

***EDWARD
CARPENTER***



***THE DRAMA
OF LOVE AND
DEATH: A STUDY
OF HUMAN
EVOLUTION AND
TRANSFIGURATION***

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The Drama of Love and Death: A Study of Human Evolution and Transfiguration

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

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Love and Death move through this world of ours like things apart—underrunning it truly, and everywhere present, yet seeming to belong to some other mode of existence. When Death comes, breaking into the circle of our friends, words fail us, our mental machinery ceases to operate, all our little stores of wit and wisdom, our maxims, our mottoes, accumulated from daily experience, evaporate and are of no avail. These things do not seem to touch or illuminate in any effective way the strange vast Presence whose wings darken the world for us. And with Love, though in an opposite sense, it is the same. Words are of no use, all our philosophy fails—whether to account for the pain, or to fortify against the glamour, or to describe the glory of the experience.

These figures, Love and Death, move through the world, like closest friends indeed, never far separate, and together dominating it in a kind of triumphant superiority; and yet like bitterest enemies, dogging each other's footsteps, undoing each other's work, fighting for the bodies and souls of mankind.

Is it possible that at length and after ages we may attain to liberate ourselves from their overlordship—to dominate *them* and make them our ministers and attendants? Can we wrest them from their seeming tyranny over the human

race, and from their hostility to each other? Can we persuade them to lay aside their disguise and appear to us for what they no doubt are—even the angels and messengers of a new order of existence?

It is a great and difficult enterprise. Yet it is one, I think, which we of this generation cannot avoid. We can no longer turn our faces away from Death, and make as if we did not perceive his presence or hear his challenge. This age, which is learning to look the facts of Nature steadily in the face, and see *through* them, must also learn to face this ultimate fact and look through it. And it will surely—and perhaps only—be by allying ourselves to Love that we shall be able to do so—that we shall succeed in our endeavor.

For after all it is not in the main on account of ourselves that we cherish a grudge against the 'common enemy' and dispute his authority, but for the sake of those we love. For ourselves we may be indifferent or acquiescent; but somehow for those others, for those divine ones who have taken our hearts into their keeping, we resent the idea that *they* can perish. We refuse to entertain the thought. Love in some mysterious way forbids the fear of death. Whether it be Siegfried who tramples the flaming, circle underfoot, or the Prince of Heaven who breaks his way through the enchanted thicket, or Orpheus who reaches his Eurydice even in the jaws of hell, or Hercules who wrestles with the lord of the underworld for Alcestis—the ancient instinct of mankind has declared in no uncertain tone that in this last encounter Love must vanquish.

It is in the name, then, of one of these gods that we challenge the other. And yet not without gratitude to both.

For it is Azrael's invasion of our world, it is his challenge to *us*, that (perhaps more than anything else) rivets our loyalty to each other. It is his frown that wakes friendship in human souls and causes them to tighten the bonds of mutual devotion. In some strange way these two, though seeming enemies, play into each other's hands; each holds the secret of the other, and between them they conceal a kindred life and some common intimate relation. We feel this in our inmost intuitions; we perceive it in our daily survey of human affairs; and we find it illustrated (as I shall presently point out) in general biology and the life-histories of the most primitive cells. The theme, in fact, of the interplay of Love and Death will run like a thread-motive through this book—not without some illumination, as I would hope, cast by each upon the other, and by both upon our human destiny.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNINGS OF LOVE

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As I have just suggested, the great human problems of Love and Death are strangely and remarkably illustrated in the most primitive forms of life; and I shall consequently make no apology for detaining the reader for a few moments over modern investigations into the subjects of cell-growth, reproduction and death. If this chapter is a little technical and complex in places, still it may be worth while delaying over it, and granting it some patient consideration, on account of the curious light the study throws on the rest of the book and the general questions therein discussed.

Love seems to be primarily (and perhaps ultimately) an interchange of essences. The Protozoa—those earliest cells, the progenitors of the whole animal and vegetable kingdom—grow by feeding on the minute particles which they find in the fluid surrounding them. The growth continues, till ultimately, reaching the limit of convenient size, a cell divides into two or more portions; and so reproduces itself. The descendant cells or portions so thrown off are simply continuations, by division, of the life of the original or parent cell—so that it has not unfrequently been said that, in a sense, these Protozoa are immortal, since their life continues indefinitely (with branching but without break) from generation to generation. This form of reproduction by simple budding or division extends even up into the higher types of life, where it is sometimes found side by side with

the later sexual form of reproduction, as in the case of so-called *parthenogenesis* among insects. It is indeed a kind of virgin-birth; and is well illustrated in the vegetable world by the budding of bulbs, or by the fact that a twig torn from a shrub and placed in the ground will commonly grow and continue the life of the parent plant; or in the lower stages of the animal world, where, among many of the worms, insects, sponges, &c., the life may similarly be continued by division, or by the extrusion of a bud or an egg, without any sex-contact or sex-action whatever.

This seems in fact to be the original and primitive form of generation; and it obviously depends upon *growth*. Generation is the superfluity, the ὑβρις, of growth, and connects itself in the first instance with the satisfaction of hunger. First hunger, then growth, then reproduction by division or budding. And this process may go on apparently for many generations without change—in the case of certain Protozoa even to hundreds of generations. But a time comes when the growth-power and energy decay, and the vitality diminishes^[1]—at any rate, as a rule.^[2] But then a variation occurs. Two cells unite, exchange fluids, and part again. It is a new form of nourishment; it is the earliest form of Love. It is a very intimate form of nourishment; for it appears that in general the nuclei themselves of the two cells are shared and in part exchanged. And the vitality so obtained gives the cells a new lease of life. They are in fact regenerated. And each partner grows again actively and reproduces itself by budding and division as before. Sometimes the two uniting cells will remain conjoined; and the joint cell will then generate buds, or in some cases enlarge to bursting

point, and so, perishing itself, break up into a numerous progeny.^[3]

So far there seems to be but little differentiation between Hunger and Love. Love is only a special hunger which leads cells to obtain nourishment from other cells of the same species; and generation or reproduction in these early stages, being an inevitable accompaniment of growth, follows on the satisfaction of love just as it follows on the satisfaction of hunger. Rolph's words on the relation of these two impulses (quoted by Geddes and Thompson) are very suggestive. He says:—"Conjugation occurs when nutrition is diminished.... It is a necessity for satisfaction, a growing hunger, which drives the animal to engulf its neighbor, to 'isophagy.' The process of conjugation is only a special form of nutrition, which occurs on a reduction of the nutritive income, or an increase of the nutritive needs."

And so far there is no distinction of sex. It is true there may be sex in the sense of union or fusion between two individuals; but there is no distinction of sex, in the sense of male and female. In the Protozoa generally there is simple union or conjugation between cells, which, as far as can be observed, are quite similar to each other. It is a union between similars; and it leads to growth and reproduction. But both union and reproduction at this early stage exist quite independently of any distinctive sex-action, or any differentiation of individuals into male and female.

At a later period, however, Sex comes in. It is obvious that for growth (and reproduction) two things are necessary, which are in some degree antagonistic to each other—on the one hand the pursuit and capture of food, which means

activity and force, and on the other hand the digestion and assimilation of the food, which means *quiescence* and passivity. And it seems that at a certain stage—in general, when “animals” have already been formed by the conjunction of many protozoic cells in co-operative colonies—this differentiation sets in, and some individuals specialize towards activity and the chase, while others (of the same species) specialize towards repose and assimilation. The two sets of qualities are clearly only useful in combination with each other, and yet, as I have said, they are to some degree contrary to each other; and therefore it is quite natural that the two corresponding groups of individuals should form two great branches in each race, diverse yet united.

These two branches are the male and female—the active, energy-spending, hungry, food-obtaining branch; and the sessile, non-active, assimilative and reproductive branch. And by the division of labor consequent on the formation of these two branches the whole race is benefited; but only of course on condition that the diverse elements are reunited from time to time. It is in the fusion of these elements that the real quality and character of the race is restored; and it is by their fusion that development and reproduction are secured.

In some of the Infusorians^[4] there seems to be a beginning of sex-differentiation, and fusion takes place between two individuals slightly differing from each other; but as we have already seen, in most of the Protozoa the union is a union of *similars*—that is, as far as can at present be observed, though of course there is a great probability

that here also there is generally *some* difference which supplies the attraction and the value of union.^[5]

It is in the *Metazoa* generally, and those forms of life which consist of co-operative *colonies* of cells, that sex-differentiation into male and female begins to decisively assert itself. Here—since it is obviously impossible for all the cells of one individual to fuse with all the cells of another—certain special cells are set apart in each organism for the purpose of union or conjugation; and it seems quite natural that in the course of time the differentiation spoken of above, into male and female, should set in—each individual tending to become decisively either masculine or feminine—both in the sex-cells or sex-apparatus, and (though in a less marked degree) in the general ‘body’ and structure.

In the lower forms of life, generally, as among the amphibia, fishes, molluscs, &c., the male and female sex-cells—the sperm and the germ—do not conjugate within either of the parent bodies, but are expelled from each, in order to meet and fuse in some surrounding medium, like water. There the double cell, so formed, develops into the new individual. But in higher forms the meeting takes place, and the first stages of development ensue, *within* one of the bodies. And, as one might expect, this occurs within the body of the female. For the female, as we have said, represents quiescence, growth, assimilation. The germ or ovum is large compared with the spermatozoon; it is also sessile in habit. The spermatozoon, on the other hand, is exceedingly active. And so it seems natural that the latter should seek out the germ within the body of the female. Just as, in general, the female animal remains impassive and

quiescent, and is sought out by the male, so the female germ remains at home within the female body, and receives its visitor or visitors there. And the whole apparatus of connection is symbolical of this relation. The body of the female is the temple in which the sacred mystery of the union or fusion of two individuals is completed, as a means to the birth or creation of a new individual.

Yet though the female is thus privileged to be the receptacle and sanctum of the life-giving power, it must not be thought that this argues superiority of the female, as such, over the male. The process of conjunction is sometimes spoken of as a fertilization merely, implying the idea that the ovum or female element is the main thing, and that *this* only requires a slight impulse or stimulus from the male side for its powers of development to be started and set in operation. But though it is true that the ovum can in many cases of the lower forms of life be started developing by the administration of a chemical solution or even a mechanical needle-prick, this development does not seem to continue; and modern investigation shows that in normal fecundation an absolute equality reigns, as far as we can see, between the two contracting parties and their contributions to the new being that has to be formed.

Nothing is more astounding than the results of these investigations; and they not only show us that the protozoic cells (and sex-cells), instead of being very simple in structure, are already extremely complex, and that their changes in the act of fertilization or fusion are *strangely elaborate and systematic*; but they suggest that though to us these cells may represent the microscopic beginnings of

life in its most primitive stages, in reality they stand for the first visible results of long antecedent operations, and indicate highly organized and, we may say, intelligent forces at work within them.

The mere process by which a primitive cell divides and reproduces itself has an air of demonic intelligence about it. Roughly, the process may be described as follows. The nucleus appears to be the most important portion of a cell. Certainly it is so as regards the supply of hereditary and formative material—the surrounding protoplasm fulfilling more of a nutritive and protective function. Within and through the liquid of the nucleus there spreads an irregular network of a substance which is (for a purely accidental reason) called *chromatin*. As long as the nucleus is at rest, this network is fairly evenly distributed through it; but the first oncoming of division is signalled by the break-up of the chromatin into a limited and definite number of short, threadlike bodies—to which the name *chromosomes* has been given. These *chromosomes*, after some curious evolutions, finally arrange themselves in a line across the middle of the nucleus; and they are apparently governed in this operation, and the whole splitting of the cell is governed, by a minute, starlike and radiating centre (called *centrosome*), which first appearing outside the nucleus and in the general protoplasm of the cell, seems to play a dominant part in the whole process. This *centrosome*, when the time comes for the cell-division, itself divides in two, and the two starlike centres so formed (which are to become *centrosomes* of the two new cells), slowly move to opposite ends or poles of the original cell—all the time, as they do so,

throwing out raylike threads or fibrils which connect them somehow with the chromosomes and which seem to regulate the movements of the latter, till, as described, the latter form themselves in a line across the centre of the cell, transversely to the line joining the poles. At this stage, then, we have a tiny, starlike centrosome at each end of the cell, and a transverse line of chromosomes between. (Also, during the process the wall or enclosing membrane of the nucleus has disappeared and the general contents of cell and nucleus have become undivided.) It is at this moment that the real division begins. The chromosomes—of which it is said that there are always a definite and invariable number for every species of plant or animal,^[6] and which are now generally supposed to contain the hereditary elements or determinants of the future individual—these chromosomes have already arranged themselves longitudinally and end-on to each other across the middle of the cell. They now, apparently under the influence of the radiating points at each pole, split longitudinally (as one splits a log of wood)—so that each chromosome, dividing throughout its length, contributes one half of itself to one pole and one half to the other. The halves so formed separate, and approach their respective poles; and at the same time the cell-wall constricting itself along the equatorial line, or line of separation, soon divides the original cell into two. Meanwhile the chromosomes in each new division group themselves (not round but) near their respective poles or centrosomes, and a new nucleus membrane forming, encloses each group, so that finally we have two cells of exactly the same constitution as the

original one, and with exactly the same number and quality of chromosomes as the original.^[7]

The whole process seems very strange and wonderful. No military evolutions and formations, no complex and mystic dance of initiates in a temple, with advances and retreats, and combinations and separations, and exchanges of partners, could seem more fraught with intelligence.^[8] Yet this is what takes place among some of the very lowest forms of life, on the division of a single cell into two. And it is exactly the same, apparently, which takes place in the higher forms of life when the single cell which is the result of the fusion together of the sperm-cell and the germ-cell, divides and subdivides to form the 'body' of the creature. As is well known, the joint cell divides first into two; then each of the cells so formed divides into two, making four in all; then each of these divides into two, making eight; then each into two again, making 16, 32, 64, and so on—till they number the thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, which in effect build up and constitute the body. And at each division the process is carried out with this amazing care and exactness of partition described—so that every cell is verily continuous and of the same nature with the original cell, and contains the same nuclear elements, derived half from the father and half from the mother. Yet in the process a differentiation has set in, so that in the end each cell becomes so far modified as to be adapted for its special position and function in the body—for the skin, mucous membrane, blood corpuscles, brain, muscular tissue, and so forth.^[9] It is worth while looking carefully at the body of an animal, or one's own body, in order to realize what this

means—to realize that the entire creature, in all its form and feature, its coloring, marking, swiftness of limb, complexity of brain, and so on, has provably been exhaled from a single cell, *is* indeed that original cell with its latent powers and virtue made manifest; and to remember that that original cell was itself the fusion of two parent cells, the male and the female.

A word, then, upon this matter of the fusion of the two parent cells in one. Here, again, two very remarkable things appear. One refers to the equality of the sexes; the other refers to the onesidedness (or deficiency or imperfection) which seems to be the characteristic *and* the motive power of the phenomenon of sex.

With regard to the first point, we saw that among the Protozoa conjugation occurs for the most part between two individual cells which are alike in size and (to all appearance) alike in constitution; and this conjugation leads to reproduction. But when among the higher forms sex begins to show, the conjugating cells—sperm-cell and germ-cell—are generally unlike in size, and often in the higher animals extremely unlike—as in the human *spermatozoon* and *ovum*, of which the latter is a thousand times the volume of the former;^[10] and this has sometimes led, as remarked before, to an exaggerated view of the preponderant importance of one sex. But the curious fact seems to be that when the spermatozoon of the human or higher animal penetrates the ovum, there is a preliminary period before its nucleus actually combines with the nucleus of the ovum, during which the nucleus rapidly absorbs nourishment from the surrounding protoplasm, and *grows*—

grows till it becomes of *exactly the same size* as the nucleus of the ovum. The situation then is that there are two nuclei of the same size and both charged with chromatin of the same general character, in close proximity, and waiting to fuse with each other.

The product of that fusion is a new being; and as far as can at present apparently be observed, the parts played by the two sexes in the process are quite equal. There may be *difference* of function but there is no inequality. “Both male and female cells,” says Professor Rolleston,^[11] “prepare themselves for conjugation long before it takes place, and neither of them can be said to be a more active agent in fertilization than the other. Not ‘fertilization’ but ‘fusion’ is the keyword of the process. The mystical conception, as old as Plato, of the male and female as representing respectively the two halves of a complete being, turns out to be no poetic metaphor. As regards the essential features of reproduction, it is a literal fact.”

The second remarkable point has to do with the oneness of sexual conjugation, and the complementary nature of the exchange involved. This is truly noteworthy and interesting. It is evident that if the sperm-cell and germ-cell simply coalesced, containing each the amount of chromatin characteristic of the species—say sixteen chromosomes in the case of the human being—the result would be a cell with double the proper amount, *say thirty-two chromosomes*, i.e. *an amount belonging to another species*. “What happens is that each of the reproductive cells, male and female, prepares itself for conjugation *by getting rid of half its* chromosomes. Two

divisions of the nucleus take place, *not* as in the ordinary fashion of cell-division, when the chromosomes split longitudinally, but in such a way that, in each division, four of the sixteen chromosomes (making eight in all) are bodily expelled from the nucleus and from the cell, when they either perish, or, in some cases, appear to help in forming an envelope of nutritive matter round the germ-cell. These divisions are called 'maturation divisions,' and until they are accomplished fecundation is impossible."^[12] Thus the two nuclei, having each their number of chromosomes reduced to half the normal number (in this case to eight), are now ready to coalesce and so form a new cell with the proper number belonging to the species (*i.e.* sixteen). This cell is the commencement of the new being, and, as already described, it divides and re-divides, and the innumerable cells so formed differentiate themselves into different tissues, until the whole animal is built up.

Says Professor E. B. Wilson:—"The one fact of maturation that stands out with perfect clearness and certainty amid all the controversies surrounding it, is a reduction of the *number of chromosomes in the ultimate germ [and sperm] cells*^[13] to one half the number characteristic of the somatic cells. It is equally clear that this reduction is a preparation of the germ [and sperm] cells for their subsequent union, and a means by which the number of chromosomes is held constant in the species."^[14]

This extrusion or expulsion by each of the conjugating cells of half its constituent elements is certainly very strange.^[15] And it seems strangely deliberate.^[16] Various theories have been formed on the subject, but at present

there is apparently no satisfactory conclusion as to what exactly takes place. Some think that in the one case certain male elements are expelled, and in the other case certain female elements; and anyhow it seems probable that a complementary action sets in, by which each prepares itself to supply a different class of elements from the other, thus rendering the conjunction more effectual. Plato has been already quoted with regard to male and female being only the two halves of a complete original being. He also says (in the speech of Socrates in the *Banquet*) that the mother of Love was Poverty, and that Love “possesses thus far his mother’s nature that he is ever the companion of Want.” And it would appear that in the most primitive grades of life the same is true, and that two cells combine or coalesce in order to mutually supply some want or deficiency.

Anyhow, in the process just described two points stand out pretty clear: first, the exact equality of the number of chromosomes contributed by sperm-cell and germ-cell to the fertilized ovum—which seems to indicate that the descendant being has an equal heredity from each parent^[17]—though of course it does not follow that both heredities become equally prominent or manifest in the descendant body; and secondly, that the same is true of all the cells in this new body—that they each contain the potentialities of the joint cell from which they sprang, and therefore the potentialities of both parents.

These amazing conclusions concerning the origins of life and reproduction—here, of course, very briefly and imperfectly presented—cannot but give us pause. Contemplating the evolutions and affinities of these

infinitely numerous but infinitely small organisms which build up our visible selves, and the strange intelligence which seems to pervade their movements, the mind reels—somewhat as it does in contemplating the evolutions and affinities of the unimaginable stars.^[18] We seem, certainly, to trace the same laws or operations in these minutest regions as we trace in our own corporeal and mental relations. Cells attract each other just as human beings do; and the attraction seems to depend, to a certain degree, on difference. The male spermatozoon seeks the female ovum, just as the male animal, as a rule, seeks and pursues the female. Primitive cells divide and redivide and differentiate themselves, building up the animal body, just in the same way as primitive thoughts and emotions divide and redivide and differentiate themselves, building up the human mind. But though we thus see processes with which we are familiar repeated in infinitesimal miniature, we seem to be no nearer than before to any ‘explanation’ of them, and we seem to see no promise of any explanation. We merely obtain a larger perspective, and a suggestion that the universal order is of the same character throughout—with a suspicion perhaps that the explanation of these processes does not lie in any concatenation of the things themselves, but in some other plane of being of which these concatenations are an allegory or symbolic expression. In portions of the following chapters I shall trace more in detail the resemblance or parallelism between these processes among the Protozoa and some of our own experiences in the great matters of Life and Love and Death.^[19]

CHAPTER III

LOVE AS AN ART

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The astounding revelation of the first great love is a thing which the youthful human being can hardly be prepared for, since indeed it cannot very well be described in advance, or put into terms of reasonable and well-conducted words. To feel—for instance—one's whole internal economy in process of being melted out and removed to a distance, as it were into the keeping of some one else, is in itself a strange physiological or psychological experience—and one difficult to record in properly scientific terms! To lose consciousness never for a moment of the painful void so created—a void and a hunger which permeates all the arteries and organs, and every cranny of the body and the mind, and which seems to rob the organism of its strength, sometimes even to threaten it with ruin; to forego all interest in life, except in one thing—and that thing a person; to be aware, on the other hand, with strange elation and joy, that this new person or presence is infusing itself into one's most intimate being—pervading all the channels, with promise (at least) of marriage and new life to every minutest cell, and causing wonderful upheavals and transformations in tissue and fluids; to find in the mind all objects of perception to be changed and different from what they were before; and to be dimly conscious that the reason why they are so is because the background and constitution of the perceiving mind is itself changed—that, as it were, there is another

person beholding them as well as oneself—all this defies description in words, or any possibility of exact statement beforehand; and yet the actual fact when it arrives is overwhelming in solid force and reality. If, besides, to the insurgence of these strange emotions we add—in the earliest stages of love at least—their bewildering fluctuation, from the deeps of vain longing and desire to the confident and ecstatic heights of expectation or fulfilment—the very joys of heaven and pangs of hell in swift and tantalizing alternation—the whole new experience is so extraordinary, so unrelated to ordinary work-a-day life, that to recite it is often only to raise a smile of dismissal of the subject—as it were into the land of dreams.

And yet, as we have indicated, the thing, whatever it is, is certainly by no means insubstantial and unreal. Nothing seems indeed more certain than that in this strange revolution in the relations of two people to each other—called “falling in love”—and behind all the illusions connected with it, *something is happening*, something very real, very important. The falling-in-love may be reciprocal, or it may be onesided; it may be successful, or it may be unsuccessful; it may be only a surface indication of other and very different events; but anyhow, deep down in the sub-conscious world, *something* is happening. It may be that two unseen and only dimly suspected existences are becoming really and permanently united; it may be that for a certain period, or (what perhaps comes to the same thing) that to a certain *depth*, they are transfusing and profoundly modifying each other; it may be that the mingling of elements and the transformation is taking place almost

entirely in one person, and only to a slight degree or hardly at all in the other; yet in all these cases—beneath the illusions, the misapprehensions, the mirage and the *maya*, the surface satisfactions and the internal disappointments—something very real is happening, an important growth and evolution is taking place.

To understand this phenomenon in some slight degree, to have some inkling of the points of the compass by which to steer over this exceedingly troubled sea, is, one might say, indispensable for every youthful human creature; but alas! the instruction is not provided—for indeed, as things are today, the adult and the mature are themselves without knowledge, and their eyes without speculation on the subject. Treatises on the Art of Love truly exist—and some (for the field they cover) very good ones, like the *Ars Amatoria* of Ovid or the *Kama-sutra* of Vatsayana; but they are concerned mainly or wholly with the details and technicalities of the subject—with the conduct of intrigues and amours, with times and seasons, positions and preparations, unguents and influences. It is like instructions given to a boatman on the minutiae of his craft—how to contend with wind and wave, how to use sail and oar, to steer, to tack, to luff to a breaker, and so forth; all very good and necessary in their way, but who is there to point us our course over the great Ocean, and the stars by which to direct it? The later works on this great subject—though not despising the more elementary aspects—will no doubt have to proceed much farther, into the deep realms of psychology, biological science, and ultimately of religion. ^[20]

As we have just said, Love is concerned with growth and evolution. It is—though as yet hardly acknowledged in that connection—a root-factor of ordinary human growth; for in so far as it is a hunger of the individual, the satisfaction of that hunger is necessary for individual growth—necessary (in its various forms) for physical, mental and spiritual nourishment, for health, mental energy, large affectional capacity, and so forth. And it is—though this too is not sufficiently acknowledged—a root-factor of the Evolution process. For in so far as it represents and gives rise to the union of two beings in a new form, it plainly represents a step in Evolution, and plainly suggests that the direction of that step will somehow depend upon the character and quality of the love concerned. Thus the importance, the necessity, of the study of the art of love is forced on our attention. It has to be no longer a subterranean, unrecognized, and even rather disreputable cult, but an openly acknowledged and honorable department of human life, leading in its due time to broad and commonsense instructions and initiations for the young.

Casting a glance back at the love-affairs of the Protozoa, as briefly described in the preceding chapter, there certainly seems to be a kind of naive charm about them. The simple and wholehearted way in which on occasions they fuse with one another, losing or merging completely their own separate individualities in the process; or again part from each other after having exchanged essences in a kind of affectionate cannibalism; the obvious and unconcealed relation between love and hunger; the first beginnings of

generation; and the matter-of-fact manner in which one person, when he finds it convenient, divides in half and becomes two persons, and after a time perhaps divides again and becomes four persons, and again and again until he is many thousands or millions—and yet it is impossible to decide (and he himself probably is not quite clear) as to whether he is still one person or different persons—all this cannot fail to excite our admiration and respect, nor to give us, also, considerable food for thought.

One of the first things to strike us, and to suggest an application to human life, is the importance of Love, among these little creatures, for the health of the individual. The authors of *The Evolution of Sex* say in one passage (p. 178): “Without it [conjugation], the Protozoa, which some have called ‘immortal,’ die a natural death. Conjugation is the necessary condition of their eternal youth and immortality. Even at this low level, only through the fire of love can the phœnix of the species renew its youth.” And again, in another passage (p. 277), referring to the conclusions of Maupas: “Already we have noted this important result, that conjugation is essential to the health of the species.” Thus it appears that, in these primitive stages, fusion more or less complete, or interchange of essences, leads to Regeneration and renewal of vitality—and this long before the distinct phenomena of sex appear. It leads to Regeneration first, and so collaterally, and at a later period, to Generation.

Somehow—though it is not quite clear how—this view of the importance of love to personal health has been sadly obscured in later and Christian times. The dominant Christian attitude converted love, from being an expression

and activity of the deepest human life and joy, into being simply a vulgar necessity for the propagation of the species. A violent effort was made to wrench apart the spiritual and corporeal aspects of it. The one aspect was belauded, the other condemned. The first was relegated to heaven, the second was given its *cong * to another place. Corporeal intercourse and the propagation of the race were vile necessities. True affection dwelt in the skies and disdained all earthly contacts. And yet all this was a vain effort to separate what could not be separated. It was like trying to take the pigments out of a picture; to call the picture "good," but the stuff it was painted with "bad."

And so, owing to this denial, owing to this non-recognition of love (in all its aspects) as necessary to personal health, thousands and thousands of men and women through the centuries—some "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," and some for the sake of the conventions of society—have allowed their lives to be maimed and blighted, their health and personal well-being ruined. The deep well-spring and source of human activity and vitality has been desecrated and choked with rubbish. That some sort of purpose, in the evolution of humanity, may have been fulfilled by this strange negation, it would be idle to deny; indeed some such purpose—in view of the wide prevalence of the negation, and its long continuance during the civilization period—seems probable. But this does not in any way controvert the fact that it has in its time caused a disastrous crippling of human health and vitality. Human progress takes place, no doubt, in sections—one foot forward at a time, so to speak; but this does not mean that

the other foot can be permanently left in the rear. On the contrary, it means its all the more decided advance when its turn arrives.

To-day we seem at the outset of a new era, and preparing in some way for the rehabilitation of the Pagan conception of the world. The negative Christian dispensation is rapidly approaching its close; the necessity of love in its various forms, as part and parcel of a healthy life, is compelling our attention. No one is so poor a physiognomist as not to recognize the health-giving effects of successful courtship—the heightened color, the brilliant eye, the elastic step; the active brain, the prompt reflexes, the glad outlook on the world. Indeed the effect upon all the tissues—their nourishment, growth, improvement in tone, and so forth—is extraordinary; and yet—remembering what has been said about Love and Hunger—quite natural. For, after all, we have seen that every cell in the body is a *replica* of the original cell from which it sprang; and so the love which reaches one probably in some way reaches all. And there is probably not only union and exchange (in actual intercourse) between two special sex-cells; but there is also (*all through* the period of being “in love”) an etheric union and exchange going on between the body-cells generally on each side; and a nourishment of each other by the interchange of finest and subtlest elements.

That this mutual exchange and nutrition may take place between the general cells of two bodies is made all the more probable from the experiments already alluded to with regard to chemical fertilization—whereby it has been shown that some ova or egg-cells may be started on a process of