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A SHORT HISTORY OF MARRIAGE.

"Let observation with extensive view
Survey mankind from China to Peru."

—*Dr. Johnson.*

So much of the happiness and prosperity of mankind depends upon the right relations of the sexes, that it is desirable that all should have a clear perception of the origin and nature of marriage, and of the conditions which it requires. We live in an age in which social questions are becoming of vital importance, and of these marriage must occupy a front place. Old prejudices are dying out, ancient barriers are visibly decaying, stubborn ignorance is yielding to multiplied knowledge, floods of benevolent and intellectual light are thrown upon every dark spot in our social system, and, therefore, it is not possible that the unjust and one-sided views of sex-unions still prevailing, can for long remain unchanged.

Bishop Taylor said: "The first blessing God gave to man was society, and that society was a marriage, and that marriage was confederate by God Himself, and hallowed by a blessing." But McLellan says: "Marriage laws, agnatic relationship, and kingly government, belong, in the order of development, to recent times."

All divines agree with Taylor, all men of science with McLellan. Unfortunately, our present marriage laws were instituted by the divines. It remains for us to bring them into harmony with the scientific. For all these human laws, which the theologians audaciously call sacred because of their ecclesiastical origin, were, from their supposititious character, intended to become stationary; whereas, marriage is by its very nature progressive. It advances as minds

advance, and the ideals of the past can never be satisfactory nor suitable in the wiser future. Thus every endeavour to hinder its development is a crime against humanity.

In our brief remarks upon the subject we shall mainly rely for our facts upon those agreements exhibited by a number of original and independent investigators of unquestioned abilities and veracity. Nor shall we forget that "the concealment of truth is the only indecorum known to science, and that to keep anything secret within its cold and passionless expanses, would be the same as to throw a cloth round a naked statue."

There can be little doubt that the earliest connections between our sexes were periodical, as in the case of other Mammals, and were equally as fugitive as theirs. Traces of periodicity still exist in civilized races. Among the semi-civilized they are more pronounced; while, with a few savage tribes, the original habit remains in great force. The wild Indians of California belong to the lowest of the human family, and Johnston says: "They have their rutting seasons as regularly as have the deer, the elk, the antelope, or any other animals." Powers also says, that spring "is a literal St. Valentine's Day with them, as with the natural beasts and birds of the forest." The Watch-an-dies of West Australia resemble them.

Mr. Oldfield, in his "Aborigines of Australia," tells us: "Like the beast of the field, the savage has but one time for copulation in the year. About the middle of spring, when yams are in perfection, when the young of all animals are abundant, and when eggs and other nutritious food are to be had, the Watch-an-dies begin to think of holding their grand semi-religious festival of Caa-ro, preparatory to the performance of the important duty of procreation." The Tasmanians had a similar feast. Annual Saturnalia of a quasi-religious character have existed in every part of

the world, and still obtain in many districts of Asia, Africa, and America, when all indulge in unbridled licentiousness. At Rome the festival of Venus occurred in April. It appears that the season of periodicity of the sexual passion is largely determined by the season for the food on which the species lives. If we turn to the Anthropoid Apes, Winwood Reade informs us that the male gorillas fight for the females at the rutting season, and others say the same of the Orang-utan. There can be little doubt that our extremely savage ancestors did this also, and that those with the strongest canines and greatest muscular development, obtained the choicest females and the largest number.

The next stage towards marriage was the comparatively peaceable and promiscuous intercourse between those of the same family, or group of families. Even in each tribe every woman was common, and none knew the father of her own child. Thus the children were the property of the tribe, and not of the parents, and for ages derived their descent from their mothers. Display, in the forms of ornamental dress, dancing, and boating, began to take the place of prowess. Thus vanity had its rise in the male breast before it was communicated by heredity to the female. Sir John Lubbock dignifies this promiscuous breeding by the name of Communal Marriage, but with all deference to so high an authority, we consider that it was not until extra-tribal women were captured that marriage had a beginning. For these became the peculiar property of their captors, and gave rise to both monogamy and polygamy, as a man might have as many as he could capture and keep. Without defining at present our idea of what true marriage is, or should be, we cannot concede that any vagrant amour deserves the name, even though it be a tribal one.

The union must at least have some degree of permanence. In a general way, however, we can

agree with the mediæval proverb: "Boire manger, coucher ensemble est mariage, ce me semble."

It should be clearly understood at the outset that love, as we understand it in its highest sense, is altogether the product of modern times. It had its inception in the age of chivalry. Sacred and profane poets sang of love, but it was a sensual passion only that inspired their song. No Greek or Roman could so much as have imagined the feeling which a high-minded and cultured European entertains for the maiden whom he woos and weds. Their love was coarse, voluptuous, lascivious, and when most refined, as in Plato's "Banquet," was infinitely beneath the spiritualized sensuousness which we are here and there able to acquire.

The so-called communal marriage was attended by curious circumstances. One was that when men were allowed to select women for wives from their own tribe, the others had still their common rights in her. When this was abandoned, "a temporary recognition of the pre-existing communal rights" had to be made; or, as in much later times, every woman was obliged, once in her life, to submit herself indiscriminately to the worshippers of some Phallic divinity, or to strangers at a great periodic festival, as in the primæval custom. It may be, too, that the *jus primæ noctis*, claimed sometimes by the chief or noble, and at others by the priest, was a survival of communal right, these officers representing the community. With numerous tribes unmarried girls were free to practise promiscuity, when married women were jealously guarded, and a man often disdained to marry a woman unless she had previously had many lovers. Thus, too, when civilization appeared, the "social evil" was regarded with a tolerance amounting to approbation. The Hetairæ of Greece were long held in much esteem, and were publicly known by their coloured or flowered garments. The women of the fornices at Rome used to stand

openly at the doors of their cells in loose and light attire, with their bosoms exposed and the nipples gilt. And thus, too, did Messalina, the infamous wife of Claudius Cæsar, dare to offer herself at the doors of the lupinaria, with her breast coloured in the same curious manner. Torsions of ancient human thought and taste caused many other singular customs.

All male savages are much given to jealousy of their property. Daughters were their father's slaves, and they and their mothers—also slaves—did all the hard work required for the family. Thus difficulties in obtaining wives by tribal or inter-tribal arrangement, coupled with female infanticide or the love of war, partly led to the practice of capture. This custom prevailed in various parts of the world, and has now almost perished, but the form has survived as a mere ceremony. Even with us the bridegroom's best man represents the faithful friend who formerly helped to steal a wife, and whose reward afterwards was the *jus primæ noctis*. In the beginning of the present century capture *de facto* was in full force among the South Slavonians. One of the eight legal forms of the marriage ceremony in the "Laws of Manu" was the Rākshasa rite: "the forcible abduction of a maiden from her home, while she cries out and weeps, after her kinsmen have been slain or wounded and their houses broken open." The use of the symbol has been found among all except the Chinese and a few others, and perhaps these formed no real exception. The most brutal form of capture was that of the Australians. A man stalked a woman as he would a kangaroo, stole behind her and with his nulla-nulla, a heavy club, struck her senseless. In this state he carried her off, and, when revived, her marriage was at once consummated.

* Capture, however, gave way to purchase. Bartering women between two tribes was a favourite method at first. A man gave a daughter or some

other female relative for a wife. The bought wife was his absolute property and slave, over whom he had the power of life and death, but in process of time more merciful ideas modified her condition. The system of purchase did much to abolish the horrible practice of female infanticide. It is thought that as sons strengthened the fighting power of a tribe, and daughters weakened it, exogamous peoples destroyed their female infants except the first-born, preserved for menial purposes, and thus capture and infanticide were almost universally established, and regarded as social duties. Marriage was prohibited between members of the same tribe so long as the tribes were undivided, but when clans were formed members of the same clan were prohibited, although persons of one clan might marry with those of others. Next, members of the same stock or family name might not intermarry, then divisions of the same tribe might marry with some and not with others, until finally caste was developed. On the contrary, with endogamous tribes marriage outside the tribe was forbidden and punished. When by fusion of primitive groups the tribal system was less distinct, marriage was forbidden except between persons of the same family or stock name. Next it was restricted to members of particular families; and, lastly, old tribal divisions were disregarded or forgotten, and those having by custom the right of connubium, became a caste. And thus, by two opposite processes, caste came about. It is not, of course, to be supposed that those methods were invariably followed with mathematical precision. They were frequently modified, just as promiscuity was modified by polyandry, in which one woman had several husbands who were sometimes brothers and at others not. Polyandry still exists over large areas in the East, and was formerly practised in Germany and in this country. Sometimes it arises from a desire to prevent undue increase of family;

at others from sheer poverty. A few club together and obtain a wife between them. As soon as purchase became the fashion, daughters were valuable property to their fathers and female infanticide ceased. The price depends, as it has always done, upon the rank, condition, and accomplishments of the bride, and the extent of the demand.

Virgins generally fetch more than others, and many strange customs have been adopted to preserve their purity, especially in those cases where a general warranty is understood, and a fraudulent sale would entitle the husband to return the lady and claim back the price paid for her. With some a platform is built by her parents' hut immediately after an early betrothal, and there she is fed and kept high up out of harm's way without once leaving it until delivered to her husband. In parts of Africa she is shut up at six or seven years of age in a bamboo cage, and constantly watched and attended to by old women, who fatten her for the Mohammedan mart. But a more general and a surer method is infibulation. Many other plans are adopted to the same purpose, and when married her virginity was sometimes proved *coram populo*,³ or the evidences were preserved by her parents—as among the Jews—in case of repudiation by the husband. The first form of inheritance was through the female line. This originated from the uncertainty of male parentage. Polyandry was a fertile cause of both methods. A Nair woman, under some restrictions as to rank and caste, might have twelve husbands. In Ceylon, when a woman lives in a house and village of her husband's, the marriage is Deega, but when the husband or husbands go to live with her, it is Beena; "and among the Kandians the rights of inheritance of the woman and her children depend upon whether she is a beena or a deega wife." Chief Justice Starke, of Ceylon, said that "sometimes a deega married girl returned to her parents' house and was there provided with a beena husband." Deega

marriages, where the husbands were brothers, promoted male kinship; beena marriages, female inheritance and kinship, to the exclusion of the males. In the first, the eldest brother was the head of the house and the father of the family, to whom the others succeeded in turn on his decease, and continued to "raise up seed to their brother." Where exogamy was the rule, the mothers were necessarily foreigners, and, by the system of kinship, their children were foreigners also. McLellan shows that thus, "so far as the system of infanticide allowed, their young men and women accounted of different stocks might intermarry consistently with exogamy. Hence grew up a system of betrothals, and of marriage by sale and purchase." But when civilization advanced, and paternity became recognized, and conjugal fidelity and family property commenced, kinship through the males superseded that through the females. The whole subject is a very large and complex one—far too large for a short article. It can easily be proved, however, that all the social and moral virtues have arisen from the circumstances attending the right of family and individual property. Honour, chastity, modesty, fidelity, in their first feeble birth, date from the time when the right to individual property made its appearance, and when this occurred "barbarism was already far in the rear." Before this everything was common, and enjoyed promiscuously. Now men begin to feel the delights of family and home. Every personal acquisition was thereby invested with a new charm. And the love of one's own developed into the larger love of one's country, and at length into sympathy for the whole human family. And, probably, the germ of all these elevating sentiments was the humble right of absolute ownership to a wife by capture. If this be so, then marriage was the foundation of all civil rights and moral virtues.

We owe to the Jews that theory of a primitive

state which has been the cause of so many errors and failures during the last eighteen centuries. Human history opens with Eden, a perfect marriage and a happy family. But it was not in this way that man commenced his career. Whatever is good in him had to be groped for, fought for with blood and tears, and held through infinite and severe struggles. Many races perished, and those that survived had, and have, to work out their own salvation. Neither can any tribe or nation trace its descent to an individual. Many peoples have professed to do so, but in all cases their genealogies are spurious and their common ancestor fictitious. Besides, it can be demonstrated that the family appeared last in the order of social development. Indeed this has now almost become an ethnographical axiom, and the law of progression, as against the debasing theory of retrogression, has been amply vindicated.

In the earliest times of purchase, a woman was bartered for useful goods or for services rendered to her father. In this latter way, Jacob purchased Rachel and her sister Leah. This was a Beenah marriage where a man, as in Genesis, leaves his father and his mother, and cleaves unto his wife, and they become one flesh or kin—the woman's. The price for a bride in British Columbia and Vancouver Island, varies from £20 to £40 worth of articles. In Oregon, an Indian gives for her, horses, blankets, or buffalo robes; in California, shell-money or horses; in Africa, cattle. A poor Damara will sell a daughter for a cow; a richer Kafir expects from three to thirty. With the Banyai, if nothing be given, her family claim her children. In Uganda, where no marriage recently existed, she may be obtained for half-a-dozen needles, or a coat, or a pair of shoes. An ordinary price is a box of percussion caps. In other parts, a goat or a couple of buckskins will buy a girl. Passing to Asia, we find her price is sometimes five to fifty roubles, or at others, a cartload

of wood or hay. A princess may be purchased for three thousand roubles. In Tartary, a woman can be obtained for a few pounds of butter, or where a rich man gives twenty small oxen, a poor man may succeed with a pig. In Fiji, her equivalent is a whale's tooth or a musket. These, and similar prices elsewhere, are eloquent testimony to the little value a savage sets on his wife. Her charms vanish with her girlhood. She is usually married while a child, and through her cruel slavery and bitter life, she often becomes old and repulsive at twenty-five.

When Augustine converted the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, marriage by capture was dying out with them, and purchase had become general. Nevertheless, capture was not extinguished in England until centuries later, for Ethelbert, while enforcing the new law, also ratified the old one, so that they ran concurrently. He recognized the right of a raptor to carry off a woman by force on his afterwards paying fifty shillings to her owner as a fine, and then buying her from him at a reasonable price. If she were a maid, the fine went to her father; if a wife, then to the husband; but the raptor had to buy the defrauded husband another wife, and, in each case, he retained by law the woman whom he had stolen. It will be seen that the transition from capture to purchase in this country was very gradual, and that both methods existed, for a time, together. Even our princesses were bought by kings with cattle and costly articles, just as the poor creatures we have noticed were obtained by humbler purchase. We learn that the covetous Anglo-Saxon fathers drove extortionate bargains, and cheated simple buyers like modern horse-dealers at a fair. Ethelbert provided against this by enacting: "If there be any deceit, let him bring her home again, and let the man give him back his money." This privilege, in its turn, became obsolete when "morning gifts" were general. These were presents, made to the bride

by her husband on the morning after the marriage night, to show his satisfaction with his bargain, and she who received a morning gift could not be afterwards returned. In process of time, when the brutality of selling one's own offspring dawned upon the coarse minds of our ancestors, a euphemism was invented to conceal its baseness and satisfy public conscience. Contracts for future marriages had been called "espousals." The bride-price was paid at the time of espousal, and was now called "foster lean," or a supposed repayment to the parent of the daughter's cost for nurture and training. Greedy fathers made a trade of this by accepting "foster lean" from many suitors, and cheating all but one; but at length this fraudulent practice was checked by the public sentiment demanding that foster lean should be paid on the marriage day instead of the day of espousal. In those times the wedding day was only the day of betrothal, when the suitor gave a "wed," or pledge for the due performance of his contract. Our present law of damage for seduction originated in the law of Ethelbert, and was strengthened by Alfred, who enacted that the betrayer of an unbetrothed woman should pay her father for the damage done to her. "Breach of promise" by the maiden incurred the forfeiture of presents and the foster lean, and another third of the latter by way of penalty. The man who refused to marry his spouse, or delayed more than two years when she was of marriageable age, forfeited all further right to her and to the foster lean which he had paid. Subsequently, when the Church controlled marriage, she dealt more severely with flirts and dishonest fathers, and compelled the latter, in the event of breach on the woman's part, to pay back four times the amount of the foster lean. Later it was reduced to twice the sum.

Among civilizations far older than ours the system of purchase had ceased before we were a

people. * The Indian lawgiver, Manu, strictly forbade it, and said: "A man who through avarice takes a gratuity is a seller of his offspring." In the historical times of the Greeks they no longer bought wives. In Rome *coemptio* was only a symbol of the ancient custom. In the Jewish Talmud the purchase is also symbolic, as is frequently the Mohammedan "mahr." With all, the bride-price, foster-leans, and marriage gifts, when returned, were converted into dowry, and became at first the bride's property. Thus marriage portions chiefly derived their origin from the habit of purchase, and dowry often became, as with the Hebrews, a religious duty. Not less than the tenth of a father's property was considered a just dower. In Aristotle's time nearly two-fifths of all Sparta belonged from this cause to the women. Sir Henry Maine considers that the amazing thrift of the French is also owing to this custom, which probably descended to them from the marriage law of Augustus Cæsar. It was only by an anachronism that Euripides made Medea lament that women were obliged to purchase husbands at a great price. And it is often as true to-day as when the Latin poet sang:

"Pars minima est ipsa puella sui."

As we have seen, there were at first no marriage ceremonies, and this is the mode still with many uncivilized tribes. When they did arise it was by degrees and in many ways; and in all, customs such as capture, when superseded, became by symbolism a part of the succeeding legal form of contract. Sometimes the ceremony symbolizes sexual intercourse, but more frequently companionship or the wife's subjection. To eat maize pudding from the same plate, or to eat in any way together, is a widely distributed marriage ceremony. In Brazil a couple may be married by drinking brandy together; in Japan, by as many cups of wine; in Russia and Scandinavia it used to be one cup for

both. The joining of hands among the Romans and Hindoos is common to many parts of the world. In Scotland it is called "hand-fasting," and couples live together after. To sit together on a seat while receiving friends, or to have the hands of each tied together with grass, or to smear with each other's blood, or for the woman to tie a cord of her own twisting around the naked waist of the man, constitutes marriage in one part or another. In Australia a woman carries fire to her lover's hut, and makes a fire for him. In America she lays a bundle of rods at the door of his tent. A Loango negress cooks two dishes for him in his own hut. In Croatia the bridegroom boxes the bride's ears, and in Russia the father formerly struck his daughter gently with a new whip—for the last time—and then gave the weapon to her husband. Down to the present, it is a custom in Hungary for the groom to give the bride a kick after the marriage ceremony, to make her feel her subjection. Even with all civilized peoples the servitude of the bride is clearly indicated.

The religious ceremonies, where they exist, are as numerous and various as human whims and caprices can make them. Rossbach says that the farther we go back the stricter they become. But as Paganism perished in Europe, marriage was deprived of religious rites, and became a purely civil institution. Christianity restored its religious character, and by a much too free translation from the Greek to the Latin Vulgate of the word "mysterion," used by St. Paul, the dogma of sacramental marriage had its rise. By the 12th century it was gradually developed, and in 1563 the Council of Trent made the religious ceremony the essential part of marriage, without which it was rendered invalid. In this way a dangerous blow was struck at social and civil liberty, and Christendom still suffers from its pernicious effects. From that day concubinage, illegitimacy, and prostitution flourished. These were greatly accen-

tuated by another evil law of the Church—the celibacy of the priests and the “religious.”

Asceticism is a very ancient Pagan custom, and has found followers in all civilized times and countries. Even savages often expected celibacy, but not chastity, from their medicine men and priests. With some of the cultured it has been assumed from misanthropy, or as a protest against profligacy; with others, from a hollow assumption of superior virtue. It never occurs under natural conditions. Neither animals nor savages are ever celibates from choice unless infirm or diseased. The Jewish proverb “He who has no wife is no man,” was a universal sentiment, and always put into practice. With uncivilized men, if one remained single he was thoroughly despised as unnatural, and classed with thieves and witches. Neither did he rank as a man in his tribe. Among the savage and partially civilized, celibacy is unknown among women, and the enforced celibacy of a few men is owing to a scarcity caused by polygamy or to extreme poverty. In Sparta celibates were criminally prosecuted; [at Rome, bachelors were taxed. Exception to marriage was only made in the case of a few priestesses devoted to special work, as in Peru, Persia, Rome, Greece, and Gaul. Religious asceticism, however, comes from the East. Buddhism is its centre. Buddh was the only son of his mother, the best and purest of women, whose conception was supernatural, so that she still remained a virgin. Christianity reproduced this original idea. In India, where polygamy is the rule, celibacy is permitted only to men, who must devote their lives to contemplation; but in Tibet, where polyandry is the rule, women are encouraged to become nuns. Both monks and nuns are as unchaste as were those of Europe before the Reformation. “Lust and ignorance,” it is said, “are the chief causes of misery; we should, therefore, suppress lust and remove ignorance.” The

Dharmika-Sutta tells the faithful, "A wise man should avoid marriage as if it were a burning pit of live coals." Sexual intercourse was sinful in itself, and the first indulgence by a monk entailed expulsion from the fraternity, and he was no longer a monk.

These Eastern ideas probably spread to Syria, and made a few converts there, known as Essenes. Josephus, who was born at Jerusalem three years after the Crucifixion, knew them well. They rejected pleasures, and, from their esteem of continence, neglected wedlock. It is not quite certain whether Christ Himself favoured their views to any degree, for although He put religious duty first, He did not reprobate marriage, but He commanded desertion of wife and family for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. St. Paul, however, held celibacy to be preferable, although he admitted "it was better to marry than to burn." * Marriage was for the incontinent, as the lesser of two evils. It does not seem that Christianity at first forbade polygamy, for Paul held that a bishop (or pastor) should be satisfied with *one* wife, and many learned theologians held polygamy lawful to a Christian. St. John saw the celestial band of a hundred and forty-four thousand around the throne of God, all virgins who had never known man. The Fathers soon strengthened these notions. Tertullian, who died in 216, held that celibacy ought to be chosen though mankind should perish. Origen, born in 185, taught that marriage was profane and impure. Taking Christ's words literally, he emasculated himself. Yet he lived to A.D. 254. St. Jerome, born 88 years after, tolerated marriage only for the sake of producing monks and nuns. He said that, though marriage fills the earth, virginity peoples heaven, and twenty years before he died, a Roman-Synod insisted on the celibacy of the superior clergy. In fact, all the Fathers agreed with those named, but human nature was too strong for the general

acceptance of their views. Chastity, however, became, in theory, the cardinal virtue of the Church, whatever it may have been in practice, and divorces were freely granted *sine causa sœntica*, and from no other reason than to promote celibacy. When the Church sanctified marriages, she desired that they might be as platonic as possible. Thus the Emperor Henry II., Edward the Confessor, and Alphonso II. of Spain, were husbands only in name. All human beings produced through sexual union were "born in sin and conceived in iniquity." "To have children under any circumstances was a sin," but to have them without the sanction and blessing of the Church, was a deadly sin. "Woman was an instrument of Satan," and a Gallican Bishop declared that she was not human. At the Council of Mâcon the Bishops debated whether she had a soul. The fanatics who taught these unnatural and abominable doctrines, forgot that marriage was the oldest human institution, and therefore immeasurably older than the Church; that, by their own Bible, the first law given to man by his Maker, unqualified by any restriction, was to "increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." Thus the immortality of the race depended upon its power of reproduction, and the first duty of man was to ensure the continuance of his species. Procreation was the sovereign law of being. Yet, as Huth says, "there is no doubt that if the clergy had had their own way, they would have forbidden all mankind, as they forbade themselves, ever to enter the bonds of matrimony."

In the Council of Rome, 1074, all ministers already married, were ordered to divorce their wives. In England, however, this could not be enforced, and at the Council of Winchester, held two years after, the secular clergy were permitted to retain their wives. The edict of Gregory the Great produced terrible results, so that laws were

repeatedly made forbidding priests to have their sisters or even their mothers as their house-keepers. Formerly they had been permitted to keep concubines, and were generally taxed for this license. Early in the fifth century the Council of Toledo legalized these unions, but Henry III. of Castile ordered the concubines of priests to wear a piece of scarlet cloth in their head-dress. The Puritans of New England compelled the unwedded mother to wear a scarlet A on her breast, and this custom gave rise to Nathaniel Hawthorne's beautiful story, "The Scarlet Letter." In France the priests often practised polygamy. Everywhere, bigamy was especially common. Their compulsory celibacy, therefore, led to every possible immorality and to the most infamous crimes, until at length the Papal throne itself became polluted. Speaking of Pope John XXIII., Gibbon says, "The most scandalous charges were suppressed; the Vicar of Christ was only accused of piracy, murder, rape, sodomy, and incest." D'Israeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," quotes the lines written on a lady's tomb by way of a pasquinade on Pope Alexander VI., to whom she had been too well known:—

"Hoc tumulo dormit Lucretia nomine, sed re
Thais : Alexandri filia, sponsa, nurus."

The hostility of the Church to sexual union even in the form of marriage, caused her to devise innumerable impediments. Married women were forbidden to approach the altar or to touch the Eucharist, and were commended for refusing the embraces of their husbands. If a woman wished to become a nun, she could leave her husband without his consent, nor could he take a wife in her stead. The Rev. S. Baring-Gould in his "Lives of the Saints," tells the following anecdote of St. Dominic, which at once illustrates the childish superstition of devotees and the arguments for encouraging celibacy: "A lady of

extreme beauty wished to leave her monastery, and resisted all the preacher's arguments. She blew her nose, and it came off in her handkerchief. Horror-stricken, she implored the prayers of Dominic. He put her nose on again; and the lady consented to remain in the convent." Widows promising to remain single were excommunicated on marrying again, which was then called bigamy. Abstention was demanded of married people for three days before communion and forty days after Easter; next, it became as great a sin for them to cohabit during Lent as it was to eat flesh; then, marriage was prohibited during Lent and at no other specified seasons, so that, as an old writer said, "there were but few weeks or days in the year in which people could get married at all." And in the Confessional even the youngest and fairest wives were compelled to lay bare the most secret acts of their wedded lives. Marriage was forbidden within the seventh canonical degree (or to sixth cousins), equal to the fourteenth civil degree of blood relationship, and spiritual affinity had been invented, and made equal to that of blood, to increase the prohibitions. Thus godfathers and godmothers were held as related to the child and its relations and to each other. Bridesmaids, groomsmen, bride, bridegroom, and officiating priest were similarly related to each other and to all the relations of all. No one, therefore, could tell to whom he was not related. Repudiation after marriage, fraud and trickery, were made easy for the unprincipled, and the authority of the Church was appealed to from a thousand directions. Pope Zachary had said that marriage must be denied when any relationship could be traced, and this was confirmed by two Councils. But by Luther's time the prohibition extended only as far as to third cousins. Hallam points out that these "affinities" rendered it necessary for the Royal houses of Europe to keep on good terms with the Court of Rome,

because it was scarcely possible for them to intermarry without transgressing the Canonical limits. Hence arose constant requests for Papal dispensations. "History," he says, "is full of dissolutions of marriage, obtained by fickle passion or cold-hearted ambition, to which the Church did not scruple to pander on some suggestion of relationship." Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing the Council of Trent, held in 1545, re-affirmed the spiritual affinities declared by the Nicene Council in 325.

All this systematic opposition reduced marriage, but did not prevent indulgence. We have already noticed two out of the many Popes who led scandalous lives. The irregularities of the ecclesiastics would be almost too astounding for belief were it not that the authorities are unquestionable. One Abbot, for instance, had seventy concubines, and a Bishop was deposed for having sixty-five illegitimate children. Many a congregation having an unmarried priest stipulated, for the protection of their wives and daughters, that he should keep a concubine. For it was not until Peter the Lombard had discovered the seven-fold operation of the Spirit of God in the seven sacraments that the Church in the 12th century included marriage as one, and by the middle of the 13th every wife of a priest had been driven from her home. Since the 16th century the Roman canons have remained unchanged.

We have the authority of the pious and learned Bellarmine, a Roman Catholic, that "For some years before the Lutheran and Calvinist heresies broke forth, there was no justice in ecclesiastical courts, no discipline in morals, no knowledge of sacred literature, no reverence for sacred things: there was almost no religion remaining." The Roman Curia published a book containing a tariff of fees for pardons. A deacon could commit a murder for twenty crowns; a bishop or abbot, for three hundred livres; and any ecclesiastic might

violate his vows of chastity with the most aggravating circumstances for one hundred livres, or eight pounds of our money. The loathsome condition of the Church caused two of her most earnest monks to become distinguished reformers. St. Cajetan and Luther were born within three years of each other. The one effected a schism which we call the Reformation. The other gave his life and genius for her internal purification. Cajetan remained a rabid celibate. The monk Luther married a nun. But the early Protestants—so strong is custom—looked with a timid eye on the marriage of their priests. Queen Elizabeth, when leaving the episcopal palace, insulted Archbishop Parker's wife, by saying that she did not know how to address her, implying that Mrs. Parker was only a concubine. And even to-day, from some cause or other, an unmarried clergyman *caeteris paribus*, finds more favour with his congregation than a married one.

Monogamy was instituted long before Christianity—long before even the Mosaic law. It was established in Egypt, for instance, ages prior to Joseph's captivity. Potiphar's amorous wife was evidently his only one. We know that in Egypt polygamy was legal, and yet monogamy was the more general practice. It has been the same in other countries; and owing to the numerical equality of the sexes, where men can afford to marry, monogamy is a natural necessity. We may take it, therefore, that with or without a Divine revelation, monogamy would become the final and most perfect form of marriage.

The "communal marriage" was the gratification of a periodical sexual passion—a mere brutal instinct. The marriage by capture secured a like purpose, with the addition of personal possession and the services of a household slave. Marriage by purchase procured the same advantages without the danger of retaliation from injured relatives. Women now were a sort of cattle, bought and

sold, exchanged and lent, just like any other chattels. Excessive lust was indulged in by child-marriages and polygamy. A woman was worn as one wears a glove, and then cast aside. Next dower supplanted purchase, and she began to possess legal rights, sometimes to obtain the mastery over the husband. Her jubilant freedom made her audacious. Her superior subtlety gave her the pre-eminence in the home. When her social and legal equality were well nigh assured, the emissaries of Christianity brought a message from God and imposed it on the people, whereby her humanity was questioned, her possession of a soul doubted, her inferiority divinely affirmed, her perpetual guardianship legalized, her civil rights merged in her husband, and her subordination to him laid down by ecclesiastical laws. In childhood she was denied her share of mental education; in womanhood her civil and political rights. If, in exceptional instances, she led armies or ruled states, or legislated, or otherwise distinguished herself, these were regarded as exceptions to a general rule, and her inferiority to man was still determined. And now, when women in large numbers have shown their capacity in every permitted profession and occupation, when every office that has been opened to them has been worthily filled, there are still heads and hearts so obtuse that old conditions are re-asserted, old prejudices revived, old customs invoked by all the aids of ridicule and religion. An ignorant and corrupt Church enslaved her body and starved her mind, defiled her morals, and denied her even the right to read the Scriptures. We are not ignorant of the history of that corporation. We know by what sinister and unholy methods it attained its power. And relying on the ultimate triumph of truth and justice, we offer it and all other enemies of our sex open and honourable opposition. We invite discussion, but refuse suppression of facts, and our opponents must either treat or fight.

In England this battle for the equal privileges of women commenced more than 150 years ago, when, in 1739, "Sophia, a woman of quality," wrote an able work entitled "Woman not Inferior to Man." She said "There is no science or public office in a State which [women are not as much qualified for by nature as the ablest of men." In 1792, Mary Wolstonecraft, in her "Vindication of the Rights of Women," demanded that the medical profession, which had been wrested from women, should be thrown open to them again, and that they should be allowed to vote for Members of Parliament. She pointed out that "meek wives are in general foolish mothers," and that business and professional education of various kinds for women "might save many from common and legal prostitution." And for this she was denounced "as an infidel and monster of immorality." But now in all countries, the flower of our sex for purity and intelligence are beginning to spread the same wholesome teachings throughout the world.

Marriage is usually either misunderstood or the ideal is set too low. People marry from a variety of reasons: for a living, for convenience, from vanity or lust, or for companionship or a family. With Mary Wolstonecraft, we denounce the first four as "legal prostitution," and assert that nothing but true companionship and desire for children can ever justify marriage. We doubt whether the mere desire of a family could alone justify it unaccompanied by mutual love. But we regard love as all-sufficient in itself, and the true touchstone by which marriage may be proved. And by love we mean that intelligent and mutual respect and sympathy, that unity of thought and aim, that blending of two in one, which makes each ready for any sacrifice, or even to die for the other,—a union which neither time nor accident can destroy. This alone is marriage, and is able to transform the peasant's cot and patch into a veritable Paradise,

while without it a palace may be hell. We have heard of men, rough, commonplace beings, who could brave Arctic or torrid wastes in severest cold or heat, in hunger and thirst, so long as they were cheered by the companionship of their fellows. Our first real hunger is heart hunger. Prisoners denied human companionship have sought comfort in the affection of a bird, a mouse, or even a spider. All true natures must have some one or something to love. And although the love of youth is charming and picturesque, the love of old age is radiant with beauty. To see two human creatures who have weathered together in closest communion all the storms and ills of life, battered and deformed by time, yet able to look into each other's eyes with a love surpassing that of their first affection, is a sight grander than any other the world can show. For it reveals to us the depth and purity of marriage as it should be. What are rites and priestly formulas to such as these? And what dignity or value can any ceremony add to the union of true minds?

We read of Gretna Green and Fleet marriages, and the outcry with which their abolition was met by younger sons, and even statesmen like Fox. The Marriage Act, as they well knew, was passed for the protection of heiresses and ambitious fathers. It was a rich man's Act, and opposed to the interests of the poor, for whom marriage and divorce should be as inexpensive, easy, and expeditious as of old. We know that love will not fill the larder, but a man who loves will work for his wife, and the wife who loves will work for her husband. Love sets in motion a two-fold energy which is able to conquer many difficulties.

We must not omit to point out as briefly as possible that to secure the happiness and welfare of the married and their offspring, the fitness of candidates is of the highest importance. The sexual side of our being has been so stigmatized that our other natural appetites have shared in its

degradation. We boast of our love of art, of literature, or of science, but never of our love of eating or sleeping. We are ashamed of our bodily organs and functions, and shun the knowledge of our own physiology. These beautiful structures, which it should be our pride to improve and preserve untainted, are accounted vile and not to be discussed; consequently, those most unfit are united in marriage, and those subject to personal or hereditary disease increase and multiply, filling the earth with sin and sorrow. The nauseous "purity" which produces all this should be scouted as criminally filthy, and recklessly foolish. We should then see how necessary it is to enquire into character, habits, and family antecedents; how wicked it is to permit those who can produce none but diseased or defective offspring ever to marry; and that no iniquity of parents can equal that of giving a pure maiden to an impure man. Physical beauty alone should never be allowed to outweigh moral beauty, nor mental excellency be held inferior to wealth. Great authorities, like Möbius, Charcot, Féré, and others, group together as brain and nerve diseases: insanity, eccentricity, violent temper, paralysis, epilepsy, hysteria, neuralgia, scrofula, gout, diabetes, consumption, asthma, dipsomania, deformities, and mal-formations. "All these may alternate with each other in a given family, one member suffering from one and another from another." All arise from imperfect brain nutrition, which is always transmitted from parent to child.

Our social vices entail the widespread scourge called syphilis. This is so common among a certain class of men that they affect to treat it as of little moment. Often men of rank and education are not ashamed to give their daughters to those who have suffered from it. Yet every eminent physician knows that up to two or three years after the last signs of the 'secondary symptoms' have disappeared "the infected person will transmit the

disease itself to any child born or begotten," and, in neglected cases, even after twelve years or more. In some instances the power of continuing the species is destroyed. "Kissing is a common form of conveying the infection." Healthy wet nurses receive it from infected infants. This insidious and loathsome disease is not hereditary *as syphilis* beyond three generations,—seldom beyond two, but it is none the less deadly. It affects the whole system. No tissue or organ is safe from it. It produces degenerate conditions. It devitalizes and deteriorates the family stock. Its virus is never expelled from the system, and may occasion other diseases years after health has been apparently restored. And for many generations it induces any of the neurotic complaints we have enumerated. The experience of Dr. Tarnowsky, a distinguished observer, shows that 71 per cent. of women suffering from syphilis, give birth to dead children, who die in their first year. Professor Fournie found it fatal to offspring to the extent of 28 per cent. through the father, and 60 through the mother, but 68½ per cent. when both suffered from it. Mr. Lecky describes it as "an epidemic which is one of the most dreadful among mankind, which communicates itself from the guilty husband to the innocent wife, and even transmits its taint to the offspring"; and he adds that no other feature of English life appears so infamous to continental physicians and writers, as the fact that it should be suffered to rage unchecked. Yet, when marriage is contemplated, no questions are asked, no investigation is made. The men who are careful—extremely careful—in the breeding of their domestic animals, ignore the same necessity for their children. Hence the Royal Houses of Europe are profoundly tainted with insanity, and the aristocracies with epilepsy and other neurotic diseases. Benoiston de Châteauneuf proved the average life of a French noble family to be about three hundred years. And, at the beginning of the last century,

the *haute noblesse* at the French Court looked like *une société de malades*.

We have only touched the fringe of our subject, but we must stop. We commend our readers to search further for themselves. Possibly the day is not far distant when education will be directed on better lines, when the teaching of physiology will be compulsory, and soundness of mind and body will be the chief desiderata. And when sex distinctions and privileges are swept away, physical, moral, and mental improvement will grow apace. This beautiful world will be the home of beauty. Ignorance and crime, like unclean beasts, will flee to its remote recesses. Men will live for themselves and for each other, and not for arbitrary laws that harass, injure, and destroy. The foul brood engendered by ages of superstition will disappear, and all will see that only through a new and wiser system of marriage can the regeneration and perfection of mankind be brought about.



TRUE LOVE.

"True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the Heaven.—
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie
Which heart to heart and mind to mind
In body and in soul can bind."

Scott (Lay of the Last Minstrel).

Ambition and love appear to be the two master passions of mankind. But few ambitions are worthy, and comparatively few loves are true. Vulgar love, like vulgar ambition, may degrade its possessor and ruin others, but true love ennobles him who feels it, and exalts its object beyond all else. Lately our contention that true love is the product of later times, and was unknown to the ancients, has been called in question by one or two superficial critics. The Bible and Horace have been quoted to disprove our statement. In regard to the Scriptures, the conditions of life were such in Biblical times that its existence was impossible. Women were either slaves or semi-slaves, constantly in subjection from their birth to their death to one man or another. Solomon's song is very beautiful as the production of an ancient Eastern poet. But the royal lover, whose harem contained a thousand women obtained by power, could never have known the sentiment in its purity, however much he may have fancied a new beauty, or however impassioned may have been his lay. Much has been made of Jacob's serving seven years for Rachel, but that was a common mode in those days of obtaining a wife when a man was too poor to buy one, and it is still done in many parts of the world. Jacob's affection, which came nearer to modern love than any of which we have read, did not prevent him from taking as many other women as were offered him, although he preferred Rachel to her sore-eyed sister, and to the female slaves who were his concubines. Seeing that she was quick-witted, "beautiful, and well-favoured," his preference is not surprising, nor that the seven years "seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her," for these were years of courtship between a patient shepherd and a pretty shepherdess. In the pastoral age they took no note of time. Jacob's grandfather had just completed a century, and his wife and half-sister was nearly as old when Isaac was born to them. We sober Westerns must not take the tales of the

East too literally. The whole account is deeply tinged with the exaggerations and marvels of the Arabian Nights. Sarah is the Jewish Helen with whom all who see her are smitten. By collusion she passed as Abraham's sister. The King of Egypt takes this very matured beauty into his harem, and "the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarah, Abraham's wife." Twenty-four years later, when she was extremely old and at least forty years past the period of child-bearing, her husband was informed that she would become a mother. She is very sarcastic over it, regarding it as a physical impossibility; nevertheless, it came to pass within a year. But, in the meantime, her beauty attracts the notice of the King of Gerar, who also seizes her, and takes the venerable princess into his harem. God visits him in a dream and tells him all about his mistake. Besides which, the fertile ladies of the court were suddenly afflicted with barrenness, but as soon as Abimelech restored her, things went on as usual. If the purity of love is to be proved in Scriptural times, it must be on more coherent testimony than all this. The course of Nature proceeds irrespective of human morality or immorality, but the sacred writers had very confused notions of moral and physical causes and sequences, and often mixed them incongruously.

The Odes of Horace are next cited to refute us. Well, all who have really read Horace know that he followed the filthy and degrading custom of the Romans of his day, just as they copied the Greeks, and that it was a matter of indifference to him whether the object of his affection were a girl or a boy. The moderns with all their progress are seen to be bad enough, but the ancients must not be quoted as knowing anything of love. The men were too sensual, and the women too servile, to comprehend the pure passion of to-day, and the prettiest phrases that ever were penned cannot conceal the vile immoralities and unnatural lusts which they have enshrined. When our objectors next do us the honour to criticize, we trust that they will first prepare themselves by some elementary acquaintance with the subject.

Chaucer, in the Clerk's Tale, gives the story of the patient "Grisildis," who suffered every cruel indignity at her husband's hands and never once complained nor resented it. This was much esteemed. Abject submission, however, is not love. No woman could really love a man who treated her so foully. Yet many poets

have held up this Griselda as a pattern of wifely virtue and conjugal love. The Patient Countess, in Percy's Reliques, is a somewhat similar but better example. The first stanza anticipates its moral:

"Impatience chaungeth smoke to flame,
But jalousie is hell ;
Some wives by patience have reduc'd
Ill husbands to live well ;
As did the ladie of an earle,
Of whom I now shall tell."

The ancient ballad of Sir Cauline who loved "faire Christabelle, that lady bright," the daughter of a "bonnye kinge in Ireland ferr over the sea," is a beautiful tale of unhappy love with a tragic ending. Yet we see from the first that it was chiefly "the lust of the eye." They had no other reason to love, for they knew little of each other.

The ballad of "The Nut-brown Maid," gives us a nearer glimpse of the true passion. Yet even she seems to have been a relation of the Patient Griselda. Men, however, like women to learn that the most esteemed among them were those who would flatter and pet them notwithstanding their infidelities, their coarseness of mind and manners, their neglect, and general bad conduct. Thus pretty fools without much sensibility have always been admired, while women of sense and learning and self-respect have been sometimes shunned. Both sides, however, are becoming wiser. Men are not so ready to marry a doll-face as they were, and women begin to look for men with brains and sound hearts. Increase of caution will produce increase of domestic happiness, and will make less work for the Divorce Courts. For it is not possible for two to run together unless well suited to each other. They cannot even pull comfortably through life in harness together unless they are unanimous. There are so many tendencies to friction in married life that it is certain to prove unhappy unless misery be insured against beforehand. Nothing but mutual love can preserve them from this, a love based on profound knowledge of each other, profound respect, mutual admiration, and general agreement, which altogether produce an irresistible attraction. Physical beauty may play a part, but mental and moral beauty will always prove more powerful and more enduring, for while the first is fading the others are ripening into fuller perfection. True love can only be experienced by the highest natures, because the moral qualities required for it are indispensable. They must be true, chaste, full of honour and fidelity, tender, generous,

and firm as adamant. The false, the sensual, the dishonourable and faithless, the hard, the mean, and the fickle, can never acquire the happiness of possessing it. Its heavenly delights are for reverent dispositions. If "love is heaven and heaven is love," then to love truly is the most perfect moral and spiritual education. Selfishness has no place in it. Self-abnegation is its flower and root. In order to obtain this supreme felicity of life, we must avoid all that will lower our moral tone, and must cherish whatever will advance it. They are fools and egoists who despise love. Love is the highest form of altruism, and is, therefore, the most perfect goodness. Whosoever lives for or to serve another without looking for fee or reward, lives a life of love. Nature is love: by her laws each lives for others; "all the flowers kiss one another." Heaven is love. God is love. And a true union might, and should be, the most perfect means of human happiness could we only purify and etherealize it with the spirit of true love. The noblest and wisest minds have already obtained it, and when true nobility and true honesty become less rare, true love will be more general. But while marriage continues to be based upon unworthy considerations, inspired by recklessness, ignorance, lust, selfishness, or weak ambition, instead of true love, it will be like that house which was built upon the sands: "And the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."



NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

WHO SHOULD PROPOSE ?

"Where found you confidence your suit to move?"

—*Dryden.*

"Beshrew me, but 'twere pity of his heart,
That could refuse a boon to such a suitress."

—*Rowe.*

Marriage is like a voyage by sea—it reveals character. It shows others what manner of men and women we are. So Corydon may be the gentlest of swains, and Phyllis the sweetest shepherdess that ever carried a crook, so long as they meet to woo and to be wooed; but when they exchange their pastoral pursuits for homely housekeeping, the defects of each are for the first time exposed to the other. It is all very well to sit on a mossy bank beneath some ancient tree in the leafy month of June, surrounded by flowers and frisking lambs, and to babble of love and eternal fidelity; but to sit by a smoky fire in winter, when the larder is empty and the purse is low, and flowers and lambs and June are dead, and love itself fast dying, will test the strongest vows and unloose the most latent discords. Each is surprised to find that the character of the other was misunderstood. Each feels deceived and aggrieved, and reproaches and tears take the place of billings and cooings.

But the glittering mansion is not exempt from the evils of the thatched cottage. There may be wealth and rank, and a full measure of worldly prosperity, yet discord will enter in. Lady Clara Vere de Vere is as frail and unstable as her humbler sisters. Her lordly spouse is in his way as selfish and as exacting as simple Corydon. Ennui and friction are as fatal to the happiness of the great as cold and want are to the poor. Discontent is the cause with both. And why? Because neither really knew the other. Because both masked their feelings and displayed their most agreeable qualities and abilities. Because wit; each the rôle of the man was to win, and of the woman to be won. It was his to pursue boldly, and hers to coyly retreat. Thus he displayed a fictitious courage, and she an artificial modesty, with two wrecked lives as a result.

These methods may have been suitable for a barbarous age when men wooed like the birds and beasts of the field, and lived scarcely better lives than they. But at this

period of human evolution, we require more rational processes of mating, processes which will promote truth and honesty between the sexes prior to marriage, and thus prevent unpleasant after developments. And in order to accomplish this we must first sweep away the cobwebs of superstition, particularly those which render it immodest for a woman to make the first advances in affection. Women are far shrewder than men in the matter of sexual choice, and are less governed by blind passion. If they had the same freedom to propose as men have, there would be fewer unhappy marriages. It is true a woman has many ways of letting a man know that he is pleasing to her without saying so in so many words. But men have the same. And any such indication on her part would, as things are, be liable to serious misconstruction. She might be accused of levity, or even of wantonness, unless she could be permitted to make her intentions clear by a definite proposal. It might sound a little strange at first for a modest and pretty girl to say, "Dear Mr. Smith, I have had the pleasure of knowing you for some time, and have the highest esteem for your character. I am sure you would make a good and affectionate husband to a suitable wife. Our views and feelings have often been mutually exchanged in the most friendly and unreserved manner, and I have learnt to entertain a tender regard for you. If you, as I flatter myself you do, feel similarly towards me, and think I could make you a wife after your own heart, I should feel myself the happiest woman alive by your accepting me. Should you consent to my proposal, I shall be delighted to mention it at once to your Mother." This, we say, might seem strange at first, but not stranger than now, when at a tenants' ball the ladies of the great house invite the men to dance with them; and after a few courageous maidens had essayed and succeeded, it would quickly become the fashion. Young men, we hear, are shy of proposing now-a-day, and so cultivate bachelorhood. This is not only an evil to the commonwealth, but it is also a wrong to its fairer members, and a tacit reproach to their character. As men are not generally given to excessive modesty as to their own qualifications, it cannot be supposed that they think themselves not good enough for the women. It would be a great slur on our marriageable young women, however, to suppose that they are not good enough for the men, and still worse if it could be said that neither are fit for marriage. If the young men will not do as their fathers before them, and what has hitherto been considered their

duty, let our girls inaugurate a better state of things by proposing on their own account. After the first novelty has worn off, no one will accuse them of impropriety or forwardness.

As things are now, men only are allowed to propose. We have not desired this custom, but to make it interchangeable and common to both sexes. That it is not immodest for a woman to propose, Desdemona herself proved; she was unquestionably modest, "a maiden never bold," said her father. Her husband, when charged with bewitching her, explained to his judges that she had requested him when they were alone to tell over again the story of his adventures. With manly frankness he concluded:—

"My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs;
 She swore; in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful;
 She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished
 That heaven had made her such a man; she thanked me;
 And bade me if I had a friend that loved her,
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.
 She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
 And I lov'd her that she did pity them."

Notwithstanding their disparity of years, of colour, and race, this natural union was an inexpressibly happy one until the noble nature of Othello was betrayed by the villainy of an arch-rogue and the fatuousness of a fool. Surely their misfortune is no argument against love matches or maidenly proposals. Desdemona knew a hero when she met him, because her judgment was sound and her education sufficient for discrimination. But if girls are imperfectly educated, and therefore deficient in judgment, they will undoubtedly mistake shams for realities, and tinsel for sterling gold.

In truth it seems most fitting, if there should be any preference in proposing, that women should possess it. At present marriage is of more importance to her than to a man. Our opponents are never tired of telling us that it is her avocation. We will take them at their word. A good woman's happiness centres in her home. There she is mistress, mother, and queen. It is her delight to make all within its influence the happier and better for her rule, and to convert it into an earthly Paradise. But to do this she must have the man whom she can love most truly, and must, therefore, have the right of choosing. One of the most accomplished and beautiful Eng-

lishwomen of her day, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, daughter of a duke and wife of an ambassador, and an associate of the most intellectual men in Europe, an unromantic, clear-headed, fashionable lady who saw more of life, perhaps, than any other woman, wrote in reply to Rochefoucault's cynical maxim, "That marriage is sometimes convenient, but never delightful," and said: "It is impossible to taste the delights of love in perfection, but in a well-assorted marriage. . . . A fond couple attached to each other by mutual affection, are two lovers who live happily together. Though the priest pronounces certain words, though the lawyers draw up certain instruments; yet I look on these preparatives in the same light as a lover considers a rope-ladder which he fastens to his mistress's window: If they can but live together, what does it signify by what means the union is accomplished. . . . Two married lovers lead very different lives: they have the pleasure to pass their time in a successive intercourse of mutual obligations and marks of benevolence, and they have the delight to find that each forms the entire happiness of the beloved object. Herein consists perfect felicity. The most trivial concerns of economy become noble and elegant when they are exalted by sentiments of affection: to furnish an apartment is not barely to furnish an apartment; it is a place where I expect my lover; to prepare a supper is not merely giving orders to my cook; it is an amusement to regale the object I dote on. In this light a woman considers these necessary occupations as more lively and affecting pleasures than those gaudy sights which amuse the greater part of the sex, who are incapable of true enjoyment." The husband's feelings in his duties correspond to the wife's: he works for her, and both are prepared, by calm reflection, for mutual infirmities and the ravages of time. "When a pair," she adds, "who entertain such rational sentiments, are united by indissoluble bonds, all nature smiles upon them, and the most common appear delightful. In my opinion, such a life is infinitely more happy and more voluptuous than the most ravishing and best regulated gallantry."

Another reason why a woman should have the privilege of proposing is, that it is she who will bear the fruits of marriage. Hers will be the pain, the years of weariness, the intense anxiety and affection for her offspring. If she endure the cross, should she not also wear the crown? If in suffering and sorrow she bring forth children, should she not have the selection of her partner,

so that she may be indemnified for all by the joy of knowing that they spring from one whom she is proud to call their father? Women are growing wiser, and if free to propose would elect the worthiest they could obtain. The wiser they prove the more select will be their choice. Rakes and profligates of all descriptions they will reject. They will refuse to join themselves to any unless sound in body, mind, and morals. Maternity will be revered as a sacred function demanding every just precaution; as an obligation to reproduce man as in the Biblical beginning—in the likeness and image of God.



WHICH IS TO BLAME?

MAN OR WOMAN?

[Reprinted from the "Woodhull & Claflin Weekly," 1871.]

"Ignorance is not innocence, but vulgarity."

In my first series of Essays, I defined "Virtue" and "Modesty." I will now venture on a definition of "Seduction."*

With the world generally, the assumption is that women and women only, are liable to seduction, and that men are entirely free from any such weakness. Now what is the implication in all this? Why, simply that women are weaklings and ninnies, and that they have no opinion, no character, no power of self-defence, but simply the liability to be influenced to their ruin by men. And women consent to and strengthen this implication by conceding the truth of this false notion, by joining in the clamour about seduction, precisely as they concur in the false and insulting discrimination between the virtue of man and the virtue of woman. Now, the fact is that seduction is, and ought to be, mutual. No love is without seduction in its highest sense. But love is not the only attribute of either man or woman. There should also be wisdom, character, purpose, and power of self-regulation and defence on the part of each. If there is any difference, woman is, of the two, the grand seductive force, whether the seduction be legitimate charm or its counter-part. She is, by nature and organisation, if the poets speak the truth, "a magazine of enticement and influence and power" over the imagination and conduct of the opposite sex. But even if that were not so, if she stood on the same level of capacity in this respect with the man, the condition into which society has thrust her compels her to make a profession of seduction. It is considered a

* This article on "Seduction" was written by Lady Cook twenty-five years ago. It has still, and especially at the present time, *sa raison d'être*, although some passages may, in some respects, be out of date; but even those passages referring to the conditions of the position of woman—which conditions have now happily almost ceased to exist—will have in themselves their purpose in reminding the reader of the vast progress made in the cause of woman since that period, and in giving the opportunity to do homage to the valiant efforts of the many of its noble workers.—NOTE OF PUBLISHER.

reproach for a woman to be an "old maid." She must, therefore, by all possible means, lure some man into marriage; and not succeeding in that directly, she is tempted to beguile him into some act which will compromise him and compel marriage subsequently. She has the strongest possible motive, therefore, from this point of view, to be herself the tempter; and if the roofs were lifted off the tops of the houses, if the facts were simply known of what is every day occurring, I believe it would be found that a majority of women exert an undue influence over men.

But it is not merely that the female sex is pre-eminently interested in the whole matter of love, and is, by nature and organisation, representative of that half of human concerns, nor the fact, which I have alluded to, that she is humiliated and despised by society if she fails to secure a husband; there are still stronger impulses and motives and necessities operating on her. As things are in the world at present, women have not equal chances with men of earning and winning anything; men hold the purse and women are dependents and candidates for election to place. They must entice and seduce and entrap men, either in the legitimate or in the illegitimate way, in order to secure their portion of the spoil. It is no fault of theirs if they have to do this. Society condemns them to a condition in which they have no other resource. I am not arguing the rectitude or otherwise of that point now. I am merely adverting to the fact as a reason why many women make a business—the great pursuit in fact of their lives—of the seduction of men; while with men the betrayal of women is an incident, mostly a sudden temptation perhaps thrown in their way, without suspicion on their part, by the very women who then raise a hubbub of excitement about having been ruined. When people had slaves, they expected that their pigs, chickens, corn, and everything lying loose about the plantation would be stolen. But the planters began by stealing the liberty of their slaves, by stealing their labour, by stealing, in fact, all they had; and the natural result was that the slaves stole back all they could. So in the case of women. Reduced to the condition of dependency, and with no other avenue for acquirement or success than the one which lies through their mastery or influence over the opposite sex, their natural powers to charm and seduce are, of course, reinforced by astuteness and trickery, and they not only have the cunning to beguile the men, in the majority of cases, but the astuteness also to throw the blame on the men for betray-

ing them. This is sharp practice ; but they are taught in a school of sharp practice which the men have instituted for them ; and the result is a natural and necessary one from the present organization of society. The very foundation of our existing social order is mutual deception and all-prevalent hypocrisy ; and this will always be the case until we have freedom ; until we recognise the rights of nature, until we provide in a normal and proper way for every passion of the human soul.

There are two policies, or theories, of action in the world. One is the policy of "repression" ; the other is the policy of "enfranchisement," or enlargement. The policy of repression has its whole legion of legitimate consequences, which are in the main what we know as the vices of society. The slave was taught to be tricky and wily and wise after his method, to circumvent the wrong which was inflicted on him. The depressed and oppressed woman is made to be hypocritical and frivolous and in every way false to the higher nature of womanhood, false to her duties in life, and false to the true relations which she should hold to men. By enslaving her the male sex is doing the greatest possible injustice to itself. It is only by enfranchising her, by helping her by every possible method to security of condition, to the opportunity for development, to the means of being true and noble, that men will have in the world a being whom he can truly love and whom he will be proud in all ways to aid and protect. The policy of repression is therefore suicidal or self-defeating ; and as the world grows wiser, it will be, in all the spheres of life, replaced by the nobler, more natural, and beneficent policy of freedom, with order of a higher and better kind, which will spontaneously follow.

I have spoken of seduction in a somewhat more general sense than the definitions to be found in the dictionary, as applicable to all the attractions which exist between the sexes, or to that which is exercised by the one over the other ; but it is generally confined to, and defined in, its bad sense, as the exertion of this charm unduly and adversely to the real wish and the true interests of the party affected by it. In this sense it is mutual, or as likely to occur on the one side as on the other, even if it were not stimulated on the part of the woman by the considerations which I have suggested. What I have said will perhaps enable my readers to apportion for themselves the degree of criminality. The immediate criminality is more likely to be with the woman than with the man ; but the remote criminality of

instituting and maintaining conditions in society which force the woman into hypocrisy is more that of the man; and yet it is hardly worth while to talk of criminality in either case. The great fact is one of ignorance. What the world wants is more knowledge of how to do right. The human passions have been found to be terrible forces, like steam or fire, and instead of studying them in order to regulate them in accordance with their own true laws and their adaptation to the world's well-being, they have been feared merely, fought down and repressed.

It may be asked "ought a woman to risk her happiness for a lifetime on a promise of marriage?" In my profession of a physician, and in a practice of more than a dozen years, I was consulted by women, and especially by those in the higher rank in society, for the reason that they had more leisure, means, and opportunity to investigate. I have been consulted by thousands of such women, and I can truly say that, in a very large proportion of cases, they have confessed or confided to me that they had placed the fullest confidence in their husbands prior to marriage, and that no subsequent advantage was taken of that fact by the men. In other words, the so-called "seduction" in these numerous instances was not followed by desertion. It never became known, therefore, as "seduction." It is a very prevalent opinion that the prompting motive to marriage on the part of men is the mere gratification of the one passion. The truth is, I believe, very much the opposite; and that men seek instinctively, and hope to find, in that relation a true, rational, and spiritual companionship, as well as material charm; but, alas! how often are they sadly disappointed! The woman proves to be a mere doll, a characterless and insipid person. The ideality which had enshrined her before marriage is dispersed after a few days or weeks of acquaintance and familiarity. Instead of rising in the esteem of her husband by the development of new and grand characteristics, she sinks under his contempt, or palls upon his interest, and he is driven elsewhere in the hope of meeting that companionship in women which the higher instinct of the manly soul constantly, whether consciously or unconsciously, craves. The popular assumption that when a woman has surrendered her greatest treasure she is threatened to be despised and abandoned for that, is not true. For if she is a woman of a great and noble soul, of commanding character of intellect, spirituality, and womanly worth, the true man from that time begins to know how to live. He is initiated by her generosity into the true knowledge of his own

nature, and elevated to the moral and æsthetic plane of a woman's soul.

On the other hand, her silly pretence of ignorance, her lack of true sentiment and dignity, her childishness, growing in some of its many shapes out of the false education and no education which surround this whole subject, are precisely what disgust and repel men and ruin them. It is another blunder to suppose that it is only women who get ruined. Women who allow themselves to think that sexuality and prettiness are the only charms they are expected to have, and that it is a disgrace for them to be strong-minded, are sure to wreck their own happiness and that of the man whom they ought to love.

I may here answer more than one correspondent by saying that I do not advocate the abrogation or the amendment of the Marriage Laws as long as they are needed, as long as there is nothing better, as long as people's ideas are not elevated above the plane of such laws. What I advocate is freedom of thought and speech on the subject, freedom to devise better methods; but I mean all this a great deal more with reference to opinion than with reference to law. What I want are higher development, better knowledge, and of course, better laws and better institutions to grow out of these. There are, undoubtedly, women who are weak and silly and simple, and who are taken advantage of by designing men. Until we have such systems of education as will tend to prevent women from being weak, simple, and silly, it is undoubtedly right to have laws punishing seduction with the utmost severity; but we have also, as I think I have shown, ninnies among men, and ought we not therefore to have laws for their protection? An Act of the Legislature entitled "An Act for the Protection of Ninnies against Designing Women" would be refreshing, and perhaps logically based upon the reason of the laws for the protection of female virtue. Indeed, there were, at one time, laws in England specifically "for the punishment of bad women who seduced the soldiers of the king."

I do not remember that the Bible has said much, if anything, about the awful crime of seducing women. It has, I believe, on the contrary, commiserated the sad condition of the ninny part of our mixed population. Read attentively Proverbs vii. on this subject. Making a running commentary on it, it reads somewhat as follows: "Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister, and call understanding thy kinswoman, that may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with

her words (the seducer). For at the window of my house I looked through my casement (peeped from behind the curtains, spying over other people's affairs, which showed the writer's interest in the subject) and I beheld among the simple ones (the ninny population—not the women, mind), a young man void of understanding (not a very rare case) passing the street near her corner (whoever she was, the woman that lived in the corner over the way), and he went the way to her house in the twilight in the evening, in the black and dark night (that is to say, repeatedly, and sometimes when it was so dark that 'it was all I could do to watch them'), and behold there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtle of heart (cunning and capable of seduction); so she caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him 'I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us us take our fill of love until the morning, let us solace ourselves with loves. For the good man (the husband) is not at home, he has gone a long journey. He hath taken a bag of money with him and will come home at the day appointed' (that is to say, not too soon for us). With her much fair speech she caused him to yield (seduced him), with the flattering of her lips she forced him to yield (figuratively, violation, I suppose). He goeth after her (nunny-like) straight-way as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool (as he was) to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strikes through his liver."

The point here is that the Bible makes the chief instance of seduction to be that of the man by the woman in common allusion to the matter. Indeed, we always admit this, after the first instance; but, then, without much logic for it, we assume that it is always the man, in this first instance of the the so-called "fall from virtue," who has betrayed and ruined the woman. This point the Bible does not mention or refer to. If, then, woman is the only sex which elevates seduction into a profession or a life-business, I suggest that there may be some mistake about the matter, and that the poor innocent girl, or older maiden, who wakes our sympathy for her wronged innocence, may, at least in a majority of cases, have planned her own ruin, and have seduced the foolish man into what goes afterwards as his criminality. I still adhere to my proposition of a law to emanate from Parliament "for the protection of ninnies against the seduction of young girls and grown women." If law is to regulate the matter, let the whole ground be effectually covered.

MARRIAGE.

"Wishing each other not divorced but dead,
They live respectably as man and wife."—BYRON.

If one were driven in a corner for an argument against the existing marriage system, it would only be necessary to refer to the records of the Divorce Courts during one short year. What a catalogue of wretchedness is contained in those files! Those "human documents" are more tragically pathetic than the most startlingly realistic work of the imagination ever written in the past or which can ever be penned in the future. People of all ranks and all classes devour their filthy details, published by the least reputable of the daily journals, and yet turn up the whites of their eyes and hold up their hands in hypocritical amazement when any would-be reformer of the existing horrible state of things steps into the arena to denounce unholiness, and to endeavour to bring about a more holy, a purer, and a more natural condition of things.

How often do we not hear it said, by women of the world, as well as by men, that "marriage is a lottery?" The proposition indeed is so self-evident as to be undeniable. A "lottery!" That is precisely what marriage has come to be. For one marriage of affection and love, there are many unions of what the French term "convenience"—that is to say, marriages wherein the prevailing, and often the only, element is cash! It is all a question (to employ the mordant phrase of the Poet Laureate) of "Proputty, proputty, proputty!" Now, how is the modern marriage "brought about?"

For reasons, which are so obvious that they do not require to be specified, I will deal first with marriage as it is known in what, by a polite fiction, are styled "the upper classes," albeit some of those who "live, move, and have their being" in that orbit have, by their evil example, done more than any other classes to bring the sacred institution of marriage into loathing and contempt. Like most of the other marts of commerce, the marriage of Modern Babylon is open for all practical purposes the whole year round, morning, noon, afternoon, and night. Special activity, however, reigns during the Spring and

Summer months, from April to the end of July the market-place of Society is thronged by matrons and maids, the latter decked out in all the colours of the rainbow, and further bedizened by the aid of "jewels rich and rare." No expense is spared by the matronly auctioneers to make their property attractive and fascinating, and every inducement is offered to purchasers to come and buy the human flesh and blood. The proprietors of all this beauty are their own auctioneers, and set up their rostrums as we have all seen, and can see every season, in every conceivable place; it may be an at home in Mayfair, a dance in Belgravia, or a Royal strawberry crush in Pall Mall. But, no matter where it may be, the procedure never varies, but is always the same.

A goodly assemblage having been got together, the auctioneer-mother mounts the rostrum, and the sale begins:—

"My lords and gentlemen, the catalogue of to-day's auction contains, as you will have seen, an unusually choice selection of youthful beauties, differing only in age, height, and colour. Many of them can trace their family history back to the days of Adam; they are highly accomplished, able to drive, ride, swim, row, fence, and play tennis as well as any of yourselves. Some have been taught, or perhaps I should say, have taught themselves to smoke, but at present, I grieve to say, these latter are in the minority. And now, my lords and gentlemen, with these few preliminary remarks, we will have Lot 1. brought forward. Her age is eighteen, and, as you will observe, she is a magnificent blonde, as like as possible to her female ancestress, the Countess of Ruffleton, whose portrait, painted by Lely, you have all doubtless seen at Hampton Court. Observe her lustrous eyes, the texture of her velvety skin, the roundness of her arms, the beauty of her bust, her delicate hands, and her small feet. Approach her more closely, gentlemen; don't be afraid—she won't mind your criticism. She is the last of six sisters, so don't let this opportunity slip. The reserve price put upon her is only £100,000. The purchaser need not have any birth at all. We ask no particulars as to the existence of grandfathers or grandmothers; money is the *sine quâ non*. £100,000 buys her! Buyer's name, please, Mr. Moneybags? Thank you. The solicitors will wait on you in the morning. Now put up the next lot."

And thus the sales of human flesh and blood proceed day after day and year after year in the marriage mart of

the Modern Babylon. If I am charged with exaggerating the prevailing condition of things, I am content to call one witness, and one only, in support of the accuracy of what I have set down in no spirit of malice or uncharitableness. Let us hear "Canon Liddon on the Marriage Market," for that is the exact heading which the newspapers gave their reports of that memorable discourse, which the ever-to-be-lamented divine delivered from the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral a short time before his death. Canon Liddon (I am now quoting textually from the newspaper reports of that period), preaching yesterday at St. Paul's on the parable of the rich landowner who had more goods than he could stow away, said there were many counterparts of him in modern society. . . . After dwelling on four considerations as to the use or abuse of property to be derived from the parable, Canon Liddon said:—

"The London season is approaching, and a bevy of mothers, like Generals on a campaign, will complain of no fatigue if they can only marry their daughters, not to high-souled and generous men, but to those who have a fortune. There will also be a group of young men, who, having lived a life of dissipation, are thinking of settling down. They will look for a girl, not with graces of character which will make her husband and children happy, but for one possessed of a dowry which will enable him to keep up a large establishment. Thus the most sacred of all human relationships, both for time and eternity, is prostituted to the brutal level of an affair of cash, and is quickly followed by months and years of misery, which, after seething in private, are paraded to the world amid the shame and degradation of the Divorce Court. He did not underrate the dangers of revolution likely to arise from the strained relations of capital, labour, strikes, and other causes, but there were dangers nearer home."

These words, of one of the most devoted sons of the Church who ever lived, made a profound, but not lasting, impression on the world generally. Nobody dared to criticise them, for they were stamped with the impress of Truth, and not to be ridiculed or explained away by sneering doctrinaires in the Press or Voltairian cynics in the drawing-rooms and clubs. Liddon had spoken and the mouths of the mockers were closed; and they were as dumb dogs in the presence of such an accusation. Dr. Magee, the deeply-regretted Archbishop of York, was another eminent cleric, who was not afraid to speak out,

either in the pulpit or the Senate, and a few others might be added to the glorious roll of men in high places who, recognising the social decadence of which every day furnishes more and more striking proofs, did not hesitate to denounce the evils which still surround us, despite the vaunted "spread of civilization," Free Education, and the benefits which we are told a Free and Cheap Press has bestowed upon the Empire.

When we read of Joan of Arc being tied to the stake and burnt, we shudder even now; but how far in excess of all physical torture is the refined cruelty of the nineteenth century, which compels a girl or a woman to be the companion of a lustful being who is hardly one remove from a beast, simply because she is penniless and he has well-filled coffers! In the great majority of cases it may be safely assumed that a girl knows nothing whatever about the duties and responsibilities of wedded life until she is married. Such ignorance is not only culpable, it is positively criminal on the part of those who have let her go blindfolded to the altar. Where there has been no love, how can there ever be any respect? And where the husband sets a bad example—as he too often does, particularly in aristocratic life—who can wonder at the wife straying into the paths of sin? The wonder is, not that there is so little good in the world, but that there is not more vice than unfortunately exists.

Marriage, according to the existing system, is, with many women, the first step towards demoralisation—the initial step to Avernus—from which there is no retreat. "All hope abandon ye who enter here!" It is a sad and ghastly fact that a newly-married woman, no matter how young she may be, is considered fair game by all the elderly and youthful rouses whose position enables them to approach her. Every artful wile is practised to lead her astray; she is flattered and fooled to the top of her bent; money is lavished upon her; and, to sum up, she finds a life of sin so much easier and more pleasurable than one of virtue, that she too seldom hesitates before leading it.

Again, if we do but consider the number of opportunities which young and middle-aged married women have of kicking over the traces, we shall be the less surprised at the appalling results of modern marriage. Where the alliance has been entirely a question of cash, and where, as in any great city like London and New York, women are surrounded by luxuries and beset by the most insidious temptations, how can we expect society of all

kinds to be other than it is? The looseness of the conversation at the dinner-table, and even in the drawing-room, has much to do with ruining women, especially if they be of the giddy and thoughtless kind. And what shall we say of feminine dress, which, in this year of grace one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, may be said to have reached the acme of indecency and extravagance? It seems to be a race with "fashionable" women who shall wear the most décolletée gown and the largest diamonds. Whenever I see one of these much-jewelled ladies, I am reminded of what Juvenal says in his terrible trenchant and biting Sixth Satire: There is nothing a woman will not allow herself, nothing she holds disgraceful, when she has encircled her neck with emeralds, and inserted ear-rings of great value in her ears, stretched with their weight. Is it not humiliating to reflect that the world is no better now than it was in its infancy—than it was when the greatest satirist who ever lived penned his scathing denunciations of the women of Old Rome? Juvenal, remember, was born in a small town of the Volsei, about the year of Christ 38, yet his Satires are almost as applicable to the end of the nineteenth century as they were to the period of which he wrote.

Let us glance for a moment at the frequently discussed union of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes.

They were brought together through the medium of Mr. Herbert Spencer, and in less than three years, as is evident from her correspondence, they had become everything to each other. They could not legally marry, inasmuch as Mr. Lewes's wife was living. Mr. J. W. Cross, who, less than two years after the death of Lewes, was married to George Eliot at the fashionable fane in Hanover Square, says:—"In forming a judgment on so momentous a question, it is above all things necessary to understand what was actually undertaken and what was actually achieved; and, in my opinion, this can be best arrived at, not from outside statement or arguments, but by consideration of the true tenour of the life" which followed, in the development of which Mr. Lewes's true character, as well as that of George Eliot, unfolded itself. George Eliot herself, writing to a lady in defence of her line of conduct, declared, "If there is any one action or relation in my life which is and always has been profoundly serious, it is my relation to Mr. Lewes." In order to allay any prejudice which her friends may have had against her mode of life (says one of her biographers), she argues the possibility for two persons to have different

opinions on momentous subjects with equal sincerity, with an equally earnest conviction that their respective opinions are alone the truly moral ones. "If we differ on the subject of marriage laws," says George Eliot, writing to Mrs. Bray, the lady above referred to, "I at least can believe of you that you cleave to what you believe to be good; and I don't know anything in the nature of your views that should prevent you believing the same of me. . . . One thing I can tell you in a few words: Lightly and easily broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with ties do not act as I have done. That any unworldly, unsuperstitious person, who is sufficiently acquainted with the realities of life, can pronounce my relation with Mr. Lewes immoral, I can only understand by remembering how subtle and complex are the influences which mould opinion. From the majority of persons, of course, we never looked for anything but condemnation. We are leading no life of self-indulgence, except, indeed, that being happy in each other, we find everything easy. . . . I should not care to vindicate myself if I did not love you, and desire to relieve you of the pain which you say these conclusions have given you. I should like never to write about myself again; it is not healthy to dwell on one's own feelings and conduct, but only try and live more faithfully and more lovingly every fresh day." It is, perhaps, hardly necessary for me to point out what is perfectly well known—namely, that Lewes and his wife had previously come to the conclusion that they could no longer live together. The world would be all the better if we had more George Eliot's—women with the courage to be true to their hearts and their convictions—and fewer of those women who, in accordance with the monstrous law of society that you may commit any number of sins if you can do so without being found out, lead double lives, and instead of elevating themselves and their husbands by the good influence which an honourable attachment would exercise over them, gradually sink down and down, and become brutalised under the weight of the dual existence which they have been beguiled into leading. These, however, are precisely the women who are most severe and unsparing in denouncing the weaker vessels who have fallen in public estimation, simply because they have not been sufficiently clever to observe the Eleventh Commandment: "Thou shalt not be found out!"

From the days when, to go no farther back, Hogarth

painted his "Marriage à la Mode," down to the present date, our satirists have made the marriage institution a target for their most pointed shafts. One eminent writer makes these pertinent remarks, which I perhaps may be pardoned for observing fully bear out my assertions as printed above:—

"Considering how fashionable marriages originate, it is astonishing that they do not turn out worse than they generally do. A man meets a girl in a ballroom, admires her, gets into the way of dancing with her, calls on her parents, and, perhaps, is asked to dinner. The end of the season approaches; she seems to prefer him to others; the match would be suitable; he proposes and is accepted. . . . Whatever the cause and explanation, a thoroughly united and loving couple is comparatively seldom to be met with in good society. . . . Finding it terribly dull at home, she invites some of her most favoured acquaintances to call on her. Soon one succeeds in rendering himself more agreeable than his rivals, and he gradually establishes his position as permanent cavalier. . . . and she soon gets so used to his visits and attractions as to look on them as almost necessities of life. By degrees the cavalier draws his intimacy closer. . . . Then the woman must be a prodigy if she is not in great danger of forfeiting her fair fame."

Our novelists and playwrights base the great majority of their stories and dramatic plots on the unhappiness of those women. And as it is in "Society," so it is in the ranks of the middle and lower middle classes—in fact, the bourgeoisie. Mr. Giblet, the poulterer, will not allow his daughter to wed the son of Mr. Spratt, the fishmonger, unless he has ocular demonstration of the fact that Spratt père is certain to "cut up warm," and *vice-versâ*. The great linendraper, who has made a fortune by the sale of shirting and huckaback, urges his son to marry into the ranks of the aristocracy, and threatens to cut him with the proverbial shilling unless he does so. Not long ago the daughter of a Hebrew dressmaker espoused a Roman Catholic nobleman! Indeed, the children of wealthy Jews frequently marry into Christian families whose blood is pure though their purses are light. In fact, from the top to the bottom of the ladder it is the same story—"Proputty—proputty—proputty!" The American poet summed up the matter tersely and accurately when he wrote—

"O, dimes and dollars—dollars and dimes!
An empty pocket 's the worst of crimes!"

It is only on rare occasions that we hear any reference made to the "sanctity of the marriage-tie." This is well, for, remembering what Society is, and has long been, it would take a judge who has been through many divorce cases to tell us the precise amount of "sanctity" which still hovers over the institution of marriage. A primary evil of the existing institution of marriage is the mad haste with which many matrimonial alliances are concluded. The young couple who are to be "joined together in holy matrimony" see one another, so to speak, in false colours—at all events, not in their own characters. They are thrown together for a short time, when both are decked out in the most attractive manner, and usually under circumstances which do not admit of any but the merest puerilities of the day being gossiped about. A few hasty conversations at parties, where everything is artificial, and everybody playing a part; an occasional chat in a drawing-room, where the girl's mother and sisters are watching her every movement and striving to catch what he is saying; a stolen meeting in the park or elsewhere—these are often the only opportunities afforded the husband and wife of the future to become acquainted with each other. "Acquaintance" is indeed the right word for it, inasmuch as their knowledge of one another rarely or never develops into anything more until the clergyman has made them one. But, indeed, it may be stated as an incontestible fact, that under the present conditions of social life it takes years for people to know each other at all intimately; yet, in face of this drawback, parents willingly give their consent to the marriage of their children, well knowing that the girl and the young man are absolutely without any—even the smallest—knowledge of each other's real character, temperament, disposition, and good or bad qualities. Opportunity of talking over the serious matters inseparable from that existence into which they are about to plunge, unreflecting, yet nevertheless responsible, they have never had. Each is more or less infatuated with the other; and that is the Alpha and the Omega of their wooing!

A man no sooner endeavours to fathom the ideas, capabilities, and general character of a girl to whom he has been drawn more than to another, than his evident partiality for her is misinterpreted, and he is asked by the eager match-making mother what his "intentions" are. Thus he is too often bamboozled into what is called "making a declaration," and he finds himself "engaged" before he knows whether he is standing on his head or on

his heels! When, by some chance or other, he arrives at the terrible conclusion that the young lady is not at all suited to his notions of what a helpmate should be, it is too late for him to retract, the least symptom of his wish to do so being greeted by a hint that the matter will have to be referred to the family solicitor. Fearful of such a denouement as a breach of promise action, he holds to his written or spoken word, and goes to the altar with the knowledge that he is entering upon a marriage which can but end in dire, humiliating failure. Is it not a crying shame and scandal that the Church and the law should sanction such unholy alliances, ending as so many of them inevitably must, and do end, in the Divorce Court, or worse? Surely a woman who offers herself for money in the street is a lesser offender than one who sells herself at the altar for a fortune or a title. The former, indeed, does less positive harm to the community than the latter, who is guilty of bringing into the world children for whom she has no real affection, and who are too often the fruit of a transient animal passion.

Even worse are the marriages of ignorance, which, alas! only too often become criminal marriages. When mothers take less trouble over the accomplishments and appearance of their children, and more over the early formation of their characters and dispositions; when, instead of bedizening them with jewellery, tricking them out in purple and fine linen, and rushing them into marriage, for no other reason than to get rid of them because there are others growing up, and because they are crazy to secure for their offspring big incomes and what is fatuously termed "social position"; when mothers steadfastly and determinedly impress upon their progeny the absolute necessity of deep consideration and reflection before taking a step which can never be retraced, and which, if hastily and thoughtlessly taken, may embitter and perhaps ruin several lives; when mothers become the true guides, teachers, and loving advisers of their children, instead of being, as now, their covert enemies; when they impress upon them that a passing fancy or a spasmodic passion must not be mistaken for love, and that love which is not based on mutual respect will never serve as the foundation of married happiness; and when they teach them that marriage was not instituted for the simple purpose of getting them "well provided for"—in other words, of enabling them to live the lives of drones; when, in short, mothers will no longer think it "wrong" to discuss marriage and its attendant responsibilities with

their daughters, but will initiate them into the duties and requirements of wedded life, and look upon them as their best friends instead of as burdens and ignorant beings, from whom everything relating to the innermost life of a woman—or of man—must be jealously hidden, while girls must only be permitted to see the artificial side of life, and be callously left to find out the rest for themselves—then, and not till then, shall we have moral marriages, unions of hearts and souls; in which the characters of both men and women will be elevated, purified, and developed—unions in which both husband and wife can truly say—not only at the altar, but every day of their lives—that they will “love, honour, and respect” each other.



WRONGS OF MARRIED MEN.

"If too wary, then she'll shrew thee,
If too lavish, she'll undo thee."

—*Cotton's Joys of Marriage.*

The circumstances relating to marriage are becoming so confused and anomalous, that a re-casting of the laws pertaining to it must soon be universally demanded. At present married people scarcely know where they are. The daily papers constantly give most pathetic accounts of injured husbands in humble life resorting to Police Magistrates for assistance or advice, and finding that they have no remedy against the misconduct of their worthless partners. We have not been sparing, from time to time, in enumerating the wrongs of women. But the men have theirs also to a less degree, and it is only equitable that attention should be drawn to them, for justice and fair play should be given to all. We have never demanded that women should have any privileges denied to men. We only ask that both should share alike.

Not long ago, when the law gave the husband sole control of the wife's unsettled property, it was right that he should be liable for her maintenance. But when, as now, a married woman retains her own, the reason for compelling maintenance from the husband has disappeared. She may have a good house and a good income, and from caprice or other cause, may deny him admittance to his married home, and to any share of her living. If destitute he may go to the workhouse, while she is living in luxury, and no claim can be made upon her for his sustenance. But reverse the positions, and the husband will be compelled to allow her a maintenance. This system falls hardest on the poorest. It is not uncommon for a Police Magistrate to order a working man to contribute twelve shillings a week or more to the support of a separated wife. Few men of such a class can do this and live.

Again, since the Jackson case, no husband can compel an unwilling wife to cohabit with him. Of course, this is right enough. But, on the other hand, a wife can compel an unwilling husband, by a Judge's order, to restore her to cohabitation or pay the penalty of refusal. This seems an unfair distinction. If a husband neglect his wife and family, so that it become constructive cruelty, the wife can obtain a separation order without so much as the

asking. But a wife may spend her days in dissipation, may frequent public-houses, and neglect her children, and the husband has neither remedy nor power to prevent her.

The wife may be a nagger, a scold, a perpetual tormentor; one of the class whom our humorous and practical forefathers cured by the application of a ducking-stool and a horse-pond; she may be guilty of any misconduct short of adultery, and the unfortunate husband must put up with it all. Many such fly for refuge to the nearest tavern and drown their misery in drink, and often become criminal from their misfortune. Many an honest, hard-working man, too, is punished by the Magistrates because, in his absence from home, his wife neglected her duties and kept his children from school. If the fines are not paid, it is he who is imprisoned, and not the culprit wife.

Widows can claim, absolutely, one-third of the personalty of husbands dying intestate, but widowers have only a life interest in the unwilling property of deceased wives.

As a rule the husband has to work hard to maintain his wife and family, but however humble their circumstances may be, the wife can, if she will, be as idle as she please, and her husband has no remedy. The law will punish him for his neglect, but not her for hers. Formerly he could castigate her, now he must not so much as threaten. A working man complains to a Magistrate that his wife neglects to get his meals, and when she should be tidying his home, spends her time gossiping in a public-house. "Very sorry," replies the Magistrate, "but I can do nothing for you. You have taken her for better or for worse; you must grin and bear it." He refuses, and leaves her, and she straightway obtains a maintenance order against him. But would not easy, swift, and cheap divorce, be a fairer and more sensible mode of settling their difficulty? Ought the law to compel people to commit adultery before they can obtain it?

These are some of the wrongs under which married men suffer, owing to the radical changes which have taken place in the relations of husband and wife since marriage was made a religious sacrament. A more rational perception of its nature, however, is beginning to prevail, and it is time that all these and other anomalies should cease. The religious idea of its character must give way. Marriage will have to be thoroughly re-constructed on the basis of a civil partnership, terminable at will, or from

breach of contract, as in other associations. Even time partnerships, to lapse at the end of a term, say seven or any other number of years to be agreed upon, would be better than the hap-hazard, happy-go-lucky system now in vogue. These, if agreeable, could be renewed or continued at the will of both. As Mr. Labouchere has just said in the House of Commons, the Law of Divorce is utterly absurd. "If two people," he added, "wanted to be married, let them be married,—and if they wanted to be divorced, let them be divorced." Although these opinions were greeted with much laughter by the House, as though they were excessively funny, they are nevertheless correct, and domestic happiness will never be universal until they be received as serious truths. Should there be children of those separated, it would be a simple matter to compel parents to set aside a sum for their support in a ratio according to the individual property of each. This would put an end to the filthy accounts of divorce suits which pollute our daily papers, and which obtain ready admittance into families where a serious essay on manners and morals is too often excluded because it contains a little necessary plain speaking—as though omelettes could be expected without breaking eggs.

If people could divorce themselves at will and without publicity, they would be as careful to preserve each other's esteem after, as they were before marriage. We should then seldom see what so frequently happens now; the charming, neat, obliging, fiancée, developing into the giddy, careless, slatternly, and dis-obliging wife, or the ardent and devoted lover cooling down into the neglectful and heartless husband. Those truly married would continue to do all they could to please each other; and those superficially united would practise the outward decencies of married life from mutual and self interests. Marriage would cease to be the grave of love, and the sum total of human happiness would be immensely increased. Possession during good behaviour is far better for our weak human nature than possession absolute. In the State of Illinois, where divorce is as easy as possible, only one couple in seven resort to it, including strangers who visit there for the purpose, so that of the inhabitants, perhaps not more than one in fourteen couples, or one person in twenty-eight, desire to break through the marriage bond. The nature of marriage would be elevated by bringing it as nearly as possible to a condition of mutual satisfaction. Morality would be increased through it. All that are required to effect these ends are: equal conditions of partnership, civil contract, and easy method of separation.

ARE WE POLYGAMISTS?

A DOMESTIC DIALOGUE.

" That love, Sir,
Which is the price of virtue, dwells not here."
—*Beaumont and Fletcher—The New Lover.*

HE: I don't know what you mean, Gladys, by asking such a ridiculous question. Of course we are not polygamists. Polygamy is practised only by Asiatics, Africans, aboriginal Americans, Mormons, and such people, and not by Europeans, except in Turkey, much less by Englishmen.

SHE: I am quite aware, Bertie, that Englishmen are not supposed to be polygamists. I know that public opinion, the laws, and our religion, are understood to be directed against plurality of wives. But I have heard and read some very strange things lately, and since our honeymoon, five years ago, my ideas of marriage have become so much clearer, that I have really begun to question whether polygamy may not be an institution with us in private, although disavowed in public. I assure you, dear, the query is by no means a ridiculous one.

HE: I suppose you have been reading some of the trashy views put forth by the advocates of women's rights and other rubbish of that sort. Better stick to a lively novel, Gladys; it will do you more good.

SHE: No, Bertie, you have not guessed correctly. My thoughts are my own. But I don't see why you should be so hard on women's rights. If they have any, surely they should be allowed to claim them, and it is not very gallant of the men to treat rightful claims so contemptuously. However, Bertie dear, we won't quarrel over this. But I should so like to ask you a few questions: you will answer them on your honour, well and truly. They say Socrates used to arrive at the truth by asking questions. Then why not a woman?

HE: Well, my little philosopher in petticoats, ask what you please, and I will answer as well as I am able.

SHE: Do you love me, Bertie?

HE: You darling little goose, of course I do. You know I do. What makes you ask such a question?

SHE: Excuse me, dear, you must not ask questions, but only answer them. Else the process will be spoilt. Did you ever love anyone else?

HE: Come now, my little wifey, that's hardly fair. I suppose I have done much like other young men. Most of them sow a few wild oats before they settle down to the calm delights of matrimony. No one thinks the worse of them for that, and many believe that they are all the better for it afterwards.

SHE: I have heard these sentiments before, dear. I suppose it soothes men's consciences to play at this kind of make-believe. You, Bertie, are very clever and sensible, as everyone knows. Do you think immorality is less immoral because you call it "wild oats"?

HE: Certainly not.

SHE: Does it depend upon sex?

HE: Well, I suppose not. I should say what would be immoral in one would be immoral in the other.

SHE: Yet, darling, if you had put the question to me and I had given a similar reply as to my former life, I am afraid you would not have forgiven me.

HE: I am afraid not, too. But then girls are not expected to do the same as men. Society gives men greater licence, and with good reason. Conduct which scarcely harms them would ruin women.

SHE: Just so. Men weigh their actions in one balance and ours in another. But they could not sow wild oats unless women helped them.

HE: True, but not your sort, dear. I think we had better not discuss them.

SHE: Then you can answer my question. Did you ever love anyone else?

HE: Most men love, or think they love, many times, perhaps, before they meet with the right one. I have done the same. But I have never loved anyone as I love you, Gladys, and that should satisfy you.

SHE: It does. I am very proud and happy in your love, darling. I am only trying in my weak, and, perhaps, foolish way, to see whether we are polygamists or not. So I am sure you will humour me for a few minutes. Did you ever know a man obtain the affections of a woman, persuade her to live with him in all the manner of a wife, and then legally marry some one else while so engaged?

HE: I am sorry to say, many.

SHE: Is it true that it is quite a common thing, for men of means especially, both married and single, to have one or more mistresses and to keep two or more homes?

HE: I am afraid it is very common, from the well-to-do even up to royalty, and the higher the more so.

SHE: And if a Prince, say, marry one woman with his left hand and another with his right, and he call the first marriage morganatic, what should we call the second?

HE: I don't know. I suppose the second does away with the first.

SHE: How can it? It doesn't do away with the woman and her children. If the second is not bigamy it must be polygamy,

HE: But, possibly, he may not have any further connection with the first. Polygamy does **not** mean a series of wives, but having more than one at **the** same time.

SHE: I am aware. But I believe it is not the habit of polygamists in the foreign parts you first mentioned, to be closely associated always with all their wives. No one can suppose that Solomon for example, loved a thousand women at once. One or two favourite ones usually supplant the others, but these are maintained and their children cared for because the mothers continue to be wives in name, as they were at one time in fact. There is something honest about this. Every woman knows beforehand that she must expect associate wives, and often prefers them, because they share and lighten her duties. Her constitution is seldom broken down by excessive child-bearing. But English women endure much because they are led to anticipate an undivided empire over their husbands, who, by your own admission give them only a share in their affections and embraces. If the custom is general, it would be better for the happiness of women if we were to profess polygamy as well as practise it,—better if it were acknowledged openly and legalized as in the East. Do you think it general? Pray answer me carefully, dear.

HE: Why, Gladys, your praises of polygamy surprise me. It will not be very hard to convert the men. For am ashamed to confess,—but a promise is a promise,—that in every class of life men have mistresses. I do not mean to say that all have, or that the practice is always general with those who do. On the contrary I believe that, as a rule, the union is occasional only, and that any given moment those who thus indulge themselves are in a minority. Yet there are comparatively few who **not** have concubines at some time or other in their li-

SHE: You are trifling with me. I do not admire polygamy, but I admire honesty, and honest polygamy is better than dishonest and hypocritical polygamy. Young married women are the fashion, now, I am told. But what becomes of these women?

HE: Heaven knows. I don't like to speculate. I fear that, when cast off, they retaliate by deceiving other men, and go from bad to worse. Sometimes they pass from one "protector" to another; at others, they fall as low as women can.

SHE: Then that disposes of all excuse for wild oat sowing. The results are terrible to think of. What would you say of me, Bertie, if after professing to love you above all men, and you only, after lying in your bosom and becoming your other self, I were, from mere caprice or selfish convenience, to cast you forth to poverty, shame, the streets, and premature death,—I having the power, as men have, to do all these?

HE: I cannot imagine it, dear. You couldn't do it.

SHE: No! I could not do it, and I cannot understand how men can do it. But such creatures are not men. Cowards, like these, do not deserve to call any woman mother.

HE: You are getting excited, and the children are just coming in and will want to see us.

SHE: The darlings! O, Bertie, promise me to guard our boy against sowing wild oats, and I will teach our little Gladys to shun the snares and follies that may threaten her in the future.

HE: We will both do our best to shield them from evil.

SHE: And, as to the question with which we started, I suspect I am not sufficiently Socratic, or you have been too vague in your replies, for although, from what I have heard, I fear that Englishmen are mostly polygamists by practice or inclination, I am not able to decide it from my own observation. Suppose we submit our remarks to the public. You know "in the multitude of counsel there is wisdom."

HE: The very thing. I will write them out at once.



MORALS OF AUTHORS.

It is a melancholy fact that the morals of writers and their writings have often been at variance. A large number of distinguished authors whose works have become immortal, and whom it would be invidious to mention, have been men of indifferent lives, and in some cases grossly dissolute and abandoned. Their work, however, was better than themselves, and has been preserved and valued for its intrinsic merit. Genius and moral purity should be inseparable, but unfortunately it is not so. As a rule, men of great abilities have claimed for themselves a license denied to meaner mortals, and on the whole it has been regretfully conceded to them. For just as we pardon the private follies and wickedness of those monarchs who have ruled well, so with these, the true kings of men, mankind have been lenient to their faults for the sake of their great public usefulness. Strange to say, no matter to what department of intellectual or artistic greatness we turn our eye, we observe that its most splendid members have very frequently been distinguished for eccentricity or recklessness, they soar higher and fall lower than other men. "Great wits to madness are allied," said the poet, and thus brilliant abilities have been too often united to moral worthlessness. But by universal practice and consent, a distinction has been preserved between the worker and his work. Each has been judged separately, and thus some of the priceless intellectual and artistic treasures of past times have come down to us, whereas otherwise they would have been lost. It was chiefly reserved for this century, and notably since the days of Wesley and Lord Byron, to attempt to measure a man's work by the standard of his moral character. This spirit, however, has never been so remarkably exhibited as during the last few weeks. And as it appears to be opposed to sound sense and to the public welfare, we desire to question its utility and therefore its morality.

An author and playwright of some considerable reputation has been convicted by a jury of infamous crimes.

nality. Before his conviction—indeed, as soon as he was charged—his works were in some places withheld from the public. And now a Member of the Westminster Vestry has given notice to move “that they be withdrawn from the two public libraries in Westminster, and that the other local authorities in London be requested to take the same course in regard to the libraries under their control.” Several libraries had already done this, perhaps without sufficient consideration. We have never had any acquaintance whatever, beyond common repute, with the author in question or his literary works. But these, we presume, were good to have become so popular, and if they were good then they must be the same now. Here we regard only the principle involved. This resolves itself into the query—Should we prohibit or refuse good work because of the immorality of the author or doer?


The absurdity of an affirmative to this question should be self-evident, and, if carried out, would land us into endless difficulties. If our baker bakes good bread, or our bootmaker makes good boots, we do not ask what are the morals of these tradesmen before eating the bread and wearing the boots. It would be agreeable to know that they are worthy people, and sad to think them the reverse, but the usefulness of their handiwork would not be affected by either sentiment. Indeed one ought to be thankful to be able to get a good thing at all without troubling about the moral deficiencies of the makers.

We do not inquire before buying a picture whether the artist is moral or otherwise. The quality of the work is all we regard. If literature is to be an exception to this custom, there would be very little left but that of inferior value, for, unfortunately, as we have said, the men of highest genius have been too frequently of extremely shaky morals.

The virtuous vestryman of Westminster no doubt goes to church regularly and enjoys the Psalms of David and the Song of his son Solomon. But the worst of modern authors are the pinks of propriety compared to those old poetic Jews who perpetrated many villainies. However, we do not on that account move that these amorous and religious effusions be withdrawn from Westminster Abbey and our other churches. On the contrary, if their perusal will do any one any good, by all means let people read them. And let us thank God that it is possible to educe good from the evil, and to paint the beauty of the rose and the fairness of the lily from the ordure of the stable.

It is surprising how virtuous everybody is when some one more unfortunate is found out. Some men have been practising an indescribable and abominable custom from time immemorial. The greatest and most accomplished were frequently addicted to it, and thousands of well born and high bred in our country today still follow it. If the waves of indignation which are said to pass over the English speaking nations demand that the intellectual work of its votaries be also condemned, then, to be consistent, we must prohibit the choicest efforts of genius. Horace, and most of the rest of the ancient classics must be burnt, the Bible expurgated, and possibly even our own glorious Shakespeare himself would come under the ban. Are our great works to make room for some of the puling and demoralizing novels of up-to-date writers, the giants to give way to pigmies? It would seem so if we permit vestrymen to decide.

If we are genuine in our desire to root out this immorality, we should attack the many instead of making scapegoats of one or two. We should check the growth of this abomination in our schools and colleges, where our youths are too often educated in the vice, and stamp it out in our Army and Navy as we did the leprosy. And our sense of virtue should impel us to lay hands upon that viler and far more important abuse: the betrayal and ruin of innocent girls, for, unlike the other, this is followed by every evil: suicide, infanticide, destitution, disease, or death.



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