

usually has sexual affairs with one man at a time; her neurosis is usually based on sexual seduction in early childhood.

The second type is nearly the exact opposite of the psychic type of frigidity. I call her the all-mother type. She is a distinct anomaly. In the first place, she is definitely classifiable as sexually frigid; the degree of her erotic reaction is zero. She is totally anesthetic sexually.

Psychologically speaking, however, she exhibits almost the perfect picture of normalcy. She is happily married, is a very giving and altruistic person, and is totally loyal and devoted to her husband. She is, above all, a wonderful mother, willing and able to give the very best of herself to her children. Her husband is generally happy with his marriage. We suspect, although there is not sufficient data on this to say it with certainty, that the mate of the all-mother type has a rather low-pitched sexual nature and also a rather low storehouse of normal male vanity, albeit he is a good provider and a steady type. It is probable that the woman divined his characteristics unconsciously when she first fell in love with him.

There is generally little reason why the all-mother type of woman should seek to change herself in any way. I must emphasize the fact again and again that the reason frigidity presents a problem that must be solved is that it has harmful repercussions on the woman and on those close to her. It causes acute misery to her, causes personality damage to the children, and tends to destroy her marriage. The all-mother type of frigidity does none of these things, and I see no reason, if the woman doesn't, why she must contemplate changing herself. However, the matter can be a subtle one, for this type of woman can, without any awareness of the fact, tend to be overprotective of her children or tend to have a hard time letting them go from the nest when that period in their growth has arrived. She should be most careful, weigh this matter thoroughly, before she decides in any final sense whether her problem may or may not be having untoward effects of a concealed nature.

These, then, are some of the basic facts about the nature of frigidity. Let us now consider their implications.

## Chapter 5

# THE WAR BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

When one contrasts the normal woman with the frigid woman, certain questions come to mind at once. Why, for example, *do* certain women become frigid? Have millions of women always been this way, or is it a problem of our times only? Why, if *not* being frigid is so pleasant, do some women hold onto this problem though they know they can get help for it?

To answer these questions in part or in whole, you will first have to know a little history. For, though every case of frigidity represents a psychological problem in the individual, we have found that, sociologically speaking, frigidity is rooted in certain destructive events that have occurred to woman in the past two hundred years. If you grasp them you will begin to get a picture of the over-all problem that has beset woman, of how she lost her direction, her sense of self, and what she must do to find them again.

The history I am going to tell you about is the history of a war, a bitter and destructive war. It is often called "The War between Men and Women." For far too many women and men too—it is still going on.

It began toward the end of the eighteenth century, and the apparently innocent event that started it all was the invention of the steam engine by Watt—the great invention that ushered in the modern age. It seems hard to believe

now that this almost outdated means of creating power could have been so important, but it was. It launched the so-called Industrial Revolution, which was to change the whole fabric of society, our ways of doing things and making things, our living quarters and our living standards, our morals, religion, art; name it and you will find that the Industrial Revolution has turned it upside down and inside out.

Most of all, and most tragically, it changed the home. It would be more accurate, if somewhat bleaker, to say that it destroyed the home, at least as home was known up to that time.

But let me tell you what home was like before the Industrial Revolution, for when you see that you will begin to discern the outlines of the great tragedy that happened to woman when the old-fashioned family home ceased to exist.

In that era our society was almost entirely rural and agricultural. In other words, most homes were farms. There were cities and some industry, of course, but where industries existed they were almost entirely home industries run by individual families.

Home, then, was, almost without exception, the center of all life, economic, social, and educational. Everything was produced at home; all food was grown; suits and dresses and underclothing were made from cloth woven on the premises. There were simply no stores in which to buy anything. The leather for shoes was taken from the hides of animals one had reared oneself, and the shoes were made at home, the leather tanned, the shoes fashioned. A man made his own tools, was his own blacksmith, carpenter, architect. He built his own house, too, and kept it in repair.

Woman's place in this early family home was indisputably at the very center, an equal partner with her husband in all the manifold duties, responsibilities, joys, hopes, and fears of the entire household. Her work was heavy and constant; she cooked the food her husband had grown, wove the cloth, fashioned and made the clothes for the entire family. She cleaned and she swept, washed, and ironed from morning till night.

Children, as soon as they were old enough, lightened her labors. She was responsible for their education (public schools had never been heard of), which was not just a matter of teaching them the three R's but of inculcating in them all that she knew of the multitude of arts, crafts, and techniques it took to run such a home.

Her reward for all this was the fact that she was needed,

loved, held in the highest esteem by her husband and her whole family. If she failed in her duties or if she died, it would be not merely a sad or inconvenient event for the family. It would be a disaster, for the activities of the distaff side, although different from those of the male, were of equal importance.

There were of course no social scientists to ask her probing questions about her sex life, and we can only know about her indirectly and by piecing odd patches of information together wherever we may find them. From what we can gather, even the concept of frigidity in marriage was unknown to her; love, home, work were a unified and profoundly satisfying experience on all levels. As a woman she was profoundly needed, and as a woman reared to respond to this need she had no single occasion to question her worth or her abilities.

And then one by one, slowly but surely, her responsibilities and her duties were removed from her; her close and equal working relationship with her husband was destroyed; her importance to her children was diminished sadly.

The new machines made possible by Watt's harnessing of steam power began to take over, to displace all those things that had been done by hand. Transportation, via the new Iron Horse, developed, and trade between sections that were once remote from one another was made possible. A man could make more money than he had ever dreamed of if he could supply a need of some group or community.

And so industry in the sense that we know it today started with a rush. The principle of steam power was applied to the manufacture of goods with tremendous success. Factories sprang up, and they needed men to run them. Now husbands who but recently had worked at home, hand in hand and side by side with their wives, labored outside the home, developed lives that were independent to some extent of the home's activities and concerns.

The supply of manufactured goods from the factories began to render the homemaking skills and handicrafts of woman unnecessary. As time wore on and new ideas developed to meet the new conditions created by the machine, the education of the children passed from the home to a new institution, the public school.

It happened slowly, very slowly, over generations, in fact, and the full results of the Industrial Revolution were not felt until this century. At first, so gradual was the process that only a few women, scattered here and there, felt the impact of the change. But as time passed and the process

extended, more and more families were drawn into the vortex of industrialization, and at length it had changed the lives of every individual in the land.

Very slowly, too, but everywhere, women woke as if from a centuries-old dream of peace and happiness to find themselves dispossessed. Gone was their central place in the family home, gone their economic importance, gone their close working partnership with their mate, their functions of teacher and moral guide to the children. The child himself was gone, to school, as the husband had gone to the mill or factory.

Yes, she was dispossessed, dispossessed of all those things that for centuries had defined her womanhood for her, that had supported her ego, given her the certain knowledge that being a woman, however hard, was a wonderful and most desirable thing. She felt her womanhood itself devalued, the things it represented unwanted.

And then she reacted. She reacted violently and with rage at this depreciation of her feminine attributes, of her skills, of her functions. Unhappily this reaction was precisely the wrong one, the one from which no solution of a happy kind for her could be attained.

Here's what she did. Looking about, she thought she spied a villain in the piece. Who was it? None other than her partner through the centuries, man. It was he who had deserted her, who was responsible for her loss of self-respect as a woman, a mother, an equal socially and mentally and morally. He despised women. Very well, she would show him. She would simply stop being a woman. She would enter the lists and compete with him on his own level. To hell with being a woman. She would be a man.

You don't believe it? It seems too farfetched? Woman as a sex would never have made such a decision?

Well, let's look a little more closely at some of the facts.

Earlier I mentioned the feminist movement. Now it is time to look at it in more detail. It was launched by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792, less than thirty years after the invention of the steam engine that ushered in the Industrial Revolution, and its power and influence were and still are enormous. It has been the self-appointed spokesman for womankind for over one hundred fifty years, and its program of reforms has been almost entirely realized in every detail.

What did this movement want to achieve? Let me quote to you what two profound students of feminism, Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, had to say about it in

their book *Modern Women, The Lost Sex*: "Far from being a movement," they wrote, "for the greater self-realization of women, as it professed to be, feminism was the very negation of femaleness. Although hostile to men and hostile to children, it was at bottom most hostile to women. It bade women commit suicide as women and attempt to live as men . . . Psychologically, feminism had a single objective: the achievement of maleness by the female, or the nearest possible approach to it. In so far as it was attained, it spelled only vast individual suffering for men as well as women, and much public disorder."

What was the program of the feminists? Actually Mary Wollstonecraft had enunciated it in its entirety in her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and the movement never deviated from her original demands. She had stated that men and women were, in all fundamental characteristics, identical, and that therefore women should receive the same education as men, be governed by the same moral standards, do the same work, and have identical political rights and duties. Women were to be treated exactly as men in every detail of living, and the same demands were to be made on them.

The appeal of this program was enormous. Nineteenth-century woman felt: "Ah, if we could only achieve *this*, then we would be happy once again." The fact—and it's a dreadfully simple one—is that now, indeed, the entire program has been realized and modern woman, having reaped the benefits of it in full, is more confused, perhaps even unhappier, than ever.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that woman's lot was not difficult, often impossible, in the nineteenth century. Nor am I saying that all of the goals set by the feminists were neurotic and wrong-headed. The movement indeed helped to overcome some of the gravest dislocations in social and economic life caused by the upheavals that followed in the wake of the Industrial Revolution.

I *am* saying this: that in so far as the feminist movement pitted itself against the male, and at the same time advised woman to masculinize herself or divest herself of her feminine nature, it was dreadfully neurotic, and we have been reaping the whirlwind this movement started ever since.

The rage of the feminist was directed against herself. We know, for example, that to fulfill herself biologically—that is, to give birth to children—a woman must have security, the protection of the male, a permanent abode. Marriage has been society's answer to this feminine need

from time immemorial. But the feminists pitted themselves against the institution of marriage. Woman, they held, had the right, even as men did, to be promiscuous sexually, to live with whom she pleased, for as long or as short a time as she pleased. If she wished to get married she should be able to do so, but she should also have the privilege of terminating this marriage when she wished to, when she tired of it.

We know, too, that maternal love for children, particularly love of her own children, is one of the major traits of womankind, as typical of her as her female anatomy. We know that only the very sickest women, mentally, will desert or neglect their children. Maternity is so deeply rooted in the biology of the female sex that its fierce protectiveness can be observed in many animals.

Maternity is a trap, said the feminists in effect, a bill of goods sold to women by men in order to keep them enslaved. Children should not be allowed in any way to interfere with the new freedom of women. Work, advised the feminists, right up to the last day of pregnancy. Then, mothers, get back to work as soon as possible. Put your child in the hands of some trained child handler or handlers. Public nurseries were advocated, pre-kindergarten groups were advocated; anything that "freed" the mother was advocated.

Freed the mother for what? you may well ask. To work in offices and factories as the men did, of course. To substitute boss for husband, to share the "privilege" of being hired or fired; to be, in short, men.

If space allowed I could continue with a long and circumstantial list of masculine goals which the feminists advocated. And I could give an equally long list of goals which ignored or denied the existence of feminine characteristics in womankind. Very few of the early feminists actually lived in the manner they prescribed. But it was as clear as crystal that they ardently desired to.

But here is the important thing to remember: The feminist credo thoroughly discredited truly feminine needs and characteristics and substituted male goals for female goals. There weren't so many feminists in actual numbers, but those there were, were incredibly vocal, and in the end their ideals and beliefs became the ideals and beliefs of millions of women.

But the feminist front was not the only front in this war between men and women; it was only the loudest and most militant. Unnoted, hidden, unknown even to the women

themselves, the war against feminine sexuality, against the flowering of true womanhood, was being waged in every home in the land. The chaste and prim-lipped heroine of this front was Victorian woman, whom we already have had a look at. Let's take another quick one.

Her reaction to the loss of her position in the highly creative family home which had preceded the Industrial Revolution was just as violent as that of the feminist. But it was thoroughly unconscious. She had been rejected, her place taken from her, her sexual and maternal functions devalued. Very well. She had a perfectly good technique for dealing with the situation.

She simply denied the very existence of female sexuality. Sex, according to her, was exclusively a male characteristic; woman had none of it in her nature. Although this was a form of psychological revenge on the "rejecting" male, she was amazingly successful in convincing men in general, even the scientists of the day, that frigidity was indeed a basic attribute of the female.

Victorian woman was, of course, unconscious of her motives in affirming that she was biologically frigid. She entirely believed it herself, and there is much evidence to indicate that the individual woman was generally deeply shocked if she discovered she was not as unresponsive as she had been taught she was or wished to be. She kept any such reactions a very dark secret indeed.

Frigidity as an article of female faith died with the Victorian woman—a happy and mercifully early death during World War I. But the influence of Victorianism is still very much with us in our unconscious attitude toward sex and love.

This, then, is the heritage of woman today: On the one hand, from Victorian woman, a profound belief that she is and should be non-sexual, frigid, by natural law. On the other hand, from the feminists, that man is woman's natural enemy, that she should drop her femininity altogether, oppose man, supersede him, become him.

Please stop for a moment now to think what effect either of these two attitudes must have had on the marital life of a woman who held one of them. Her hostility to her husband and all the misery such hatred implies, we take for granted. But it was the effect on the children that was decisive.

I have treated, as I have told you, several women who had been raised by Victorian or feminist mothers. The attitudes inculcated into these patients in their childhood would make one's hair stand on end. Or it should. This is



what they learned at their mother's knee: Shame about their bodies; shame about menstruation, and disgust with it, hatred of it, for it is a hallmark of womanhood; fear of pregnancy and childbirth; punishment for early and natural sexual feelings and experimentation; destruction and depreciation of the father as an ideal image for the child to love or to emulate. In general, women learned early and well to loathe their womanhood in all of its important manifestations.

Can you begin to see why most psychiatrists passionately agree with Dr. Marynia Farnham when she writes: "The most precise expression of unhappiness is neurosis. The bases for most of this unhappiness . . . are laid in the childhood home. The principal instrument of their creation are women."

You may perhaps have noticed that I have coupled our feminist with our Victorian woman, and you may object that they really shouldn't be spoken of in the same breath. The feminists were, after all, for more and more sexual freedom; Victorian woman was anti-sexual. I feel that that is only superficially true. They were both, in their unconscious lives, against feminine sexuality. It is not possible for woman to be masculine sexually; to advocate that for her is exactly equal to demanding that she be frigid.

Of course feminism, as a conscious attitude toward sexuality, ultimately triumphed over Victorianism. Sexual freedom and all the other equal rights with men demanded for women by the feminists after World War I became the order of the day.

The flapper of the 1920's represented the unintended flower of the feminist philosophy of life, its definition of what constituted womanhood. As we know, the flapper was a caricature of woman, a cheap and shoddy imitation of the opposite sex, a second-class man. Happily, she did not survive as a conscious national ideal, but the philosophy that created her *did* survive. The depreciation of the goals of femininity, biological and psychological, became part and parcel of the education of millions of American girls. Homemaking, childbearing and rearing, cooking, the virtues of patience, lovingness, givingness in marriage have been systematically devalued. The life of male achievement has been substituted for the life of female achievement.

The feminist-Victorian antagonism toward men has survived too. It has been handed down from mother to daughter in an unbroken line for so many years now that, to millions of women, hostility toward the opposite sex seems almost a natural law. Though many a modern woman may

pay lip service to the ideal of a passionate and productive marriage to a man, underneath she deeply resents her role, conceives of the male as fundamentally hostile to her, as an exploiter of her. She wishes in her deepest heart, and often without the slightest awareness of the fact, to supplant him, to exchange roles with him. She learned this attitude at her mother's knee or imbibed it with her formula. Little that she learns elsewhere counteracts it with any great effectiveness.

Clearly, then, if this is the historical direction women have taken, the individual woman who wishes to become a real woman must change this direction. This she can do only by taking thought, long thought. For among the women around her she will not necessarily find too much support for her wish to be entirely feminine.

For one hundred fifty years now women have blamed their problems on the outside world. They have used the very real difficulties created by revolutionary social changes to avoid the task of looking within for the real problem and the real solution. They have indulged in an orgy of finger-pointing and self-pity.

If the results had been different, if this attitude had brought them happiness and fulfillment, if feminism and Victorianism had made them good mothers and joyful wives, or even pleased them with their new place in industry, the game might have been worth the candle. But it hasn't been. The game has brought frigidity and restlessness and a soaring divorce rate, neurosis, homosexuality, juvenile delinquency—all that results when the woman in *any* society deserts her true function.

Last year a woman came to see me at the request of a lawyer she had consulted. She was on the verge of divorce, she told me. And then, her face distorted with rage, she said of her husband: "He will have to come crawling to me on his hands and knees before I will even think of forgiving him."

I questioned her and soon elicited the fact that she had been totally frigid from the first time she had had intercourse with her husband. Yet consciously she felt blameless in the difficulties that had arisen, self-righteous, indignant that her husband should find her anything but eminently desirable after five years of joyless love-making. With such an attitude, of course, she could never have made the slightest headway against her underlying problem, so, as I sometimes do, I told her in detail the history I have told you in this chapter. She listened, at first with hostility and

then with the growing shock of self-recognition. Just by listening she developed a genuine concern for the very first time about her whole attitude. She left that session with an avowed intent to look more deeply and more thoroughly into the whole matter and to reshape her values. There was no more talk of divorce from her; just hard work on her real problem, and success, finally, in dislodging the cause of it.

Seeing one's own responsibility in a situation is often difficult. However, in this problem of frigidity, not to take the blame is even more difficult. It means—and has meant for millions—that one almost literally commits sexual suicide, embraces emotional isolationism as the proper condition for womankind.

## *Chapter 6*

# WHY WOMEN CAN BECOME FRIGID

Some time ago a young husband sat in my office. His wife had come to me for help for a frigidity problem, and after the first session he had asked her if he might see me. I take that to be a good omen for a relationship, generally, and I was not disappointed when I met him. He told me very quickly that he did not care how long it might take for his wife to get over her difficulty. "I'd stay with her even if she didn't," he said in a low voice. "I don't love her problem, but I love her and I want you to know that I didn't marry her for better only but for worse as well."

No matter how much a psychiatrist hears about love, its difficulties and its triumphs, a statement like that always moves one, makes one feel that tasks and difficulties have been somehow lightened. In short, I liked him, and this moved me to ask him about himself. "That's what I came to tell you about," he said. "There's something I thought just may be of some help."

What he wanted to tell me was the amazing similarity between his background and his wife's, and as he talked on I could see some of the reasons for his broad sympathy with her problem. They were both children of farm people and had been reared in the strictest of Puritan disciplines. They were both the oldest children, and each had had two brothers and a sister. Their mothers had hated and feared sexuality and had communicated quite freely to the children their feeling that it was dirty and wicked. The fathers had