

# **SEX ANTAGONISM**

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Sex antagonism by Walter Heape

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**WALTER HEAPE**

**SEX  
ANTAGONISM**



# SEX ANTAGONISM

BY

WALTER HEAPE, M.A., F.R.S. *9/10/13*

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to*

*IMOGENE*

*LIBRY OF  
CALIFORNIA*

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## SEX ANTAGONISM

## I

## INTRODUCTORY

THE condition of unrest which permeates society to-day is apparent to all thoughtful men and women in every civilised country. Discontent in one form or another is rife amongst us, and daily it becomes more evident that, in some instances, what has for long smouldered as a grievance cannot any longer be restrained from bursting out into active antagonism.

The origin of this universal unrest may be traced broadly to three sources, Racial antagonism, Class antagonism, and Sex antagonism. In every country one or other of these three forms of discontent is prominently exhibited. In our own country, partly because of our great possessions, the first is a cause for continual anxiety, though long experience is apt unduly to dull popular apprehension in that direction. The second has ever been common with us as it has been with all civilised peoples; the fact is generally recognised, and although drastic change in the relation of class to class seems once more imminent, changes of this kind are no new thing,

and we may have confidence that so long as the people of a country are patriotic, class readjustment is not necessarily a national evil but rather a sign of the vigour of a people. It is the exhibition of ignorant selfishness or gross brutality by a few individuals most directly concerned in some particular class battle, the incitement to violence preached by fanatics and charlatans, and a general tendency to disregard the law, which causes the timid to fear; but such phenomena are incident to all wars, and it is a class war we are experiencing.

The third cause of unrest is a very different matter. \*Sex antagonism is a family war, and as family strife leads to the most bitter of all quarrels so this war threatens to lead to enmity which may last for many years and work untold evil on the nation. For that reason it is, in my opinion, the most fateful of all the three forms of antagonism I have mentioned, and the inherent differences which exist in the character, sympathies, aims, and methods of the combatants cannot fail to lead to cruel misunderstandings and virulent recriminations which the moderate party on either side will find impossible to explain or restrain.

To most of us a sex war appears to be an entirely new experience. For fifty years we may have noted the gradual growth of opinions which have led to a more or less indefinite alteration in the tone of the sexes to each other; for the last twenty-five years

we may have recognised just cause for that alteration and some of the advantages to be derived from it; but of late we have been face to face with strife as selfish, as brutal, as bitter, and as unrestrained as that shown in any class war between men alone, and man's opinion of woman has been definitely modified—his attitude towards her as an integral component of society can never be the same again. Many older men view this fact as nothing less than a calamity; they are doubtless 'getting old.' It is possible however that future generations of women may derive benefit from a readjustment of sex relations. But in spite of the many reasons given by women for hope that such benefit will accrue, nay, for certainty that it will accrue somewhere along the line they have adopted if not at the end of it, those of us who are familiar with the working of natural law must find reason to doubt the soundness of the ground on which such confident belief is founded, and may even perhaps expect that this 'awakening of woman,' as it is called, will lead to a very different result from that anticipated by those who have sought to rouse her.

The differentiation of living matter into Male and Female was one of the earliest products of biological law, and the advent of the laws which govern and compel the functions of the Male and of the Female are comparatively but little subsequent in time to the first principles of life. Environment may influence the ease with which these functions may be discharged, but failure by either sex to discharge