

## THE CRY OF THE WOMEN\*

Is the heading of a comment by Elizabeth Bisland in *The North American Review*, for June, 1894, which opens with the following remarkable sentence:—"In the name of common sense—demands the bewildered reader of the detail of recent books written by the gentler sex—what is the matter with the women? Their voices are all bitter with unsatisfied longing, yet one can distinguish no definite demand. What do they seek? What provokes such outcries as 'The Heavenly Twins,' 'Keynotes,' 'A Superfluous Woman,' 'A Yellow Aster,' 'The Woman who Dares,' and their like? They are all stormy with revolt, against—*what?*" The writer then tells us that "literature has its birth in the current thoughts and needs of a people," and declares that the greediness with which these books are seized upon by the feminine reading public proves that they express the mental condition of the woman of to-day. Certainly there is a dreadful cry, and the fathers of state look aghast, and literary men scribble and scribble, and close each sentence with the question, "Where will it all end?"

But the feminine reading public is divided into two classes, a class which reads the books referred to, and a class which does not; therefore is shown the mental condition of but a part of our reading women. Meanwhile other women have no time to quarrel with the present condition of things, no time to read "The Heavenly Twins," and "A Yellow Aster." For the world is flooded with books that tell of bright and beautiful things, and also of sorrowful conditions to be ameliorated. The sweet measures of healthful music deaden the bitter outcries of the day; nature and art are working hand in hand to make our beautiful earth a restored Eden; whole-souled, pure-minded, God-honoring writers in prose and in verse, of both the past and the present, throw back the lie into the teeth of the malcontents; happy homes are made; more girls are born to follow the footsteps of happy mothers; God is as kind as ever; man is kinder than ever, and the world is being brought to Christ by the Christian woman of to-day!

Oh! woman of popular literature, hush your clamor and turn to Christ! That is what you want. You are not misunderstood; you are not down-trodden; but you are without hope, because you are without God in the world. When God and good works come into a woman's life, bitterness goes out; and she who leaves the directing of her life to Him who noeth even the sparrow's fall, will have no need of the assistance of any would-be emancipator. Emancipation from what? God's plan is perfect; even the woes of maternity are drowned in the ocean of a mother's love and joy. I would rather be a Christian woman, with a woman's joys and sorrows, with a woman's opportunities, possibilities and responsibili-

ties, with a woman's sympathies, and with a woman's honor, than be the mightiest and best man in the whole world.

But there is the cry of the women which must be heeded, a keen, piercing, bitter cry; a cry and a call; and the call comes to you and to me to-day, "Come—over and help us. We are lost, lost, lost for time and for eternity. There is no light in our life; gladness and hope are unknown to us. Degradation, toil, unrelieved suffering, unhallowed bereavement, a loveless life and a hopeless death are ours. Girlhood is a disgrace, widowhood is slavery, motherhood is unmitigated sorrow and bitterness; the past is a regret, the present is a pang, the future is darkness and dread. Come and help us, and come to-day."

That is the awful cry that is borne to us by every breeze that blows; that strikes to the heart as we sit in our homes hour after hour with the piece of fancy work that is to brighten our already attractive parlors; as we draw our chairs closer to the fire in the cool of the October evening and hum, low to ourselves, "Love's Old Sweet Song"; as we greet in the market-places our friends laden with the rich gifts of God; at morning, at noon, and at night comes the cry. Just now as we sit in these seats, secure and happy, with our hearts all but bursting with love and gratitude, just now comes the cry, "Come over and help us." Who dare turn a deaf ear? Dare you? Dare you? By the blood that flowed for our dark Indian sisters, I entreat you to awaken to a consciousness of your responsibility in this matter. The years are passing swiftly as clouds of summer. I see before me those whose hands I clasped in the old school days, in the early Maytime of life, and when we measure the time by its joys and sorrows, we lose the count of years. But what have we done since we thus met? Oh! for a million lives to be lived all for India: Will not some one in this hour register a holy vow of consecration to benighted India? Lives are ready to be consecrated, to be sacrificed if necessary, but where is the gold to build the altar? O my sisters, what do you mean? How are you going to look into the face of the Holy One and say, "Lord, I did my best," while upon your redeemed soul lies the weight of a lost Indian sister, and, perhaps, of a big bank account? May God help us all, that no dreadful charge be laid to us when the end comes.

But we are met to-night to say farewell to two of our number whom God has honored, and who find sacrifice sweet for Jesus. One, indeed, is doubly honored. After a long day of toil, she has been permitted to enjoy the rest of home and the companionship of loved ones, and now the wise and loving Father, as if in approval of her devotion and toil, is sending her back to the work which He sees she only can do. Is this not double honor? It is both choice and commendation; it is a smile of approval, a line of light flashed from the Throne,

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