

ents like to have a place. The capacity and obligation for prolonged gratitude and prolonged revenge—both only among equals—artfulness in retaliation, refinement of pleas in friendship, a certain necessity to have enemies (as outlets for the passions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance—in fact, in order to be a good friend): these are all typical characteristics of the noble morality, which, as we have indicated, is not the morality of “modern ideas”, and on that account is at present difficult to realise, and also difficult to unearth and disclose.

It is different with the second type of morality, Slave-morality. Supposing that the misused, the oppressed, the suffering, the enslaved, the weary and those uncertain of themselves should moralise, what will be the common element in their estimates of moral worth? Probably a pessimistic suspicion with regard to the whole situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man together with his situation. The slave contemplates with disapproval the virtues of the powerful; he has a thorough skepticism and distrust, a refinement of distrust, of everything “good” that is there honored; he would like to persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine. On the other hand, those qualities are brought into prominence and into the light which tend to alleviate the existence of sufferers; it is here that the kind helping hand, the warm heart, along with sympathy, patience, diligence, submissiveness and friendliness attain to honor; for these are the most useful qualities here, and almost the only expedients for supporting the burden of existence. Slave-morality is essentially the morality of utility. This is the seat of the origin of the celebrated antithesis “good” and “evil”; the notion of power and dangerousness is introduced into the evil, the ideas of dreadfulness, subtlety and strength, which do not admit of being despised. According to slave-morality, the “evil” man also excites fear; according to master-morality, it is precisely the “good” man who excites fear and seeks to excite it, while the “bad” man is regarded as the contemptible being. The contrast attains its maximum when, according to the logical consequences involved, a tinge of depreciation attaches itself to the “good” man of slave-morality; because in any case he has to be the safe man: he is good-natured, easily-deceived, perhaps a little stupid, *un bonhomme*. Wherever slave-morality gets the upper hand, language shows a tendency to approximate the significations of the words “good” and “stupid”.

A last fundamental distinction: the desire for *liberty*, the instinct for happiness, and the refinements of the feeling of freedom, belong as necessarily to the domain of slave-morals and slave morality, as enthusiasm and art in reverence and devotion are the regular symptoms of an aristocratic mode of thinking and valuing.

John Stuart Mill

Misogyny—hatred, or at any rate suspicion, of women—is at least as old as the Greeks who coined the term. Since history is written by the winners, lots of texts tell us why women should be mistrusted or scorned; few speak for them. We have encountered a few exceptions to this rule in earlier readings; but it was only in modern times that women and their supporters began to make their voices heard in public. The first truly influential personality to take sides for the emancipation of women was the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill.

More a romantic than a utilitarian, Mill met Harriet Taylor, a married woman, in 1831 and loved her constantly for twenty years until, in 1851, her husband's death enabled them to marry. Their union lasted only seven years, for Harriet died in 1858; but Mill attributed to her the inspiration for his ideals about individuals and society. Not least of his works is the essay on *The Subjection of Women*, which he wrote in 1861 and published in 1868. Mill was a founder of the first women's suffrage society, and his essay remains the classic nineteenth-century statement of the case for women's suffrage and equal rights.

From The Subjection of Women

The social subordination of women thus stands out an isolated fact in modern social institutions; a solitary breach of what has become their fundamental law; a single relic of an old world of thought and practice exploded in everything else, but retained in the one thing of most universal interest. . . .

The least that can be demanded is, that the question should not be considered as prejudged by existing fact and existing opinion, but open to discussion on its merits, as a question of justice and expediency; the decision on this, as on any of the other social arrangements of mankind, depending on what an enlightened estimate of tendencies and consequences may show to be most advantageous to humanity in general, without distinction of sex.

Neither does it avail anything to say that the *nature* of the two sexes adapts them to their present functions and position, and renders these appropriate to them. Standing on the ground of common sense and the constitution of the human mind, I deny that anyone knows, or can know, the nature of the two sexes, as long as they have only been seen in their present relation to one another. If men had ever been found in society without women, or women without men, or if there had been a society of men and women in which the women were not under the control of the men, something might have been positively known about the mental and moral differences which may be inherent in the nature of each. What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing—the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others. It may be asserted without scruple, that no other class of dependents have had their character so entirely distorted from its natural proportions by their relation with their masters; for, if conquered and slave races have been, in some respects, more forcibly repressed, whatever in them has not been crushed down by an iron heel has generally been let alone, and if left with any liberty of development it has developed itself according to its own laws; but in the case of women, a hot-house and stove cultivation has always been carried on of some of the capabilities of their nature, for the benefit and pleasure of their masters. Then, because certain products of the general vital force sprout luxuriantly and reach a great development in this heated atmosphere and under this active nurture and watering, while other shoots

From John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, 1869 (New York: F. Stokes Co., 1911), pp. 42–51, 54.

from the same root, which are left outside in the wintry air, with ice purposely heaped all round them, have a stunted growth, and some are burnt off with fire and disappear; men, with that inability to recognize their own work which distinguishes the unanalytic mind, indolently believe that the tree grows of itself in the way they have made it grow, and that it would die if one-half of it were not kept in a vapor-bath and the other half in the snow.

Of all difficulties which impede the progress of thought, and the formation of well-grounded opinions on life and social arrangements, the greatest is now the unspeakable ignorance and inattention of mankind in respect to the influences which form human character. Whatever any portion of the human species now are, or seem to be, such, it is supposed, they have a natural tendency to be: even when the most elementary knowledge of the circumstances in which they have been placed, clearly points out the causes that made them what they are.

. . . Because women, as is often said, care nothing about politics except their personalities, it is supposed that the general good is naturally less interesting to women than to men. History, which is now so much better understood than formerly, teaches another lesson: if only by showing the extraordinary susceptibility of human nature to external influences, and the extreme variableness of those of its manifestations which are supposed to be most universal and uniform. But in history, as in traveling, men usually see only what they already had in their own minds; and few learn much from history, who do not bring much with them to its study.

Hence, in regard to that most difficult question, what are the natural differences between the two sexes—a subject on which it is impossible in the present state of society to obtain complete and correct knowledge—while almost everybody dogmatizes upon it, almost all neglect and make light of the only means by which any partial insight can be obtained into it. This is, an analytic study of the most important department of psychology, the laws of the influence of circumstances on character. For, however great and apparently ineradicable the moral and intellectual differences between men and women might be, the evidence of there being natural differences could only be negative. Those only could be inferred to be natural which could not possibly be artificial—the residuum, after deducting every characteristic of either sex which can admit of being explained from education or external circumstances. The profoundest knowledge of the laws of the formation of character is indispensable to entitle anyone to affirm even that there is any difference, much more what the difference is, between the two sexes considered as moral and rational beings; and since no one, as yet, has that knowledge (for there is hardly any subject which, in proportion to its importance, has been so little studied), no one is thus far entitled to any positive opinion on the subject. . . .

Even the preliminary knowledge, what the differences between the sexes now are, apart from all questions as to how they are made what they are, is still in the crudest and most incomplete state. Medical practitioners and physiologists have ascertained, to some extent, the differences in bodily constitution; and this is an important element to the psychologist; but hardly any medical practitioner is a psychologist. Respecting the mental characteristics of women, their observations are of no more worth than

those of common men. It is a subject on which nothing final can be known, so long as those who alone can really know it, women themselves, have given but little testimony, and that little, mostly suborned. . . .

. . . We may safely assert that the knowledge which men can acquire of women, even as they have been and are, without reference to what they might be, is wretchedly imperfect and superficial, and always will be so, until women themselves have told all that they have to tell.

Suffragettes

The peaceful propaganda of suffrage advocates having proved ineffective, some English suffragists decided to try violence. Disorder and demonstrations incensed defenders of the status quo and crowds unsympathetic to "wild women." But propaganda by the deed continued until the outbreak of World War I in 1914. The war's much worse disorders were followed in 1918 by a law that enfranchised all English men over the age of twenty-one and English women over thirty.

The London Times: "The Militant 'Suffragettes'"

I. EXAMPLES OF SUFFRAGIST AND ANTI-SUFFRAGIST DISORDERS

Militant suffragists yesterday chose the two principal Roman Catholic places of worship for their acts of brawling. Several women were ejected from Brompton Oratory for interruptions at midday Mass. In the evening a woman ascended one of the pulpits at Westminster Cathedral and attempted to address the congregation.

A house at Tyler's-Green, near High Wycombe, was burned early on Saturday morning. The usual evidences of militant agency were found.

Disorderly demonstrations against the militants occurred at the usual open-air meetings in London.

A suffragist named Nancy Lightman, who was speaking in Hyde Park, was severely handled by a large and angry crowd. She was rescued by the police and taken along with a male sympathizer to the police station in the Park. Later in the day they were both released. A clergyman who was with her was also hustled by the crowd. Another militant suffragist who afterwards attempted to speak had to be rescued in the same manner.

The London Times (June 8, 27, 1914).

II. LORD CURZON ON THE MILITANT SUFFRAGISTS

Lord Curzon, speaking at the annual meeting of the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage yesterday afternoon, entered a strong protest against the criminal conduct of the militant suffragists.

He said that there could be no doubt that the anti-suffrage cause stood in a stronger position at present than it had done at any time during the past 20 years. That had been due perhaps in the main to the tactics and the errors of their opponents, but it had also been due in no small measure to their own activities. The phenomenon of the year had been the revival of militancy in its most outrageous and abominable forms. The efforts of these wild women had put back the cause which they advocated for at least a decade, if not longer, and they had shown how easily disturbed the mental balance of some women could be and how a perverted line of reasoning could render some women, at any rate, simultaneously indifferent to a sense both of honour and of shame.

The methods of the wild women suggested an evil possibility in the future, for they must not suppose for a moment that with the grant of the vote to one million or five or six million women militancy would necessarily cease. It would find fresh outlets of activity, perhaps even more sinister and more devastating than those with which they were now familiar. Anti-suffragists might be grateful for that warning of future danger, but there was not a thoughtful citizen in the country who did not deplore the continuance of those outrages. Little by little they were breaking down that sense of chivalry and respect which had hitherto existed like a shield to defend women from outrage and insult in the world.