

a momentary delight to the depraved male, a lasting insult to his mind and soul, a pollution from which her little son must be snatched.

The meaning of this clearly is that women must think less of babies and more of—everything else. It is an odd doctrine to preach at a time when the birth-rate is either stagnant or falling, when women and men are shirking the responsibility of children, and when already women *are* busying themselves more than ever they did with books and sport and travel and mountaineering and public questions, when countesses run hat shops and market gardens for gentlewomen, and when, fostered by women, handloom weaving and domestic spinning are taking a new lease of life in the villages and smaller towns.

Have women really changed their shape in this way and to the extent that Mr. O'Reilly would have as believe. Doubtless feet are smaller in the civilised woman and the civilised man as well. But one generation gets back to big enough feet if they are used. If the biologist wants big feet there are postmen, policemen, and milk and bread carriers who should satisfy the most exacting biological standard.

If woman has changed her organic structure it is for reason good. Surely Mr. O'Reilly does not wish to see women cease their reproductive functions altogether, and the proper adjustment for child-bearing is as desirable for the bearing of one child as for the bearing of ten. But the real truth is that woman bears children with more labour and pain than ever she did. So far being over-specialised for the maternal function she is less so than the wild animals, the barbarian woman, or even than her own grandmother. The use of instruments and anaesthetics in obstetric practice is increasing, and breast-feeding is much less common among delicately nurtured women than among their hard-working sisters. Mr. O'Reilly has got the facts the wrong way round.

The civilised woman is not so sexually specialised as the less evolved woman. Any work on ethnographical sociology—Letourneau's or Reclus's, for instance—shows the savage and the barbarian woman to be very gross, and mostly devoid of the feeling of genescic shame. Genescic modesty is a modern product, and even at that is confined to civilised countries, though on this head Japan would have to be ruled out, since prostitution there is accounted no disgrace, and mixed bathing in a state of complete nudity is common. The conversation of savage and barbarian women is said by Letourneau to be grossly indecent, and old women take delight in initiating girls into the lewdest practices.

So that Mr. O'Reilly, in representing women as sexually over-developed, and as going from bad to worse, is as wrong as wrong can be; and the reviewers who have lauded this book as a brilliant and convincing apologia for the Feminists who want to make woman over again, need nothing so much as a dash of common knowledge and a touch of ordinary perception and sense.

Genescic impulse would really seem to be waning in both sexes, though the decreasing birth-rate and marriage-rate is no certain guide, and if