

CHAPTER XI

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

Here is a very vicious circle. And how to get out of it? In the first place, we have to break the love-ideal, once and for all. Love, as we see, is not the only dynamic. Taking love in its greatest sense, and making it embrace every form of sympathy, every flow from the great sympathetic centers of the human body, still it is not the whole of the dynamic flow, it is only the one-half. There is always the other voluntary flow to reckon with, the intense motion of independence and singleness of self, the pride of isolation, and the profound fulfillment through power.

The very first thing of all to be recognized is the danger of idealism. It is the one besetting sin of the human race. It means the fall into automatism, mechanism, and nullity.

We know that life issues spontaneously at the great nodes of the psyche, the great nerve-centers. At first these are four only: then, after puberty, they become eight: later there may still be an extension of the dynamic consciousness, a further polarization. But eight is enough at the moment.

First at four, and then at eight dynamic centers of the human body,

the human nervous system, life starts spontaneously into being. The soul bursts day by day into fresh impulses, fresh desire, fresh purpose, at these our polar centers. And from these dynamic generative centers issue the vital currents which put us into connection with our object. We have really no will and no choice, in the first place. It is our soul which acts within us, day by day unfolding us according to our own nature.

From the objective circuits and from the subjective circuits which establish and fulfill themselves at the first four centers of consciousness we derive our first being, our child-being, and also our first mind, our child-mind. By the objective circuits we mean those circuits which are established between the self and some external object: mother, father, sister, cat, dog, bird, or even tree or plant, or even further still, some particular place, some particular inanimate object, a knife or a chair or a cap or a doll or a wooden horse. For we must insist that every object which really enters effectively into our lives does so by direct connection. If I love my mother, it is because there is established between me and her a direct, powerful circuit of vital magnetism, call it what you will, but a direct flow of dynamic vital interchange and intercourse. I will not call this vital flow a force, because it depends on the incomprehensible initiative and control of the individual soul or self. Force is that which is directed only from some universal will or law. Life is always individual, and therefore never controlled by one law, one God. And therefore, since the living really sway the

universe, even if unknowingly; therefore there is no one universal law, even for the physical forces. Because we insist that even the sun depends, for its heartbeat, its respiration, its pivotal motion, on the beating hearts of men and beast, on the dynamic of the soul-impulse in individual creatures. It is from the aggregate heartbeat of living individuals, of we know not how many or what sort of worlds, that the sun rests stable.

Which may be dismissed as metaphysics, although it is quite as valid or even as demonstrable as Newton's Law of Gravitation, which law still remains a law, even if not quite so absolute as heretofore.

But this is a digression. The argument is, that between an individual and any external object with which he has an affective connection, there exists a definite vital flow, as definite and concrete as the electric current whose polarized circuit sets our tram-cars running and our lamps shining, or our Marconi wires vibrating. Whether this object be human, or animal, or plant, or quite inanimate, there is still a circuit. My dog, my canary has a polarized connection with me. Nay, the very cells in the ash-tree I loved as a child had a dynamic vibratory connection with the nuclei in my own centers of primary consciousness. And further still, the boots I have worn are so saturated with my own magnetism, my own vital activity, that if anyone else wear them I feel it is a trespass, almost as if another man used my hand to knock away a fly. I doubt very much if a blood-hound, when it takes a scent, smells, in our sense of the word. It receives at

the infinitely sensitive telegraphic center of the dog's nostrils the vital vibration which remains in the inanimate object from the individual with whom the object was associated. I should like to know if a dog would trace a pair of quite new shoes which had merely been dragged at the end of a string. That is, does he follow the smell of the leather itself, or the vibration track of the individual whose vitality is communicated to the leather?

So, there is a definite vibratory rapport between a man and his surroundings, once he definitely gets into contact with these surroundings. Any particular locality, any house which has been lived in has a vibration, a transferred vitality of its own. This is either sympathetic or antipathetic to the succeeding individual in varying degree. But certain it is that the inhabitants who live at the foot of Etna will always have a certain pitch of life-vibration, antagonistic to the pitch of vibration even of a Palermitan, in some measure. And old houses are saturated with human presence, at last to a degree of indecency, unbearable. And tradition, in its most elemental sense, means the continuing of the same peculiar pitch of vital vibration.

Such is the objective dynamic flow between the psychic poles of the individual and the substance of the external object, animate or inanimate. The subjective dynamic flow is established between the four primary poles within the individual. Every dynamic connection begins from one or the other of the sympathetic centers: is, or should be, almost immediately polarized from the corresponding voluntary center.

Then a complete flow is set up, in one plane. But this always rouses the activity on the other, corresponding plane, more or less intense. There is a whole field of consciousness established, with positive polarity of the first plane, negative polarity of the second. Which being so, a whole fourfold field of dynamic consciousness now working within the individual, direct cognition takes place. The mind begins to know, and to strive to know.

The business of the mind is first and foremost the pure joy of knowing and comprehending the pure joy of consciousness. The second business is to act as medium, as interpreter, as agent between the individual and his object. The mind should not act as a director or controller of the spontaneous centers. These the soul alone must control: the soul being that forever unknowable reality which causes us to rise into being. There is continual conflict between the soul, which is forever sending forth incalculable impulses, and the psyche, which is conservative, and wishes to persist in its old motions, and the mind, which wishes to have "freedom," that is spasmodic, idea-driven control. Mind, and conservative psyche, and the incalculable soul, these three are a trinity of powers in every human being. But there is something even beyond these. It is the individual in his pure singleness, in his totality of consciousness, in his oneness of being: the Holy Ghost which is with us after our Pentecost, and which we may not deny. When I say to myself: "I am wrong," knowing with sudden insight that I am wrong, then this is the whole self speaking, the Holy Ghost. It is no piece of mental inference. It is not just the

soul sending forth a flash. It is my whole being speaking in one voice, soul and mind and psyche transfigured into oneness. This voice of my being I may never deny. When at last, in all my storms, my whole self speaks, then there is a pause. The soul collects itself into pure silence and isolation--perhaps after much pain. The mind suspends its knowledge, and waits. The psyche becomes strangely still. And then, after the pause, there is fresh beginning, a new life adjustment. Conscience is the being's consciousness, when the individual is conscious in toto, when he knows in full. It is something which includes and which far surpasses mental consciousness. Every man must live as far as he can by his own soul's conscience. But not according to any ideal. To submit the conscience to a creed, or an idea, or a tradition, or even an impulse, is our ruin.

To make the mind the absolute ruler is as good as making a Cook's tourist-interpreter a king and a god, because he can speak several languages, and make an Arab understand that an Englishman wants fish for supper. And to make an ideal a ruling principle is about as stupid as if a bunch of travelers should never cease giving each other and their dragoman sixpence, because the dragoman's main idea of virtue is the virtue of sixpence-giving. In the same way, we know we cannot live purely by impulse. Neither can we live solely by tradition. We must live by all three, ideal, impulse, and tradition, each in its hour. But the real guide is the pure conscience, the voice of the self in its wholeness, the Holy Ghost.

We have fallen now into the mistake of idealism. Man always falls into one of the three mistakes. In China, it is tradition. And in the South Seas, it seems to have been impulse. Ours is idealism. Each of the three modes is a true life-mode. But any one, alone or dominant, brings us to destruction. We must depend on the wholeness of our being, ultimately only on that, which is our Holy Ghost within us. Whereas, in an ideal of love and benevolence, we have tried to automatize ourselves into little love-engines always stoked with the sorrows or beauties of other people, so that we can get up steam of charity or righteous wrath. A great trick is to pour on the fire the oil of our indignation at somebody else's wickedness, and then, when we've got up steam like hell, back the engine and run bish! smash! against the belly of the offender. Because he said he didn't want to love any more, we hate him for evermore, and try to run over him, every bit of him, with our love-tanks. And all the time we yell at him: "Will you deny love, you villain? Will you?" And by the time he faintly squeaks, "I want to be loved! I want to be loved!" we have got so used to running over him with our love-tanks that we don't feel in a hurry to leave off.

"Sois mon frère, ou je te tue."

"Sois mon frère, ou je me tue."

There are the two parrot-threats of love, on which our loving centuries have run as on a pair of railway-lines. Excuse me if I want to get out of the train. Excuse me if I can't get up any love-steam

any more. My boilers are burst.

We have made a mistake, laying down love like the permanent way of a great emotional transport system. There we are, however, running on wheels on the lines of our love. And of course we have only two directions, forwards and backwards. "Onward, Christian soldiers, towards the great terminus where bottles of sterilized milk for the babies are delivered at the bedroom windows by noiseless aeroplanes each morn, where the science of dentistry is so perfect that teeth are planted in a man's mouth without his knowing it, where twilight sleep is so delicious that every woman longs for her next confinement, and where nobody ever has to do anything except turn a handle now and then in a spirit of universal love--" That is the forward direction of the English-speaking race. The Germans unwisely backed their engine. "We have a city of light. But instead of lying ahead it lies direct behind us. So reverse engines. Reverse engines, and away, away to our city, where the sterilized milk is delivered by noiseless aeroplanes, at the very precise minute when our great doctors of the Fatherland have diagnosed that it is good for you: where the teeth are not only so painlessly planted that they grow like living rock, but where their composition is such that the friction of eating stimulates the cells of the jaw-bone and develops the superman strength of will which makes us gods: and where not only is twilight sleep serene, but into the sleeper are inculcated the most useful and instructive dreams, calculated to perfect the character of the young citizen at this crucial period, and to enlighten permanently the mind of the happy

mother, with regard to her new duties towards her child and towards our great Fatherland--"

Here you see we are, on the railway, with New Jerusalem ahead, and New Jerusalem away behind us. But of course it was very wrong of the Germans to reverse their engines, and cause one long collision all along the line. Why should we go their way to the New Jerusalem, when of course they might so easily have kept on going our way. And now there's wreckage all along the line! But clear the way is our motto--or make the Germans clear it. Because get on we will.

Meanwhile we sit rather in the cold, waiting for the train to get a start. People keep on signaling with green lights and red lights. And it's all very bewildering.

As for me, I'm off. I'm damned if I'll be shunted along any more. And I'm thrice damned if I'll go another yard towards that sterilized New Jerusalem, either forwards or backwards. New Jerusalem may rot, if it waits for me. I'm not going.

So good-by! There we leave humanity, encamped in an appalling mess beside the railway-smash of love, sitting down, however, and having not a bad time, some of 'em, feeding themselves fat on the plunder: others, further down the line, with mouths green from eating grass. But all grossly, stupidly, automatically gabbling about getting the love-service running again, the trains booked for the New Jerusalem

well on the way once more. And occasionally a good engine gives a screech of love, and something seems to be about to happen. And sometimes there is enough steam to set the indignation-whistles whistling. But never any more will there be enough love-steam to get the system properly running. It is done.

Good-by, then! You may have laid your line from one end to the other of the infinite. But still there's plenty of hinterland. I'll go.

Good-by. Ach, it will be so nice to be alone: not to hear you, not to see you, not to smell you, humanity. I wish you no ill, but wisdom.

Good-by!

To be alone with one's own soul. Not to be alone without my own soul, mind you. But to be alone with one's own soul! This, and the joy of it, is the real goal of love. My own soul, and myself. Not my ego, my conceit of myself. But my very soul. To be at one in my own self. Not to be questing any more. Not to be yearning, seeking, hoping, desiring, aspiring. But to pause, and be alone.

And to have one's own "gentle spouse" by one's side, of course, to dig one in the ribs occasionally. Because really, being alone in peace means being two people together. Two people who can be silent together, and not conscious of one another outwardly. Me in my silence, she in hers, and the balance, the equilibrium, the pure circuit between us. With occasional lapses of course: digs in the ribs if one gets too vague or self-sufficient.

They say it is better to travel than to arrive. It's not been my experience, at least. The journey of love has been rather a lacerating, if well-worth-it, journey. But to come at last to a nice place under the trees, with your "amiable spouse" who has at last learned to hold her tongue and not to bother about rights and wrongs: her own particularly. And then to pitch a camp, and cook your rabbit, and eat him: and to possess your own soul in silence, and to feel all the clamor lapse. That is the best I know.

I think it is terrible to be young. The ecstasies and agonies of love, the agonies and ecstasies of fear and doubt and drop-by-drop fulfillment, realization. The awful process of human relationships, love and marital relationships especially. Because we all make a very, very bad start to-day, with our idea of love in our head, and our sex in our head as well. All the fight till one is bled of one's self-consciousness and sex-in-the-head. All the bitterness of the conflict with this devil of an amiable spouse, who has got herself so stuck in her own head. It is terrible to be young.--But one fights one's way through it, till one is cleaned: the self-consciousness and sex-idea burned out of one, cauterized out bit by bit, and the self whole again, and at last free.

The best thing I have known is the stillness of accomplished marriage, when one possesses one's own soul in silence, side by side with the amiable spouse, and has left off craving and raving and being only

half one's self. But I must say, I know a great deal more about the craving and raving and sore ribs, than about the accomplishment. And I must confess that I feel this self-same "accomplishment" of the fulfilled being is only a preparation for new responsibilities ahead, new unison in effort and conflict, the effort to make, with other men, a little new way into the future, and to break through the hedge of the many.

But--to your tents, my Israel. And to that precious baby you've left slumbering there. What I meant to say was, in each phase of life you have a great circuit of human relationship to establish and fulfill. In childhood, it is the circuit of family love, established at the first four consciousness centers, and gradually fulfilling itself, completing itself. At adolescence, the first circuit of family love should be completed, dynamically finished. And then, it falls into quiescence. After puberty, family love should fall quiescent in a child. The love never breaks. It continues static and basic, the basis of the emotional psyche, the foundation of the self. It is like the moon when the moon at last subsides into her eternal orbit, round the earth. She travels in her orbit so inevitably that she forgets, and becomes unaware. She only knits her brows over the earth's greater aberrations in space.

The circuit of parental love, once fulfilled, is not done away with, but only established into silence. The child is then free to establish the new connections, in which he surpasses his parents. And let us

repeat, parents should never try to establish adult relations, of sympathy or interest or anything else, between themselves and their children. The attempt to do so only deranges the deep primary circuit which is the dynamic basis of our living. It is a clambering upwards only by means of a broken foundation. Parents should remain parents, children children, for ever, and the great gulf preserved between the two. Honor thy father and thy mother should always be a leading commandment. But this can only take place when father and mother keep their true parental distances, dignity, reserve, and limitation. As soon as father and mother try to become the friends and companions of their children, they break the root of life, they rupture the deepest dynamic circuit of living, they derange the whole flow of life for themselves and their children.

For let us reiterate and reiterate: you cannot mingle and confuse the various modes of dynamic love. If you try, you produce horrors. You cannot plant the heart below the diaphragm or put an ocular eye in the navel. No more can you transfer parent love into friend love or adult love. Parent love is established at the great primary centers, where man is father and child, playmate and brother, but where he cannot be comrade or lover. Comrade and lover, this is the dynamic activity of the further centers, the second four centers. And these second four centers must be active in the parent, their intense circuit established even if not fulfilled, long before the child is born. The circuit of friendship, of personal companionship, of sexual love must needs be established before the child is begotten, or at least before

it attains to adolescence. These circuits of the extended field are already fully established in the parent before the centers of correspondence in the child are even formed. When therefore the four great centers of the extended consciousness arouses in a child, at adolescence, they must needs seek a strange complement, a foreign conjunction.

Not only is this the case, but the actual dynamic impulse of the new life which rouses at puberty is alien to the original dynamic flow. The new wave-length by no means corresponds. The new vibration by no means harmonizes. Force the two together, and you cause a terrible frictional excitement and jarring. It is this instinctive recognition of the different dynamic vibrations from different centers, in different modes, and in different directions of positive and negative, which lies at the base of savage taboo. After puberty, members of one family should be taboo to one another. There should be the most definite limits to the degree of contact. And mothers-in-law should be taboo to their daughters' husbands, and fathers-in-law to their sons' wives. We must again begin to learn the great laws of the first dynamic life-circuits. These laws we now make havoc of, and consequently we make havoc of our own soul, psyche, mind and health.

This book is written primarily concerning the child's consciousness. It is not intended to enter the field of the post-puberty consciousness. But yet, the dynamic relation of the child is established so directly with the physical and psychical soul of the

parent, that to get any inkling of dynamic child-consciousness we must understand something of parent-consciousness.

We assert that the parent-child love-mode excludes the possibility of the man-and-woman, or friend-and-friend love mode. We assert that the polarity of the first four poles is inconsistent with the polarity of the second four poles. Nay, between the two great fields is a certain dynamic opposition, resistance, even antipathy. So that in the natural course of life there is no possibility of confusing parent love and adult love.

But we are mental creatures, and with the explosive and mechanistic aid of ideas we can pervert the whole psyche. Only, however, in a destructive degree, not in a positive or constructive.

Let us return then. In the ordinary course of development, by the time that the child is born and grown to puberty the whole dynamic soul of the mother is engaged: first, with the children, and second, on the further, higher plane, with the husband, and with her own friends. So that when the child reaches adolescence it must inevitably cast abroad for connection.

But now let us remember the actual state of affairs to-day, when the poles are reversed between the sexes. The woman is now the responsible party, the law-giver, the culture-bearer. She is the conscious guide and director of the man. She bears his soul between her two hands. And

her sex is just a function or an instrument of power. This being so, the man is really the servant and the fount of emotion, love and otherwise.

Which is all very well, while the fun lasts. But like all perverted processes, it is exhaustive, and like the fun wears out. Leaving an exhaustion, and an irritation. Each looks on the other as a perverter of life. Almost invariably a married woman, as she passes the age of thirty, conceives a dislike, or a contempt of her husband, or a pity which is too near contempt. Particularly if he be a good husband, a true modern. And he, for his part, though just as jarred inside himself, resents only the fact that he is not loved as he ought to be.

Then starts a new game. The woman, even the most virtuous, looks abroad for new sympathy. She will have a new man-friend, if nothing more. But as a rule she has got something more. She has got her children.

A relation between mother and child to-day is practically never parental. It is personal--which means, it is critical and deliberate, and adult in provocation. The mother, in her new rôle of idealist and life-manager never, practically for one single moment, gives her child the unthinking response from the deep dynamic centers. No, she gives it what is good for it. She shoves milk in its mouth as the clock strikes, she shoves it to sleep when the milk is swallowed, and she shoves it ideally through baths and massage, promenades and practice,

till the little organism develops like a mushroom to stand on its own feet. Then she continues her ideal shoving of it through all the stages of an ideal up-bringing, she loves it as a chemist loves his test-tubes in which he analyzes his salts. The poor little object is his mother's ideal. But of her head she dictates his providential days, and by the force of her deliberate mentally-directed love-will she pushes him up into boyhood. The poor little devil never knows one moment when he is not encompassed by the beautiful, benevolent, idealistic, Botticelli-pure, and finally obscene love-will of the mother. Never, never one mouthful does he drink of the milk of human kindness: always the sterilized milk of human benevolence. There is no mother's milk to-day, save in tigers' udders, and in the udders of sea-whales. Our children drink a decoction of ideal love, at the breast.

Never for one moment, poor baby, the deep warm stream of love from the mother's bowels to his bowels. Never for one moment the dark proud recoil into rest, the soul's separation into deep, rich independence. Never this lovely rich forgetfulness, as a cat trots off and utterly forgets her kittens, utterly, richly forgets them, till suddenly, click, the dynamic circuit reverses itself in her, and she remembers, and rages round in a frenzy, shouting for her young.

Our miserable infants never know this joy and richness and pang of real maternal warmth. Our wonderful mothers never let us out of their minds for one single moment. Not for a second do they allow us to escape from

their ideal benevolence. Not one single breath does a baby draw, free from the imposition of the pure, unselfish, Botticelli-holy, detestable love-will of the mother. Always the will, the will, the love-will, the ideal will, directed from the ideal mind. Always this stone, this scorpion of maternal nourishment. Always this infernal self-conscious Madonna starving our living guts and bullying us to death with her love.

We have made the idea supplant both impulse and tradition. We have no spark of wholeness. And we live by an evil love-will. Alas, the great spontaneous mode is abrogated. There is no lovely great flux of vital sympathy, no rich rejoicing of pride into isolation and independence. There is no reverence for great traditions of parenthood. No, there is substitute for everything--life-substitute--just as we have butter-substitute, and meat-substitute, and sugar-substitute, and leather-substitute, and silk-substitute, so we have life-substitute. We have beastly benevolence, and foul good-will, and stinking charity, and poisonous ideals.

The poor modern brat, shoved horribly into life by an effort of will, and shoved up towards manhood by every appliance that can be applied to it, especially the appliance of the maternal will, it is really too pathetic to contemplate. The only thing that prevents us wringing our hands is the remembrance that the little devil will grow up and beget other similar little devils of his own, to invent more aeroplanes and hospitals and germ-killers and food-substitutes and poison gases. The problem of the future is a question of the strongest poison-gas. Which

is certainly a very sure way out of our vicious circle.

There is no way out of a vicious circle, of course, except breaking the circle. And since the mother-child relationship is to-day the viciouslest of circles, what are we to do? Just wait for the results of the poison-gas competition presumably.

Oh, ideal humanity, how detestable and despicable you are! And how you deserve your own poison-gases! How you deserve to perish in your own stink.

It is no use contemplating the development of the modern child, born out of the mental-conscious love-will, born to be another unit of self-conscious love-will: an ideal-born beastly little entity with a devil's own will of its own, benevolent, of course, and a Satan's own seraphic self-consciousness, like a beastly Botticelli brat.

Once we really consider this modern process of life and the love-will, we could throw the pen away, and spit, and say three cheers for the inventors of poison-gas. Is there not an American who is supposed to have invented a breath of heaven whereby, drop one pop-cornful in Hampstead, one in Brixton, one in East Ham, and one in Islington, and London is a Pompeii in five minutes! Or was the American only bragging? Because anyhow, whom has he experimented on? I read it in the newspaper, though. London a Pompeii in five minutes. Makes the gods look silly!