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EQUAL PAY TO MEN AND WOMEN FOR EQUAL WORK [1]

1. SHOULD men and women receive equal pay for equal work? This question is in a peculiar degree perplexed by difficulties that are characteristic of economic science. They arise from the presence of a subjective or psychical element that is not encountered in the purely physical sciences. Outward and visible wealth cannot be quite dissociated from the inward feeling of welfare. But the ideas of welfare or well-being are deficient in the simplicity and distinctness which conduce to accurate reasoning. It may be, indeed, that there is something indefinite and metaphysical about certain conceptions which the higher physics now involve. But the practical uses of those sciences are not thereby impaired. Speculations about four-dimensional time-space do not much interfere with the work of the engineer. But the connection of our studies with things higher than material wealth affects injuriously the reasoning even about material wealth. Sentiment exercises a disturbing influence—a disturbance peculiarly to be apprehended in dealing with a question which touches not only the pocket but the home. Nor even when this danger is avoided does the logic of political economy escape the consequences of its connection with the higher parts of human nature. The most correct and unbiassed economic conclusions are liable to be overruled by moral considerations. This fate, too, is particularly to be apprehended for arguments on the present subject. Guarding against these difficulties, I propose to distinguish and to discuss separately two inquiries into which the proposed question may be subdivided, according as it is referred to external wealth only, or also to the attendant internal feeling of welfare.

2. The disturbing effect of sentiment or prejudice makes itself felt, at the very outset of the discussion, in the definition

[1] Presidential Address to Section F of the British Association, Hull, 1922.

of the issue to be discussed. In masculine circles the question is often dismissed with the remark that the work of women never, or hardly ever, is equal to that of men. The truth of this proposition will be considered later (below, 14). Here it is relevant to observe that even if the proposition were true the question would not be stultified. For the term "equal" is evidently not to be interpreted, for the purpose of this inquiry, as identical in amount. Equality, as Aristotle says, is of two kinds, numerical and proportional—meaning that the share of A is to the share of B as the claim or worth (*ἀξία*) of A is to that of B. So when Adam Smith propounds a maxim in the observation of which, he says, consists what is called the equality of taxation, it would be trivial to object that the subjects of the State are not all equal in respect of ability to contribute. Of course he meant, as he says in the context, taxation "in proportion to their respective abilities"; not implying that the abilities are equal. The question then arises (in economics as well as in politics), What is the criterion of that worth which governs distribution, according to which shares are to be distributed? "Pay in proportion to efficient output," the phrase used by the War Cabinet Committee on Industry, expresses the meaning approximately. By "equal efficient output" may be understood, in the phrase of Dr. Bowley, "equal utility to the employer." To the same effect others speak of equal "productivity" or "productive value."[1] With these phrases there must be understood a certain equality on the side of the employee as well as on the side of the employer or community. Thus, when the Children of Israel were compelled to gather straw in the fields, the bricks which they made might have been of the same utility to the taskmaster as when the raw material was obtained gratis. But if the workers received the same remuneration per dozen of bricks as before, we should not say that, as compared with the former terms, they were receiving equal pay for equal work. Again, there might be nothing to choose from the workers' point of view between carrying a certain quantity of silver or the same weight of lead for the same distance; while the employer or customer might derive a much greater advantage from the transportation of silver than from that of lead. If

[1] The definition given by the (majority of the) War Cabinet Committee is at s. 211 of their Report [Cmd. 135], 1919. Professor Bowley's definition is in the first column of p. 177 of (Appendices to) the *Report on Women in Industry* [Cmd. 167], 1919. Mrs. Fawcett adopts Miss Eleanor Rathbone's definition, which is substantially identical with our first definition, the one proper to the present study (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1918, p. 3). It is quoted in part below (14).

now the carriage of silver is restricted (by custom, say, or favouritism) to a class defined by some attribute unconnected with the value of their service (uncorrelated with speed, security, punctuality, and so forth), the carriers of lead and silver would not be receiving equal pay for equal work, although each class received a pay proportional to the utility of its service. In short we must understand with the term " equal work " some clause importing equal freedom in the choice of work. This condition should include equal freedom to prepare for work by acquiring skill. There are thus presented two attributes : equality of utility to the employer as tested by the pecuniary value of the result, and equality of disutility to the employee as tested by his freedom to choose his employment. These two attributes will concur in a régime of perfect competition. For then, theoretically, each employer will apply labour in each branch of his business up to the point at which the return to the unit of labour last applied is equal to the cost of that unit, and the same (*ceteris paribus*) as in all branches of each business. Likewise, in the state of equilibrium which characterises perfect competition the employee cannot better himself by taking the place of another. The question thus conceived may be restated : Should there be perfect competition between the sexes ? The question thus put requiring a categorical answer, Yes or No, may be labelled A, to distinguish it from the question of degree, B, which may be asked if a categorical answer is not forthcoming, namely, What sort or amount of competition between the sexes is advisable ?

In the question thus stated equal work is defined objectively by the fact that as between two tasks the worker is indifferent. This fact, like the action or inaction of Buridan's ass, is ascertainable by the senses. But something more than what is given by physical observation seems to be implied in ordinary parlance with reference to our question. Some comparison between the feelings of the workers seems to be implied in statements such as the following : " The remuneration of the peculiar employments of women is always, I believe, greatly below that of employments of equal skill and equal disagreeableness carried on by men " (J. S. Mill, *Political Economy*, II. xiv. 5). " Men and women often work side by side in the same schools ; . . . and we are satisfied that the work of women, taking the schools as a whole, is as arduous as that of men and is not less zealously and efficiently done " (Report on Teachers in Elementary Schools, Lond., Cmd. 8939). " An unfortunate female does not receive for thirteen or fourteen hours' close daily application during

six days as much as a man for one day of ten hours " (referring to Philadelphia early last century; cp. Carey, *Social Science*, Vol. III. p. 385). If equal work is interpreted as equal disutility, in the sense of fatigue or privation of amenity, then equal pay may be interpreted equal satisfaction obtained from earnings. Equality in this sense is not always predicable of equal external perquisites. It is conceivable, for instance, that a gaudy livery might in general have more attraction for one sex than for the other. This second question, which is presented by the subjective interpretation of the terms, like the first, may be subdivided according as (*a*) a categorical answer is demanded, or (*b*) the question is one of degree.

In the first of the two inquiries which have been distinguished we may, if we can, maintain the position assumed by Jevons when he disclaimed any attempt to " compare the amount of feeling in one mind with that in another," when he affirmed that " every mind is inscrutable to every other mind, and no common denominator of feeling seems to be possible " (*Theory of Political Economy*, p. 15). The second inquiry presupposes the faculty which forms the main theme of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Sympathy; in addition to the self-interest which is prominent in his *Wealth of Nations*. The first inquiry belongs to political economy in a strict or " proper " sense, which we may call pure economics. The second inquiry belongs to political economy in a larger sense, which includes the satisfactions attending the possession and use of wealth—say the economics of welfare. The second inquiry is wider than and comprehends the first; since an increase in welfare is, *ceteris paribus*, apt to attend an increase in wealth. As equality in the first sense, concerned with production only, tends to maximise the national income, so equality in the second sense, affecting distribution, tends to maximise that aggregate of welfare which utilitarian legislation increases, which wise taxation diminishes as little as possible.

Above both these aims, higher even than economic welfare, is well-being other than economic—moral or spiritual good; a hurt to which may well outweigh a gain in satisfactions less independent of material conditions.[1] But the " should " in the question with which we started is to be interpreted as referring only to advisability in the first or second sense. The answers to the question thus limited may at least afford materials for the

[1] On the distinction between economic welfare and welfare as a whole, see Pigou, *Wealth and Welfare*, ch. i. s. 2, *et seq.*

answer to it in all its bearings. For the present I confine myself to the question in its first sense. In a sequel I hope to consider the question in its second sense.

3. To the question (A), whether competition between the sexes should be restricted, it may seem sufficient to reply that competition between all classes should be unrestricted. In the immortal words of Adam Smith, " all systems, either of preference or of restraint, being completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man or order of men." This system tends to increase " the real value of the annual produce of its (the society's) land and labour," or, as we now say, the national income. It is pointed out by Professor Pigou that, in order to secure a maximum of produce, productive resources must be so distributed that the net product of the unit last applied in each branch of industry—the marginal productivity—may be the same for all branches. To this proximate end *laissez faire* is a means. A maximum of wealth will thus in general be attained by unrestricted competition.

4. But a *maximum* is not always the *greatest possible* value of which a quantity is susceptible.[1] The top of a hillock presents a maximum; but it is not always the highest attainable height. Half-way up Mount Everest is higher than the top of Snowdon. So it may happen that the unrestricted play of competition between short-sighted, self-interested employers and desperately poor workers, though securing a temporary maximum of production, may bring about that *degradation of labour* which the warmest champions of competition have apprehended; notably Francis Walker (*Wages Question*, ch. v., and *Political Economy*, Art. 343 *et seq.*). There may occur the " strange and paradoxical result " described by Marshall (*Principles of Economics*, VI. iii. 8; cp. iv. 1): employers adhering to old methods which require only unskilled workers of but indifferent character, who can be hired for low (time-) wages. Even Mill admits that unrestricted competition may tend to a lengthening of the hours of work which it is desirable to restrict by law (*Political Economy*,

[1] As to the relation between maximum and greatest possible advantage, see Pigou, *Economics of Welfare*, Part II. ch. ii. s. 7 *et seq.*, restating the doctrine of his *Wealth and Welfare*, which has been paraphrased by the present writer in the ECONOMIC JOURNAL for June, 1913, p. 215.

V. xi. 12). On purely economic grounds, apart from humanitarian sentiment or Socialist bias, it seems that in certain cases the community may with advantage interpose to regulate the labour market. From such regulation female labour could claim no exemption; rather the depression or *débâcle* of industry that is apprehended would be aggravated by the competition of women. Their competition would be particularly effective owing to three incidents. First, the minimum of requirements for efficiency, of actual as distinct from conventional necessaries, is less for a woman than a man (in the ratio of 4 : 5 according to Rowntree). This circumstance might acquire a dangerous importance in a struggle for bare life, though not of much significance, it may be hoped, in prosperous conditions. Secondly, wives and daughters are apt to be subsidised; and though subsidies do not always lead to the offer of work on lowered terms, this result may be anticipated in the case contemplated.[1] Last, and not least, the woman worker has not acquired by custom and tradition the same unwillingness to work for less than will support a family, the same determination to stand out against a reduction of wages below that standard. Altogether, if we are convinced that some action must be taken to avert the evils which have been glanced at (cp. Marshall, VI. xiii. 12), it seems that our question (A) cannot receive a categorical answer in the affirmative.

5. I dismiss section A with the following cautions: (*a*) Let us not forget the general presumption in favour of *laissez faire*. It may be true that the top of a hill is not so high as that of a neighbouring mountain. It may be probable that by getting down from the hill and getting up on the mountain we shall ultimately attain a position higher than the hilltop. But the transition, over unknown ground perhaps, is not without danger. For example, many who have left the simple path of Free Trade in order to attain greater prosperity through the protection of infant industries have not bettered themselves.[2] (*β*) Let us remember that there are limits to the effects of regulation. It is well to prescribe: "The best way to secure the necessary advances in wages would be to set up Trade Boards for all industries and instruct them to bring minimum wages for men

[1] As to the effect of subsidies see Pigou, *Economics of Welfare*, Part V. ch. vii. s. 3, restating *Wealth and Welfare*, Part III. ch. viii. s. 3.

[2] The advantages theoretically obtainable by the scientific protection of infant industries are well exhibited by Professor H. O. Meredith (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1906). But he adds: "I know no case in which Protection has demonstrably done more good than harm."

as well as women as soon as possible to a level which would fulfil the conditions indicated above (enabling the man to marry and support a family and the single woman to live in decent comfort). The rise will be made possible by the increase of productivity." But unfortunately, such is the uncertainty of human affairs, the required increase of productivity does not always follow the determination of a desirable minimum, as the Australians have lately experienced. In the fixing of minimums, as in the cutting of coats, regard must be had to the amount of material or means available. (γ) In view of the uncertainties attending our course once we leave the obvious and simple system of natural liberty, let us advance with great caution. Our motto should be *pedetentim*, testing each foothold before committing ourselves to an irrevocable step; prepared to retract if the ground prove unsafe. An excellent example of the appropriate method is afforded by the English Trade Boards. The Committee to which they owe their institution (1908) recommended that " Parliament should proceed somewhat experimentally," that legislation should at first be " tentative and experimental " (Report on Home Work, 1908, No. XV. 40, 54). The first step having proved encouraging, a further step was tried. But that further step, having proved unsafe, is to be retracted, as recommended by the Cave Committee (Cmd. 1645).

6. B. Under section B, dealing with the question as one of degree, there might perhaps be included the comparative treatment of male and female workers among the classes which shall have been excluded from open competition. Thus, according to Charles Booth's plan of segregating the feckless class who spoil the labour market, his class B, what will be the distribution of work and of pay (or should we say of rations?) as between the sexes? But such questions belong rather to our less purely economic sequel. In any case I shall not be expected to pronounce on hypothetical cases as numerous as the Socialistic schemes which are in the air. Under head B it must suffice to consider a state of things in which, desperate competition having been somehow ruled out, there remain competitors freed from the deranging effect of extreme poverty and incompetence. The case is that of which Charles Booth said that the " hardy doctrines " of the individualist system " would have a far better chance in a society purged of those who cannot stand alone " (*Life and Labour*, Vol. I. p. 167, ed. 2). Or we may recall Mr. Seebohm Rowntree's distinction between wages below and above his minimum: " the former should be based on the human

needs of the workers, the latter on the market value of the services rendered" (*Human Needs*, p. 120). It is the latter kind of wages only that are now to be considered. For a first approximation (I) let us simplify the problem by abstracting the circumstances of family life, considering the labour world as if it was composed of bachelors and spinsters.

7. I. Competition now being freed, the Smith-Pigou principle (above (3)) resumes its authority. The best results will presumably be obtained by leaving employers free to compete for male or female labour. Thus equal pay for equal work would be secured in our sense of the term; which does not imply that the time-earnings of the sexes should be equal (2). Equality in our sense would be realised in the conceivable state of things which a high authority (Professor Cassel) appears to regard as actual when he argues that but for the inferiority of female labour "it is not clear why the employer should not further (than he does) substitute female labour for the dearer male labour" (*Theoretische Sozial-Economie*, p. 293). There is much force in Professor Cassel's argument; and his conclusion would be perfectly true if the implied premiss, the existence of perfect competition, were true. But competition is not perfect while it is clogged by combinations both of employers and employed. An employer of many workmen is in himself virtually a combination, as Dr. Marshall has pointed out. Men, being generally better organised than women, have exercised an unsymmetrical pressure on the employer to their own advantage. For instance, "London printing-houses dare not employ women at certain machines unless they are prepared to risk a long and costly fight" (Mrs. Fawcett, ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1904, p. 297, cp. 1892, p. 176). I have been told of similar proceedings elsewhere.

8. The concession of the employer to male pressure is facilitated by the circumstances that, though the use of male labour beyond a certain limit is to his disadvantage, yet it is probably *not very much* to his disadvantage. This circumstance is deducible from a proposition pertaining to the theory of maxima, of which I shall hereafter make much use. It may be stated thus: If y is a quantity which depends upon—increases and decreases with —another quantity, x, the change of y consequent on an assigned change of x is likely to be particularly small in the neighbourhood of a value of x for which y is a maximum.[1] For example,

[1] Mr. Bickerdike has made an interesting application of the property to the theory of Free Trade (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, Dec. 1906). His argument is discussed by the present writer in the ECONOMIC JOURNAL for September 1908, p. 401.

in ascending a dumpling-shaped hill from a point of the plane on which the hill stands, the first hundred yards of advance in the direction of the summit might correspond to an elevation of fifty yards above the plane. But as the summit is approached the same change of length measured along the surface may be attended with a change of height that is a hundred times, or even a thousand times, less than what it was at a distance from the summit. The principle is illustrated by the well-known proposition that a small tax on a monopolised article forms a *very small* inducement to the monopolist to raise the price and reduce the output of the taxed article. Thus, in an example given by Cournot (to illustrate another property of monopoly) a (specific) tax amounting to 10 per cent. of the price before the tax will afford a motive to the monopolist to raise the price, but a very weak motive, since by making the change he will benefit himself only to the extent of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of his profits. A tax of 1 per cent. would afford a very much weaker motive. By raising the price to the figure which (after the imposition of the tax) yields maximum profit he stands to gain (to save upon the loss caused by the tax) about a twenty-thousandth part of his profits!

9. The pressure of male trade unions appears to be largely responsible for that crowding of women into a comparatively few occupations, which is universally recognised as a main factor in the depression of their wages. Such crowding is *primâ facie* a flagrant violation of that free competition which results in maximum production and in distribution of the kind here defined as equal pay for equal work. The exclusion of women from the better-paid branches of industry may be effected less openly than by a direct veto, such as the "No female allowed" in the rules of an archaic society (*Industrial Democracy*). Withholding facilities for the acquisition of skilled trades comes to much the same as direct prohibition. A striking instance is mentioned by Mrs. Fawcett with reference to the allegation that women are unable to "tune" or "set" the machines on which they work. They were never given the opportunity of learning how to perform these operations (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1918, p. 4). Exclusion may also be effected by regulating that women entering an industry should conform in every particular to arrangements which are specially suited to male workers. Of such rules Mrs. Fawcett has well written: "to encourage women under all circumstances to claim the same wages for the same work would be to exclude from work altogether all those women who were industrially less efficient than men. A

woman who was less capable of prolonged physical toil, who was less adaptive and versatile than the average man, would be forbidden to accept wages which recognised these facts of her industrial existence" (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1894, p. 366; cp. 1904, p. 296). The exclusiveness of male trade unions has been in the past at least fostered by prejudices and conventions that are becoming obsolete. Before the Labour Commission, for instance, a witness was asked, "What is there unwomanly in steering a barge?" Answer: "It is a work that is entirely unfit for women"; also "it reduces the wages of men." It should be remembered, however, that many of the prohibitions and prejudices here mentioned as contravening free competition were adapted to avert that catastrophic competition (4) which we here conveniently suppose to be excluded.

10. The oppressive action of male unions should be counteracted by pressure on the part of women workers acting in concert. Suppose now that these balanced forces encounter the resistance of the employers, themselves perhaps associated, what will be the resultant? We may assume that the resulting arrangement will not be in strong conflict with the natural forces of competition. Probably an arrangement that the weekly earnings of women should be the same as those of men, in cases where the actual value of a woman as a worker was about 30 per cent. below that of an average man employed in the same capacity (as testified by a majority of employers before a Committee of the British Association, Kirkcaldy, *Credit Industry and the War*, 1915, p. 108), could not be maintained without tyranny on a Russian scale. But within limits thus prescribed there is room for a considerable variety of arrangements. On what principle, then, will a more exact determination be obtained? The principle most congenial to the present subsection is that which is suggested by Walker's doctrine, that "competition, perfect competition, affords the ideal condition for the distribution of wealth" (*Political Economy*, 2nd ed., s. 466; cp. s. 343).[1] We should then not only keep within those limits outside which it would be futile to set up any arrangement, as it would be swept away by the forces of competition, but also within the wide tract thus delimited we should endeavour to find the particular point which would be determined by ideal competition. The first of these precepts may conceivably be carried

[1] On the utilitarian principle of distribution, in the absence of perfect competition, I may refer to what I have said in the ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1897, p. 552, and to my lecture on *The Relations of Political Economy to War*, p. 15 *et seq.*

out by a board of employers and employees. But the second is evidently a counsel of perfection. As Professor Pigou says with reference to railway rates, " it is plain that anything in the nature of an exact imitation of simple competition is almost impossible to attain " (*Wealth and Welfare*, p. 267 *et seq.*). In the case before us the task of the board would be particularly difficult. For, first, even if the labour contract were of the simplest possible type—so much energy applied, so many foot-pounds raised, in return for so much standard money—it appears from the mathematical theory of demand and supply that, even if competition between employers and employed were as free as can be supposed, a determinate position of equilibrium would not be reached.[1] And the contracts with which we have to do are not simple. As well explained in the First Report on Wages and Hours of Labour (1894, C. 7567) and elsewhere, the wage-rate proper to each kind of work is obtained by numerous extras and deductions corresponding to variations from a standard article or process with specified price—a standard which is itself far from simple. Here, for instance, is, or was, the definition of the standard woman's boot: " Button or Balmoral, 1½ in., military heel, puff toe; 7 in. at back seam of leg machine-sewn, channels down or brass rivets, pumps or welts, finished round strip or black waste." The extras (and likewise the deductions) may be presumably calculated on the principle described by Mr. and Mrs. Webb as " specific additions for extra exertion or inconvenience," so as to obtain " identical payment for identical effort." Are these additions, and also the standard to which they are referred, to be determined objectively as what would result from the play of ideal competition? Or must we call in Socialistic, or, as I prefer to say, Utilitarian, principles of distribution in order to fill in the details left blank by the award of competition? However this deep question is decided, whatever blend of competition and combination is proper to the modern labour-market, it remains true that on the suppositions here made (B, I) the distribution of work and pay between the sexes ought to be conducted upon the same principles as between any other classes of workers.

11. On the general principle of distribution I have nothing to add to the little that I have said here and elsewhere. I subjoin some suggestions for carrying out the principle in the case before us. They relate to the comparative efficiency of the sexes, concerning which assumptions are to be made with

[1] See ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1908, pp. 527–9.

caution. There are to be avoided two opposite misconceptions: the one exaggerating the comparative efficiency of men, the other that of women. The first exaggeration is countenanced by Plato when, notwithstanding his admission of women to the highest posts in his Republic, he yet holds that they are inferior to men in all the arts. Even in those arts in which they might be expected to excel, such as weaving and cookery, he seems to say that they are beaten by men.[1] In the modern world, however, it appears that women excel in certain branches of the textile art. "Having smaller hands they are able to handle the twist and weft with greater dexterity than men" (Cmd. 167, p. 79). Superiority is claimed for them, too, in typewriting and in telephoning. As nursery-maids they are certainly more efficient. The opposite exaggeration is committed by feminists when they maintain, in the words of a generally impartial expert, that "there is no reason save custom and lack of organisation why a nursery-maid should be paid less than a coal-miner."[2] No doubt it is difficult to disprove, and even to define, this proposition with reference to employments that are not common to both sexes. The comparison would seem to be as to the time-wages, say the average weekly earnings, of the two classes. The institution of the average presents difficulties. Still, I submit it as an inference based on general impressions and ordinary experience that, even if all restriction of the competition between male and female workers were removed, we should still find the average weekly earnings of the former to be considerably higher.[3]

12. The following fuller statement of the matter is submitted as intelligible and probable. Let us suppose at first that work can be defined in such precise and neuter terms that

[1] Plato hardly commits himself (*Republic*, 455D) to the statement too roundly attributed to him by Grote "that women were inferior to men in weaving no less in other things." But no doubt he considered them to be generally less efficient: ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ ἀσθενέστερον γυνὴ ἀνδρος.

[2] Professor Cannan, in his important contribution to our subject (*Wealth*, p. 202 *et seq.*), realises the difficulty of comparing the earnings of a children's nurse with those of her brother in his occupation of, say, carting coal.

[3] With respect to the presumption that, even if all restrictions were removed, the (time-) earnings of women would normally be less than those of men, some specific evidence is forthcoming in the case of the cotton-weaving industry—a strong case if women are particularly well qualified for that work. Yet even in that industry, "though the earnings are computed on the same table of piece-work prices, the men average more per week than the women" (Mrs. Sidney Webb, *New Statesman*, August 1914, p. 525). This statement is borne out by the "Report on Earnings and Hours" [Cmd. 4545], 1906, where the average weekly earnings for men and women in the Cotton Industry are compared (pp. xxxiv–xxxvi).

it makes no difference to the employer whether a unit of work is performed by a man or a woman. The definition should include not only a specification of the product, as in the case of the boot above instanced, but also the time taken up (affecting the " overhead " charge), the expenditure on apparatus (which may be greater for weaker persons), and so forth. In ideal competition men and women shall be equally free to choose any of the occupations so defined. It may be expected that there are some branches of industry into which women only will enter, others into which they will never, or hardly ever, enter. Let us call the former A, B, C, . . . F, and the latter, M, N, . . . Z. Let the average weekly earning in each of the former occupations be $a, b, c \ldots f$; and in the latter $m, n, \ldots z$. Then I submit that the average of $a, b, c, \ldots f$ will be less than the average of $m, n, \ldots z$. There remain occupations that are entered by both sexes: say G, H, I, K, L. For any one of these, *e.g.* I, the (rate of) pay, say ι, for unit of work in the sense above defined is to be the same for men and women; but the weekly earnings will not be the same, say i_1, for the female and i_2 for the male workers; i_1 less than i_2. The letters may be applied so that $f_1, g_1, h_1, \ldots l_1$ will form an increasing series; on which supposition it may be expected that $g_2, h_2, \ldots l_2, m_2$ will also form an increasing series, rising from the female to the male level.

The conception thus presented may be illustrated by an Australian ruling. Judge Higgins fixed the minimum rate for fruit-picking at one shilling an hour, observing that " the majority of fruit-pickers are men," that " men and women should be paid on the same level," the employer being left free to employ persons of either sex. But for the operations in the packing-sheds the minimum for (women) workers in these processes, in which men are hardly ever employed, should be fixed at 9*d.* per hour (*Commonwealth Arbitration Reports*, 1912, Vol. VI. p. 72, and context). Fruit-picking and the operations in the sheds might correspond to our L and G respectively.

If the rates attached to each specification of work are proper, the distribution will be ideal. Suppose that a slightly different system of rates, $\alpha', \beta', \ldots \iota', \ldots \mu', \nu' \ldots$ etc., is adopted. There will be a slight difference in the distribution of work and pay. But by the property of a maximum above noticed the difference to the community considered as a sort of collective monopolist, the difference to the national income will be not merely slight, but *very* slight.

13. It should be understood that the preceding representation relates only to the present, or rather to a short period in the immediate future. The period must be long enough for the removal of trade-union restrictions to be realised, for training hitherto denied to be acquired; but not long enough for a material change in physique, arts and customs. If in the course of evolution the female sex became as strong as the male, if in the progress of practical science muscular strength became less and less in demand, then the average of $a, b, \ldots f$ might no longer be less than the average of $m, n, \ldots z$. Again, a conceivable change in desiderata would affect the truth of our representation; for instance, if typewriting, telephoning and the like became more in demand than coal-mining and ironworks. Again, if the vast amount of household work that is now unpaid could only be obtained by paying for it, the demand for woman's labour and its price might be considerably raised. The general principle of equal distribution above indicated would hold good notwithstanding these changes; but the suggestions made for its working would require modification. The changes, however, do not appear very imminent.

14. Existing institutions being presupposed, it should be noticed that the supposition above made of work defined irrespective of sex is somewhat abstract. It would be appropriate in the Socialist community imagined by Anatole France (*Pierre Blanche*), where the employer would not inquire whether an applicant for work was a man or a woman. He would not be informed by the garments of the applicant, identical attire having been introduced along with equal conditions of work. But in the present state of things it will often be within the knowledge of the employer that it is more profitable to employ a man than a woman, although the work performed by each is identical so far as it can be defined by the most exact rate. For a woman, unlike a man, is "liable to go off and get married just as she is beginning to be of some use," as a candid champion of equal pay has observed (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1917, p. 59). Again, a woman is generally less useful in an emergency. As a witness before the Committee on the Employment of Women put it, "A woman punching a ticket may appear equal to a man, but she is not so useful in case of a breakdown or runaway." Of course these "secondary" differences, as they might be called, are much less serious in some industries than in others. In some permanence may be less a desideratum, a breakdown less to be apprehended. Among secondary differences is hardly

to be reckoned the alleged inability of women workers to " tune " the machines on which they work; for that regularly recurring need can be allowed for by a properly constructed rate. But it is otherwise with the risks which hardly admit of actuarial calculation. Besides, even if the probability could be calculated precisely, the compensation to the employer for carrying the risk is not to be measured by the mathematical " expectation " thereof. This point has been well brought out with reference to risks in general by Mr. Keynes in his great treatise on Probability. The point is of importance here, as it contravenes what *primâ facie* seems the simplest solution of the difficulty: that is, in all the industries where secondary differences between the sexes are operative to lower the rates for female work correspondingly. Thus in industry E, instead of the rate ϵ which would be proper in the absence of secondary differences, we should put the somewhat lower rate ϵ'. Likewise in I (above (12)), instead of the common rate ι for men and women equally, we should put a lower rate ι' for women, retaining ι for men. Such an adjustment seems to carry out the recommendations of the (majority of the) War Cabinet Committee when they contemplate " a fixed sum to be deducted from the man's rate " corresponding to the " lower value of the woman's work," if proved by the employer (par. 10 (5), p. 4). The adjustment would be in accordance with the definition of equal pay for equal work given by those who are best qualified to interpret the claim: " Any permanent disadvantage that adheres to women workers as such should be allowed for by a *pro rata* reduction in their standard rates " (Mrs. Fawcett, citing Miss Eleanor Rathbone, ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1918, p. 3). But the reduction corresponding to the demand of the employer for women as compared with men workers could not well be calculated objectively by a board. It could only be determined by the play of ideal competition, which exists only in idea. There would be incurred the danger either (α) of the women's rate being fixed high above the point for which production would be a maximum, or (β) its being " nibbled " by the employer. The former danger is probably, as things are, not very serious; the latter is much apprehended by experts. Altogether it would seem better to proceed on the lines of Mrs. Sidney Webb's " occupational rate," rather than on the plan recommended by the majority of the Committee. Instead of fixing two rates, ι and ι', let us fix (for the defined unit of work) a single rate for men and women alike, say ι'', less than ι, which would have

been the rate in the absence of "secondary" differences. The readjustment will result in a redistribution of male and female work. The men would back out of occupations in which previously it had been worth their while to take part; the employment of women would be correspondingly extended. The process may be illustrated by an incident which Mr. and Mrs. Webb have recorded. The reduction of a farthing in the pay for a dozen of stockings resulted in that branch of the industry being deserted by the men and occupied by the women (*Industrial Democracy*, II. p. 502). If the reduction from ι to ι'' was inconsiderable, the consequences to the consuming public would be negligible upon the principle above explained (8). Otherwise a great drop from ι to ι'', by greatly increasing the number of women in the industry, might have as bad an effect on production as fixing a women's rate, ι', too near ι, the men's rate, so as, by greatly increasing the number of men in the industry, to incur the danger above labelled α.

15. The specious arrangement by which secondary differences may be masked through the adoption of a uniform rate is not applicable to another kind of difference between the work of the sexes which occurs in the case of some personal services. The vexed question of schoolmasters' pay illustrates this "tertiary" difference, as it may be called. If teaching were an art as mechanical as turning a prayer-wheel, then (apart from secondary differences) it would be unreasonable that men should be paid more than women for the same operation. But supposing that the presence and influence of a master, say in dealing with the bigger boys, is something different from that of a mistress, and that it is considered indispensable,[1] it is not unreasonable (in a régime of pure economics) that the desired article should be purchased at the market price. The market price of a master is higher if he comes from a class between our M and Z (14), for which the average is higher than a corresponding class of women between A and F. His higher pay is quite consistent with the finding of the teachers above cited (2), that "the work of women, taking the schools as a whole . . . is not less zealously

[1] On the payment of school-teachers, Mrs. Sidney Webb, in the course of her interesting articles on the right of the woman to free entry into all occupations, in the *New Statesman* (July–August 1914), states that "educationists think there are already too few men on the teaching staff." In this connection it is well said by Mrs. Webb: "Sex, like youth or middle age, is a peculiar characteristic which sometimes qualifies and sometimes disqualifies persons for particular tasks." The need of men teachers for boys, and other relevant considerations, are forcibly stated in the booklet, *Equal Pay and the Teaching Problem*, issued by the London Schoolmasters' Association.

and efficiently done than that of men." They might, indeed, be more diligent and in most branches of education better teachers than men. A steel knife is a more useful implement for general purposes than a silver blade. But if silver is required to preserve the flavour of dessert, the epicure must pay for the metal which has the greater value in exchange. A good cab-horse may, for all that I know, draw a vehicle as well as a high-stepping thoroughbred. But if for purposes of state and show the high-paced animal is required, high prices must be paid for the high paces. The distinction, it will be noticed, turns upon the nature and presence of the horse. If for the carriage of parcels one kind of horse was as efficient as the other, then, indeed, a carrier who charged a higher price for the delivery of parcels because he employed a particular breed of horse could only maintain this differential charge through a, presumably noxious, monopoly. That is the difference between the case of the schoolmistress and the case of the Mrs. Jones, whose grievance is recorded by Mrs. Fawcett. Mrs. John Jones during the illness of her husband passed off her own work as his to the firm of outfitters which employed him to braid tunics. " When, however, it became quite clear, John Jones being dead and buried, that it could not be his work . . . the price paid for it by the firm was immediately reduced to two-thirds of the price paid when it was supposed to be her husband's " ! (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1918, p. 1). Here, in the absence of tertiary (and presumably also secondary) differences, the differentiation of price was certainly contrary to the principle of equal pay for equal work.

On behalf of the schoolmistresses it may still be urged that the market price of male work is artificially raised by inequitable laws and customs. To this the Teachers' Committee might reply that if the time in this respect is out of joint, they were not created to set it right. But it is here questioned whether the time is so much out of joint. It has been submitted that the average earnings of male labour (*m* .. *z*) would probably be higher than the female average (*a* .. *f*), even if there had been introduced the most perfect freedom of competition that is thinkable in the present state of things (12). If so, the higher pay of masters for similar work does not violate the rule of equal pay for equal work in the first, purely economic, sense of the rule (2). The unequal pay for equal effort does violate the rule in the second, utilitarian or hedonic, sense. In fact, the instance is well suited to bring into view the essential difference between the two definitions of the formula. The Socialist who

aims at a closer approximation of pay to efforts and needs naturally does not acquiesce in the present arrangements (cp. Report on Women in Industry, Cmd. 135: Minority Report by Mrs. Sidney Webb, ch. ii. §§ 12, 6). But these considerations lie outside pure economics, and must be postponed to our sequel.

16. II. The presumption in favour of free competition and the methods of putting it in practice require to be reconsidered when we restore the abstracted circumstances of family life. We now encounter the dominant fact that men very generally out of their earnings support a wife and family. " It is normal for men to marry and to have to support families. . . . It is not normal for women to have to support dependants " (Seebohm Rowntree, *Human Needs*, p. 115). These words express a very general belief and sentiment. It is a norm accepted throughout the civilised world. It is embodied in the Australian determinations of minimum wage, one of which, by Judge Higgins, has been above cited (12). Another Australian Judge rules: " the man, and not the woman, is typically the breadwinner of the family " (*South Australian Industrial Reports*, Vol. II. 1918–19). Justice Jethro Brown grounds an award on " the traditional social structure which imposes on men the duty of maintaining the household." So Professor Taussig, " For a man wages must normally be enough to enable a family to be supported and reared. The great majority of working women are not in this case " (*Principles*, ch. 47, s. 9, vol. ii. p. 144). It cannot be supposed that these authoritative expressions of belief have no correspondence with reality. Indeed, the wiser and more moderate advocates of equal pay for women admit it to be " unlikely that any large proportion of married women will aim at earning their own living as the norm or standard " (Miss B. L. Hutchins, *Conflicting Ideals*, p. 63). Few would agree with the authoress of *A Sane* (sic) *Feminism*, that " domestic morality and feminine dignity make it essential for the married woman of to-morrow to be independent of her husband's income, and therefore normally dependent on some occupation outside the home . . . a work to be continued throughout married life, with occasional lapses incidental to child-bearing " (pp. 111, 113). Even Mill admits that " in an otherwise just state of things it is not . . . a desirable custom that the wife should contribute by her labour to the income of the family . . . the actual exercise in a habitual or systematic manner of outdoor occupations, or such as cannot be carried on at home, would . . . be practically interdicted to the greater number of married

women " (*Subjection of Women*, pp. 88–89). Does it not follow that the husband must support the family, so far as he is not assisted by contributions from adult children or the occasional—not " systematic "—work of the wife ?

17. It has been sought to evade this stubborn fact by the contention that the occupied single woman is responsible for the support of as many dependants as the man. On the strength of an investigation conducted by the Fabian Research Committee it is maintained that " two-thirds of the wage-earning women are not only entirely self-supporting, but have others to maintain besides themselves." But grave doubts are thrown upon these figures by the more elaborate investigation which Mr. Seebohm Rowntree has recently conducted. He finds from an extensive observation of samples that " only 12·06 per cent. of women have either partially or entirely to support others beside themselves " (*Responsibility of Women Workers*, p. 36). If we except the cases due to the death of " the normal breadwinner "—admittedly requiring special treatment—the proportion is reduced to 4·12 per cent. The figure would not be serious even if it proved on further inquiry to be somewhat greater. For the figure has not the same significance as that which relates to the dependants of the male wage-earners. The sustentation of the old and infirm cannot be compared, as regards at least economic importance, with the support of the young, the cost of which normally falls on the male breadwinner. The world got on tolerably before the institution of Old Age Pensions; but it could not have got on at all without the support of young children by their fathers.

18. If the bulk of working men support families, and the bulk of working women do not, it seems not unreasonable that the men should have some advantage in the labour market. Equal pay for equal work, when one party is subject to unequal deductions from his pay, no longer appears quite equitable. But it can hardly be expected that the representatives of female interests should look at this question from the masculine point of view. The ladies who have shown this unusual degree of sense and sympathy are entitled to a very attentive hearing. Miss B. L. Hutchins, in her *Conflict of Ideals*, has discerned with remarkable insight the antithesis between the traditional *status* of the husband and father, expected to support a family, and the modern régime of *contract* tending to universal competition. Miss Hutchins does not see her way to ending the conflict: " it is almost impossible to make any logical scheme or theory that will fit

the woman and the young child exactly into a commercially organised society based on exchange values" (*loc. cit.*, p. 69). Miss Eleanor Rathbone, equally discerning the difficulty, is more confident about the solution. She proposes a scheme which has certainly the merit of being logical, the endowment of motherhood, as set forth in her article on the "Remuneration of Women's Services" in the ECONOMIC JOURNAL for 1917. The plan deserves consideration here as a step towards that freedom of competition which has been prescribed. The plan may also be advocated as conducing to advantages less purely economic than those now considered. When those other advantages come to be thrown into the scale, the weight of the economic arguments which I now attempt to estimate will still be relevant.

As text of the plan to be examined we may take the pamphlet entitled *Equal Pay and the Family*, the report of the Family Endowment Committee formed in 1917 at the suggestion of Miss Rathbone. With this pronouncement should be placed the proposal independently made by Mrs. Sidney Webb in her evidence before the War Committee (1919, Cmd. 135). The bright and clear *résumé* of the arguments given by Mrs. Stocks in the booklet entitled *The Meaning of Family Endowment* is also to be considered.

The purpose of the scheme may be summarised in the words of the Endowment Report: to secure "that *within each class of income* the man with a family should not be in a worse position financially because he has a family than the single man *in that class*." For the partial attainment of this purpose, allowances for children being paid only for six years, there would be required an annual grant of £154,000,000. For the fuller realisation of the plan, continuing allowances for children up to the age of fifteen, the cost would be £240,000,000 (*loc. cit.*, p. 44). "Something like 250 millions sterling annually" is the estimate of Mrs. Sidney Webb (*loc. cit.*, p. 307).

Let us separately consider, firstly the advantages, secondly the disadvantages, which this plan presents, and, thirdly, whether there is any alternative course by which much of the good result with little of the evil may be obtained.

19. i. One main advantage is thus stated in the Endowment Report: "When the national endowment of mothers and children becomes an accomplished fact this excuse for the under-payment of women (that men have families to keep) will no longer hold good, and women will be free to claim—and men to concede to

them—whatever position in industry their faculties fit them for, at a wage based on the work they do, and not on their supposed necessities" (p. 18). The endowment "would do away with the present involuntary blacklegging of men by women, by depriving employers of their one really plausible, if not actually valid, excuse for paying women less than the standard rates; so putting the competition between the sexes for the first time on a basis which is at once free and fair." The endowment would certainly facilitate the adoption of that free and fair competition which has been above recommended (9). But that recommendation presupposed that there had been ruled out a sort of competition which is described by some high authorities as not free, which is at any rate generally regarded as deleterious. That tendency to the degradation of labour is, as above explained (4), aggravated by the competition of women. Now the endowment of motherhood would not suffice to remove this danger. The transitory and episodical character of female labour would still threaten male wages. It may be objected that men, freed from the obligation of supporting a family, would no longer have a reason for not competing *à l'outrance* with equally free women. They might not have any reason; but they would surely long retain the habit, the "social custom" as it has been called, engendered by their traditional position as at least potential heads of families. In short, the proposed endowment would not remove all the difficulties attending competition between the sexes, but only those attending the ordered competition for which alone I venture to prescribe (Class B above). How large an endowment would be required to counteract the consequences of removing the restrictions on female competition? A measure is afforded by the extent to which male wages would be depressed. We need only, then, consider how much male wages are likely to be diminished by the liberated competition of women. In making this estimate we have to take into account the elasticity of labour, the probability that the greater supply of work will be met by a corresponding demand for work.[1] We have to take into account also the probability above suggested (12), that the demand for goods in the production of which men's labour plays a great part greatly exceeds, and will continue to exceed (13), the corresponding demand for women's work. When these two circumstances are taken into account it may be doubted whether

[1] See Pigou, *Wealth and Welfare*, pp. 88–89, 321 *et seq.*; and *Economics of Welfare*, Book V. ch. iii. s. 8, where reference is made to the present writer's statement of the proposition as a postulate implied in the theory of free trade. *Cp.* ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1905, p. 195, note.

any great reduction of male wages would follow on the improvements suggested—better training of women, hours and appliances suited to their requirements, in short every degree of freedom that does not evidently tend to the degradation of labour. A comparatively small endowment, then, might suffice to deprive men of a reason for objecting to free competition. The excuse, indeed, without the reason might remain. And no doubt the more completely the burden of supporting a family is taken off the shoulders of men, the more effectually will the excuse be stopped. But a reason more specious than stopping an excuse may be advanced in favour of a large endowment. If we are about making an endowment, why confine ourselves to the one advantage of smoothing the way for free competition? Let us take the opportunity of securing a second advantage.

ii. The second advantage is the possibility of distributing the resources available for the nurture of children in such wise that the requirements of the larger families may be met more adequately than on the present system. This advantage is thus forcibly stated by Mrs. Sidney Webb: "In the actual course of Nature the distribution of children among households varying from none to a dozen or more; the number who are simultaneously dependent on their parents varying from one to more than half-a-dozen; and the time in each family over which this burden of dependent children extends, varying from a year or two to ten times that period—bear, none of them, any relation to the industrial efficiency either of the father or of the mother; or to the wage that either of them, or both of them, could obtain through individual bargaining by the higgling of the market; or yet to any actual or conceivable occupational or standard rates to be secured by them, either by collective bargaining or legislative enactment" (Report of the War Committee [Cmd. 135], p. 306). By a children's allowance payable to the mothers in all the households of the United Kingdom it may be secured that "adequate provision is made for children not by statistical averages, but case by case." This second advantage, as well as the first, would certainly be considerable, if it were unmixed.

20. I will now enumerate some disadvantages; in no particular order, seeing that the relative importance of the objections will not be the same for different mentalities.

i. The administration of enormous sums will require a corresponding multiplication of officials; an increase of that bureaucratic routine which tends to deaden individual initiative.

ii. The raising, too, of enormous sums, with the view of improving distribution, is attended with danger. It requires the subtlety of a Pigou to devise transferences from the richer to the poorer classes which shall not have the effect of curtailing the national dividend (cp. *Economics of Welfare*, Pt. V. ch. ix. ss. 7, 8). But there is reason to apprehend that no such subtlety would be exercised in the case before us. The Endowment Committee touch lightly the question of finance. They mention as an alternative to income-tax a levy of so much per cent. on all incomes, including those of the class not paying income tax. But is it likely that this method will be employed? Mrs. Sidney Webb thinks it better that the children's fund should be "provided from the Exchequer (that is to say, by taxation, like any other obligation of the community" (*loc. cit.*, p. 309). No doubt a stiffly graduated income-tax would play a great part in the formation of the fund. Much of the popularity which the scheme enjoys in labour circles is probably due to the prospect of transferring hundreds of millions from the income-tax-paying classes to the families of working-people. The imposition of an enormous additional burden on the former class would surely tend to check saving.

iii. The scheme would resemble the quality of mercy in having an effect both on him that gives and him that takes. But the resemblance would end there. The effect on the contributor will be depressing; but the effect on the recipient is likely to be more seriously deleterious. It does not require much knowledge of human nature to justify the apprehension that in relieving the average house-father from the necessity of providing necessaries for his family you would remove a great part of his incentive to work. There is doubtless much exaggeration in evidence which has been given to the effect that when wives earn, husbands idle. Yet there is probably an element of truth in the saying which is thus reported by one of our most experienced lady-inspectors, "I almost agree with the social worker who said that if the husband got out of work the only thing that the wife should do is to sit down and cry, because if she did anything else he would remain out of work" (Report on Home-Work, 46, Question 1027, cp. 1024–5). A gratuitous allowance to the mother would have an effect in this direction at least as great as her earnings have. A homely truth is expressed by Rudyard Kipling with his usual vigour when he describes how the workmen, at the Congress convened by "Imperial Rescript," received the invitation to adopt Socialistic

motives: "To ease the strong of their burden, and help the weak at their need." The English delegate replies, "I work for the kids and the missus;" and the workers of all countries join in declaring: "We will work for ourselves and a woman for ever and ever. Amen." I owe this quotation to Mrs. Fawcett, who has used it with effect in the course of a powerful protest against a scheme similar to that now under consideration, proposed by a member of the Endowment Committee (ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1907, pp. 377–8).

It may be urged that similar objections were made to Old Age Pensions, which yet have proved a success. But the motives affected by pensions given to parents were not exactly the same as those now considered; the very mainspring of industry was not equally touched. Nor was the measure so tremendous a step in the dark. The initial cost of Old Age Pensions was but a twentieth part, and the present cost is but a tenth part, of the colossal sum demanded for the endowment of motherhood.

iv. It will be gathered from the two preceding objections that the proposed scheme is likely to result in a diminution of the provisions at Nature's feast, to use a Malthusian metaphor. It is now to be added that the number of guests will probably be increased. There will be a serious stimulus to population. Now the pressure of population on resources may not be very alarming in this country at present. But it is tenable that as regards this danger we are only enjoying a reprieve, "an age of economic grace" (cp. Marshall, ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1907, p. 10). Is it wise to commit the country to a system which may prove unsuitable, yet unalterable?

v. The increase of population might be welcomed if it consisted of the higher types. But in the current proposals one sees no security for the improvement of the race. It is not suggested that Governments might use for this purpose the power which they will acquire as distributors of a bounty. Rather it is to be apprehended that the least desirable classes, say Charles Booth's Class A and Class B, will be encouraged to increase and multiply. It is argued, indeed, that the better class of artisans will be encouraged to keep up their good stock; while the undesirable class are already so improvident that no stimulus could add to their recklessness. But these arguments, based on a calculation of motives, seem precarious in view of the enormous risk involved. There are degrees of improvidence; there must be many who are not so improvident but that they may be made more so by encouragement. The endowment of

parents in these classes at the expense of the income-tax-paying classes may realise the gloomiest anticipations of Dean Inge. The effect be " to penalise and sterilise those who pay the doles "; to precipitate the ruin of the great middle class, to which England owes so much (*Edinburgh Review*, April 1919).

21. Let us now consider some alternative arrangements which make for the advantages and avoid the dangers which have been described.

Some arrangements calculated to render the freedom of competition more acceptable follow automatically from that liberation; for the removal of restrictions on the work of women is calculated to increase their efficiency, and an increase in their efficiency will be attended, *ceteris paribus*, with an increase in their contributions to their families.

i. The burden of the family borne by its head does not increase in proportion to the number of children; for some contribution towards family expenses is often made by the elder children. It appears from an investigation recently made by Professor Bowley that in rather more than a third of the households which he examined there were " earning children." It is presumable that they contributed something over and above their keep to the maintenance of the family (cp. Bowley, *Livelihood and Poverty*, p. 31). The family would be losers pecuniarily by the removal of these children. Many of these members would be daughters, by hypothesis in the future more efficient than at present.

ii. Where the number of the children is small, may not some contribution often be expected from the wife? Will it not be possible to arrange piece-work, or more generally precisely definable operations (12), adapted to suit women who can only work a few hours a day? It may be hoped that in the future the only alternatives open to married working women will not be a whole day's work away from home, or work in a home made intolerable by the conditions of home work (as strikingly described by Mr. and Mrs. Webb, for instance, in *Industrial Democracy*, p. 541). Something better may be expected from the progress both of physical and of economic science. Leroy-Beaulieu, who is sanguine as to this resource, characteristically hopes much from science and nothing from legislation.

iii. Leroy-Beaulieu also hopes for the contribution to a prospective family made by spinsters who expect to be married. " The girl accumulating a *dot* by work in the factory, in order

to remain at home as a married woman and bring up her family in comfort (*dans de bonnes conditions*)—this is the only real and practicable progress" (*La femme ouvrière . . .*, p. 425). Mr. Cadbury's observations on the ways of the factory girl do not encourage us to hope much from this resource in this country at present. "Only in very few cases are they (savings) accumulated in readiness for a marriage outfit" (*Women's Work and Wages*, p. 244 and context). But we may suppose an improvement in economic character as well as conditions.

iv. A more obvious compensation to men for the loss of wages—not, like the preceding, indirectly resulting from the circumstance which occasions that loss—would be afforded by an extension of the allowance now made in furtherance of education. They should be in *kind;* regard being had to Mill's principle that what Government may provide with most propriety is the commodities which people would not have spontaneously demanded (*Political Economy*, V. xi. 8).

These compensations may suffice to meet the male objection to removing restrictions on female competition.

For the further object of equalising the application of resources to the nurture of children within each grade a further extension of the last-named allowances (21, iv.) may be risked. But they should be guarded against the dangers objected to the endowment scheme (20, ii., iii. and iv.). Are those dangers sufficiently guarded against by Miss M. E. Bulkley when, in a work prefaced approvingly by Mr. R. H. Tawney, she recommends the provision of a free meal for all schoolchildren (*Feeding the Schoolchildren*, pp. 223–6)? The cost would be £12,500,000 a year. That is for one meal, dinner. But of course breakfast would often be required (p. 228).

v. A plan for equalising the burden of dependent children would be especially serviceable in the case when the family is larger than the average. That case might be met by the comparatively modest subsidy proposed by Mr. Seebohm Rowntree (*Human Needs*). He estimates that the allowance necessary to secure physical efficiency "in case of more than three dependent children" would come to only £8,000,000 (if only families with incomes below a certain figure are to be subsidised).

Here may be the place to observe that Mr. Rowntree's proposal to treat widows with dependent children more generously than at present is not nearly so open to the objections above enumerated as the endowment of motherhood in general.

vi. Some further suggestions may be obtained from the

schemes now under consideration in Australia.[1] It is proposed to levy on every employer a tax of so much per employee, and from the proceeds to form a fund which is to be distributed among mothers according to the size (perhaps also the needs) of the family. The proposal—like that of the Endowment Committee—probably owes its chance of being accepted partly to the belief that the cost of the plan will not fall on those who are benefited by the plan, but on the employer, or the capitalist, or that supposed independent and abundant resource, the State.

But if equality of provision for children within each class is sincerely desired—without the *arrière pensée* of equalising the incomes of different classes—a simpler plan is suggested. It is open to any association of men—a trades union, for example—to resolve that each member of the association should contribute a quota of his earnings towards the formation of a fund which is to be distributed among the wives of members in accordance with the size of their families. This plan would be much less open to the objections above enumerated than the endowment of motherhood by the State. It would not disturb the labour market or the financial system. It would not require legislation. Persuasion would suffice. Those who believe that such equalisation is desirable, and that there is a chance of its being accepted, should start a campaign of argument and exhortation. Bachelors and childless husbands should be persuaded to support a fund by which they may hope one day themselves to benefit as future fathers of families.

22. To sum up; equal pay for equal work, in the sense of free competition between the sexes, has been advocated, with some reservations and adjustments. Desperate disordered competition, tending to the degradation of labour, is supposed to be excluded. There are suggested compensations to families for the loss sustained by the male breadwinner through the increased competition of women. Among such compensations the endowment of motherhood on a large scale by the State is not included. The advantages weighed are economic in a strict sense. The balance may be affected when welfare or well-being in a wider sense is taken into account. F. Y. EDGEWORTH.

[1] The origin and features of the Australian plans for the endowment of children are described in the ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 1921, by Professor Heaton. (See also Miss Eleanor Rathbone's description of the South Australian scheme in that Journal, 1922)