,' she said, 'you're not well enough.'

" 'Yes. I am. Come on.'

" 'No. You're not strong enough.'

" 'Yes. I am. Yes. Please.'

" 'You do love me?'

" 'I really love you. I'm crazy about you. Come on, please.'

" 'Feel our hearts beating?'

" 'I don't care about our hearts. I want you. I'm just mad about you.'

" 'You really love me?'

" 'Don't keep on saying that. Come on. Please, please, Catherine.'

" 'All right, but only for a minute.'

" 'All right,' I said. 'Shut the door.'

" 'You can't. You shouldn't—'

" 'Come on. Don't talk. Please come on.'\*...

The author identifies himself with Henry, the hero of the novel, and unfolds the story as his personal experience....Miss Barkley is transferred to the American hospital and comes to share his bed every night. On the eve of the operation, she asks him most lovingly—

" 'What would you like me to do now that you're all ready?'

" 'Come to the bed again.'

" 'All right. I'll come.'

" 'Oh, darling, darling, darling,' I said.

" 'You see,' she said, 'I do anything you want.'

" 'You are so lovely.'

" 'I'm afraid I'm not very good at it yet.'

" 'You're lovely'....

" 'I'm good. Ain't I good? You don't want any other girls, do you?'

" 'No.' ....

Henry did not want to love Catherine, but her constant care and soothing companionship like intoxi-

\* *A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway, (Penguin Books, 1937), pp. 84-85.

cation had permeated his whole being somuchso that she came to be quite indispensable to him. After his operation and during his convalescence, she proved herself a veritable ministering angel. Things went on in this way for a few months, till she looked one day very pallid and distraught. When Henry wanted to know the reason, Catherine slowly breaks the news to him :

" I'm going to have a baby, darling. It's almost three months along...."

" 'All right'.

" 'I did everything. I took everything, but it didn't make any difference'...."

Henry goes back to his post ; but during a wholesale retreat he deserts the army, and then under a false name and with Catherine nearing her term comes over to Switzerland. They arrange between themselves to get married after the birth of the child. They put up in a hotel near Montreux. One day they were having a conversation in the following strain :—

" 'I have a lovely life. But I was afraid because I'm big now that maybe I was a bore to you.'

" 'Oh, Cat ! you don't know how crazy I am about you.'...."

" 'I was wondering whether Rinaldi had the syphilis'...."

" 'I'm glad you have'nt. Did you ever have anything like that ?'

" 'I had gonorrhoea...."

" 'I wish I'd had it.'

" 'No, you don't.'

" 'I do. I wish I'd had it to be like you. I wish I'd stayed with all your girls so I could make fun of them to you.'

" 'That's a pretty picture you having gonorrhoea !'..."

\* Ernest Hemingway, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-59.

## CHAPTER VII

## LUST BEHIND THE LINES

What was the condition behind the battlefield and in the conquered areas? Was Cupid slumbering there like an innocent child? Were only gallantry, privations and self-sacrifice on one hand and retreat, surrender, wounds and deaths on the other, ruling supreme there?...Decidedly no. Cupid was all the while wide-awake in his most perverted mood with his two over-active new myrmidons—Pan and Comus. The love-god had run amock in the trenches, behind the firing lines, in the conquered areas—and where not!

## War-time Paris

First of all let us pick out Paris for our survey—the town that heard the distant rumbling of enemy guns for a few weeks and came under the hell-fire from the Big Bertha for a few days. It was Paris to the very gates of which Kaiser's blood-thirsty army pushed the allied forces back and which was constantly subjected to enemy air-raids, that remained serenely stoic under the darkest clouds of war. Looking round Paris in 1915, 1916 or 1917 who could surmise that the greatest war the world had ever

known was in progress a few miles away? The war might have been raging thirty million miles away in a twinkling corner of the Mars or thirty thousand years back. War-time Paris rolled over in luxury, lassitude and libertinage more than ever.

Paris was the halting station of a majority of soldiers proceeding to and from the different sectors of Central and South-eastern France. The British, Colonial and later American soldiers in their thousands visited, sojourned in or passed through Paris according to the exigency of occasions, and a majority of them did not forget to taste of the wine and women of this famous city. In almost every street and lane of Paris bars, cabarets, *estaminets*, inns with secret quarters, assignation houses, brothels and separate establishments for high-class courtesans thrived. Each and every one of them hummed with life and activity all throughout the day and night. Many Samsons spent their privilege and special leaves away here in the lap of some fair Delilah who knew the secret art of poisoning their souls and of vitiating their tastes.

It enthralled the young British territorials freed from their conventional schools and colleges and orthodox homes to strike up in a trice a deep acquaintance with a bunch of French hussies and to spend their hard-earned pay to buy their momentary favours. The enchantresses in their cosy dens would lie on their rugs in the firelight—completely nude

like Eve with no fig-leaf on and serpent about—their hands cupping their chins, their feet swinging in the air, the flickering light of the flames gleaming over the pink rotund curves of their spotless body.

Many pitiful mothers, dutiful wives and beautiful fiancées were thrown into the limbo of forgotten things. After breathing in the Parisian atmosphere of boundless hilarity and stimulating novelties, very few could spend their holidays under the roof of their sombre-looking home with breakfast at seven-thirty, lights out at ten, measured drinks, few smokes and a sticky Methodism or Presbyterianism. Many British young-husbands were heard to scoff at their wives: "Enough of this nagging and shedding-tears business. I'm cutting short my leave and going away to-morrow. If I can't find a place where they only stop dancing to take in the morning milk, I don't know how to live, that's all! I'm going to book a room in the W.I district, just over a bar and with a tobacconist alongside, etc. etc."...

War-time Paris with her thousand and one nerve-racking allurements has found place—a prominent one at that—in almost every war novel and soldier's memoirs. We are reverting to Saint-Mandé for a partial bird's-eye-view of the hilarious French capital during those fateful years when equality, fraternity and liberty of the proud people were veritably at stake. Now, here are Mandé's own experiences in his own words :

"One evening we went out to a *boite de nuit* in Montmartre and had a most enjoyable time. Major Dark (an American medical officer) smoked such strong cigars that the people near us started to cough. A girl danced naked on the table and prostitutes drank champagne. At one table a female in evening dress slipped out her breasts and held them up on a plate; they were tattooed in colours.

"We then went to another night haunt at the foot of the funicular railway on the *Buttes* and there saw a number of men, at least males dressed as women. They all wore high heels, evening dress and silk stockings; their faces were painted and so well disguised that one would hardly believe that they belonged to men. A number of society women and men were sitting and drinking, some looking bored and others amused. They danced the most indecent dances with chests and backs bare. All the pederasts had women's names and spoke in falsetto tones waving their fans languorously. A young man came in quite naked with a lion's skin over his shoulders. His eyes were dilated, he appeared to be under the influence of some drug. Throwing off his skin he danced in a most fantastic manner until he fell exhausted, and a naked girl took his place.

"We walked along the streets, had a drink at a big café in Place Clichy and talked to two prostitutes. Between Clichy and Place Pigalle we were accosted at least fifty times, and several impudent wenches tried to drag us into the dark side-streets. We shook them off and went to a place called Hell, where we drank out of glasses shaped like skulls, and sat before tables shaped like coffins. A yellow light suffused the room and we looked like corpses.

The waiters were dressed like undertakers. One of the guests was invited to stand at the end of the room and a coloured light played on him. Gradually he changed to a skeleton. It was done by mirrors, I suppose. Then a beautiful girl stood in the same place and undressed till she was naked. When the lights were turned up she was fully clothed. I got too drunk to remember what happened after that, and awoke next morning with a splitting headache and a parched mouth. Dark came to see me and laughed when in reply to his enquiry, I said I was feeling rotten....

"What do you think of that after what we saw last night?" he demanded with a chuckle.

"It is hardly fair to judge a nation by a few haunts of vice," I replied, "they are to be found in every country."

"Yes, but they are worse in France than in any other so-called civilized land", he answered. "The French are a nation of immoral atheists....Talk about Sodom? It was purity itself compared with what goes on here every night. This place is rotten to the core. While the men at the front are going through hell their wives are selling their bodies every night. There is no more morality in Paris; it is the cesspool of the western world.".....

We are again indebted to Dr. Hirschfeld for furnishing us with the information that the underworld of Paris under the stress of war had bounced up to the surface. In 1916-17 when the powers that be observed that the smart and *chic* Paris was already smutched from head to foot, and the young boys and girls as well as decent ladies having broken away from the family bond were lending piquancy

to the vitiated atmosphere of the city where the demi-mondaine ruled supreme, they ordered for a wholesale raid on the so-called saloons and night-clubs. As a result three hundred such haunts of vice were raided and closed. But despite regular police intervention, they rose like phoenix from their smouldering ashes. In a most luxurious apartment of an elegant house situated somewhere between the Champs Elysees and Bois de Boulogne there lived a woman who issued heavily-scented invitation cards to the rich new-comers. The admission fee to her private saloon was fifty francs.

"On the the avenue de Wagram, one of the handsomest private homes was converted into a gambling den, where during the night tremendous sums were lost and won, where elegant and beautiful women also ventured other possessions of theirs, and where beautiful flesh, despite its comparative accessibility, sold at high price. The Baroness de Vaughan, the morganatic widow of King Leopold of Belgium, once suffered great losses here and since she was suspicious of the honesty of the game, she complained to the police. Accordingly the place was raided and among the personnel there were found Russian princesses, many belonging to the French nobility, dancers, jockeys etc. engaged either in gambling or in the full fury of amorous practice in the privacy of some of the elegant cabinets....In a raid once on one of these luxuriouse stablishments

in the vicinity of Park Moncean, there were found no less than twenty-three army speculators grown rich overnight, playing, dancing and toying with representatives of the great and of the half-world. (About a million francs in cash was found here)."

### Condition in other French Cities

Saint-Mandé has also drawn for us a pen-picture of Amiens, one of the French towns in Northern France, that for a time came under enemy bombardment and occupation. When Saint-Mandé visited the place with Danesford, a pal of his, to do some shopping for their mess, the town had been but partly damaged and evacuated. Walking along the canal bank they passed by long rows of brothels. Though it was day time the door of every brothel was wide open and females in their underwear beckoned them to come and to enjoy them for a song. They were of the lowest class and looked horrible at close quarters. There was something so coarse and vulgar about the manner of offering their merchandise that these two friends, though out on a spree, could easily give a wide berth to them.

Finally they arrived at a café in front of which an attractive-looking strumpet was sipping wine and biding her time for a client. Danesford suggest-

ed enjoying her in turns that, of course, did not appeal to Sain-Mandé who left him with her and strolled down the street. In the Grande Rue he saw swarms of harlots. Turning off into a narrow side-street he just happened to look at the window of a house where a pretty girl stood with a langourous look and a disarming smile. Mandé entered the house and was welcomed by her with a seemingly hearty '*Viens, mon cheri*'. On each landing he found a cluster of public women, reading or sewing and awaiting clients. Suzanne, for that was the girl's name, shepherded him into her room and suddenly slipping off her dress stood before him in pale-blue short knickers. She wanted fifty francs for possessing her beauty.

Mandé at this stage recalled all on a sudden a few of the eerie stories told by soldiers in the trenches as to how they were robbed by bullies lurking in these houses of ill-repute, knocked on the head and left senseless in a *cul-de-sac*. In spite of the caresses and entreaties of Suzanne he scampered out of the place. It did not take him long to come across two women who apparently looked like twin-sisters and were aged somewhere in the neighbourhood of thirty. They were probably amateurs, as their faces were not painted and two or three children were playing in the house. These two sisters wanted simultaneously to entertain this adventurous young British. Here also he was seized upon

\* M. Hirschfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

by some qualms and scruples and gave them the slip.

Finally he repaired to a café. When he was finishing his second glass of Moselle, a young woman entered with an empty bottle and a shopping basket. The girl eyed him rather inquiringly and sympathetically. When she left the café after having her bottle filled, Mandé rose and followed her. After crossing several streets she went into a quiet épicerie and he stepped behind her. Within a few minutes they exchanged confidences. Her name was Julie Michon; her mother was dead and her father was serving as a territorial somewhere near Verdun. Julie was looking after the business till her father returned. She had received a good education and knew a smattering of English.

At this stage it will be worth our while to quote from Saint-Mandé's book :

"I tried to kiss her, but she pointed to the upper part of the door through which one could see into the shop, and said a customer may come in at any moment. I suggested going upstairs, but she pointed out that the windows of the house opposite overlooked her bedroom, and she would have to draw the blinds, which would arouse suspicion. Finally we went down to the cellar where a couch had been installed in case of air-raids. I took her on my knee and kissed her with a warmth that showed the eagerness of my desire....I buried my face in her hair and hugged her fiercely, being thrilled at the contact of a lovely

female form. I had to desist when the shop bell rang and Julie had to go upstairs. When she returned, we arranged to meet at the inn where I had my room. ...

"I was reading a paper when the door opened and she entered, radiant and smiling. We had dinner in a corner screened off from public gaze....We left, taking a stroll in the cool air before returning to Julie's home....Her room was tastefully furnished in blue. After our first transports we lay in bed discussing poetry. Julie was fond of Verlaine and recited some of his poems. Next day I went and did the shopping, returning to Julie at night. We kissed and loved until dawn. ...

### Cupboard-Love and Field-Marriage

In the German-occupied towns of France such as Lille, Douai, Roubaix, Tourcoing, Ypres, Mons, Verdun etc., not only the prostitutes but young French girls and elderly ladies welcomed the German soldiers as Godsend and scrambled among themselves to catch hold of the best of the lot. Many German soldiers were relieved to find so many temporary homologues of their homes in an alien land and entered into temporary marriage with hundreds of innocent-looking spinsters. These marriages between the victor and the vanquished came to be known as *Feldheirat* (field-marriage) or *Wildheirat* (wild marriage). In hundreds of cases the soldiers committed bigamy in defiance of its legal implication and in their eagerness to enjoy



*Küchebequemlichkeit* (kitchen comfort) in a dismal environment of war. Some of these relationships persisted even a few years after the armistice. In a few instances, of course, cupboard-love and urge of the flesh soon merged into a bond of lasting companionship.

But most of the so-called spinsters and better-class ladies were hot-beds of venereal diseases. It was truly a Herculean task for the German military leaders to clear the Augean stable of contagion among their militia. In spite of the constant vigilance of the military police frivolous women poured in from the neighbouring villages and townships after dusk to sell their blasted beauty to the Jerries and unknowingly undermine their health and morale. A more stringent measure had at last to be adopted. Women that were caught in the fact of having illicit connection with any German, civil or military, were at once brought before the military physician as were those who had been pointed out by infected soldiers as the sources of their infection. On the military physician's recommendation some of the women were driven out of city or segregated under strict police surveillance or sent up to special V. D. hospitals for a trying course of treatment. In certain cities every woman on "the suspects list" was weekly made to undergo close medical examination. Still gonorrhoea and syphilis continued taking their heavy toll from among the soldiery.

In the whole of Northern and Central France it was next to impossible among all classes of women to discriminate between the virtuous and the vicious, the respectable and the disreputable. It looked as if the whole female population had totally forgotten all social and ethical codes in their national predicament and their personal privations and bereavements. A pinch in their stomach had mysteriously unloosened the clench of their traditional sense of pudicity and moral scruples and unleashed their suppressed primieval instincts in a way that often amazed the unflinching bawd. For a mess of pottage they could sell their body as well as their soul, and they actually did it more often than we could imagine. In their mad scramble for a morsel or a merry time they threw all their patriotic fervour to the winds and flung themselves equally on the necks of the friends as well as the foes.

In the delapidated, war-ridden villages and towns of Eastern France many old and decrepit men and women with their young daughters, daughters-in-law, grand-daughters and small grandsons dragged their weary and woeful existence with practically nothing to live by and to hope for. The sturdy young members of the family either had been drafted into the service, many of them being killed in action, wounded and made prisoners of war or had fled the region leaving everything behind. Sometimes these sorry figures tried but feebly to eke out a respect-

able livelihood by working on their unscathed farmlands (if there remained any), on the kitchen gardens or by raising poultry and selling the products to the nearby military mess. But these were hardly sufficient to keep their noses above water and willy-nilly they had to connive at the doings of the young women folk who by hiring out their bodies, the only resource left to them, tried to keep the wolf from the door. Saint-Mandé at least in one place of his book has recorded a small incident which gives us just sufficient insight into the state of degraded morals behind the lines.

"When I woke up," incidentally relates Mande, "a little boy was standing in the door-way of the shack repeating in a monotonous whine: 'My sister plenty good jig-a-jig. Me take you. Five francs et plenty wine. Present for me.' The kid was such a tiny brat that I asked him in French how old he was, and he answered that he was ten and his sister sixteen.... Captain Robert Graves in his startling war novel, *Good-bye to All That*, has painted a similar picture.

In Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe, La Havre, Ostend and other seaports the condition had been none too commendable during normal times; leaving aside the port of Marseillaise in the south all these places have been painted in the blackest colours by Dumas, Hugo and Mupassant. But in the exigency of war matters went to such extremes that the

horrified military authorities waxed reluctant to allow their soldiers and sailors to put up at these towns even for a few hours, not to speak of staying for a night. The military police and the hospital surgeons were but helpless flotsams in this surging tempestuous sea of open debauchery, drunken brawls, flesh-mongering and venereal diseases.

At these places the waitresses, all young and handsome in the eyes of the fuddled uniforms, sat on the knees of the soldiers between serving the drinks and dishes, all the while hugging and kissing them and sportively thrusting their hands into their pockets. There one could find swarms of accosting wenches in the streets, market places, bars and *estaminets*, and on the quays and station platforms, and around the hospitals and military barracks. They could dance or lie with anybody from dusk till dawn for a few francs and a good drink.

### Brussels as Love Station

Conditions in Belgium were, however, much worse. Most of the cities worth the name and many a village with them were in smouldering ruins within the first few months of the war. Big and once prosperous cities like Brussels, Antwerp, Liege and Ghent were partially destroyed and damaged; and the houses that had not been burnt down remained either vacant or occupied by German soldiers. The inhabitants that could not or did

not flee for their dear lives, remained behind to curry favour with the victor. The socio-political and moral structure had fallen to pieces. The children became orphans overnight, the women became widows in a day. With their homes reduced to smithereens, their source of subsistence gone for ever, all their traditional beliefs and pious hopes shattered to pieces, they could but feel the most primordial needs of a higher living organism—the need for food and the need for physical love.

Hirschfeld has mentioned the name of Alex von Frankenburg whose educative essay entitled *Brussels as Love Station* bore abundant evidence of the most depraved state of the Belgian people at the period. It is known that a famous dancer of the Gaiety Theatre, Macro by name, acted for some time as a procurer of better class women for the finical German officers. There were other professional *femmes des joie* who could not run away to Paris or London and had to depend solely on the lustful caprice of the enemy to earn their keep. The bars, cinemas and cafés were infested with shameless Belgian hussies like maggots on a dunghheap. After the compulsory closing of all places of entertainments at 11 P.M., there was a regular fusillade of amorous gestures and solicitations from the street-walkers; and sometimes a lonely German soldier was dragged into their miserable shanties against his will only to be relieved of his purse and infected with their disease. The

first thing that the German soldiers detailed to garrison Brussels after its occupation saw on their arrival was the innumerable signs and posters stuck on the street hoarding boards warning them against indiscriminate association with alien women and advising them to always consult the sanitary orderlies and officers.

The most abominable sight one could see in every town and every village of Belgium in those days was the compulsory and voluntary prostitution of minors. For a pound of sugar or a loaf of army bread mothers had to offer their children on the altar of military lust, "emphazing their virginity."\* Lanky boys and girls of eight or nine were seen to be tugging at the coat-tails of soldiers with the whimpering request to visit their pretty sisters at home, while making indecent gestures with their fingers and thumbs. Little girls of twelve, thirteen and fourteeu in their tattered frocks and with wolf in their bellies would not hesitate to catch at a soldier's hand saying, "*Monsieur, vous trouvez bon moi, je viens pour une livre de pain !*"...

In the villages many German officers found comfortable shelter in friendly middle class families and remained more than as their paying guests. They often filled the gap of the paterfamilias who had in all probability fallen in battle. The children that

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\* M. Hirschfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

were born in consequence of an illicit relation between a particular German soldier and a Belgian lady stood eligible for the state dole and were called the *duitschmaneke*. The women in South-eastern Belgium (i.e. Flanders) accorded a most cordial reception to the Germans who had many things in their linguistic and cultural spheres in common with them. Many cases of tender love relations sprang up between noted Flemish beauties and Hun soldiers. In Ghent it was found that more than four-fifths of the occasional prostitutes were members of impoverished middle class families and mothers of more than two children. As for the temporary 'unmarried' prostitutes, they were mostly drawn from the vast army of unemployed or jobless servants, seamstresses and factory girls.

### At-the-Fourteen-Cheeks

As we have already noted, the *estaminets* and bars were the notorious breeding places of prostitution and disease. Some of them thrived even within the earshot of the din of battle. The management of these establishments often, if not always, rested with females of questionable repute. In the village of Aisné near Ghent there was one *estaminet* which was always full to overflowing. There one could see regular rows of sweating German soldiers and subalterns waiting patiently for a table to be disengaged.

The real cause of the enviable notoriety of this hostelry lay in the fact that the proprietor had seven young daughters of whom the youngest, though only fourteen or fifteen, was equally serviceable like her other six sisters with her highly painted face, giggling repartees and stimulating flirtations. "The German soldiers always felt very comfortable in the home-like atmosphere of his simple, low-ceilinged, smoke-filled room, and called this estaminet by the picturesque and telling name of *At-the-Fourteen-Cheeks*." This astoundingly popular tavern became like a place of pilgrimage for the German soldiers in the whole of Ghent sector.

Early in 1916 the German Staff Officers issued a decree prohibiting all German soldiers from visiting Belgian inns and *estaminets* and threatening all Belgian hotel-keepers who sold food and drinks to the German soldiers with closure of their business and penal servitude. It is said that about ten thousand Flemish saloons were closed down by the operation of this ordinance. Only a handful of *estaminets* whose proprietresses were in illicit connection with some high police officials of the district, were exempted from the operation of the law and set apart with the sign on their doors: *In Bounds for German Soldiers*.

### Cafe Leonidas

One of such *estaminets* was Café Leonidas run by a Greek fortune-hunter. Inasmuch as the whole establishment was situated in a spacious cellar, it was scarcely visible from outside. Only high-class German officers were permitted entry here as there were many costly delicacies and beverages for sale—from the real German beer to the prohibited Spanish absinthe, and above all, most expensive strumpets. The commander of the district was a secret patron of of this exotic establishment, and in order to keep up appearances, he ordered that all men and women who would visit the underground hall of the Hotel Leonidas must sit at separate tables. But the clever pages were always found to run on errands between the tables with chits in their hands. After a while the separate pairs would unite in close embrace in the secret upper conclaves of the hotel.

### Cuckoo's Eggs in a Crow's Nest

There is a story current regarding the general staff of a certain division stationed in Belgium who had a number of young women brought over from home for their exclusive pleasure. They set up these girls at a small township about an hour's drive from the scene of operation, and to obviate any possible calumny placed them in charge of a coffee

stall fitted up from their own contributions. The officers would retire to this place for enjoying a well-earned reprieve. But the subalterns fighting ceaselessly by the side of their men in the unwholesome trenches somehow or other got scent of this, and racked their brains to hatch up pretexts for having a look at these sacred lovelies. At last some of them, being on some occasions entrusted with carrying despatches to the divisional commander a few miles behind the front, made it a point to pay a flying visit to the highly-flavoured coffee-stall and make a furtive acquaintance with the winsome purveyors of beverages and beauty. The latter after all found these young, vigorous lieutenants and ensigns more entertaining and more liberal than their densely-moustached, ribboned patrons. "This secret was carefully guarded" Hirschfeld wittingly remarks, "and to this very day the original *entrepreneurs* do not know that cuckoo's eggs were laid in their nest."\*

### Affairs Behind the Eastern Front

The same state of affairs prevailed in Poland and the Russian front. Many poor women at these places under the pretext of washing the soldiers' linens and darning their socks would enter their barracks and messes and put their love on sale. In not a few cases the German soldiers clean forgot that

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\* M. Hirschfeld, *Op cit.*, p. 159.

they had a wife and children behind at home and neglected them so much so that the wives were forced to inquire of regimental commander whether their gallant husbands were still in the land of the living.

In Warsaw, Lodz, Lowicz, Ostrow and other towns of Central Poland there was a regular stampede among the Polish ladies for capturing the victorious soldiers and offering their bodies to their savage salacity. Sometimes the number of improvised and professional prostitutes far exceeded the number of soldiers in a town. As a result, from the summer of 1915 an epidemic of venereal diseases broke out among the German soldiers stationed in this theatre, that assumed frightful proportions towards the end of the year. The German authorities, however, as early as on June 22, 1915, issued an ordinance to the effect that if a woman having a venereal disease offered herself to a soldier, she would be liable to a hard labour for a period ranging from two months to a year. During the spring of 1916, a similar decree was issued in some towns in Alsace, making extra-marital intercourse with a venereally infected man or a woman punishable by a year's imprisonment or a fine up to 1500 marks.

### The Hotel at Pirizzin

In Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania and Albania the soldier had very little trouble in finding out suitable outlets for his pent-up concupiscence.

In the salubrious city of Pirizzin in Macedonia, there stood a large hotel where the officers of the Austro-Hungarian army would come to recuperate after their severe wounds or serious illness. The proprietor of this hotel was so very obliging to his customers that he would slovenly visit every one of his customers in his room and asked him in an ingratiating tone whether he required any high-class lady for preparing his couch and, if so, of what nationality he would require her to be. As soon as he received his order, the unscrupulous gentleman would at once send away his trusted myrmidons to search for the desired merchandise. Adventuresses from all parts of Europe had been living there from before the war and were anything but respectable or high-class as they were declared to be.

When the officers would stroll along through the streets of the town, the street-arabs would badger them with the patent humdrum query, "*Ima zina, effendim* (want a female, sir)?" If some of them answered in the affirmative, they would be chaperoned by these imps into a small house where they would be received by an elderly dapper Turkish lady with extreme courtesy. The lady would lead them into an alcove, set some black coffee before them and then would summon two or three loosely-attired tittering Turkish girls into their presence. "The officers of the monarchy," Dr. Hirschfeld informs us, "would invariably be pleased

by one thing: that these girls would be clean-shaven from head to foot."

### The Incurrable Gypsies

In all the regions of South-eastern Europe including the Balkan states, there were thousands of Gypsy families most of whom were nomadic and lived in shacks and limehuts on the outskirts of a town or a prosperous village. Many of the young and beautiful Gypsy women during the bustle of war shifted with their families into the middle of the towns as full-fledged whores and some trying to pass off as somewhat respectable citizens. The latter would mostly rent a room or two on the upper storey of a coffee house, tavern or a saloon and pick up their patrons from among the customers on the floor below. They reaped a bumper harvest with the Bulgarian and German soldiers and disseminated the virus of gonorrhœa with a bountiful ferocity. Many of the Gypsy fathers and husbands were drones and lived luxuriously on the prostitution of their daughters and wives. Some of them not only remained in the house during the visit of a client but would be willing to serve him for a paltry tip in any way he chose.

### Female Flesh Goes A-begging

In the Eastern battlefield of Vossa at the foot of the Carpathian mountains, Wilhelm Michael found the

th town swarming with women of all ages and types. There were amidst them girls of fourteen or fifteen big with illegitimate children whimpering for bread in return of their besmirched beauty. Even for a few "fags" one could sleep with a woman or a girl. The married women lived like grass-widows inasmuch as their husbands neither sent them any money nor had they come home on furlough for over a year. Almost all the husbands and wives were, as a rule, illiterate; so the question of exchanging letters did not arise. The German and Austrian soldiers carried on their amorous negotiations more by signs of the hand and fingers than by any words, as the women were all Ruthenians.

In the East the tea and coffee-houses became the worst breeding ground for prostitution and diseases like the *estaminets* in the West. Here as everywhere the attempt of the military officials to close down these establishments or to regulate prostitution proved hopelessly abortive inasmuch as after the promulgation of any deterrent decree in this behalf clandestine prostitution developed to an abnormal degree. The longer the war continued, the more the economic distress of the people increased, and the women and children became devoid of moral scruples or religious sentiments.

It is reported from all sectors of the Eastern theatre of war that girls hired out their bodies for a whole day to earn a piece of bread and a pot of



stew. The elder sister who erstwhile taught her younger one to behave in society and in school now taught her the alphabets of harlotry. Women who were freezing to death in the bleak winter months readily volunteered themselves to crawl under the blankets of a salacious soldier. The washerwoman was perhaps the most ill-fated victim of war lust in that she had often to besmirch her linen for a piece of soap.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SEX LIFE IN THE TRENCHES AND DUGOUTS

The trench warfare was a device that was first employed on a large scale in the Great War of 1914-18. In this Second Great War this feature has almost been swept away by the German *blitzkrieg* ballyhoo. Those who have read war novels or memoirs, seen still-photoes of the battlefields in the periodicals or witnessed war dramas (such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* etc.) on the screen must have a faint idea about the long zigzag lines of neck-deep burrows called 'the trench' in which the soldiers had to stand shoulder to shoulder

behind piles of sandbags with their rifles and machine guns. They had to stand cowering there in the sun and the rain, in hunger and in pain, and to fight for hours together amidst dins of firearms, palls of suffocating smoke, groans of wounds and agonies of death. They had to stick to their post up to the last man until they were relieved by a fresh contingent from behind the lines and ordered to retire to the makeshift underground cellars called 'the dugouts', very close to the firing line.

As soon as the privates with their subalterns entered a trench, they became all at once like cold-blooded robots or human machines devoid of all freedom of self-expression. Here there was no room for poetic dreams, philosophic musings or a normal love-life. Here the man had to become an animal "only without the right of the animal to enjoy the free satisfaction of its instincts."

### The Cult of Continence—its Aftereffects

Throughout the German-speaking countries from even before the war a set of politically-minded physicians backed by literature and the press were paying tributes in high-falutin phrases to the cult of abstinence as a supreme national necessity. After the war had broken out, they vociferously professed that the soldiers who could remain abstemious and continent in the true sense of the

terms would not only be able to withstand the onslaught of the foes but to vanquish them sooner than was expected. The war lords and holy bishops sang hymns in the same strain. In France and Britain, however, the abstinence slogan found very little expression in the press and on the platform.

It is true, as a result of this, the German soldiers for a few months after their entry into the war tried, heart and soul, and in a true patriotic spirit, to put a leash to their normal sex hunger and to reap the benefits of the so-called sublimation of the sexual impulse. But in the long run they could no longer restrain themselves, and gave a full play to their suppressed instincts like the soldiers of other nations. At last the aphorism of Freud that "the task of the control of so mighty an impulse as the sexual one, is possible only for a minority and even for them only temporarily," proved true up to the hilt.

The war had torn many millions of men out of their habitual, well-poised erotic mechanization and placed them in a condition in which women became almost a distant vision. In many sectors for months there was not the fringe of a skirt to be seen on all sides save and except when the soldiers were billeted for a short reprieve in a village behind the lines or sent over to a base hospital. One who would not long before have only to stretch out his hand for

what he desired, became for a time perturbed and thrown off his balance under the stress and strain of a forced abstinence. And when the taste of normal sex life was a far cry, the soldiers had to rush on into the realm of the abnormal. When any enjoyment in deeds was not possible they had to take recourse to gross sexual thoughts and revel in grosser words pertaining to woman and sex. Specially when a man stands face to face with death and the risk of lifelong invalidity and mutilation, he is apt to forget his past, his future, his finer sentiments and qualms of conscience. In a word he forgets that he is a man. He lives for the moment, acts for the moment and grabs with savage celerity at the coarser pleasures that have come his way for the moment.

### Gifts From Unknown Women

In every country the institution of sending gifts to the soldiers, specially in the shape of socks, sweaters, gloves etc., knitted by women at home, became a fashion during the war. Since these gifts were sent by unknown women to some unknown soldiers, they served to form a vague romantic connection between the sexes on the front and in the hinterland. In this way a mechanical erotic contact was maintained between the eternal man and the eternal woman. Often a note bearing the name and address and sometimes the photo of the sender of the gift were enclosed, and this was a sufficient incentive

to the recipient to write suave letter of acknowledgment to the benefactress. In some cases a correspondence course in love-making was opened and adopted.

In France, however, in order to give further incitement and a high colouring to this dignified form of charity the power that be organized an institution that sought to establish the relationship of a mother and a son between the woman at home and the man on the front. The Parisian women of all ages and shades of opinion finding enough fun in this new game turned to the military authorities to find for them some *filleur* (godson) who might not have his mother or any near female relative at home and who would gratefully accept a few useful presents in the trenches from his *marraine* (god-mother). The military authorities were only too ready to comply with their request.

Soon grandmothers, mothers and schoolgirls took on *filleuls* whose names and photographs were sent to them through proper channels. Sometimes the correspondence that passed between a wartime foster-mother and a foster-son did not look as innocent as it should have been. In some quarters there was so much abuse of this relationship, particularly when there was a meeting between a foster-mother and a foster-son on furlough, that the social potentates were led to prophesying that there might be mass marriages between these adopted relatives soon after

the war. There were disappointments too in this game of chance. Sometimes it was found to the horror and chagrin of a high-class society lady that she had been allotted a middle-aged Negro or an uncouth Indo-Chinese as her affectionate *filleur*. There was similar disillusionment from the other side too.

### Masturbation as a Substitute-Satisfaction

Though it seems incredible yet it is true that "the steel bath of the nerves," as Eulenburg euphemistically called it, could not purify the mind of the millions of men serving on the war front. During the first two years of war they were continually oppressed by thoughts of women and obsessed by quaint erotic ideas. These ideas found their natural expression in their smutty jokes, impromptues, gossips, yarns, playful drawings, cartoons, marching songs, ditties and ordinary conversation with their comrades. Not a few soldiers admitted that in the dismal dugouts, when they received a parcel of gift from an unknown woman, they had in spite of themselves vigorous erection and immediate ejaculation. The sexless life in the trenches had brought forth such a condition in many of them that their nerves lost all control over their inhibitory centres. Sometimes the smallest excitement and often without an erotic tinge would be a

sufficient cause for a sudden tumescence and a subsequent relief by masturbation.

The testimony of many military surgeons and private soldiers goes to prove that there was a frightful recrudescence of masturbatory practice among the militia of all nations. Dr. P. Lissman who has written a monograph on the abnormal sex life in the army remarks *inter alia* that during the War the evil practice became far more widespread in young-men than in peace times. "The biologically imperative sexual impulse of the soldiers," Lissman adds, "whether on active service or in reserve regiments, could not, in many cases, be eliminated or suppressed by religious or ethical scruples or by fear of infection. On this point I have questioned hundreds of men of all nationalities, and in general, have received the answer that was expected under the circumstances—that there was current an enforced or substitute masturbation. Indeed new a few older men, who at home were accustomed to regular sexual intercourse, confessed that they had chosen this way of escape from the torture of the senses, to avoid the scruples of conscience, and the dangers consequent upon illegitimate sexual intercourse."

There were long dreary periods of inaction and hours of waiting in the trench warfare, during which the soldiers would smoke, drink, curse, read a back-dated *Daily Mail* or hear their witty pals recite

with suggestive gesticulation some nauseating ditties or droll stories. Often a comrade would recount his bridal night incident in florid detail imitating at the same time the falsetto of his wife and the false modesty she showed before giving herself away. The vivid, colourful recitation would create a lively tense atmosphere in the gloomy dugout, and the excited inmates would not take long to unbutton their trousers. ...

- There was a widespread malady all over the fronts to compose vulgar mottoes, limericks, aphorisms and songs pertaining to sex hunger and substitute-satisfaction. The well-known epigram, "*Formerly my wife was my right hand, now my right hand is my wife*" composed by an Austrian Landsturm soldier has acquired a universal appeal with the militia of all nations since 1915.

A former Hungarian military officer related to Hirschfeld that a Bosnian private serving under the officer had to be hastily given a fortnight's furlough as he had been practising masturbation in front of all his comrades with a shameless gusto. Just as the sudden abnormal change in the mode of life and environs—the bombardment, filth, lice, smoke, blood, wounds, death, sleeplessness, news of disaster, constant anxiety and a state of uncertainty etc. brought about curious anomalies and a mental erethism in women, a similar reaction, though not so

intensive, was visible amongst the men on active service.

From the life history of famous generals it can be shown that they were suddenly seized by a craving for sexual enjoyment in the midst of a most critical phase in battle. Thus in the thick of the battle of Abensburg Napoleon had a woman brought into his tent and to cool down his uncomfortable tumescence by a hasty sexual connection with her. Lissmann has reported the case of a thirty-year-old soldier who had repeated ejaculations during intense artillery fire. He has cited a second example in which another youngman of twenty-five having taken refuge in a cellar during the bombardment of a town experienced pollution several times without erection. Bruno Vogel has mentioned the case of a German Major who was detected to have been masturbating while observing his men advance on an enemy trench with his field-glasses. De Sade, the master exponent of Sadism confessed to having an exotic orgasm at the sight of Vesuvius in eruption.

### Innate Homosexuals' Part in the War

When the war broke out, thousands of innate homosexuals hailed it with rapturous greetings. They joined it in large numbers to prove at least for once in their life-time that they were not inferior to their

heterosexual brothers in patriotism and bravery. Many of them, according to the surmise of Burchard, real misogynists that they were, had no doubt been attracted by the prospect of living for a long time in an exclusively masculine environment which, even without any urge for coarse physical connection exerted a soothing influence on them from a meta-physical plane. Among the other causes that drove the true homosexuals into the maelstrom of war one must have been the "will-to-die". They hoped to die a martyr's death by showing the utmost gallantry they were capable of, as they had been burning ever since their adolescence with a secret fire of contrition and a sense of failure in life.

A committee called *Wissenschaftlich-humanitaren Komitee* (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee) had been established in the very heart of Berlin sometime before the outbreak of war with Dr. Hirschfeld at its head. The Committee sought to establish the viewpoint that homosexuality was neither a sin nor should it be considered a punishable offence as under the notorious paragraph 175 of German Criminal Code, if it were at all established between two persons of the same sex on deeply-rooted emotional basis. This organization collected valuable data, reports, personal experiences and depositions from all quarters of the vast empire. A lieutenant of the the German army gave an extensive and highly interesting deposition before the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, from

which we are selecting the following few outstanding lines :

"The situation is different, however, for the informed person. He will see urnings in every department of the service, among U-boat crews, fliers, the most feudal cavalry squadrons, the lowliest food transports, etc. That many people have got the impression that there were more homosexual officers than urning soldiers is simply due to the fact that as a result of his superior position the officer was more frequently involved in this type of affair than the common soldier...."

This picture is true in respect of the Austrian army as well as other Eastern nations, though the practice was less in evidence amongst the allied nations. No serious view or statistical account was ever taken as legal prosecution or social persecution for this offence was unknown among the latter. How homoerotic tendency can lead to a nation-wide scandal and a diplomatic failure of a serious nature was proved when the activities of the Austrian commandant, Redl, was revealed. This gentleman who was highly intelligent and ingenious and at the head of the secret service of the Austrian monarchy was a born homosexual. He fell madly in love with the Russian military attaché at Vienna who for a few months appeared to respond to this unnatural infatuation. At last one day, shortly before the outbreak of the Great War, the Russian attaché threatened him with exposure if he did not

condescend to part with the Austrian plan of the General Staff. Redl was compelled to acquiesce. The whole matter came to light a few months after when the Austrian forces had been sustaining deplorable defeats at the outset of Russian campaign.

The following excerpt from a letter addressed to the above-named committee by a German bomber will bring home to us the whole tragic side of the inborn homosexual's life :

"Every evening the boys would go out for some girls. This would probably give them a great deal of pleasure. Many times I was asked why I didn't go along. I was too embarrassed to give any answer and turning away sought to find some task which I could bury myself in. It is my greatest wish to get into the field as soon as possible and to meet an honourable death, for otherwise I will be compelled later on to make an end of my rotten life due to my homosexual tendencies for which I am not at all responsible. It is better that my mother should be able to say, 'My Fritz died a heroic death for his fatherland', than that people should say, 'So! A suicide, eh?'..."

The homosexuals—the active elements in particular—in spite of their constitutional defect and the derision they had constantly to put up with, showed exceptional bravery in every theatre of war and won a great many medals, bars and crosses. Their strongly developed *esprit de corps*, their sympathy for the suffering humanity, their highly international undertone and their eagerness

to share the worst trials with their friends won for them a universal appreciation, though the military authorities, specially in the Central states, were sadly dawdling in their acknowledgment. Moreover, the paragraph 175 was a vicious and pernicious legal instrument that was always in the hands of the authorities who would not hesitate to use it whenever any homosexual offence, committed even by mutual consent, came to their notice. Many such delinquents—both officers and privates—were placed before the military courts and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment, dismissed and dishonoured.

### Passive Urnings' Role in the War

The passive homosexuals or the urnings with feminine psyche, habits and frequently appearance, were sad failures in active war-service unlike their active counterparts. They proved themselves often abhorrent of the war atrocities and not a few of them were tried for cowardice and desertion. Even if their strong masculine build belied their inner makeup, their whole soul like the eternal mother cried out in revolt against the extermination of so many bright and beautiful sons of the state. Many of these feminine urnings were known to have joined the ambulance, the signallers' corps, the kitchen, the R. A. M. C., Red cross and sanitary service.

Some of them were left-handed and amazingly adept in cooking, feeding, nursing, knitting and sewing.

Among them, again, a few were real transvestites, i.e., they loved to wear women's clothes if and when opportunity permitted. Dr. Kurt Mendel has adduced a few glaring examples of the presence of transvestites in the German army. A twenty-four-year-old salesman and a twenty-six-year-old singer were drafted into the army where they were serving as common soldiers with separate regiments since the beginning of the war. They accidentally met one day at the Breslau garrison and immediately entered into intimate relationship. While they were walking hand in hand through the streets in July, 1917, both in female *habitus*, they were arrested by the military police on suspicion.

The older of the pair admitted that he had brought along in his knapsack a few female dresses in order to feel his self for a time when his comrades were asleep. In the female costume and with a little touch of cosmetics he danced one evening with a group of paymasters behind the lines without any of them suspecting his identity. The younger transvestite gave out that he had formed liaison with several men in the army with similar inclination and once danced with a lieutenant garbed as a woman.



### Homosexuality as a Substitute-Satisfaction

There were innumerable pseudo-homosexuals in every army, apart from there being many pairs of friends whose love for each other was known either as Platonic or unconsciously erotic. Since social or sexual intercourse with women was nearly or wholly conspicuous by its absence whether in the dugouts or in the barracks behind the lines, some of these male friendships flowed almost unobtrusively into erotic channels. Often mutual homosexual practice was resorted to as a temporary expedient between two privates, two young lieutenants or between a subaltern and a private. The pseudo-homosexuals were, as a rule, either heterosexual or bisexual (more or less attracted by both the sexes). Hirschfeld, Lissmann and Mendel are fully in agreement as to the conclusion that a normally constituted man can bring himself to have occasional homosexual relations, particularly when a woman after his liking is not near at hand; and among these can be found a great many periodical neurasthenics who resort to homosexual act only under a state of intoxication. Such cases are known to have occurred among thousands of the sex-famished soldiers in the dugouts in a playful spirit and under the influence of alcohol. Often they would take into their head to catch hold of a feminine urning in

their company, who would not grudge being enjoyed by them in turns.

### The Trench-Tongue and Dugout-Songs

Where any real or substitute-satisfaction in deeds was deemed as a chimera, a vicarious from of pleasure was sought to be derived from profanity of speech. Even during peace time the vulgar cursing and nasty slangs of the soldiers are well-known; and these increase ten times during a war and on the scene of action. A battlefield whether laid on the land, the sea or in the air, appears God-forsaken to the fighters who kill and wound one another without mercy or compunction and insensate to all finer feelings, nobler sentiments and higher cultural conception. Here blasphemy is naturally encouraged as an antidote to abject fear and flinching, and a stimulant to grim determination and maligning. Here the holy name of God would be pronounced by one who is either in a blue funk to kill or let himself be killed by a foe.

In trenches, garrisons, barracks and dugouts the conversation is always punctuated *ad nauseum* with expletives like 'bastard', 'damn', 'deuce', 'devil', 'bloody', 'slut' and hundred different vulgar words relative to the sexual organs, urino-anal processes and erotic activities. Among the soldiers even during the peace times many jokes, wisecracks, couplets, songs, epigrams and limericks

spiced with noisome bawdiness and foulness are periodically composed and put into circulation. Parody of old songs, current opera hits or popular ballads with slight textual changes of nudely erotic nature are commonly made use of. During the war they grow by leaps and bounds in every warring nation. In the last war a few songs appeared to be comparatively of a more innocuous import and sentimental nature than the rest, such as those concerning the woeful plight of a soldier in the trench or on sentry-go duty, the curse of prolonging war, the merry life of the rotters at home, the sad cooking of a field-kitchen, the ravishing beauty of a barmaid etc. etc. Among these one is reminded of the famous song of the American soldiers: *Mademoiselle of Armentières*. The heroine of this song, Hirschfeld has assured us, was a woman in flesh and blood, a glamorous wench who worked in a laundry during the day and spent her evening with the American tommies at the "Black Cat Café."

Yes, there were scores of good old songs, exclusively sung by the soldiers, that infused in them a new vigour and a strange sustaining hope. Among the British boys the ones like "Tipperary", "Keep the home fires burning," "There's a long long trail a-winding," "For to-night we'll merry be", "K-k-k Kettie," "Pack up your troubles", "Hello, hello, who's your lady friend," "Little grey home in the west" etc. were no doubt widely patronised

by those who did not get much accustomed to trench-life. After that, slang parodies and lewd limericks often took their place and glided forth more easily from their throats.

We are reproducing below a few of the most innocent-looking lines from the latter category that were extant in the last war among the different nations:—

- (1) "What d'yer want with eggs and ham  
When yer've plum and apple-jam?  
Form fours, right turn,  
What d'yer do with the money yer earn?  
O! O! O! It's a lovely war,  
If the sergeant drinks yer rum,  
Never mind!  
He's entitled to a tot,  
But he drinks the bloody lot;  
If the sergeant drinks yer rum,  
Never mind."
- (2) "O madame, have you a daughter fine?  
*Parlez vous?*  
O madame, have you a daughter fine,  
Fit for a soldier of the line,  
Inky pinky parlez-vous?"  
*[Parlez vous? (parley voo)=will you say?]*
- (3) "We are Fred Karno's army,  
What bloody good are we?  
We cannot fight, we cannot drill,  
We only go on the spree.  
And when we get to Berlin,

The Kaiser he will say,  
*Ach ! Ach ! Mein Gott !*  
 What a bloody rotten lot  
 Are the boys I've seen to-day."

[*Mein Gott* (mine Got)=my God.]

- (4) "*Mica, mica, parva Stella !*  
*Minor quænam sis tam bella !*  
*Splendens eminus in illo,*  
*Alba velut gemma, caelo."*
- (5) *Es steht ein Elefant am Titicaca See*  
*Der steht und hebt Schwanzlein in die Höh.*  
*Laura, Laura, wenn ich bei dir steh !*  
*So geht mir's wie dem Elefant am Titicaca See.*
- (6) *Huren, Saufen, Spielen, Fluchen,*  
*Heisst dem Mut Erfrischung suchen.*

### Pornographic Literature

Another form of substitute-satisfaction was pornographic literature and pamphlets with which the dugouts and field barracks were flooded. In this respect the French were the worst culprits. The Parisian society journals, tit-bit magazines and photograph vendors were plying a roaring trade with their lewd stories and nude pictures. Lists and descriptions of the most depraved kinds of pornographic books were printed in the advertisement columns of popular journals and newspapers that were regularly handled by the soldiers in the trenches. Highly obscene and sadistic books by the pseudony-

mous author, Aime Van Rod and perversely erotic productions by authors like Maire Madelene were in great demand throughout the Western Front and exerted a most deleterious influence on the mind of the youthful territorials. English translations of French pornographic publications did not take long to appear on the scene. Other most sordid kinds of literature—printed or typescripted—that could throw standard pornographic books like *Fanny Hill*, *The Romance of Lust* or *The Confessions of a Bride* into the shade went on its pandering round from one end of the battlefield to the other.

The German press repeatedly printed colourful accounts of woman's hat, silken handkerchiefs, lingerie, vanity bags etc., being found in abandoned dugouts occupied by French officers, and these were, of course, not without their foundation and an erotic appeal. At a meeting of the German military physicians held at Tübingen in the late autumn of 1914, Dr. Gaupp exhibited a large phallus made of plaster of Paris, found among the kits of a French officer. The doctor asserted that such instruments and photoes of different coital postures had been found by hundreds in the knapsacks of fallen French soldiers. Similarly in the German dugouts all sorts of obscene reading matters, naked photos of one's sweethearts and other pronographic pamphlets replete with erotic parody of military orders and notifications and filthy

tirades against the sexless life of a soldier in the trenches, were known to have been extensively distributed amongst the steel helmets and ensigns.

### The Defecation Technique

One of the most pronounced outcome of sex-starvation during the war was the reversion to infantile fantasies and puerile forms of satisfying one's libido. Of the physical manifestations of infantilism, two were commonly noticeable, one being masturbation and the other anal eroticism. In the war novel of Erich Remarque one cannot fail to notice the erotic significance of the descriptions of the soldier's defecation and its technique. In the communal latrines with no intervening walls between, the soldiers—twenty to thirty at time—had to sit for easing themselves. They soon overcame the modesty, and sat like a set of small children on their uncomfortable commodes for an hour or two gossiping, jesting and singing with as much ease as at a dining table. To the soldier digestion and defecation become two sides of the same shield. The expressions embodying his keenest pleasure and deepest dismay derive their fantastic imagery from these processes.

A German officer, Beradt in his noted war novel entitled *Schipper at the Front*, has remarked in a place how every soldier soon surmounted the pudicity of undressing before the public, not to speak of his own regimental men, and how happy he

looked when he went out with a batch of his comrades to relieve nature. Once Beradt had to dine with four other officers who practically submerged him under a bore of filthiest excremental repartees with a steady stream of bawdy stories. It became impossible for him to lift his fork to the mouth. Thousands of soldiers were found to have completely outgrown their conventional dislike for blood, pus and excreta, so much so that some of them handled and scattered them with diabolical transport. Others even loved to the point of madness the sanitary parades and latrine fatigues.

### The Waning Virility

Ultimately we shall here touch upon another and perhaps the most tragic aspect of the long-continued desexualised life in the trenches, dugouts and field billets, i.e. the diminution in the size of penis organ and of sexual potency. There were other forms of sexual neurosis resulting from the war, such as fixation of anal eroticism, *ejaculatio præcox* (premature ejaculation) etc. In the midst of the war and even after many wives visited their family physicians with the patent complaint that their husbands, formerly healthy and normal, were showing imperfect erections and quick ejaculation. These symptoms were pronounced in people who either tried to lead a comparatively continent life in the trenches and discharged their duties in the firing line

continuedly for several months with little relief or no communication from the external world. Fehlinger, Vorberg, Lissmann and Pick—all have noticed many such disturbances of the sexual function even several years after the armistice among retired soldiers. There were hundreds of cases observed by the physicians in which there was complete lack of libido and virile power.

A certain German soldier wrote to Dr. Hirschfeld the following pertinent note when he heard that the renowned psychologist had been collecting data for his *Sexual History of the World War*: "In view of the change in our whole manner of life and because, from the start, one was surrounded by men only, one ceased entirely to think of sexual intercourse. Once a few of the boys were sitting on straw sacks and telling each other of their homes and relatives. Nearby one chap, who was pulling on a new underwear suddenly turned to us and exclaimed, 'Gee! My p— is getting smaller every day. What'll my old woman say when I go home?' And, I must confess, that in my own case it was the same way. I had no desire at all, despite the fact the every evening hundreds of prostitutes lay in wait for our soldiers in the vicinity of the garrison."...

## CHAPTER IX

### ARMY BROTHELS AND VENEREAL DISEASES

As we have already adumbrated, a righteous sermon was read from all pulpits in Germany by the clergy as well as by the physicians on the efficacy of sexual abstinence to the soldiers. The "big pots" in the War Office were very keen about the point that the sermon was respected and implemented by their "boys" in the best interest of the war. But it was respected more in its breach than its observance. In spite of the clamouring of the military surgeons and national leaders for abolishing all brothels, taverns and bars in the area of campaign and making strict abstinence obligatory for the army, the soldiers and their immediate superiors soon proved that they could be robots in every respect but in the matters of food and sex. As a matter of fact at the beginning of 1915 when the opposing armies set themselves to protracted trench warfare on all fronts without seeing any hope for a quick decision, the authorities had to purvey hundreds of field brothels for the soldiers.

#### The Field Brothels and Etape Brothels

The field brothels were opened at a little distance from the firing lines and often in the centre of the

field barracks and billets. They were set up in some abandoned castles, dilapidated farm houses, hastily-erected shambles, shacks, empty go-downs or in some covered wagons. They were often ambulatory; they remained at a place for but a few days and then shifted on to another venue. They were always under the direction of military surgeons and police. The inmates were generally not less than a dozen and not more than two in number, and the personnel did not exceed three. Needless to say that they were patronized by the soldiers and their officers who had been detailed to fight on the line for a few days at a stretch, or moving to the second line, or to the billets behind the lines for a brief respite.

Then there were the *etape* brothels which were opened in the halting stations at varying distances from the firing lines. These halting stations were generally established in small towns or large villages which kept always busy and looked highly important with its military stores, petrol and ammunition dumps, paymaster's office, different military accounts and despatch offices, Brigadier or Divisional Commander's offices, secret service offices, news reporter's offices, hospitals, barracks, hotels, places of amusement, repairing shops, humdrum of hundreds of military lorries and ambulance cars and soldiers daily passing to and from the front. The halting stations were, as a rule, not exposed to the direct

dangers of war unless there were any break through and quick advance from the other side. Some of the *etape* brothels had been in existence from before the war for the use of civil population; only they changed hands a few months after the war and were taken over by the military authorities, the inmates often receiving a major portion of the prices of their labour and undergoing medical examination at regular intervals.

At these *etape* brothels differences of rank were punctiliously observed. Accordingly three classes of brothels were set up with sharp distinction—one for the commissioned ranks, another for the non-commissioned officers and the third for the privates. On the Western front, it is said, there were well-arranged and well-managed *etape* brothels and field brothels at all important points in every sector. At night these houses of joy were distinguished by a blue lantern if they served the officers and by a red if they were meant for the common soldiers. The inmates were exclusively French and Belgian women who had been living there either as registered prostitutes or questionable hussies, or who had migrated from the German-occupied districts. The French as well as the English soldiers always kept the *etape* brothels busy like beehives.

In spite of the so-called care and supervision of the French military physicians, these regulated brothels could hardly be shorn of the dire possibili-



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In spite of the so-called care and supervision of the French military physicians, these regulated brothels could hardly be shorn of the dire possibili-



ties of infection. In fact most of them became veritable breeding places of venereal diseases. As there were very little arrangements in the British army for imparting instructions in anti-venereal measures and distribution of preventive medicines, most of the territorials filtered through to the trenches without any equipment for combating these abominable scourges. Sometimes the young soldiers, a majority of whom received their baptism in applied erotics in the field were as blind as beetles in regard to the most elementary knowledge of the evil consequences of erratic venery. Robert Graves in his famous book, *Good-bye to All That* has cited one or two cases of such ignorance that should be believed for all they are worth.

One night a young Welsh lieutenant who came of a very respectable and conservative family entered Graves' tent with a face beaming with delight. On being asked about the cause of his amazing happiness, the boy only complacently reported that he had just had an intercourse with a harlot in one of the blue lantern brothels and had never known such a fun before. It was his first experience, and he did not know even the alphabets of preventive technique. When Captain Graves asked him with certain anxiety on his face whether he had washed himself thoroughly after the connection the innocent lieutenant felt rather insulted and with a strident voice replied, "How do you mean that, Captain? Of course

I washed my hands and face."...Graves has shown how these young men belonging to respectable family, fresh from Sandhurst after intensive military training, kicked over the traces in France when they were put in charge of a company in the trenches and suffered to believe that they had learnt too much to risk anything. They had men at their beck and call and money in their pockets; they had seen enough of death and now wanted to see enough of life within a short span that might have been allotted to them.

These ignorance and non-chalance were responsible for creating innumerable victims for the V. D. hospitals in every sector of the war theatre. The diseases sometimes claimed more casualties than the firing line, particularly in the Eastern and South-eastern fronts, and took away many more fighting days of the soldiers than the actual "blighties". On the German side of the Western and Eastern fronts the picture looked equally gloomy and dismal. Notwithstanding the well-intentioned demands of Prof. Fleisch, Drs. Kuhn, Moeller and Mendel for absolute military continence regulated brothels were set up at Lille, Strasbourg, Liege, Antwerp, Ghent, Sedan, Brussels, Warsaw, Lodz and many other places. As we have already noted Lille and Brussels of all the cities in Belgium and North-eastern France, let alone the seaports, had been notorious for ages for their loose morals and shameless women. It was

at Lille that Charles the Bald who for a time became King of France by the treaty of Verdun in 843 A. D. was welcomed by a bevy of naked girls when he entered the city in state. After the occupation of Lille by the Germans quite a number of civil brothels were permitted to continue their existence with German soldiers as new clientele.

Wilhelm Michael in his autobiographical war novel, *Infanterist Perhobstler* gives a vivid account of a civil-military whore-house on Rue de l'A. B. C. at Lille. Three friends, among them one being Michael himself, one evening entered a brothel here at the solicitation of several girls. Their hostess spoke pidgin German with queer faltering accent that provided them with enough of rib-cracking laughter. Three girls were, however, found for them in a snug room with red furniture and trappings. Michael was attracted by a chubby girl with wavy hair and dimpled chin "who looked like a model of Renoir." When Michael asked her how much it would cost him to spend the evening in her couch, the girl tenderly holding his face whispered into his ear, "Generally it costs twenty marks, but since you are nuts on me, my couch will cost you nothing..."

In one of the most astoundingly outspoken war memoirs, *Long Live War* by Bruno Vogel, one may read shocking descriptions of the internal management of these German military brothels, and the feelings and thoughts of the soldiers standing tiptoe

in the long queue outside one awaiting their turns. This picture once more brings to relief in glaring ugliness the fact that the soldiers as soon as they received their baptism of fire ceased altogether to be human beings. Heinrich Wandt in another war book has given us an authentic report of how the brothels in Ghent were confined to a small locality where one could find never-ending lines of soldiers waiting patiently for a few minutes' perfunctory joy. The red-light district consisting of three streets were walled in on all sides by wooden fences in order not to offend public eye. Military police constables were posted at the gates and on point-duty in the streets, and strict discipline was enforced. They would at once arrest any soldier who created any disturbance, oppressed the unfortunate women or cheated them of their just recompense. The usual price for one bout generally ranged between three and five marks or an artillery bread.

### The Mysteries of Blue-Light Brothels

In Ghent and in other occupied Flemish and French cities there were whole rows of brothels set apart for all classes of officers. They were taboos for the privates. Over the entrance of these special houses of joy there were to be seen signs stuck up with the words: *For Officers only, For Officers and Civilians, No Admission for Dogs and*

*Soldiers* etc. In many cities, some superbly beautiful manors and aristocratic hotels were transformed into officers' brothels. In these high-class brothels the inmates were generally better placed and better treated. They received more than ample provisions and rich trinkets from their influential clients and also received higher fees than those of their unfortunate sisters in the red-lantern brothels. Whereas the officers' whore received between twenty and hundred marks as her wages for a single intercourse, the soldiers' woman would not receive more than five in cash or an artillery bread in kind. Bread or no bread, the latter had to pay the "bordel-mummy" twenty marks daily for board and a heavy charge to boot for clothes and wash. They were not allowed to go outside of the brothel at any hour of the day and under any pretext. At nine o'clock in the night the brothels had to be closed and the inmates had to retire at ten whether or no they had earned enough to keep the hostess smiling.

In the blue-lantern as well as the red-lantern houses of joy one could hear "the hell of a row" and uproars of a drinking brawl at night. The military police posted outside the officers' brothels and the curious privates prowling round would often observe their high-browed officers fuddled with chalices of liquor being thrashed by irate brothel-girls, spat upon and kicked out

of their doors. During July 1917 a soldier was detailed for three weeks to a brothel-vigilance duty at the small halting station of Mitau. One night he with a few of his soldier friends peeped in through the open blinds of a blue-lamp brothel where a hilarious comedy was being enacted in camera. At the piano sat a burly officer striking out a hybrid melody and half a dozen officers clad in uniform were crawling about in rhythmic canters on all fours. On the shoulder of each officer sat a naked nymph reeling with sparkling laughter and administering slaps and pinches on his haunch to spur him on into a gallop. Dr. Hirschfeld at the close of quoting this information very aptly remarks that the partner was no longer a chevalier but a *cheval* (horse).

### The Regulated Brothels at Mitau

The said concierge at Mitau has discussed at some length (in *Kulturwille* for 1929) the technique followed at the regulated brothels there. The military authorities had a little cabin erected near every brothel where a sanitary officer with generally two orderlies were stationed. The brothels remained open from 4 P. M. to 9 P. M. The sanitary officer had to examine every soldier wanting admission into the house. The soldier had to show the officer his genitals and to submit to a hasty treatment with protargol lotion and vaseline ointment. On his

egress, he had again to enter the sanitary inspector's cabin to urinate in his presence and to have another urethral irrigation with protargol lotion. In addition he had to show his indent card in which the sanitary inspector signed and the latter made a note of his name, designation and the regiment he was serving in his register. Finally the soldier had to state which girl he had enjoyed.

It was, after all, not an easy job for a private to satisfy his sexual needs in a field brothel. Hence everybody tried to give a wide berth to it and looked about for pleasures outside. The officers, however, were exempt from the ignominious submission to medical examination each and every time they went into the house of pleasure; the most that was required of them was simply to state before the sanitary officer that they were free from V. D.

The Mitau brothel supervisor who had a scientific trend of mind made a statistical survey of everything he saw and heard there during his three weeks' stay. He states that a woman named Osol living in the house under his supervision had to entertain thirty-two soldiers in one day between the hours of four and nine in the evening. Hardly a day passed in which a whore had not to submit to the embraces of at least twelve heated Jerries within the specified hours of business. One day in the early afternoon a reserve officer, the same writer amusingly recalls,

looking travel-worn and haggard scurried along to him with a request to let him have access to a girl. When he was served with a curt reply to come after four o'clock, he informed in a piteous tone that he had been booked to travel in a train and was in a hurry to catch it before four o'clock: he was ready to grease the sentinel's paw handsomely. ...

Sometimes soldiers connected with the commissariat brought in large boxes of sausages, biscuits and minced meats as presents for the janitors in order to be allowed to remain within the brothel beyond the specified time-limit. Men were often hounded out from under the bedsteads or closets and bodily turned out of the brothel compound with the butt-end of the sentry's rifle when the hour of nine had chimed in the office clock. Occasionally soldiers were found to be scaling the compound walls at dead of night with bottles of wine and packets of sandwiches in their pockets. The more fortunate ones who could buy off the brothel-mothers would sometimes be admitted through a less dangerous channel—i.e. the back-door. Frequently the sentries would be awakened by a pandemonium upstairs and on going to investigate found many "big pots" reeling, shouting and dancing with a galaxy of nude strumpets—equally boozed like themselves.

### The Army Brothel at Havremont

Otto Henel has left for us a most piquant sketch of a German field brothel in his devastatingly beautiful war novel, *Love on the Barbed Wire*. One day it was announced to their regiment that those who wished to visit the army brothel lately located in a castle at Havremont would have to report to a certain official and to take out a permit. Each company would be allowed to go in for it at a time. During the night preceding the day of the intended visit Henel heard such a voluminous exchange of Billingsgate vocabulary amongst his comrades that Aretino and Rabelais would have appeared as prattling tots before them. The next morning twenty-five of them, including Henel himself, were marched off to the half-demolished castle of Havremont. On arriving there in front of the castle, they found themselves in an atmosphere of considerable bustle and activity. At least fifty soldiers were awaiting their turns.

"How many kine are inside?" asked the sergeant of one of the groups from a passing supervisor.

"Ten pieces," was the hasty and pragmatic answer....

As the soldiers moved up along the line, each one had to be examined for venereal disease by a sanitary officer who doled out a small tube of preventive paste to each. Next their attention was

drawn to a printed notice hanging in the hall, in which a few instructions and rules were embodied. The item five dealt with the prices of prostitutes. The price for a single enjoyment in the 'privates' brothel was fixed at two marks (2½ francs) for the woman and one mark (1½ francs) for the brothel-mother. The price in the officers' brothel was four marks for the girl and two marks for the hostess.

After they had read the instructions and paid down their fees on the counter they were peremptorily told that no woman could be possessed for more than ten minutes. They stood waiting in the anteroom and at almost regular intervals heard the sergeant call out—"Next! Go to Room No 3", "Hurry np, man!" "Next! Room No. 8" and so on. Henel was assigned Room No. 6. Half trembling with suspense and iumbled up emotions he dragged himself upstairs and entered Room No. 6. "A horrible odour of bichloride and patchouli struck his nostrils. That a woman stood in half darkness of the room with her face towards the window, he could see from the contour of her body underneath her black night-gown. Very stolidly and without a word she turned around and simply let herself fall on the edge of the bed, the while hiking up her shirt."...

The same disgusting spectacle presented itself on the allied side though in a somewhat mitigated form. In this side of the front the control and regulation of the brothels were never punctiliously

enforced, and the troops had to deal generally with a friendly population. In many cases there was voluntary sale of flesh and in some a free gift of beauty in token of grateful appreciation of their gallantry and in exuberance of patriotic feelings. Moreover, the flutter of the opposite sex was more closely and frequently seen and felt in the allied war sectors than anywhere as the English and French women of all types and ages joined in their thousands from the beginning (unlike the German and Austrian women), in the nursing, transport, ambulance and signalling service.

Still there was in some sectors and for some months a great dearth of women just behind the trenches where the ambulatory military brothels were called upon to console the war-weary sex-mad soldiers. In such sectors one would be struck by the depressingly ugly sight of immense queues of impatient soldiers standing for hours in the sun and rain before the military brothels. Captain Graves has given us an account of the management of a small brothel at Béthune. Usually about 150 men would be admitted daily into this establishment consisting of three inmates, and each would be allowed pleasure for but a few minutes. The fee was ten francs (about 8 shillings) for each man. Each woman would thus serve practically a whole battalion during the five days of the week and be relieved after three weeks of active service.

### The C. D. Acts In Britain & Its Effects

In 1864 the British Contagious Diseases Act was introduced for the first time in England. Under this Act all women registered as prostitutes had to be submitted to a periodic examination by the Government physicians employed for this purpose. This enactment was deemed necessary specially in the interest of the soldiers who constituted a major bulk of the prostitutes' clients. But there was no corresponding measure for regularly inspecting and supervising the men. This unilateral law sapped at the very root of the purpose for which it had been promulgated. The prostitutes at this time started to call themselves with caustic irony as "Queen's women", because they said, "they were kept clean by the Government for the benefit of the Queen's soldiers."

In 1868 a Committee set up to enquire into the working of the C. D. Acts could not but recommend in their report an identical sanitary control for the soldiers. But nothing was done to implement this advice. The medical examination of the men in the services so far as the army was concerned had long been abrogated in 1859 on the recommendation of a committee presided over by Lord Herbert because it was said "to offend the modesty of men." So far as the navy was concerned, any anti-venereal measure had never existed.\*

\* Irene Clephane, *ibid*, pp. 94-5.



It was in the year 1869 that Mrs. Josephine Butler began her historic movement against the double standard of sexual morality and specially against the C. D. Acts. In 1883 the Acts were suspended and in 1886 finally repealed. After that Great Britain and with it the Netherland countries abolished the system of sanitary and police regulation of brothels and relied solely on the non-coercive system of combating venereal diseases. They have no system of compulsory notification of venereal diseases nor is compulsory detention applied to any class or section of infected persons, either civil or military.† Regulation or no regulation the civil and military population of the British isles had been showing a steady increase in the incidence of these social scourges since 1859. The percentage of army population afflicted with these diseases rose to 173.8 per 1000 in 1895.

The British army and navy have always shown a remarkably high percentage of venereal infection, as a Puritanical morality and false prudery have stood for ages in the way of disseminating any scientific knowledge and instruction on these diseases and any organised attempt at controlling them. These factors led to a further spread of these diseases amongst them as well as in the R. A. F. during the last war. Even amongst the civil population there

† Max Hodann. *History of Modern Morals* (Tr. by S. Browne W. Heinemann Ltd. London), p. 108.

was a fearful recrudescence of venereal diseases during years of 1914, 1915 and 1916. Consequently a Royal Commission had to be appointed to inquire into the causes of the fearful diffusion of the diseases and suggest remedies for preventing and combating them. On the recommendation of the Commission and the endorsement of the medical profession in 1916 "Public Health Regulations" were amended so as to institute—

1. Free diagnostic facilities for venereal diseases.
2. Venereal diseases clinics and free Salvarsan treatment.
3. Free instruction and education on the subject among all sections of the public.

In spite of the Draconian Anti-venereal laws and Regulation system in France, the periodic weekly and bi-weekly examination of the registered prostitutes has proved as abortive as ludicrous so far as combating the diseases was concerned. On one hand the medical examination is as perfunctory as it is rudimentary, and on the other there has been no legal provision either to put the prostitutes' clientele under periodic examination or to suppress clandestine commerce. At least one-third portion of France having come for the time being under enemy occupation and the whole of it being the centre of allied war activity for over full four years, the proverbial moral laxity of the French people and of the French urban women in particular increased during those



fateful years to a degree never known before in the history of human civilisation.

### Anti-Venereal Measures In Germany

Only in the German army has there been an organised and systematic fight against venereal diseases since the Franco-German War in 1870-71. In the beginning of the 1870 campaign, Professor Neisser, the discoverer of *Gonococcus* in 1879, had been privileged to investigate into the incidence of venereal diseases in a south German army corps. He found out only 3·3 per cent of the soldiers in the corps were infected. In the November of that year, the number had risen to 10·2 per cent. And in 1871 when the army had encamped in the heart of France for five months the number had leapt up to 77·7 per cent. When in the autumn of 1914 and in the spring of 1915 the German army in the first onrush of its vast war machine occupied whole of Belgium and a part of Eastern France including Alsace-Lorraine, the situation appeared to be identical with that of 1870 and a rapid increase of venereal infection among all classes of the army of occupation was noticed.

Of the precautionary measures taken by the Hun war lords the following items merit our special notice:

1. Regular instruction of the soldiers in the dangers of extra-marital intercourse and anti-venereal measures.

2. Periodic surprise examination in the regiment.
3. Report of personal infection to the proper authority as soon as it is detected.
4. Punishment for concealment of an infection.
5. Examination of all suspected women in occupied areas and segregation of the infected women in venereal hospitals.
6. Lubrication of the member with an ante-venereal ointment before coitus with an unknown woman; use of condoms where available.\*
7. Urination immediately after coition, and disinfection of the urethral passage with two or three drops of protargol lotion by means of a pipette (a kind of small thick-pointed glass pipes) for the prevention of gonorrhœa. Rubbing the *glans penis* and prepuce with cotton dipped in bichloride 1 : 1000.
8. Establishment of regulated army brothels whenever and wherever necessary.

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\* Condoms were recommended and extensively used by the Austrian soldiers who received them free from the sanitary department. Though individual German military authorities tried to adopt a wide-scale practice of regularly distributing French letters to their soldiers as they served the double purpose of preventing venereal diseases and illegitimate births, the general staff and the royal household would not like to encourage the idea. In 1917 when General Von Bissling in command at Brussels found immense increase of promiscuous intercourse between workless native women and womanless conquerors, he ordered for wholesale supplies of condoms from Germany for free distribution to the troops. But the German Empress, Augusta Victoria stood in the way on moral grounds. [Vide Max Hodann, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81].

The above measures, however, were not enough to safeguard the German soldiers from contracting venereal disease. As there was a proviso of mild punishment for concealing the disease and nothing for contracting it or for a failure to take precautionary measures, the soldiers as a rule preferred extra-marital relations in the *estaminets* or private houses to submitting themselves to the embarrassing and demoralising procedure in a field-brothel. Moreover, a contraction of the disease and report of the infection would earn one a comfortable bed in a hinterland hospital at least for four weeks. And last of all, the temptation was too great either for the officers or for the privates to withstand in a land where plenty of homeless hapless women were about and to be had either for a few crumbs or for half a mark.

### Regulations in Other Countries

In the Austrian army the soldiers afflicted with gonorrhœa was never sent back to a venereal hospital on a sick-leave but had to do all the "fatigues" in the lines while receiving ambulatory treatment in the field. Notwithstanding all precautions and punishments in the first one year and a half of the War the toll of venereal diseases went up by leaps and bounds that told upon the physical, mental and moral well-being not only of the army but of the civil population as well. As a result of frightful prevalence of gonorrhœa among all classes of young girls and

married ladies, the physicians noticed certain chronic disorders in the male organs of generation and a corresponding increase of sterility in women.

In the American forces, it is reported, contraction of gonorrhœa has been a penal offence for a long time in that the patient is deprived of his pay and incarcerated in a hospital during the period of his treatment. Anyone who is known to have contracted this disease in the U. S. army and failed to take medical advice is sent up for trial, and one having infected others is sentenced to a few months' hard labour. In spite of all precautions U. S. A. saw abnormal rise in the rate of venereal diseases among its civil and military population immediately after mobilization. Whereas in the last twenty years preceding 1917 the venereal infection had never exceeded 16 per cent in the army, Prof. Russel found it had risen to 40 per cent at the end of 1917. In 1918 on the battlefronts of France it must have far exceeded Russel's computation.

Looking over at the Russian and Balkan fronts one is shocked to find the perpetration of frightful debaucheries of soldiers of all nationalities and a regular tornado of contagious diseases sweeping over the fighting humanity. During peace times Kiev, the capital of Ukrain, had been receiving annually about 200 venereal cases in its hospitals, but in 1915 the number rose up to 20,500 and in the next year to about 30,000. It transpired from

medical evidence given in a medical congress held in May, 1916 in Kiev that a majority of the girls from the age of twelve upwards were already infected. In 1915 after the Russians had retreated from Galicia, in the city of Lemberg alone the police apprehended within a few days 1340 women with acute infection and packed them away to hospitals, whereas the annual average of such women never exceeded 100 in peace times.

### Machine Repairing Shops

We have already said that whenever any woman in the occupied districts was suspected to be infected or was accused by a soldier as the source of his infection, she was at once sent to the chamber of a German military surgeon and thence to a German military hospital for treatment. The female auxiliaries who were greater in number in Austria-Hungary than in Germany, were put under regular medical examination, and as soon as any of them was detected to be carrying infection she was hurried off to a hospital for treatment. Now, these hospitals were a little better than prison-houses in that they were without the regular prison-bars and barbed wire fencing, though a strict record of the cases and surveillance over them were kept by the police as long as they were not declared cured. The treatment received in these establishments was just so crude, the behaviour of the

personnel so harsh and the diet so bad that they received the significant appellation of "Machine-repairing shops."

## CHAPTER X

### SADISM AND MASS ATROCITIES

Truth is the first casualty of a twentieth-century war. Modern scientific warfare, barring men and money, seems to depend chiefly on three P's: propaganda, petrol and precision. The side that lacks these weapons is sure to lose. Propaganda, of course, comes first in the list, as without it a craze for war, a national consciousness (or to put it bluntly—a mass mentality) and a sustained hatred for the enemy are neither awakened nor aggravated. And without a plausible justification for war into which one is apparently dragged by the other, men would not enlist with patriotic enthusiasm and money would not flow into the war funds. During a war all the principal channels of propaganda—the press, the platform and the radio are always to be kept busy and on the alert. With the last-named instrument war can be pushed far beyond the firing line—into the very heart of the civil population of the enemy country—to sow the seeds of despair, discontent and diversity.

### Propaganda of Lies—Why Necessary

By manufacturing white, "blue" and black lies the war-fever and contempt for the foe are maintained or increased. As sexual offences have a peculiar appeal to many people, every warring nation concocted scores of stories in which the enemy was accused of spoiling the virginity of hundreds of innocent girls, chopping off the breasts of innumerable ladies, cutting off the genitals of fallen soldiers etc. There was no lack of fertile brains in every country to fabricate most horrifying legends and to graphically represent in arts most fantastic ideas about the enemy's inhuman cruelties and bestialities.

Actually during the last war pictures were drawn and published in which corpses of females were shown to be piled up high like stacks of hay and the departing enemy troops stowing away female breasts into their knapsacks. Another picture represented menu cards containing "cannibalistic dishes". In a large pot in the foreground female breasts were seen to be singing and in another corner of the picture a group of soldiers relishing with great gusto the so-called dainty dishes of what was termed as *cul de femme froid* (bottom of the dead woman). Postcards with different caricatures of sado-masochistic nature and pornographic pictures representing the abominable habits of the antagonist were used by the soldiers

in large numbers and in every warring state. This network of lies and vile propaganda were necessary to a certain extent from a strategical point of view, specially in order to countermand possible over-estimation of the opposite party, a defeatist mentality and spread of false rumours among one's own people.

### Boomerangs of False Propaganda

But the epidemic of groundless denunciation and innuendoes against the enemy which were often the natural and unconscious outcome of mass psychosis—designated by modern psychologists as *pseudologica phantastica*, went beyond all reasonable bounds and counted the most cultured and rational thinkers among its victims. Thus the world-renowned German scientist, Iwan Bloch villified the French by saying that a nation that saw the birth of men like Marquis de Sade and Gilles de Rais could hardly aspire to be victorious. The French artists and journalists on the other hand retaliated by branding all Germans, civil and military, as inveterate homosexuals.

In every warring state a rumour, more or less groundless, was spread among the soldiers that the enemy applies all the inconceivably brutal methods of persecution on the prisoners. The result of this vile propaganda unfortunately proved to be of far-reaching effect. Many soldiers being wounded

in a hand-to-hand encounter or about to be laid hold of by the enemy, shot themselves (or allowed to be shot by a friend) if they could rather than fall into enemy hands. Because certain brutalities had been maliciously imputed to the soldiers of an army, they were inflamed with such a mad desire for revenge as to have actually perpetrated the crimes. Lies sometimes act as intractable boomerangs.

### Destructive Agents—the Poison Gas

But in this chapter, we shall concern ourselves with a few atrocities and sexual offences of highly objectionable nature that were actually perpetrated by the soldiers of the warring nations in the last Great War, without further expatiating on the merits and demerits of war propaganda. We shall not speak of the incalculable loss in men and materials that each side sustained in the war, nor shall we dissertate on the manifold physical and mental injuries, the untold miseries of the people, moral bankruptcy, social disintegration, strange devaluation of cultural achievements etc, that followed in its wake. We shall only broach the subject of individual and collective moral bearing of the soldiers of the warring nations and races in the battlefield and enemy countries—with particular reference to their sexual tendencies and criminal propensities.

The poison-gas was first employed by the Germans on the Russian front three months after the outbreak of war, when they found that "physical" warfare would be hopelessly inadequate in deterring the spectacular offensive of the vast hordes of the Czar. It was as unexpected as terrific. Thousands started to die daily like rats in a most tragic manner. No gas-masks were handy, no antidotes were ready, no similar reprisal was possible then and there. In the dugouts, in the dressing stations, in the casualty clearing stations and in the halting stations men fell like wind-torn twigs with their blue faces, writhing limbs, hacking coughs and bleeding mouths. About ninety per cent of the victims died from pulmonary edema and hemoptysis. The German war lords gloated over the result of the application of this demonic device. In the early part of 1915 it was employed in the Western front in the battle of Ypres. The British were on the alert and not slow in paying the Huns back in their own coins.

Then there were ignoble instances of mass murders of hundreds of civil population including women, children and invalids, demolition of churches, museums, hospitals, let alone docks, harbours, industrial plants, railway centres etc. by air raids on the enemy countries—a fact that has intensified hundred-fold in the present World War. Finally there were ruthless submarine attacks on one hand

and heartless economic blockade on the other. It has been assessed by the Germans that in consequence of the allied blockade, dire famine broke out to claim about 7,63,000 victims from among the civil population during 1917 and 1918. But humanising warfare is a utopia,—a truism that the Germans amply substantiated by first introducing poison gas, by bombing civil quarters of London and by sinking hundreds of merchant ships, passenger ships and hospital ships.

### Instances of Sadistic Murders and Mutilation

Now we must proceed with our main theme. There is no gainsaying the fact that outbreaks of cruelty with a sexual undertone are more frequent in war than in peace times as there are more opportunities and greater scope for satisfying these primitive impulses. There were many instances of brutal murders committed by the enemy soldiers, even when the foe was wounded or prayed for mercy. Often such murderers were not content with administering a fatal blow on his opponent but, actuated by a strange sadistic impulse, inflicted injuries upon injuries on his recoiling body till he was dead and continued his blows even after. In the case of women, the murder was frequently preceded by rapes and followed by injuries on the genital regions, breasts and buttocks.

Captain Graves in his *Good-bye to All That* has recorded the case of a degenerate Turk who used to come daily to the officers' mess for remnants of food. One day Graves in a jocular vein intimated him that no more food will be given him unless and until he brought in a German's head. Next day he returned with such a head in his knapsack and presented it to Captain Graves as one presents his ticket at the theatre gate. The captain also mentions that many Turks had the habit of cutting off the ears of slain foes and carrying them as trophies. The Moor soldiers serving under the French were also reputed to have had the hobby of collecting ears. Dr. Hirschfeld has mentioned that once a detachment of German soldiers found in the knapsack of a Turkish private a bunch of middle and ring fingers adorned with rings, and in another's a putrid head.

### Mass Rapes In The South-Eastern Theatre

It transpired during and after the last war that mutilations of ears, noses, fingers, genital organs etc. from dead or dying foes, sadistic murders and mass rapes were very frequent among the southern Slavs, Kurds, Turks and Moors. Now we shall reproduce below a few random extracts from an illuminating article from the pen of an eminent Austrian physician, Professor Friedrich Krauss who worked for over four years in a war hospital in

Vienna and came in contact with hundreds of South-Slav and Croat wounded as a teacher of languages. It was from their mouths that he heard of the enormous atrocities that these erstwhile simple-minded rustics committed in the field of battle and behind.

Thus he writes :

"A Serbian who belonged to the academic class once told me how the Serbians had lived in Macedonia. They used to swoop down on a town, make all the men shorter by a head and consort with the wives and daughters, with no regard to religious or national affiliations. The chief impetus to these was given by the *Komitadzyes*, bands of guerillas, desperate violent men, dedicated to avenging the atrocities perpetrated against the native population. The women of the oppressors were raped, and if boys and men were captured, they were raped in the same homosexual fashion as the enemy practiced.

"One of my pupils, a wounded Croat, told us the following anecdote : 'When the war against Serbia broke out, our regiment passed through a little Slavonic city. It started to rain, and all the men were assigned to various quarters. I and five others were assigned to an innkeeper who had two grown daughters of twenty-two and twenty-four. The whole place burned with patriotic enthusiasm and our host also. After we had taken our horses to the barn, our host set before us roast goose, sauerkraut, fresh white-bread, sweet red wine, etc., all gratis and all out of enthusiasm for us heroes, for the king and for Croat fatherland. We had a right good time of it.

In the evening we lured the two daughters into the stable and raped them, despite the fact that they struggled and shrieked dreadfully. Naturally the six of us were stronger than the two girls. Three years later I returned to the same place and learnt that the younger daughter had given birth to a dead child and being accused by a hostile midwife of having slain the infant was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. In addition to that, she had gotten 'a venereal disease from us and had subsequently become insane from it. The older girl had disappeared. The host and his wife had left the place, and their son, who had been a student at the gymnasium, had become depraved. In that accursed night there was not a single girl in the whole place who had not been violated. Of our whole regiment only sixty men remained alive and of these the majority were wounded. We sinned against God and man, and God recompensed us for it because he never remains in debt to anyone.'...

"Another wounded one, who boasted that his father had already fought with Radetzky against Italy, told us the following : "We entered a small city on the Piave... and we were assigned to search the houses for concealed weapons. At the head of one such detachment I entered a palazzo and my four comrades were delighted to see the pretty lady of the house who was about forty and her three daughters, aged fifteen, sixteen and seventeen. The head of the household was away on military duty. None of us understood Italian, but we made it clear to the crying women what we were searching for. They made us understand that they had no weapons in the house and in order to mollify us they set before us bread, wurst,



figs and fine wine. The sight of the pretty mistress of the household aroused my desire and I threw her upon a sofa. She shrieked like one possessed, and when this didn't help she called out to her daughters: *Fori! Fori! Fori!* but already the three girls were struggling upon the floor and in the presence of her mother experienced the same fate as she. We amused ourselves with them until far into night. Late that night the four women foolishly attempted to flee across the Piave and ran into a whole crowd of soldiers. After two days an escort brought them back. They were scarcely recognizable, so misused and manhandled were they'...

"One day, at a distinguished party, a first lieutenant told the following story: 'During our campaign in Southern Serbia I commanded a detachment of four hundred men. The villages there consist of little isolated hamlets nestled in the hills. Once a shot was fired at us from one of the houses. We immediately surrounded the farm and ordered all who were within to come forth and surrender their weapons. One after another they came forth, seven men of various ages and a pretty woman of twenty-seven with an infant in her arms. The men steadfastly denied the possession of weapons and that the shot had come from their house. A search revealed nothing. In order to induce these stubborn peasants to confess, I had the oldest of them tied to a plum tree, and when that didn't help, the other six were hanged up in the same way. During the whole procedure the woman squatted mute and steadfast on the threshold of her house with the child in her lap. My men said that they did not want to leave the poor woman alone, so they harnessed two horses to

a rack-wagon and made a bed of straw in it for the woman and her child. On the third day the sergeant major informed me that all of my men had already consorted with the woman and she was lying in the wagon in a pitiable state, inhumanly exhausted from the terrors of more than fifty hours of uninterrupted profanation. He begged me for permission in God's name to put an end to the suffering of the unhappy woman by shooting her. One look convinced me that she was hopeless and I had to give my consent'...

"During the war there were also cases where prisoners were tied to a tree and their sexual organs torn off or covered with honey in order to attract ants and flies. Another repulsive manifestation of cruelty was the practice of dipping into human excrement all the food that was given to the hungry prisoners of war....Another bit of cruelty was to feed the prisoners herring and salted fish and then deprive them of water—a cruelty worthy of ranking beside any of the refined tortures of the Inquisition'.....

### Civil Work Battalions and German Brutality

There have been hundreds of instances collected from various sources and duly verified, in which the German invaders showed exceptional brutal force to the civil population and military prisoners. Men and women in their thousands were forcibly drafted into auxiliary labour service in which they were given a very small pittance hardly sufficient to keep the pot boiling. This service

which was responsible for creating the notorious "civil work battalions" was a disgraceful episode in the history of Belgian occupation. Search patrols of German soldiers were sent out in every village and city to visit every house of this accursed land and to ear-mark as many members—both males and females not younger than fourteen and older than fifty-five—of each household as might be drafted into the service. The recruits were instructed to appear at a certain military station or outpost with their clothing and eating utensils within an hour.

German officers drank champagne and indulged in merry pranks, while the poor women were dragged away into exile before their supercilious eyes. In many cases, women cooped up like fowls were transported in slow-moving cattle-carts and housed in miserable hovels with straw sacks for beds. "Later on at their camps, they were exposed to the offensive attention of soldiers and officers and very frequently at night they had to run for refuge in their night-shirt and bare feet." The sick, invalid and grown-up girls just under fourteen were also sometimes forcibly led away. Most of them, without any discrimination of their rank and educational qualification were harnessed on to all sorts of "fatigues" and assigned to hard agricultural labours. Above all, once a week they had to undergo physical examination held *en masse* in a brutal way by the

sanitary officers under the supervision of the military police.

That there were large number of cases of mass murders, violations, incendiarism and application of third grade methods on those suspected of espionage, by the Germans in occupied Belgium and Eastern France during 1914 and the early part of 1915, can hardly be repudiated as reports and evidences so far collected have been too cogent for it. But it must be added in this connection that these were exaggerated to a great extent during the war owing to an over-exciting atmosphere of contempt and ire against the enemy.

### Austrian and Russian Excesses

The German atrocities in Belgium and North-eastern France far eclipsed those that were perpetrated by the Russians and Austrians in Galicia, North-eastern Italy, Serbia and East Prussia and in fine by the Turkish in Armenia. We shall close this chapter and with that ring down the curtain on the book after citing a few instances of the blood-curdling mass murders and rapes committed in these sectors.

The Russians as if with a vengeance committed acts of rape on German women in their mad march towards Koenigsberg in East Prussia. But still in this sector the number of rapes in com-

which was responsible for creating the notorious "civil work battalions" was a disgraceful episode in the history of Belgian occupation. Search patrols of German soldiers were sent out in every village and city to visit every house of this accursed land and to ear-mark as many members—both males and females not younger than fourteen and older than fifty-five—of each household as might be drafted into the service. The recruits were instructed to appear at a certain military station or outpost with their clothing and eating utensils within an hour.

German officers drank champagne and indulged in merry pranks, while the poor women were dragged away into exile before their supercilious eyes. In many cases, women cooped up like fowls were transported in slow-moving cattle-carts and housed in miserable hovels with straw sacks for beds. "Later on at their camps, they were exposed to the offensive attention of soldiers and officers and very frequently at night they had to run for refuge in their night-shirt and bare feet." The sick, invalid and grown-up girls just under fourteen were also sometimes forcibly led away. Most of them, without any discrimination of their rank and educational qualification were harnessed on to all sorts of "fatigues" and assigned to hard agricultural labours. Above all, once a week they had to undergo physical examination held *en masse* in a brutal way by the

sanitary officers under the supervision of the military police.

That there were large number of cases of mass murders, violations, incendiarism and application of third grade methods on those suspected of espionage, by the Germans in occupied Belgium and Eastern France during 1914 and the early part of 1915, can hardly be repudiated as reports and evidences so far collected have been too cogent for it. But it must be added in this connection that these were exaggerated to a great extent during the war owing to an over-exciting atmosphere of contempt and ire against the enemy.

### Austrian and Russian Excesses

The German atrocities in Belgium and North-eastern France far eclipsed those that were perpetrated by the Russians and Austrians in Galicia, North-eastern Italy, Serbia and East Prussia and in fine by the Turkish in Armenia. We shall close this chapter and with that ring down the curtain on the book after citing a few instances of the blood-curdling mass murders and rapes committed in these sectors.

The Russians as if with a vengeance committed acts of rape on German women in their mad march towards Koenigsberg in East Prussia. But still in this sector the number of rapes in com-

parison with that of voluntary self-surrender was not so great as the German Government sought to establish in their memorial of March 25, 1915, obviously to palliate their own crimes in Belgium and France. After recession of the Russian hordes from East Prussia the *League for the Protection of Mothers* demanded the promulgation of a special law of the Government, by virtue of which the women and girls impregnated by the enemy would be eligible for evacuating the foetus if they could prove a rape.

A staff officer of the Austro-Hungarian army under the pseudonym of *Fabius* has written out among others the following information :

Many false stories and descriptions were current concerning the rape of women and girls by our troops. Among the regular field formation such cases were rare. When they did occur they were performed by the baggage of the corps of troops, who could not always be supervised. On the other hand the Russian Cossacks and the wild Siberian troops were much worse in this regard. I mention these divisions of the Russian army because their troops were, in general, no worse than the others. In a Hungarian Ruthenian village in the Carpathians, through which my regiment marched and which had formerly been occupied by the Cossacks, the whole female population had been raped in the most animal fashion. All the women in every family were raped by the monsters *coram publico*.... 'How many came over you?' One young girl was asked. She answered, 'Four Cossacks came over

me, six over mother and three over grand-mother.' Furthermore, it is a fact that those areas in Galicia occupied by the Russians were thoroughly infected with venereal disease after the departure of this army and that most of the women and girls had been impregnated."

E. E. Kisch has related in his famous war memoir, *Winter Camp of a Defeated Army* some of the most abominable excesses committed by the Russians in many of the Galician villages. He belonged to an Austrian regiment that occupied Galicia after the Russians had evacuated it after a short occupation. Kisch had gathered authentic reports from the eye-witnesses and the sufferers themselves.

When one day the Russian Cossacks were searching for their preys along a street and breaking open the street-door of every house, the girls in a certain rich and respectable family hid themselves in their hurry in the lumber room, in the lavatory and under the coal heaps. But when the brutes began to question their father and on his pleading ignorance started to pound his head with the handle of their bayonets, the girls came out of their concealment and implored sobbing that their father be spared. Their prayer was granted but not before two of the girls had immediately been ravished. The third jumped out of the window and scurried across a half-frozen field to hide behind

a bush. All night she stood trembling there in the blizzard.

On the contrary, Burghard Breitner has regaled us with a very popular but significant anecdote of the Russian campaign in Galicia. When after the fall of a certain town, the Cossacks were pillaging every house and rummaging about for valuables, a woman tearfully observed a band of soldiers enter her dwelling. She was all alone in the house, the male members of the family having joined the Austrian colours. The soldiers plundered everything they could lay their hands on including foods and drink. When they were about to strut out of the house, the mistress stood amazed at the door and asked them in a rather disappointing tone, "Well, boys, don't you rape?"...

Again when the Austrians re-entered the region, they meted out similar treatment to all the inhabitants, particularly the Jews. In a village several Jewish families hid inside an abandoned boiler preferring starvation to defilement at the hands of the redoubtable mastiffs of the monarchy. Fritz Wittels, the well-known soldier-psychologist of Austria and the author of another soul-captivating war novel entitled *Zacharias Pimperl* has been responsible for the following typical case of Austrian butchery:

"The dragoons entered the town from the rear, and as they came by a little group of peasants, one of the

dragoons shouted out that among the latter there was one who probably shot their sergeant-major from behind. Thereupon the dragoons drew their swords and slew everyone of the group—men, women and one girl—so that no one remained alive. The heap of corpses lay piled in a great lake of blood which was growing continually larger as the blood poured from the open wounds."...

### The Massacre of the Armenians

In the beginning of the last Great War, there were about three and a half million Armenians in the North-Eastern districts of Asia Minor and beyond the borders of Russia. About two million resided in the Turkish territory and the rest were the subjects of the Czar Nicholas. They were all devout Christians and constituted the largest professional and mercantile group in Turkey-in-Asia. Like the Jews they were a hard-working and persevering race and of progressive temperament. The Turkish Armenians had been uniformly loyal to the land of their birth and to their Mahommedan king. But the newly awakened, race-conscious popular Government began unjustly to look upon them as enemy of the land and to hate them as infidels who had been substantially contributing towards the nation's progress "with a selfish motive".

After Turkey had joined with the Central powers, the Armenians were suspected to be

sympathetic to the Russians and to the allied cause. This suspicion was confirmed when the Armenian youths, peaceful and non-martial that they were, waxed reluctant to join the war in as large numbers as were expected of them. Talaat Pasha, the then bigoted minister of the interior got false alarm from his equally myopic spies of a contemplated uprising of the Armenians to throw off the Turkish yoke.

Early in 1915 the Armenian leaders were arrested and imprisoned on frivolous charges of conspiracy and treason; all youngmen able to bear arms were conscripted into the army and the auxiliary service. A secret message was sent over to all high Turkish officials in the Armenian districts to deport all the inhabitants ostensibly to the Arabian desert and virtually to "nowhere in the earth"; in other words, if possible, they were to be exterminated root and branch. Accordingly notices were issued to all the Armenians to sell their belongings and with their families, light luggages and food to last for a few weeks be ready to march towards the places of deportation. Aleppo was made one of the principal receiving stations of these unfortunate victims.

At the expiry of a few days of grace, thousands of Turkish gendarmes were detailed to drive the inmates out of their hearth and home and from the cities and villages, and to escort them up to Aleppo,

about six hundred miles away. Little respite and no food should be provided them on the way. All the villages and cities in Armenia became depopulated on a certain date and the historic march of misery and death began from various points in different batches and through different treks. Large number of women, girls and children were captured on the way by the savage Kurds and other nomadic hill tribes; some were raped and murdered and others were sold in the slave markets of Kurdistan or away across the Persian border.

There grew up such a magnitude of immoral traffic in young Armenian girls all over Turkey as had not been witnessed in any part of the world since the Crusades. "Virgins were sold for twenty piastres, while young women went for five". Miss Torikian, one of the deported girls related that the Mahammedan landowners and merchants bought young girls direct from the gendarmes guarding a caravan. Every evening the Kaimakam (the sub-divisional officer) arranged parties with his friends and underlings in which respectable Armenian girls were forced to dance naked. One who refused was murdered by bastinadoes. Those who were afflicted with footsore or any disease during the move were hurled from a projecting precipice or left in a precarious condition by the road side for vultures, wolves and jackals to make a feast of. Thousands died of hunger, disease and

exhaustion and thousands were butchered to death. Thus, of the 18,000 deported from Kharput and Siwas only 350 ever reached Aleppo. Of the 19,000 that had set out from the city of Erzerum only eleven reported themselves at the camp at Aleppo.

At the Paris Peace Conference President Wilson in course of discussing the Armenian question quoted *inter alia* the following extract from a German memorandum that sent a righteous wave of indignation and shudder throughout the civilised world :

"Caravans which, when they left home, comprised thousands of individuals, had been reduced to only a few hundred when they came to Aleppo. All along the journey the fields were strewn with black swollen naked corpses, for they had been robbed of their clothes, befouling the atmosphere with their stench. Some tied back to back, served as a dam to the Euphrates or food for the fish...I have seen people, who, crazed by hunger, ate for food the excrements of their own body ; women who cooked the flesh of their newly-born children ; girls who had cut open the still warm corpses of their mothers to seek the money which the dead had swallowed in fear of the Turkish gendarmes. In decayed caravans, these horrible relics of humanity lay among heaps of half-rotten corpses, waiting for death. How long could they sustain their miserable existence with seeds culled from the dung of horses or with grasses ?"...

The trail of tears of this martyred race of two million souls was literally strewn with the corpses of

deflowered girls and ravished women. Many of them had cudgels shoved into their rectums. Of one caravan it has been reported by an eye-witness that after the infants and children were forcibly taken away to be sold to childless Mahammedan families, the mothers who now protected the young daughters with their hands entwined round their necks were compelled to surrender them under incessant sabre-cut wounds inflicted on their bodies. In some cases, the hands of the mothers had to be chopped off before their daughters could be torn away. In the next moment the girls were stripped naked in the open field and ravished under the very gaze of their mothers. Then the prettiest girls would be exposed naked in the market of Aleppo and would be sold as virgins at a high price to the harem masters.

One of the deported victims, a young girl, told the following story :

"The chief of the escort saw in the caravan a young girl whom he desired to have. He approached us with a company of Kurds and said, "Give me the girl at once or I shall turn you all over to these fellows."... We threw ourselves at the feet of the young girl and begged her to consent ; she remained silent, then burst into tears, but finally consented. I was deported together with my mother. Half way along the journey a man asked for some money which my mother insisted she didn't have. He then began to torture her until she finally gave him six livres which she had hidden in an intimate portion of her body. He then cut off one of her arms, then the other ;



still unsatisfied, before my eyes he cut off both her feet ; then he violated me before the eyes of my dying mother. The Kurds raped an enormous number of young Armenian girls. Those who resisted were slain, and the beasts satisfied their monstrous passion even on the dying ones."\*

Over twenty thousand German soldiers were at this time stationed in Asiatic Turkey and a moiety of them were on the march for Kut-el-Amara in the company of a strong Turkish detachment. They were meeting caravans of weary Armenians at every turn of the road through which they were passing. A German sub-altern has written the following in the course of writing a report of the Mesopotamian campaign : "We marched along Euphrates and Tigris. In the evening we pitched our tents in the desert. One evening our Osmanian comrades disappeared. We thought they had gone to a religious service ; but they returned with two hundred Armenian women and young girls whom they had obtained from a caravan camped in the vicinity. Our tents lay nearby and when night came, hell began to burn in our midst. All through the night German officers and soldiers were prevented from sleeping by heart-rending calls for help and shrieks of ravished victims. But we were unable to intervene for our military leaders had forbidden us to interfere with the 'internal' affairs of the Turks, so we had to remain silent while our 'sisters-in-faith

were abused....When we awoke next morning we saw to our horror that all the young girls and women who had served to satisfy the animal lust of these brutal tyrants, were dead, each one having her throat cut."...

It has been proved to the hilt that the German Government were at least indirectly responsible for this "huge single crime that was committed in the whole course of the war" as Lord Bryce put it in the House of Lords in November 13, 1918. This inhuman deportation affair seasoned with mass murders, rapes, robbery, mutilations, immoral traffic and inhuman cruelties had cost the ill-fated Armenians about 1,200,00 innocent lives—an act that will stand out for ages as one of the blackest crimes in the world's political history !

THE END

\* M. Hirschfeld *Op. cit.* p. 317.

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