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MARRIAGE FAILURES.

While I have breath to express an opinion on this subject I shall declare that the first and foremost reason why many marriages are a failure is because of the subject position of the wife. When we speak of the subjection of woman we mean always of married women. It was not to free the unmarried woman from legal bondage that the long, hard fight was made in this country, for the laws did not discriminate against the spinster with special injustice, whatever social custom might have done. Practically all of the changes in the statutes relating to women in the last half century have been made to protect the wife from the husband. Most of the inequities which still remain affect only married women. The one who remains single has little to fear.

There is not a business partnership of any kind that could survive under conditions which placed one member of the firm under the absolute domination and control of the other. By what logic then, can we expect it in a partnership where the conditions are far more intimate, exacting and delicate than are possible in any other.

But, it may be urged, there is a vast difference between marriage and other contracts. In this the woman yields her freedom and individuality to one who is a sworn protector, whose interests are identical with her own, and who is deeply concerned in seeing that she receives exact justice.

If this be the case, why is it that men themselves, for the last fifty years, have been repealing the old laws regarding the wife and replacing them with new enactments which would enable her to protect herself against her protector? But, notwithstanding all that has been done, the majority of wives are still in subjection to the husbands while they continue to live with them in the holy bonds of matrimony, and so long as this is the case we never can have, as a rule, the happiest and most exalted form of marriage.

The wives of today have innumerable advantages over those of past generations, but the most important of all is still denied viz, an equal right to the joint earnings of the marriage partnership. The law has yielded so far, in most of the places, as to permit a wife to retain possession of the property she brought into the firm, and that which becomes hers by will or gift. If she goes outside of the home to work, her wages are her own, but if she confine her labors to the demands of her household she is legally entitled only to board, shelter and clothes, and the husband decides as to quality.

Whatever she gets in addition is not by legal right, but simply through the influence she can bring to bear upon him. If she dies first she cannot dispose by will of a dollar's worth of all they have accumulated together, but at his death he can deprive her of at least two thirds of their joint earnings. The law, however, secures to her a certain amount, presupposing that if this were not done the husband would be likely to deprive her of all.

The man who is penniless has the world before him with all of its opportunities for making a living. Modern innovations in a large degree have placed the unmarried woman in the same position, but the wife has no such freedom. By statute she owes her services to her husband and her own sense of duty compels her to devote them to her household, therefore she is excluded from the wage earning occupations, and although performing her regular day's labor, is not entitled to handle a dollar of her earnings.

I place above all other causes for unhappiness in marriage the absolute financial dependence of the wife and I firmly believe that three fourths of the friction would be removed if a fair share of the family income were placed at her unrestricted disposal, just as now the husband controls all of it. There is not space here to go into an argument on this proposition. Nothing takes the independence, the self respect and the contentment out of a man's life so completely as pauperism, and stripped of all subterfuge, this is the condition of the vast majority of wives.

They smart under the injustice; they rebel at the cajolery, deceit and sometimes intimidation on which they must practice to get what ought to be theirs by right; while they are often irritated beyond endurance to see the husband using money in ways which they wholly disapprove. If I were a husband I never would admit that my marriage was a failure until I had tried the profit sharing plan with my wife.

The wonder is not that so many marriages are a failure, but that so many are a success. Members of the same family, parents and children, brothers and sisters, who have had years to study one another's idiosyncrasies and are bound together by the strong tie of blood-relationship, often find it extremely difficult to dwell in harmony under the same roof. How much more difficult then must it be for these who know but little of each other's inheritance of peculiarities; who are married far too often, on a brief and imperfect acquaintance; who are suddenly thrown into the most intimate relationship, without the power of getting away from it; and who occupy a position not of independence but of authority on one side and often unwilling dependence on the other—how infinitely more difficult must it be for them to bring their lives into harmonious adjustment!

The marvel lies in the fact that so many succeed in doing this, for the immense majority of marriages are fairly satisfactory to the contracting parties. It is only those that prove to be mistakes which challenge attention. The one whose troubles are carried into the courts attracts so much notice that the nine hundred and ninety-nine which are being passed in comparative peace and happiness are entirely lost sight of, and people cry out, 'Why are so many marriages a failure?'

The census of 1890 showed about 121,000 divorced persons in the United States, out of a population of over 62,500,000. A small fraction of 1 per cent, is hardly appreciable in so vast a number, and certainly does not justify the slightest alarm or the conclusions that marriage, as an institution, is discredited. Recent census doubtless will somewhat increase this percentage, but even should this be the case there is no need of a panic.

There was never in the history of the world such a period of transition as the one through which we are now passing, and it is natural that the institution of marriage should be included in the general shaking up. This means simply that it must be more carefully studied with a view to placing it on a broader and firmer basis. While modern conditions of life allow men and women innumerable opportunities of meeting, these are of the most superficial character and do not permit the long and thorough acquaintance which always should precede marriage. The latter brings many disillusiones even to those who believed they had the most absolute knowledge of one another, and they often repent at leisure to as great a degree as those who married in haste. Society in the so-called middle and upper classes permits the unmarried to meet only under artificial conditions, at balls, receptions, dinners, teas—devoted to small talk with the accompaniments of music, flowers, gala attire and crowds of people—all attractive and delightful in a way, but affording no chance for a study of character, temperament, tastes and ideas. Yet on such acquaintance as this the young folks marry and set about to face the great problems of real life. That, under such circumstances, more than 99 per cent of marriages prove so endurable at least that the parties make no effort to have them annulled is to the credit of human nature and a splendid testimony to the sacrament itself.

It is claimed that the marriages which result from coeducation in our colleges are almost universally happy. A very wide observation leads me to believe that this is the classroom and on the campus have given that mutual knowledge which should be the foundation and have developed that similarity of tastes and pursuits which is essential to a congenial union. This rule holds good where men and women in the same profession marry, as physicians, lawyers, ministers, writers, teachers. I have known scarcely an instance where such a marriage turned out unhappily and this must be because of the congeniality of disposition which leads both into the same line of work and prompts them to continue it.

Society is apt to condemn marriage between an employer and his bookkeeper or stenographer, and yet their daily companionship has given each other an insight of the habits and disposition of each other and shown their ability to work together harmoniously. When such marriages are founded on mutual respect and affection the chances ought to be in favor of their proving satisfactory. It we accept the promise that a thorough acquaintance is a requisite for a successful union.

A prominent reason why many marriages are failures is found in the imperfect development of men and women. While neither would expect to succeed in any kind of business without a special training they rush blindly and recklessly into this most complex and exacting of all life's relations, and are amazed when bankruptcy stares them in the face.

It is not possible to take up in detail the numerous causes which lead to this result, the infirmities of temper, the lack of self-control and forbearance, the business incapacity of the husband, the domestic inaptitude of the wife, the total want of an equilibrium which will enable them to meet their inevitable difficulties with calmness and fortitude. The vices of youth prove too strong for the man to lay aside, and carried into married life, produce the usual wreck. The frivolous, superficial attractions which rendered the girl so charming prove inadequate to retain the husband's love, and she has nothing more enduring to offer. The foundations of a perfect marriage cannot be laid upon a deficient manhood and womanhood.

This brings us back to our original proposition that the ideal marriage must be founded on that mutual respect which is possible only between equals, and out of this will grow the only love which is unchangeable. John Stuart Mill is often quoted as having said: 'No ordinary man is willing to find at his own fireside an equal in the person he calls wife.' This may have been true when it was written, but a new generation of women have come into existence since that time and they have revolutionized the old ideals. Even the 'ordinary' man expects far more of 'the person he calls wife' now than in days past, while the most progressive men are demanding, if not their equals, certainly a more advanced womanhood than the world ever before has seen.

Although the women of the United States stand more nearly on an equality with the men than do those of any other nation, yet a larger proportion of men here marry than in any other country. Such statistics prove that, while increased opportunities in life may make some women so exacting in the choice of a husband as to prevent marriage altogether, they do not deter a constantly increasing number of men from marrying.

Men themselves are continually raising the standard for wives, and women are striving to reach it, but no sooner has this been done than they themselves fix a nobler standard for husbands. Thus each assists the other to rise, and both attain a higher level; while the nearer that of the woman approaches that of the man the greater becomes his respect for her.

In the realm of education she has gained a hundred-fold in his regard since he has learned that her mental powers are not inferior to his own. This is equally true in the business world, since she has demonstrated her capacity in many and varied departments. The logical conclusion, therefore, cannot be evaded that there must be a corresponding increase of respect when she takes her rightful place in the affairs of government.

This evolution is developing not only women but men, and it is producing a greater mutual regard than ever has existed in the history of the race. Eventually this attitude must extend to the relations between husbands and wives, with the inevitable result that, in the fulness of time, there will be no necessity to inquire why so many marriages are failures.

Mrs. Wiggles—Mrs. Rachel played whist with us this afternoon.
Mr. Wiggles—Is that so? What score did she make?
Mrs. Wiggles—Three hundred and eighty words a minute.

Woman's Kingdom Is Home.

Agusta Robson in the Ladies' Magazine says that the home duties of a wife and mother are many and very exacting, but if she be appreciated and faithfully loved, hers is the most enviable lot among women. Success is never easy, but one of the conditions of it here is that you put your best thought and talent on your homes. Charitable societies, women's clubs and even church work, are of secondary consideration. Each is beautiful, needful and right if one is so situated that she has the time and energy to give to it without either overtaking her physical or mental resources. But she who builds and maintains a restful, helpful, happy, Christian home, is doing the world's bravest work. Here is your kingdom. Strive to reign here in harmony and to do the things 'which make for peace.' It is the friction of life which wears us out more than its hard work.

Your habits of dress were formed long before you became a wife, and very few have strength of character enough to change them, but the successful home maker is she who makes herself and her home so attractive that no club can compete with it. Far more powerful in its influence than any attractions of dress is a brave and cheerful spirit. Life is hard at best and the sooner that we realize that we have a load to carry, and determine to carry it cheerfully and bravely, the sooner are we started on the way which brings most satisfaction, most happiness, most peace.

From a Man's Standpoint.

A wife rarely keeps a husband poor that would have been rich any other way.

Women live for admiration, but men die without it.

When a woman's in love, she thinks there's no other man in the world; when a man's, in love, he thinks the same thing.

The bachelor has one great advantage over the married man; he can still get married.

A woman may have less logic than a man, but what little she does have is generally more so.

Never trust a woman with a secret. The curiosity of her husband is sure to get it out of her.

Just when a man's surest that a woman never hits anything she aims at, along comes some blushing young thing and marries him!

You'll appreciate your own home after you see some others.

Neither husband nor wife should accuse the other of their sex's propensity to talk. Both are fond of it.

The Daily Attire.

That a husband of long standing cares a great deal about the daily attire of his wife, found an illustration that is both striking and funny, in a lawsuit some years ago. The aggrieved husband writing to the father of his wife, says: 'You would bless yourself if you were to see the figure Henriett makes of herself in the morning, generally until two and three o'clock. It consists of an old plaid dressing gown, extremely dirty and with several holes burnt in it. In this disgusting costume, she came to breakfast one morning when my brother Robert was with me. She does not often wear the gowns you had the kindness to give her, her favorite gown being an old red dress not remarkably clean, which is my aversion.' This with other annoyances, combined to make him feel it impossible to live with her.

Prof's for Two.

'I was standing in the lobby of the Auditorium in Chicago,' remarked ex-Congressman P. J. Somers over in the Plankinton lobby yesterday, 'talking with Senator William E. Mason, when a trampish-looking fellow came rushing in and addressing him, said:

'Billy, lend me \$10; I have a chance to make \$3 in fifteen minutes.'

'Billy went down in his trousers and fished up a two-dollar and a one dollar note and passed them over to the man.

'I want \$10 to make the deal remarked the man, as he stretched forth his hand for additional financial aid.

'You said you could make \$3 didn't you?'

'Yes.'

'Well, you've made \$3 and I'm \$7 ahead See?'

'The man saw the point and regretfully withdrew.'

Mrs. Newlywed—You told me we would have to give up luxuries and only allow ourselves necessities.

Mr. Newlywed—That's right.

Mrs. Newlywed—But you came home in a hack last night; that was a luxury.

Mr. Newlywed—Er—er—that was a necessity, my love.

Tommie—Paw, what relashun is my gran'maw t' you?

Father—She's my mother-in-law, young man; now don't remind me of her again while she is here.

She—I don't believe you're telling me the truth.

He—You are most annoying sometimes. I suppose you think you can read me like a book.

She—O, no! Like a paragrph, I should say.

'I thought you said your husband could swim.'

'He can, but that pretty grass widow from Kentucky seems to prefer to lie around the beach.'

The young lady with the green threaded coat and Devonshire hat was interested in looking over books in McClurg's. Where is 'The Gentleman from Indiana?' she asked of the new clerk—he or the Auburn flowing hair parted from the middle. Why I used to live in Indiana, madame, said he, with a conscious blush even redder than his hair.

Harry—Oh Nellie, darling, I'm so unhappy, I feel we shall never get your father's consent to our marriage.

Nellie—Oh, Harry, dear, I think we shall—I have an idea! We shall get Mamma to object and it's sure to come right?

We understand the banns were published within a week.

Minister.—'Bridget, these potatoes taste moudy.'

Bridget—'Yis, sorr, Oi dare say, sorr—they set next to your barrel o'ermons in the sullen.'

'Ain't you most afraid to have John go to war? You know these far shootin' guns will hit a man a mile and a half away every time.'

'There ain't no bullet that'll catch John if he gets a mile an' a half start.'

Why Tommy was misled: Tommy—You wore a red suit and horns at the masked ball last night, didn't you?

Mr. Hoanly—Why no. I went as a cavalier.

Tommy—I saw pop was mistaken then. He said he gaw you and you looked like the devil.

'Why, he asked, 'why is the Fourth of July like W. J. Bryan's new lecture?'

Naturally we all gave it up.

'Because,' he said, edging toward the door, 'it is a case of spending a lot of money for some useless noise.'

'Charley dear,' said young Mrs. Torkins, 'I haven't a word to say against your playing golf any more.'

'I'm glad of that.'

'No, I think it is a very useful game. The man who was working here this morning said that your new golf sticks were perfectly lovely to beat carpets with.'

'If I thought any girl would accept me,' casually remarked the bashful Mr. Dolyers 'I'd propose tomorrow.'

'Why not this evening?' asked Miss Fosdick, coyly.

The affair will take place in about a month.

'Did you hear of that duel between those two students?'

'No. Pistols or swords?'

'Neither; they prescribed for each other.

'You're eat!' the umpire shouted.

Then sadly muttered he.

While bleachers roared their wild dissent:

'Who'll say as much for me?'

'Was your club paper troublesome, Dorothy?'

'Oh, horrible! I ransacked 11 books and ate three pounds of chocolate caramels while I was getting it up.'

'Ah,' sighed the fond mother, 'two souls with but a single thought!'

'Yes,' echoed paterfamilias, 'and less than \$1. I don't know how they're going to make it, Mary, unless—er—perhaps that single thought they've got is that papa's going to put up for two.'

'Briggs must be getting queer in his top story.'

'What's the proof?'

'He had his bare head out of his office window at noon yesterday, and when I asked him what he was doing he said he couldn't afford a regular hair cut and was trying a singe.'

'I never could see why they always called a boat 'she.''

'Evidently you have never tried to steer one.'

We can accomplish nothing in this world said the old man who was given to moralizing, until the crooked is made straight.

Well, replied the other who was also of convivial habit, of course you would expect the corkscrew.

Mother—Harry Tucker is the worst boy in school, Tommy, and I want you to keep as far from him as possible.

Tommy—I do Ma. He is always at the head of our class.