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Men and Women

By PEARL BUCK

A friend recently called my attention to Pearl Buck's "Men and Women," for which I am more than grateful. She has my hearty endorsement on "I would like to make it compulsory reading and wish that I could see that it was digested as well." This is not meant to be a book review. The excerpts given are merely to convince you that you cannot afford to miss this book.

"Men baby women because they think women want it, and women baby men because they think men want it, and in all this mutual babying it is forgotten that men and women are not babies but adult human beings who can find happiness only in the full use of their developed energies."

"Man seldom helps woman. Yet it has suddenly become urgent that he do so, for unless he does he will lose woman altogether in the slave she will become and has become if democracy changes overnight into fascism. If American men value democracy, let them look not only to fifth columnists and pro-Nazi sympathizers. A greater threat to democracy than these lies in the way men think about women, in their ignorance of her true female nature, in their carelessness of her development, in their contempt for her great abilities, in their ignorance of her much-needed and now almost entirely lacking influence in the affairs of nation and world, an influence which if it were there would supply the balance which we have not now. Until woman contributes her share to all of life we shall not find the balance between men and women which will conserve life and improve life conditions. Only this balance can provide the true foundations for peace. We shall have no peace until men and women work together outside as well as inside the home, not because either is superior to the other, but because life is designed on such balance that evil results when the balance of the sexes is lost. It is not meaningless that the dictators have risen in countries where women became subject."

* * *

"But woman in America is different; she has had liberty given her in a way peculiarly unfortunate. She was given it with too much else one day on a Christmas tree. It

was handed to her tied up in red ribbons among many other beribboned gifts. Some of those gifts were courtesy and deference and all the mixed candies and fruits of chivalry which have bred in her an incurable taste for sweets. She was given a halo, too, to wear in her hair to make her look like an angel, and that she found so becoming she has never been willing to put it aside. She was given a blue ribbon for being the best mother, and a prize for being the best cook and even a trip somewhere for being the best average woman. In a handsome leather-bound volume she was given the right to an education, and she was given a ticket to anywhere. She could come and go as she liked. She was given so many privileges that who can blame her if she overlooked the fact that a certain plain diamond, not set in anything, just a solitary hard pure diamond, was not there? But it was worth everything else put together. It was real equality with man in marriage and work.

"She has begun to notice the lack now, for without that one thing she can make full use of nothing, not even of her liberty. For what is the use of courtesy that will not allow her to grow to her full powers if it interferes with man's place in work and government, and what is the use of having an education if it cannot be used to fulfill its purpose but must be kept as a toy for dilettantism? What is the use of being the best mother in a contest if she cannot be the best woman she is able to be? Why have liberty at all when she has nowhere to go? But, having been handed all the sweets of liberty, she is surfeited and has no taste for bread and butter, that solid plain fare of work and responsibility which, had she had to labor for it as Chinese women did, would have satisfied and fed her and made the sweets sweeter."

Be Yourself

Whatever you are from nature, keep to it; never desert your own line of talent. Be what nature intended you for, and you will succeed; be anything else and you will be ten thousand times worse than nothing.

—Sydney Smith