LIPPINCOTT'S FAMILY LIFE SERIES
EDITED BY BENJAMIN R. ANDREWS, PH.D., TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THE FAMILY AND ITS MEMBERS

BY

ANNA GARLIN SPENCER

SPECIAL LECTURER IN SOCIAL SCIENCE, TEACHERS COLLEGE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, FORMERLY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK, SPECIAL LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN AND HACKLEY PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AND ETHICS AT MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL; AUTHOR OF WOMAN'S SHARE IN SOCIAL CULTURE

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TO THE MOTHERS AND FATHERS, IN NUMBER BEYOND COUNT, WHOSE COURAGE, LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS CARRY ONWARD THE GENERATIONS AND KEEP THE MAIN CURRENTS OF LIFE STRONG AND WHOLESOME.

INTRODUCTION

A Threefold Aim.—This book is based upon three theses—namely, first, that the monogamic, private, family is a priceless inheritance from the past and should be preserved; second, that in order to preserve it many of its inherited customs and mechanisms must be modified to suit new social demands; and third, that present day experimentation and idealistic effort already indicate certain tendencies of change in the family order which promise needed adjustment to ends of highest social value.

Many learned books have been written concerning the evolution of sex, the history of matrimonial institutions and the development of the family. This volume is not an attempted rival of any of these. The work of Havelock Ellis, of Le Tourneau, of Otis T. Mason, of Geddes and Thompson, and others building upon the foundations laid by the great pioneers in the study of the family, constitute a sufficient mine of historical information and scientific analysis and evaluation. The studies and suggestions of Olive Schreiner, Mrs. Clews Parsons, Mrs. Helen Bosanquet, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ellen Key and others indicate the tendency of modern inquiry into the just basis of the family order. The work of Professors Howard, Giddings, Thomas, Ross, Goodsell, Calhoun, Patten, Dealey, Cooley, Ellwood, Todd and others in college fields, shows the importance of the family and the necessity of giving all that concerns it the most serious attention.

This book aims to begin where many of these students leave off and to turn specific attention to the problems of personal and ethical decision which now face men and women who would make their own married life and parenthood successful. The past experience of the race is drawn upon only in so far as it seems to explain present conditions and point the way to future social and personal achievements.

Basic Principles Underlying All Socially Useful Changes.—A fundamental principle in democracy is the right and duty of

every human being to develop a strong, noble and distinctive individuality. For such development it is necessary that a person be self-supporting, free of despotic control by others, and able and willing to bear equal part with every other human being in the social order to which he or she belongs.

This implies that no human being should be wholly sacrificed in personal development to the service or welfare of any other human being, or group of human beings, either inside or outside the family circle. On the other hand, after temporary excursions into an extreme individualism that ordained a free-for-all competition in every walk of life, society is now keenly alive to the need for control of personal desire and individual activity within channels of social usefulness. It is beginning to be clearly seen that society has a right to demand from any person or class of persons that form of community service which definitely inheres in the social function which is assumed by, or which devolves upon, such person or class of persons. In the old days of "status," when each and every person found himself in a place set for him and from which he could not depart, there was only the duty of being content and useful in the "sphere of life to which he was called." In the new condition of "contract," in which each and every person in a democratic community finds himself at liberty to use all common opportunities in the interest of his own achievement, there is the duty of choice along every avenue of purpose and of activity. This gives the new double call to the intelligence and conscience; the call to become the best personality one can make of oneself and the call to serve the common life to ends of social well-being.

The Sense of Kind and the Sense of Difference.—Doctor Giddings declares in fine summary "we may conceive of society as any plural number of sentient creatures more or less continuously subjected to common stimuli, to differing stimuli and to inter-stimulation, and responding thereto in like behaviour, concerted activity or coöperation, as well as in unlike or competitive activity; and becoming, therefore, with developing intelligence, coherent through a dominating consciousness of kind while always sufficiently conscious of difference to insure a measure of individual liberty." Democracy tends to enlarge the area of those who, while

conscious of kind that unites, are also keen in desire to develop in liberty any natural difference which can make their personality felt as distinctive or powerful. The individual differences among women were wholly ignored in the past. They were never in reality all alike, as they were commonly thought to be. The usual designation of a subject class lumps all together as if all were the same. It is the mark of emergence from the mass to the class, and from the class to the individual, that more and more defines differences between persons. Women have now, for the first time in the civilization called Christian, arrived at a point in which differences between members of their sex can claim social recognition. They are, therefore, now called upon as never before to balance by conscious effort the personal desire and the social claim. The family, more than any other inherited institution, feels the oscillations between the individual demand for personal achievement and the response to the social need for large service within group relationships which now, for the first time, stir in the consciousness of average women.

The Family as We Know It Is the Central Nursery of Character.—The inevitable outcome of the new freedom, education and economic opportunity of women gives us the problem of the modern family. The ideal of the democracy we are trying to achieve is higher personality in all the mass of the people. The method of democracy so far as we can see is education, perfected and universalized, by which all the children of each generation may be developed physically, mentally, morally, and vocationally to their utmost excellence and power. The family, as we have inherited it, is so far the central nursery and school in this development. So far in the history of the race or in its present social manifestation no rival institution, even the formal school, offers an adequate substitute for the family in this beginning of the educative process. The intimate and vital care and nurture of the individual life still depends for the mass of the people upon the private, monogamic, family. This intimate and vital care of the children of each generation has so far in human experience cost women large expenditure of time and strength; so large expenditure that personal achievement has been wholly and is even now

largely subordinated to the social service implied in home-making. The deepest problems of the modern family inhere in the effort to adjust the new freedom of women, and its new demands for individual development in customary lines of vocational work, to the ancient family claim. New adjustments are called for not only in the family itself but in all the educational, political, economic, and social arrangements of life to accommodate this new demand of women to be achieving persons whether married or single. Women have entered, as newly emerging from status to contract, into a man-made social organization, a man-made school, a man-made industrial order, and a man-made state. Achievement, individual and successful, means to most of them, as to any newly enfranchised class, the type of distinctive activity and accomplishment which their elder brothers have outlined. The antithesis, therefore, which now works toward acute problems in the minds of both men and women is between the sort of achievement which men have sought after and attained, and the sort of social service which the past conditions required of women. Slowly it is being perceived that in the actual family service, as it is now aided by social mechanisms surrounding the household, is place and economic opportunity for high personal achievement by competent women. Still more slowly is it being apprehended that in the new adjustments of economic and professional life there is or may be opportunity for married women and mothers to serve the family in high measure and also attain outside some distinctive vocational pride and satisfaction of craftsmanship. Most slowly of all is it being understood that the future calls for such modification of specialization in outside work that men and women alike may serve the generations in family devotion to the sort of work fathers and mothers have to do and yet cherish some personal and ideal vocational effort which may sweeten and enrich their lives.

Vital Changes in All the Basic Institutions of Society.—There are five basic institutions in modern social organization. They may be named the family, the school, the church, the industrial order, and the state. They have all come to us as parts of our social inheritance from time too remote to reckon. They have mingled and intermingled their tendencies of control and

influence in varieties of social functioning too numerous to mention. They are now emerging to distinctness only to be engaged in new forms of interaction that make the highest ideals of each and all seem fundamentally akin.

The main tendency of development in all these institutions is, however, identical and one clearly perceived. It is the tendency from status to contract, from fixed order to flexible adjustment, from static to dynamic condition, already noted in regard to the family.

In the school we have moved and are now moving from an aristocracy of command, by which ancient life was reproduced, to a democracy of comradeship in which it is aimed to make each generation improve upon its predecessor. In the church, as it has moved from the family ritual at the domestic fireside to the self-chosen altar of each worshipper in the world's cathedrals, the reactionaries have held on to "the faith once delivered to the saints" and the progressive minds have moved to some new prophecy of the truth and right; until to-day, as Professor Coe well says, "the aim of the modern church is to give education in the art of brotherhood," and to evoke "faith in a fatherly God and in a human destiny that outreaches all the accidents of our frailty." In the industrial order, still in the trial stage of conflict between the fixed status of the "hand" and the "master" and the contract of equal partners in a coöperative enterprise, the movement is steadily toward the social requirement of equality, justice, and good-will. In the state we have achieved mechanical expression of complete democracy. We still lack, and in our own country woefully lack, the "spirit within the wheels" that can move with power toward an actual government by the people, for the people, and truly of the people. Yet by fire and sword and through blood and suffering the handwriting of equality, justice, and fraternity has been set in our Constitutions and Bills of Right. What remains to be done is the socializing of the political mechanisms. That means simply that we shall learn to live our democracy and be no longer content to merely write it in law. The difficulty now is not so much to get a good statement of democratic right as to make it work effectively in common action. This fact makes it

of doubtful wisdom that men and women so often concentrate effort on the eighteenth-century doctrinaire position of appeal for Constitutional Amendments and blanket state legislation as if of themselves these could secure actual personal liberty and social welfare. The objection that some forward-looking persons have to the demand of the "National Woman's Party," so called, for a Federal Amendment that shall "abolish all sex discriminations in law" is not that its principle is too radical, but that its method is too antiquated.

The business of the present and the immediate future is to so adjust the family life to "two heads" as to keep love and to balance duties. The next job is to adjust the family order itself to a contract system of industry that gives each member of the family a free and often a separating access to daily work and to its return in wages or salary, in such manner as to retain family unity and mutual aid while giving freedom and opportunity for each of its members. The pressing political duty is to use the new voters, the women recently enfranchised, for needed emancipation from partisan and selfish political despotism in the interest of effective choices for the public good. The ever-growing demand of the school is for some translation of freedom of self-development in terms of respect for social order and in the spirit of social service. The family life, in the United States, at least, stands not so much in need of manifestoes of equality of rights between men and women as of delicate and discriminating adjustments of that equality to the social demands upon husbands and wives and upon fathers and mothers. This book aims to suggest some of the changes in external customs and inherited ways of living which may lead toward a firmer hold upon social idealism within the family, as well as within all other inherited institutions, while new bases of democratic freedom are being firmly installed.

Coveted Uses of the Book.—This volume is intended to meet the needs of college and teacher-training school students; of university extension classes; of study groups in Women's Clubs, Consumers' Leagues, Leagues of Women Voters and Church Classes. It is also hoped that it may form the basis for private study by groups within the home.

The book is written with a poignant sense of the breaking up of old social foundations in the agony and terror of the Great War. It is sent forth with a keen understanding of the spirit of youth that to-day challenges every inherited institution and ideal, even to the bone and marrow of the church, the state, the industrial order, the educative process, and even the family itself. It issues from an abiding faith that "above all things Truth beareth away the victory" and hence that no fearless inquiry can harm the essential values of life. It confesses a clear trust in "the Spirit that led us hither and is leading us onward." It would sound a call to hold all that has dowered the race at the sources of life sacred and of worth. It would echo all that bids us move onward to higher and better things.

The greatest ambition herein recorded is to serve as one who opens doors of insight into the House of the Interpreter.

—THE AUTHOR.

JANUARY, 1923.

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