

THE ROMANCE OF MARRIAGE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

RELIGION AND DRAMATIC ART

THE MESSAGE OF A MISSION

THE GOSPEL OF THE FATHER

A MISSIONER ABROAD

THE ROMANCE OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. CANON

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THE ROMANCE OF MARRIAGE

I

INTRODUCTION

For some years past my experience as a Missioner has suggested to me that I ought to write a book about Marriage, so when I received an invitation from the Committee of the S P C K asking me to do this very thing I felt that it was, as we say in religious language, "a call"

Even a casual observer may perceive that further teaching on this subject is urgently required. Its problems cannot be ignored. You come across interpretations of the general theme at every picture theatre, in most modern novels, in monthly magazines and weekly picture papers. The whole subject is constantly thrust upon your attention, and you naturally ask what the Church has to say for your guidance.

This is the more important because the writings of popular novelists and the captions of the cinematograph are often absurdly inaccurate. It is not enough to say that this does not matter

because it is only in a novel or a picture. People transfer ideas to real life and then they make mistakes. For instance, two young people come to see me. After a somewhat lengthy introduction they say, "Well, the fact is, we are thinking of getting married." I say, "Quite so, I thought so about ten minutes ago." They say, "Yes, well, we want a special licence." I say, "Then you had better apply to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and it will cost you about £25." After discussion it appears they want, not a special licence, but an ordinary licence which will allow them to be married in the church of the parish where one of them lives. But they have been reading stories, which suggest that you only require a motor-cycle and a pillion seat, and you can go sailing off and be married wherever you like at five minutes' notice by special licence. But it is not by any means so simple as that.

One of our best-known novelists has a story about a couple who were married without having resided twenty-one days in their respective parishes. According to the novelist, the Church steps in some years after the marriage and says that they are not married at all and that the children are illegitimate. This is quite absurd. If you make a false statement about residence

you may be prosecuted for perjury and have to pay a heavy fine or go to prison for a few weeks, but the marriage is not void—and, by the way, the period of residence is fifteen days, not twenty-one days.

The same novelist thinks that the Church calls a marriage void if it takes place at a Registry Office, and he proves this by the words, "Those who are coupled together otherwise than by God's word are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful." He thinks that "by God's word" means a marriage in church, and that "otherwise" means a Registry Office marriage. As a matter of fact, the words are, "otherwise than God's word doth allow," which means something quite different. It is a warning against bigamy and against breaking the laws of consanguinity and affinity by which a man may not marry his grandmother, wife's grandmother, father's brother's wife, and so on. The famous novelist has here entirely missed the point, and does not know much about it.

But the great question has to do with the problem of unhappy marriages, which you find discussed on every possible occasion in the modern press. Popular writers imagine that they can solve this problem by making divorce as easy as possible and by encouraging folk to

terminate their marriages as soon as they come to any sort of disagreement. Even in a so-called "Life" of our Lord which came to me recently for review, it is suggested that in these days our Lord Himself would be in favour of a system of trial marriages. In one of my chapters I will go carefully into the matter of the modern attack on Christian ethical standards; but in the meantime I need only ask you to picture the kind of thing which is proposed. The motor-car draws up at the church door for a nice wedding, you see the red carpet and the floral decorations, the organist plays a wedding march as the bride comes in; and presently the officiating minister says, "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife? . . . Wilt thou love her, comfort her . . . and keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?" The bridegroom answers. "Not perhaps exactly so long as we both shall live, but until we are tired of each other"; or, "Until we cannot bear each other's company any longer"; or, "Until I find that I like someone else better", or, simply, "Until further notice."

There is the bride in all her beautiful raiment and white veil, do you think she will stand there and listen to that? Will she agree that each should say, "I take thee . . . from this day forward, for better but not for worse, for richer

but not for poorer, in health but not in sickness, till we agree to part"? No; never in all my life have I met a bride or bridegroom who would tolerate anything of the kind. It must be, "Till death us do part," or the whole thing is a fiasco.

But we are told that the Church is stupid and hard-hearted, and either knows nothing or cares nothing about unhappy marriages. This is not true. The fact is, there is no remedy except one—to try to live as good Christians. The main purpose of this little book is to help people to make their marriages very happy, so that by the grace of God they can be kind and loving to each other all through life. The following pages are intended for married people, but there will be no harm in allowing them to be read by those who are just beginning to think about marriage. But if my younger readers are going to consider this subject at all, they must be willing to go back to first principles. It would be much easier if people would not marry without praying for God's guidance, so that there may be no mistake. Why rush into marriage as if it were a picnic? The mistake that is made in many popular novels comes quite near the beginning of the story. It is supposed that as soon as you leave a young man and a young woman alone together they will at once rush into each other's arms and say,

“We belong to each other” Why should they? Why not stop and think and pray?

Yet even where mistakes have been made they can be mended. One point is most important all through: Remember that God is your loving Father. He is not a gloomy tyrant who wants to throw the tablets of stone at your heads every time He sees you wanting to make each other happy. It is God Himself who puts love into your hearts, and, when you come to think of it, the whole affair of love and courtship and marriage is God's invention, and He knows all about it and understands it perfectly. The one thing to remember above everything else is to ask God to guide you and to help you and to keep you from temptation, and prevent you from spoiling it all. If only you will remember that, you cannot go very far wrong. There are scores of other things that you must learn as you go along, but if only you will keep close to your Heavenly Father, you need not be afraid of losing the best and brightest that God is waiting to give you.

I may just add that my friends, Dr. Hunnard, of Mansfield, and Dr. T. Robertson, of Sheffield, have very kindly read proofs of this little book, and they allow me to say that I have not strayed away from a sound view of the subject from a medical standpoint

II YOUTH

WE hear a great deal of "hard cases" They exist. There are unhappy marriages. But, considering the matter from the point of view of the whole social fabric—the welfare of the home and the family, on which our social life is built—easy divorce cannot be the last word on the subject. Ultimately, if we are to take up this problem, we shall find the remedy, not in a lax view of the marriage promises, but in a better effort to fulfil them.

For the sake of the young people who may come across this book, let us begin by considering some of the problems of youth. Ideally, the time to prepare for marriage is years before it takes place—even before the marriage partner has been found. A man expects his wife to come to him on their wedding day a pure woman. A woman, of course, has just as much right to expect her husband to come to her a pure man. The time to think of this, therefore, is from very early days, when purity has to be kept and won.

Purity is not a negative thing. Ignorance is not innocence. Little children ask questions, and it is a great mistake for parents to "put them

off" with anything that is not true. We cannot tell our children the whole truth all at once. Knowledge must dawn gradually, as the day breaks gradually and the flowers open gradually. But from the very beginning there must be strict regard to truth. If parents tell their children what is not true, they forfeit their children's confidence. The child grows up and says: "What father or mother told me was untrue. It is no good asking them. I must find things out for myself." So the child is thrown into the company of foul-mouthed and ignorant people, who ruin the sacredness of the subject and distort the facts.

After all, it is not so terribly difficult for parents to find the right answers if they will think and pray about it. "Mother," the child asks, "where did I come from?" Why answer with foolish tales? "God made you; God sent you to us"—that is the first and the true answer. Some years later the child will ask, "How did God make me?" I have given the answer to this question in a little pamphlet, "What Makes a Man" (S P C.K.), showing how motherhood and fatherhood may be explained to a boy, and a similar method may be followed in speaking to a girl. All must be done reverently. We are dealing with the mystery and miracle of

creation. We want our children to accept it with pure minds.

Then young people in their "teens" have to be warned against the perils around them. In the same series of pamphlets I have touched on several points of this kind, under the titles, "Friendship, Love, and Courtship," and "A Woman's Honour." But in these days I fear there is still more to be said. All reticence seems to have been thrown to the winds. The most delicate and intimate questions are discussed in books which lie on many a bookstall for any inquisitive person to read.

Bernard Shaw helps us in his "Fanny's First Play," which was written, he tells us, to show what a shameful and cynical thing it is that young people should "drift along from their cradles to their graves, doing what other people do for no other reason than that other people do it, and knowing nothing of good and evil, of courage and cowardice, or indeed anything but how to keep their passions within the bounds of good taste, except when their excesses can be concealed." As Mrs. Knox says in the play: "I've noticed it all my life; we're ignorant. We don't really know what's right and what's wrong. We're all right as long as things go on the way they always did. We bring our children up just

as we were brought up, and we go to church or chapel just as our parents did, and we say what everybody says, and we go on all right until something out of the way happens . . . or one of us finds ourselves doing something we never thought we'd want to do. And then you know what happens, complaints and quarrels and huff and offence, and bad language and bad temper and regular bewilderment as if Satan possessed us all. We find out then that with all our respectability and piety we've no real religion, and no way of telling right from wrong. We've nothing but our habits; and when they are upset, where are we? Just like Peter in the storm, trying to walk on the water and finding he couldn't."

It must be understood that we have here a play within a play, with Fanny as the supposed author. Shaw has invented her play as the kind of thing that a clever young lady might write in order to bring the young person's point of view before the older people. Fanny introduces us to two families. Bobby Gilbey has been getting himself into a serious scrape, in the course of which a policeman has his helmet knocked over his eyes, with the result that Bobby has a fortnight in gaol. Margaret Knox also has been mixed up in ragging the police, somewhat after

the old suffragette fashion, and she also has been having a fortnight in prison, all unknown to Bobby or to the Gilbey parents. The real trouble had begun in the imperfect home training, based on a cold respectability, with no allowance for the natural high spirits and joy of life with which the young are endowed. Mrs. Gilbey had been at home on first Thursdays; the Knoxes had come to dinner every Friday, and the compliment had been returned on Tuesdays; how could Bobby call his life dull? But, as Margaret says, "I wanted more music, more happiness, more life. I wanted some comrade who felt as I did."

It was not enough to try to keep the young people sheltered. As soon as the sheltering was removed, the son or the daughter was left defenceless. "I haven't deserved this," says Bobby's father, Mr. Gilbey. "I've done my duty as a father; I've kept him sheltered . . . and now I must send my boy away." "Where to?" "Anywhere, so long as he is out of reach of harm." "Then I'm afraid you'll have to send him out of the world."

To knock a policeman's hat over his eyes is not perhaps a thing to pull a long face about—at any rate, in a play. But in real life it means trouble; and there is a great deal more that lies behind it. Bobby, in spite of his engagement

to Margaret, is involved in a relationship to Dora, and Dora herself (with all her bright and attractive qualities) is leading a life which is bound to end in disaster. Margaret has not gone quite so far, but her friendship with the young Frenchman, Duvallet, has been formed without any introduction. These frivolous and risky companionships are not to be treated as if they did not matter very much. The harvest sown in idle moments may have to be reaped in heavy hours of shame. Many a young person has said afterwards, with infinite regret, "I never meant to go so far."

We must return to this part of our subject in our fourth chapter. The main theme of the play is the attitude of the parents after the event. The fathers are too much concerned with the mere loss of respectability. They are afraid of being "dropped socially," and do not realise the moral question. "You have your religion," says Mr Knox, "and I'm sure I'm glad it comforts you. But it doesn't come to me that way. I've worked hard to get a position and be respectable." Mr. Gilbey has the same point of view: "Here has everything been respectable from the beginning of the world, as you may say, to the present day; and all of a sudden everything is turned upside down."

Shaw was not the first to ask the question, "Why does our religion fail when trouble comes?" This very point is made by the late Bishop Wilkinson in a sermon preached long before the play was written. He tells how he has watched hundreds of souls · he has seen them begin a new life, go regularly to church, and all so far was good. But they had never known the personal grasp of the Heavenly Father, and so when trouble came they felt as if in the dark, and all their religion seemed to be gone. People wondered why, with so much outward religion, there was so little inward power to support them in their day of trial. It was because they had never accepted the Saviour in humble penitence. So, to return to the play, Mrs. Knox says some very wise words to Mr. Gilbey: "It doesn't matter whether you set yourself up against religion or not. If it sets itself up against you, you'll have to go the appointed way. You may call it preaching if you like, but it's the truth for all that. I say that if you've the happiness within yourself . . . if you have that in you, the spirit will set you free . . . and guide you to do right. But if you haven't got it, you'd best be respectable and stick to the ways that are marked out for you; for you've nothing else to keep you straight."

Do not suppose that Christ repels the enthusiasms of youth. It is indeed a pity when such enthusiasm is dissipated, for instance, in an uncontrolled craze for dancing, especially such dancing as consists chiefly in pushing one's partner across the floor. The time to prove enthusiasm comes the next morning when it is time to get up and go to work. But parents need to have a good understanding of the best side of youthful enthusiasm. A missionary speaker was addressing a badly attended meeting at Cambridge when he was interrupted by two undergraduates tobogganing downstairs in a foot-bath. The missionary was shocked. But both these undergraduates became missionaries abroad. They were like Simon Zelotes, who had always an abundance of zeal, but the zeal was misdirected until he met Christ.

The great Captain Scott, in his last messages from the Antarctic, gave some wise advice with regard to his own son: "Make the boy interested in natural history if you can; it is better than games; they encourage it at some schools. I know you will keep him in the open air. Above all, he must guard and you must guard him against indolence. Make him a strenuous man. I had to force myself into being strenuous, as you know, I had always an inclination to be idle.

What lots and lots I could tell you of this journey. How much better it has been than lounging in great comfort at home." It was the same writer who recorded of himself and his companions, "We are weak; writing is difficult, for my own sake I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death, with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. We took risks; we knew we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will of Providence determined still to do our best to the last"

If our young people were trained to face the problems of daily life in this spirit, we should hear less about the hopelessness of solving the petty difficulties of home life. Even an unhappy marriage might bring some grains of pure gold out of the unlovely ore if people could accept even defeat and disappointment with a fine resolution, "Still to do our best to the last." And most of the difficulties would never arise if marriage were regarded in a heroic spirit of adventure

III

BEAUTY

WE are not dealing with a subject which is in itself repellent or a matter for shame. It would be possible, and in some circumstances it may be necessary, to handle as best we can the harsh problems of the abnormal. But such is not the purpose of this book. We are here concerned with the normal, the sane, the well-balanced, the romantic and beautiful. Many there are who have strayed from it; but they can come back to it. We want to present an ideal, and there is no occasion for fear and hesitancy. God is good.

Plato has taught us the relationship between love and beauty. A portion of the eternal beauty, he tells us, has impressed itself upon the form and face of the beloved. The material beauty is an outward and visible sign of a beauty inward and spiritual. The lover sees through the physical beauty to the spiritual beauty within. The beloved becomes a medium through which the lover sees the eternal beauty in the universe. Hills, trees, birds, sky—all look more beautiful when the loved one is by. The beloved has awakened the lover's sense of the beautiful, so

that the lover sees beauty everywhere. In Balzac's "Memories of Two Young Brides," the lover finds in the dark eyes of his beloved and in the bold outlines of her brow a revelation of the loftiness of her virtue, the steadfastness of her loyalty, the strength of her heart to face the storms of life

Scientific knowledge is on the side of beauty. Perhaps it sounds coldly mathematical to say that a perfect ellipse should have its axes in the proportion of five to three; yet the beauty of such a curve was observed as long ago as three hundred years before Christ. Nature is full of "lines that flow and shapes that sing." The retina of the eye is itself a beautiful curved surface, and we look out upon a world of curves, with an abundance of instances of flowing lines rhythmically repeating one another. The beauty of the human form is therefore not to be considered as something quite apart from the rest of the universe. It is not to be regarded as in itself indecent, nor a matter for prurient curiosity, nor as an object of lustful feelings. We want to encourage in the minds of normal men and women the instincts of the true artist. We have within us, if we still cultivate it, the spirit which loves to go out into God's beautiful world, and to return so enlightened as to bring with us some

revelation of the beautiful to those from whom it is hidden, and to interpret it to those who have not had eyes to see it. The drabness of our cities makes us only the more conscious of our craving for natural beauty, and emphasises our appreciation of it. Then the beauty of man or of woman will be in our eyes only a part of a wondrous scheme of beauty from the hand of the Creator.

The artist's whole view of life depends upon the central object of his vision. The painter will tell you that all those things which are not directed towards the main object on which his eyes are focussed are only half perceived, or not perceived at all. If we are to see and interpret the beautiful, the first object of all our thoughts must be in the realm of beauty. You cannot have an artistic mind until you have decided where your heart is set

Then there is the question of atmosphere. If you choose to create round you a vulgar, sniggering, or scornful atmosphere, it will be like a smoke-cloud to shut out from you all the finer delights of love and beauty. The musician creates his atmosphere by realising a mood of tranquillity, remoteness, or stillness. The charm of the hill-tops is not mainly in their outline against the sky, but in the depth of air that

reaches from them into the immeasurable distance. Even our daily conversation depends much less upon the words we choose than upon the atmosphere which we bring with us. Every work of art—and love-making is one of the greatest and most delicate arts—needs some definite atmosphere. In a water-colour painting the effect of atmosphere may have been produced by liberal washes of yellow ochre, or by soaking the first outlines all night in the bath, yet the real value of it has been achieved by something good in the soul of the artist. If you want your married life to be a fine thing, you may have to give attention to some very petty details of everyday life, but it is worth a great deal of pains to be certain that the atmosphere is right.

And, in truth, there is only one sure source of artistic inspiration. Just as the source of some orchestral music is to be traced back to the mind of the composer, and just as the orchestra can do no more than to give back to the composer that which the composer himself conceived, so the source of all beauty is in God, and the work of the artist is to give back to God that which was in His mind from the creation of mankind. So it is in the artistry of true love-making. God loves the happy natures that He has given us, and He rejoices to see us in the sunshine of life

And the very best sunshine of life is derived from something which is very sacred and deep down in our hearts. You are forming an ideal, and you want it to be like a glorious picture in an art gallery, or like a wonderful poem. Then perhaps you reach a point where you see there is a danger of spoiling the picture, and you do not want to spoil it. Things crop up which make your life less beautiful than it ought to be. Have we been such happy, radiant beings as God meant us to be?

Now, if we wish to avoid the evil things that will spoil everything, we must avoid the atmosphere of evil. While we are dealing with this whole subject, we are surrounded by dangers like the germs of fever and smallpox. Some of us have to come often into touch with very dreadful things; but God protects us so long as we are strictly on duty, in our desire to help and rescue others. But if we are merely curious, or interested in ugliness for its own sake, then the angels have no instructions to guard us. We must not tempt God by throwing ourselves from a pinnacle and then expect God to save us from the consequences. We cannot seek out a polluted atmosphere, nor create one out of the dark things in our hidden minds, and then expect to be nice-looking or in any sense beautiful in our lives

For instance, there is the question of dress. God wants women to look nice; we may be quite sure of that. Further, there are special costumes for special occasions—just as the mayor has his fine robes for the civic procession. There are clothes that are convenient to work in which are out of place when you go out for the evening with your beloved. There is a sensible costume for seaside bathing, and you look very nice in it in the atmosphere of the jolly old sea; but this does not mean that scanty clothing is right in the quite different atmosphere of a ball-room. You nice growing girls, if I may say a word here to you—you yourselves know that there are two ways of dressing. Either you are doing it to look nice and artistic as a child of God, or it is the kind of vanity which puts temptation into someone else's way. If you are trying to please God, you may be sure He will take care of you, but if you are carelessly making it easier for some wrong to come into your life which you may regret for ever afterwards, then how can you expect God to guard you in a moment of ugly temptation? I do urge you young people, and I ask parents to urge their children as they grow up, to put all reasonable obstacles in the way of some sudden temptation which may come, not to make it as easy as possible for some wrong

to happen, but as difficult as possible I am not saying this to little folk of nine or ten years of age, but to those who are old enough to exercise their own common sense. It is stupid to go about looking for trouble, knowing how horrid it would be if the trouble really came

Very often your strongest safeguard against temptation is the recollection of someone whom you love. Many a boy in the army during the war was kept straight overseas by remembering some pure girl at home. The lad would not like to do anything of which the girl would be ashamed. You remember the story of Dante, who was born at Florence in 1265. When he was nine years old he first saw Beatrice, a child of eight. At that moment, Dante long afterwards records, "the spirit of life, which dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart, began to tremble so violently that the least pulses of my body shook therewith; and trembling it said, 'Behold a god stronger than myself, who comes and shall bear mastery.'"

Dante is here expressing the emotions of childhood in the language of manhood. We must not make the mistake of underestimating the spiritual experiences of the child. We spoil the sacredness of life when with mature superiority we read into the fresh sweetness of

a child's thoughts the harsh knowledge of later life. Especially is this true in all that relates to difference of sex, and the attraction of one sex for another, just as it is true also of a tiny girl's first thoughts of motherhood. Instead of jesting, we ought rather to learn of them the meaning of innocence and purity; and to pray God that, whatever later experience may bring to us, we may never lose the freshness and beauty of those early imaginings.

Now the remarkable thing about Dante's love for Beatrice is that it never lost its first quality. To him the child of his dreams remained the "youngest of the angels." Dante did not marry her, nor ever made love to her. In fact, she married someone else, and after her death Dante took another lady to be his wife. But there remained that influence which a pure girl radiates unconsciously, never knowing indeed how much goodness she is shedding around her nor how inspiring her life has been. This is what I mean when I say that many a lad who laid down his life overseas was kept pure amidst the appalling temptations of that time by the remembrance of some pure girl at home—such a girl who perhaps as a woman today thinks with regret that her influence has never had scope and that her nature has never been valued and appreciated—little

knowing that in the world beyond there is someone who has already borne witness in the Master's presence to the debt his manhood owes to her.

Similarly, many a married man has been protected against temptations in the outside world, so subtle and searching in their nature that probably his wife had never imagined such things, yet that good wife's influence was there as a barrier against temptation, because the man did not wish on returning home to be ashamed to look his loved ones in the face

You never know, at any period of your life, how much good you may be doing by simply trying to live as a child of God. In the case of Dante, it is certainly true that if Beatrice had not lived, or if Beatrice had not been the noble character she was, the "Divine Comedy" would never have been written. You have only to read it to be convinced of that, especially if you have read also the earlier record of the "Vita Nuova." It illustrates that striking sentence in the Apocalypse, "Remember thy first love." Some experience of childhood spoke to us long ago, perhaps through our reverence for one whom we loved. It was a whisper that is to call us upwards in later years. The sweetness of life is to remember it; the bitterness of life is to be unworthy of it.

Dante tasted of both sweetness and bitterness
In 1290 Beatrice had died. Dante was then
twenty-five years old, and a time came when he
allowed his ideal to grow dim. His empty heart
ached, and, seeking relief,

“ He turned his steps into deceitful ways,
Following therein false images of good,
That ne'er fulfil the promise that they make ”

The “Divine Comedy” is the story of the long and painful process by which Dante found deliverance from his disappointment with himself. It was an upward climb, requiring constant effort and endurance; but it was abundantly worth while, and it was gloriously rewarded. Dante learned to think of his Beatrice as she stood beautified and glorified in the Heavenly Presence. I suppose that a painter or a sculptor would represent that by a wonderful study where the idea of raiment as a mere cloak of decency would seem to be an intrusion, if not an insult. God forbid that in these days we should lose the sense of reverence in the presence of the work of the great Artist, God Himself. To Him the gaze of Dante was lifted, for he knew that Beatrice was God's messenger. So he learned to worship. It is a lesson that God would teach us, and so He vouchsafes to us the bright radiance of pure young lives such as we have

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known and loved. Through them at some time our hearts have been stirred to love God and to adore His beauty. Ideals have been given us, which, if we are true to them, will be as wings to lift us from the lower levels. We can check our baser moments by the recollection of our best moments. Love seemed a fine thing once; God means it to be a fine thing now.

IV

FREEDOM

“ If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty ”

So sings Lovelace. But if he had meant this to refer to “free love” in the modern sense of the phrase, he would scarcely have thought of angels. Freedom must indeed be one of our watchwords in relation to love and marriage, but our own instincts warn us that the advocates of “free love” are somehow on the wrong track.

Everybody knows that recent years have brought a new sense of liberty into the ways of young people and into the relationship between men and women. The Parliamentary Election of 1929 will be remembered in Great Britain as the first in which young women were admitted to the franchise on precisely equal terms with men. This is only one indication amongst many of a new freedom of thought and discussion, and in the main it is proving itself a very wholesome thing. Meanwhile we cannot dismiss lightly the considered opinions of several scholars and thinkers who have given long study to difficult

ethical questions. Looking back now upon the arguments of 1914, I doubt whether we were fully justified in blaming Nietzsche for the Prussian militarism which had so much to do with the origin of the war. In fact, Nietzsche put forward a strong plea for the individual, rather than the State. But the point we have to consider is whether the individual can set himself against all the rules of society and defy the established moral code. Nietzsche himself saw that there were grave dangers if there was to be no final code of duty, and admitted that the resulting chaos was a thing not to be endured.

Meanwhile other philosophers have questioned the moral code in relation to sex. James Hinton, who died of brain fever in 1875, identified pleasure with goodness and advocated a modified form of polygamy. Havelock Ellis, who is still living, has spent a lifetime in the scientific study of the psychology of sex from a non-moral (which does not mean an immoral) point of view. Freud also has initiated a school of psychology and psycho-analysis, and appears to attribute a very large part of human conduct to the promptings of sex. Ellis does not go so far, and we undoubtedly owe him a great debt for bringing together a most valuable amount of material for a thorough study of the psychology of sex and

for his teaching on the artistry of love. But by the time these ideas have been filtered down through the hands of novelists and dramatists of less than the first rank, we find them in a perverted form in the minds of young people, who are growing up to think that nothing is really very wrong, and that we may all do as we please in our private lives.

Challenges of this boldness require an equally bold reply. We are told that we must not object if some old rules are broken, for, in a popular phrase, "You cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs." But, as we noticed when some tiny tots were trying to bring up their offerings of eggs for the hospital at a children's service, you can certainly break eggs without making omelettes. It is foolish to break down unless you know how to rebuild. Life is an art, but it is also a science, and we cannot build even the most beautiful building unless our foundations are secure. We have been rightly warned of the dangers of repression, but is it true that the only alternative to repression is indulgence? Surely the real contrast is between repression through our own unaided effort to be moral, and, on the other hand, the glorious liberty of the children of God who are made new creatures in Jesus Christ. There is no repression in the case of

those who are carried above the temptations of life in the power of the love of God. I ask you to notice as a most important fact that for five persons who are miserable and neurotic through repressing their passions, there are fifty who are miserable and neurotic through repressing their consciences

Again, surely the extreme doctrines of some psycho-analysts are open to suspicion if we follow their own argument to its logical conclusion. Why not psycho-analyse the psycho-analyst, and biologise the biologist? If a psycho-analyst goes so far as to say that all our thought, including even our religion, is due to sex, then it follows that his own ideas are due to sex. If some biologist attributes our idealism to the urge of atoms and electrons, it follows that his own theories are equally due to the meaningless urge of material forces; and therefore in both cases we may discount their conclusions. It is more than possible that a number of recent writers are suffering (to use their own phrase) from a sex complex.

The first answer to lawlessness is that it does not work. It is a delusion to suppose that some wild experiment along forbidden paths will give to a man or a woman a new chance of happiness. J. M. Barrie, in his play, "Dear Brutus," has

shown how old disappointments and failures will simply repeat themselves even under new conditions, unless there is a change for the better in our own characters; for the fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves. Thus it often happens that a divorce does not lead to happiness in a new marriage, but to a further divorce. If the first marriage has not been a success, there is not the slightest guarantee that a new experiment will yield anything better. An honest attempt to make something better of the original marriage is in itself a more reasonable policy.

Similarly, when young people are strongly tempted to make some daring experiment against the moral code, they will do well to think out calmly any proposed adventure and try to visualise how it will end. This is well illustrated in a novel by Sir Philip Gibbs, "The Age of Reason," where the experimenters in morals become embittered by failure, and everything falls flat. Further, these experiments appear to take no account whatever of the possible arrival of unwanted children, or of possible contamination by that horrible thing, venereal disease. There is a widespread idea that it is now possible for young people to take risks, of the crudest physical kind, and yet to avoid the natural consequences. It is beginning to be supposed that

sexual sin will lead to no harm, if certain precautions are taken. In a later chapter we will refer to the possible control of conception (commonly called "birth control") from the point of view of experienced married people and of their genuine problems. But if young unmarried people are being told that "birth control" opens the door to all manner of licence without danger and without regret, then let me tell them quite plainly that the danger is considerable and the regret is inevitable. Whatever may be said in advertisements addressed to married folk, there is no question that in the hands of the inexperienced and under the circumstances of experiment there is no method of "birth control" which is absolutely so reliable and so infallible as to take away all anxiety. Common sense will tell you that it is always possible for something to go wrong. This fact will not be denied, except by the ignorant and inexperienced, or by those who have a selfish interest in trying to prove the contrary.

Sometimes trouble comes through sheer inexperience, sometimes it comes, on the other hand, through careless over-confidence. It may be at the twentieth time that the snare proves itself, it may be at the first time.

But, in any case, whatever may be the physical

penalty of doing wrong, there is no question about the penalty to the mind and the soul. Peace of mind, power of concentrated work, joy in prayer—these are sacrificed. Self-respect is gone, even if the secret can be kept.

The other side of the picture is on a far different plane. The dignity, the glory, the buoyant joy of youth; the hope, in most cases, of a happy and honourable marriage and of parenthood in all its sacred pride; the sense of clean and clear-eyed self-respect, and the power to influence others for good—these are not things to be lightly thrown away. Yet they cannot be won cheaply. Love, in its delicacy, its romanticism, its pure beauty, cannot be counterfeited. Do not believe those who say you can seize upon the pleasures of love while you evade its responsibilities. They are leading you into a snare, and remember you have only to make a mistake once and then you have a muddle and mess which may sadden your life for years. Even if this is avoided, there can be no happiness without self-respect and mutual reverence. You cannot cultivate a carefully concealed and frightened course of conduct in the glorious name of freedom. Such a pretence is rather a species of bondage, an enslavement.

Real freedom is to be found in obedience to

God's law of love. This is not some stupid, narrow scheme of petty regulations. Our Lord was never for a moment blind to the best in human nature. He has taught us to see evidence of God's love in the works of nature, while He Himself set forth the love of God in action—compassionate to the weary, tender towards sinners, refusing to despair of anyone, seeking those who strayed, praying even on the cross for those who drove in the nails. He declared that all this was a revelation of love: "The Father Himself loveth you", "God so loved the world."

Yet this love is not that of an affable, easy-going being who does not care what we do or how we behave. A father who loves his children cares intensely as to their behaviour. A mother warns her child from touching fire or from dashing out upon a dangerous road. There is no freedom in being free to be burned or free to be crushed and maimed. We have to learn the plain unvarnished truth that there is no freedom at all except under certain conditions and with clear restrictions. "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," said Lovelace, and then went on to claim, in the words we have quoted, that he had freedom in his love and was free in his soul—and no doubt he was a charming lover.

This does not mean—of course, it cannot mean—that all the serious study of recent years in the realm of psychology has been without value. It is immensely valuable to anyone who cares deeply for the souls of his fellow men and women. But the principle of freedom through love is one that allows fully for both sides of the truth. On the one hand, our Lord has taught us the way to perfect sympathy and understanding. There is no condemnation, no Pharisaism, no self-righteousness in the minds of those who have studied the innermost secrets of human life. There is an immense amount to be said on behalf of those who have made a failure of life. To those who know all the facts, there is scarcely anything in human conduct that cannot be explained and understood. "Hath no man condemned thee?" said our Lord, "neither do I condemn thee." But His searching glance brought to the light of conscience many a hidden thing in the lives of the woman's accusers; and to the woman herself He said clearly enough, "Go, and sin no more." There is absolution for the penitent, but it implies amendment. There is atonement, but it implies a conversion. There is an offer of freedom, but it is conditioned by a willingness for service.

To find out the true meaning of love we want

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to win complete freedom from selfishness, freedom from the violence of uncontrolled passion, freedom to be very patient and very kind. Along these lines—I say this significantly—will be found the secret of true love-making. If we possess, by God's grace, true freedom of soul, so as to avoid the snare of haste, so that we want to give and to impart rather than to seize and to take, then we shall find wings to soar higher than our dreams. If we are not so foolish as to break love's laws, we shall find, to our surprise, love's ecstasy. But this is such a great thing that it deserves special consideration in a later chapter.

V

FRIENDS

“TAKE NO woman for your wife that you would not take for a friend if she were a man,” says the wise Frenchman, Joubert. Certainly husband and wife must be the best of friends, and it is worth while to devote some time to careful thought on the subject of true friendship.

Friendship must have its outer and inner circles. The outer circle should be as wide as humanity itself. Barriers of class, of race, and of sex are to be transcended. Even barriers of enmity may be broken down, and the barrier of unworthiness is not insurmountable. Our Lord was the friend of sinners, and we, who know how much we ourselves have been forgiven, must stretch out the helping hand of friendship to those who cannot claim to deserve it.

But, in the nature of things, this can only be an outer circle. We cannot give our intimate friendship to any whom we cannot trust. There is bound to be an inner circle of friendship, and that is a different kind of thing. You will make a great mistake if you take the whole world into your confidence about everything that passes

through your mind or comes into your life. You are not called upon to do so. But you should desire heart-to-heart friendship with someone. Clement of Alexandria has handed down to us a saying of the Lord Jesus, which is not in our printed Gospel, "Make a friend." The idea of *making* a friend suggests something closer than the friendships that spring up through ordinary neighbourliness or through the wider exercises of Christian charity. It means that of set purpose you draw to yourself one whom you can trust. Our nature demands this. Here we may quite rightly apply the teaching of psychology about the danger of repression. If you form the habit of being so self-contained that you do not need a friend, you become proud and morbid and surly, and of anything but the high Christian type. But we know that God has granted to us a great privilege, and we should be glad to share our deepest joys and our sorest griefs within that inner circle. Even our Lord Himself had need of it. We know He had His special friendship in that happy home at Bethany. We know how in His ministry He gathered around Him the company of disciples, and did not go through His ministry without leaning upon them, weak men as they were. "I have not treated you as My bond servants," he said, "I have called you

My friends, because I have taken you into My confidence ”

Keeping in mind the idea that your beloved should be your best, though not your only, friend, let us remember that friendship in this deeper sense is impossible unless there be complete frankness—an absence of that caution which is unfortunately necessary in relation to the world outside. You want to open your heart, and you cannot do so unless its secrets may be disclosed just as they are. You even desire that your friend should know your weaknesses just as much as your good points. For indeed it is a very good definition of a friend that he is one who knows all about you and loves you just the same. The friends of our outer circle will be good to us so long as they are quite sure that they can in all respects look up to us, and we naturally take some pains to keep their esteem. But in our hearts we long that there should be someone, or some small circle of people, who will know us quite as we are, and who will not run away from us, or shun us on that account.

Yet, with all this, there must be mutual respect. If we know each other's failings, we must yet be able to value each other's virtues. Indeed, with reference to some third person, we should never discuss the faults unless the virtues

are well known and understood. It is one thing to point out a particular fault which may be mended, in a character otherwise excellent, it is quite a different thing to magnify the fault in such a way that the virtues are completely forgotten. This being understood, how much life is enriched by this frankness between friends! There is the unburdening of the heart, and very often the unburdening of the conscience. There is also the growth of the understanding—and remember that we are to serve God with all our minds, as well as with all our hearts. How much your mind grows by talking over your thoughts with a friend! The very expression of your thoughts, bluntly and frankly, without having to make all sorts of qualifications for fear you may be misunderstood, the very speaking out of what is in your mind will help you to see clearly what you really mean. Then, as you discuss it, you see things that lie just beyond, corrections to be made in your point of view. The sense that your friend values and shares your best thoughts will strengthen you against the easy-going opinion of the world and help you when you go forth to meet opposition.

It follows from this that we must learn to be good listeners. If it helps us to pour out our troubles and to find someone to share them, we

must be ready to make this mutual. We must not be selfish. We cannot sympathise if we are always full of our own affairs. You will be a poor friend if you do all the talking. Your heart must often be at leisure from itself in order to give that sympathy which enters fully into the other person's point of view—forgetting yourself entirely except in order to put your experience at the disposal of your friend.

We must know also how to hold our tongues when we go forth from the intimacies of friendship to mingle in the world outside. You cannot be friends with a tatter. You will not give your confidence to anybody who will go off and make of it something for popular gossip. So you will never be a friend if you cannot be trusted to be loyal.

While every real friendship must touch the deeper springs of our nature, this does not mean that friendship must always be solemn-faced or must spend its whole time on the discussion of sacred things. Do cultivate a sense of humour. Friendship is impossible if you cannot share your best joke—especially if your friend is going to be offended when quite sincerely you were only joking. A sense of humour indicates some of the most Christian qualities of character; it implies humility and charity and other virtues.

Many a quarrel and many a divorce might have been avoided by the use of this priceless gift. But although your friend and you will have many a joke together and many a jolly reminiscence, yet the main drift of it should be that your friendship draws out the best side of the character of each of you instead of rousing the worst. Your talking and listening sends you away refreshed, with that charming feeling that helps you to be good all over—not at all with that horribly uncomfortable feeling of having somehow wasted the time by saying all the wrong things and taken quite the lower view of life instead of the higher. Friendship cannot be built up simply on frivolity. As the old proverb says, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." What a big comfort is your best pal!

Yet even so, there are moments in life when no human friend can meet all our need—times when you and your beloved together will need some higher hand to help you. You need always the friendship of our Lord. You need Him first, to keep your friendship all that He wants it to be. And you need Him most when there are things within your heart too deep for words, too perplexing for even your best friend to understand. In married life praying *together*—even in silence, if words do not come easily—is the

greatest and most enduring link of all, praying for each other and committing to God the things that are too big for you to express even to yourselves.

So if God should spare you to keep your golden wedding, He may grant that the one with whom you share it may still be the best earthly friend you ever had

Now if your friend is, in the sense which we are frankly considering, your beloved, all these things which we have been discussing in this chapter must be remembered; but we shall be less frank if we pretend that there is nothing more. Without basing your friendship on so poor a basis as mere sensuousness, yet as you open out your hearts to each other and your minds and souls are mingled, you will naturally be drawn towards each other—I was going to say, physically, but rather let me say, in a sacramental way; for every touch and movement of this kind is essentially an outward and visible sign of that inward and spiritual fellowship which we have been considering. That is the point of view from which the Scriptures say so much—and say it so clearly—about kissing.

It would be easy to quote from the Old and New Testaments to illustrate the kiss of friendship, the kiss of dutiful respect, the kiss of

brothers, the kiss of blessing, the kiss of lovers, the kiss of parting, and the last kiss on the brow of the dead. You cannot fail to see in all this that the Bible insists upon reverence in the sacred relationships of life. As a simple matter of fact, if a kiss is used for self-indulgence to seek physical sensation for its own sake, then love will quickly die out and nothing will be left but regret. But if a kiss is the mutual bestowal of esteem, kindness, and blessing, then it deepens and strengthens love and helps to make it lasting. There is an instance in the Bible in which a kiss was a call to a great work, and this is still the case in the first kiss of lovers. They are committing themselves to those great tasks which will issue in the responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood, with all the joy and travail, all the self-sacrifice which will be needed for the great work of bringing up children in the fear of the Lord. Even the kiss at the death-bed is not too solemn to be remembered, seeing that we must wish so to pass through life that when death takes some loved one from our side there shall be no vain regrets, no sense of shame.

You will find also a Scriptural reference to the kiss of reconciliation after a quarrel. It would be well if there were no quarrel, but if such there

be, then the kiss that ends it has a value that makes life the sweeter after it.

Then there is the kiss of David for Absalom—and the sequel—the rebellion of the son against the father, and David's cry, "O Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom!" There is the kiss of treachery—Jacob deceiving his blind father, while Isaac pleads, "Come near now, and kiss me, my son", Joab taking Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him, while smiting him to death with the sword in his left hand, Judas betraying our Lord in Gethsemane. It is not unknown in these days for a man to kiss his wife while secretly betraying her in his heart; or for a kiss of passion to be such an act of base selfishness as takes no thought at all of the possible ruin in body and soul of the object of that passion. Of course, there is no salvation of marriage under such conditions except by a repentance which proves real hatred of such ugly things. Yet there is that way of return kept open, for the golden kiss of the whole Bible is the kiss of the father for the returning prodigal. The Eternal Father still stands watching and waiting, even amidst the ruins of what was once a happy home. He has a perfect understanding of all that has brought about the gradual declension, and of all the unnoticed steps which

have hastened the day of ruin. The things that are never explained in a court of law are all quite clear to Him. There is a kiss of pardon which in some cases is the one thing needed to restore a marriage to something like what it was meant to be.

We must not overlook the words of our Lord to the proud Pharisee who was so formal, so correct in his own estimation, yet so cold of heart, like the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal. "Thou gavest me no kiss," said our Lord. Propriety, no doubt, we must have, restrictions, certainly, must be enforced; a code of honour is essential. But do not let us set up a standard of frigidity and hardness and call it Christ's, for Christ will undoubtedly disown it "Thou gavest me no kiss"—there is no encouragement here for that cold silence, that forbidding aloofness, which breaks more hearts than the sum total of all the drunken brawls and murderous cruelties which we rightly lament. The self-righteousness of those who have never done anything wrong, but who studiously omit to do what is obviously right, is one of the chief causes of divorce. "Thou gavest me no kiss," said Christ. If these words should meet the eye of any who have been practising desertion without leaving each other's roof—the agonising

desertion which cuts all the deeper because it is unsuspected by the outside world, the daily torture of just refusing the kiss that would mend all—then, before you consult your solicitors, just see that picture of the Saviour, and see Him in the one whom He gave you to love. Just kiss—and be friends.

VI

ROMANCE

“Good shepherd,” says Phebe, in “As You Like It,” “tell this youth what ’tis to love;” and Silvius answers that it is to be all made of sighs and tears, of faith and service, of fantasy, of passion, of wishes; “all adoration, duty, and observance; all humbleness, all patience, and impatience, all purity, all trial, all observance.” One thing is remarkable in this definition—there is nothing selfish in it.

There are two secrets which, if they are fully understood and practised, are invaluable to those who would bring the art of love to its highest perfection. The first is, Do not make haste; and the other is, Seek to impart rather than to receive.

The whole principle of courtship is based on the first of these. However dazzling may be the success of the Sheik on the cinematograph screen, it is quite disastrous to imitate his methods. Even the fair maiden who dreams that it would be lovely to be carried off and married by main force would at once be disillusioned if a man tried to do it. There is something to be learned from Shakespeare’s Petruchio, but there are few who can tame a shrew in a day. Or, as the

romantically inclined will scorn any reference to a shrew, let them note the words of the tender Juliet :

“ Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night ·
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say—It lightens ”

Why does Juliet check Romeo's impatience? Because she is a woman, and young, and must be wooed before she is won. This is not all mock modesty, nor is it mischievous coquetry. A woman's first response to the attraction of love may seem to be immediate—indeed, Bernard Shaw suggests, perhaps truly enough, that it is the woman who draws and the man who follows, but be that as it may, her first instincts are widely diffused and quite general in character. The development of that widely diffused instinct towards an emotion more intimate and complete does not come rapidly, and does not arrive naturally except in response to much kindness and gentleness. This law of gradualness holds good, not only in the period of courtship before marriage, but again and again within married life itself. If this were better understood, many an instance of alleged incompatibility would be diagnosed as mere clumsiness on the part of the

nature of the woman to whom he commits his hope of harmony and repose at night. If he were to treat an engine, or a horse, or a piano, or even a ledger, with the crudity and abruptness with which he treats the most delicate of all human relationships, he would be dismissed in a week, and would receive no sympathy if he were to blame any person or thing but himself. Yet if, by the same irrevocable law, he were to find himself divorced within a year, he would be the first to blame his wife for coldness, want of understanding, and refusal to be responsive.

Meanwhile the wife, if she were to understand her own nature better, knowing that she desired not to be dominated but to be wooed, might recall and exercise some of those little arts of attractiveness which she used (dare I say, without the least offensiveness, that she used them deliberately?) in the early days of courting. At least, in those days, she did not yawn when he hinted that it was a nice evening for a walk in the gloaming; and why now should she make it a habit to yawn and look at the clock with a bored expression in saying that she supposes it must be bed-time? The first rule of marriage, and at least half of the whole of its rules, is to remember that courtship does not end on the wedding-day; it is a lifelong privilege, the ever-

husband. Love-making is an art, and it is always a mistake to be in a hurry. This is not surprising when we observe the patience of God in nature, and when we take to heart some of the profound sayings of our Lord in teaching His disciples: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"; "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter"; "It is not for you to know . . . but ye shall receive power. . . ." After all, such a law of love is simply a rebuke to greediness and grasping; it is an appeal to patience and considerateness and gentlemanly feeling. It is because love is so fine a thing that it needs time to grow and ripen.

It is indeed a ridiculous thing that we should be hurrying on the business of divorce courts and urging still further measures to pronounce marriage a failure, instead of recognising in a sensible way the obvious reason why marriages have gone wrong—obvious because anyone may know that more care is commonly taken to learn the violin or to master the rudiments of drawing or of any other art, or of any science, than is taken by a husband to learn the wonderful art of winning a full response from the whole nature of his wife. Many a man knows more about the machine at which he works by day than he knows about the

to-be-trodden avenue to a never-ending series of new discoveries.

Then, don't daub the canvas with a whitewash brush; don't thump the piano; don't scrape cruelly at the harp-strings; don't jar and grind the gears; don't try to dash uphill on top gear in the first twenty yards; don't, in short, be a barbarian. Be nice; be kind; be considerate, if you are a man. Or, if you are his wife, don't be so obsessed with the problem of next week's housekeeping money that you must badger him about it just at the moment when he is thinking of worshipping God for the beauty of your wonderfully moulded arms. It is far better to be just a little vain than to be indifferent to the power you possess to make the man adore the Creator for having made you.

So we come to our second principle—seek to impart, whether you be the husband or the wife, and never aim at your own gratification. If you are greedy, the fruit you grasp will be sour in the tasting; and each will blame the other for the failure. But if you are very kind and entirely unselfish, if your love prompts you to give the utmost of happiness to your beloved, regardless of yourself, then comes the miracle; for he that would save his life shall lose it, and he that is willing to lose his life finds it. It is all part of

the fundamental law of the universe, and there would be no divorce laws if folk would practise the original laws of God.

So you arrive at the wonderful law of rhythm. It is the law of all poetry and of all music. Perhaps you have yet to learn the beauty of a nocturne of Chopin; but, believe me, it is worth a whole row of solicitors' offices just to find the meaning of such music. For God inspired it.

Then, when you have been especially affectionate, do not afterwards turn away from each other abruptly. It is important for a man to understand this for his wife's sake. As her feelings have risen more slowly to a climax, so they sink back to repose more gradually than his. It a man's love is not to appear selfish and self-centred, he must not cease to be kind as soon as his own feelings have attained a climax. Real love will tend to express itself in continued tenderness by way of epilogue.

Further, it should be understood clearly by any sensible folk that life cannot be lived all the time at a climax. God has ordained a law of rest, and the principle of keeping Sabbath applies very widely to human affairs. A great deal has been said lately, and with great forcibleness, about the number of hours that a man ought to work in a week. There has been much less said about the

number of hours his wife works, but at least it is being recognised that the best work cannot be done by those who are not allowed enough time to recuperate. Now the same truth holds good in other spheres of life. Even pleasure and so-called recreation may be too strenuously carried on, for instance, there is a limit to the number of hours of dancing that is really beneficial to the tired worker, and it is a mistake to try to extract the last ounce of gaiety and excitement from a Bank Holiday. Human nature cannot be roused to its highest pitch of ecstasy too often without a pitiful reaction. It is folly to expect more out of the universe than the universe is prepared to give. So in love-making, any kind of greediness always brings its penalties. The climax of true love-making, when the laws of its art have been observed, should be followed by a sense of well-being and of renewed and increased capacity for the tasks of life. But an inartistic excess leads to that well-known feeling of "the morning after the night before", the whole personality is jaded, nerves are strained, tempers are spoiled; quarrels are easily provoked; and the joy of love is lost. But the problem is not at all a difficult one to those who have any sense of self-control. A little experience soon enables you to understand your own nature in this respect; and then it

is only a question of elementary self-respect together with a decent respect for each other. We are here dealing with the simple proposition that when you have plucked the roses from your garden, you must be patient till more roses grow. This is true even from the first weeks of the honeymoon period of life.

But then comes a much more serious proposition. It has to be remembered that nature does not grow roses without thorns. Folk are beginning to think that the roses would be sweeter without them. I can only say, in reply to that, our Lord and Master did not think so; for He wore thorns on His brow and glorified them for ever.

*“Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”*

Here again is a law of the universe, “sorrow and love,” “love and sorrow.” It is of the nature of love that it never attains its highest expression except by climbing the hill of suffering. Love must express itself in sacrifice. It is essentially a giving. Anything less than this belongs merely to the realm of flirtation. Such may yield a transient pleasure, but it cannot give abiding joy and deep-rooted happiness. Our Lord spoke quite plainly of the sorrow of travail, which He

said was soon forgotten in the joy—a joy which does not pass away. The readiness to suffer and to endure is an indispensable part of romance. It arises from one of the deepest and truest instincts of the soul. Obviously this is true of a woman's wonderful maternal instinct, but surely there is also the instinct of a father, who counts no sacrifice too great to provide the best within his power for those whom he loves. A man does not bargain about the cost of his first gift to his lady-love, but feels the happier to find himself out of pocket on the transaction. He need not lose this instinct when much greater sacrifices are required of him—sacrifices not of money only, but of private satisfactions which he must be content, for a time, to do without. If this means discomfort, this is a small thing to bear for the sake of the woman who has loved him enough to go cheerfully to her travail.

It is all delightfully romantic, so long as you see it in its right perspective. You cannot regard a matter artistically without a sense of perspective. I recall that once when I entered Southwell Cathedral I was a little late, and my first concern was to find a peg on which to hang my coat. But you cannot measure a great Norman building in terms of coat-pegs. So if you view marriage simply and alone from the standpoint of honey-

moon excitements, you lose the perspective and miss the beauty and the glory. You have to lift up your eyes and see how one arch leads to another, and to another, and so on till you behold, as the central object of vision, an altar, on which stands a cross, with the light shining through from beyond it. If you are thinking only of some immediate necessity, you fail to comprehend the grandeur of God's plan. But take the large view, and the light is on the cross, and all is in proportion, till your whole being is lifted up in thanksgiving for such a miracle of creation.

I like to think of the young couple choosing a house and the furniture, including the bedroom furniture, and looking out on the plot of grass, however small, and thinking, "That is where (please God) our bairns will play." That is charmingly romantic, is it not? And of course they know quite well that, however useful the threepenny bazaar has been in providing odds and ends for the kitchen, this other part of their dreams will cost them considerably more. But romance is blissfully unselfish. Then when the time comes to make the sacrifices and to practise the self-denials that are involved, they must not forget that it really is romantic—much more so than an everlasting canoe for two.

If, then, there must be periods of self-denial,

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let them be times of quite special tenderness. All trace of resentment, all rebellion against the higher call of unselfish love, must be lost in the delightful resolve to be particularly nice to each other at such times. For tenderness, a wise man once said, is love in repose. So, whether your love is at its climax of expression, or your unselfishness is at as high a climax in repose, it is in either case a self-surrender. "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

VII

PROBLEMS

WE come now to a consideration of some of the problems of married life. Few married people escape all the problems, although these vary a great deal in different cases. Some of them may be avoided if husband and wife have been warned of them beforehand, but alas! such warnings are seldom given, and young people are left to find out by experience, which under such circumstances is apt to be a hard teacher.

The first problem is the establishment of complete intimacy between bride and bridegroom during the period of the honeymoon. This requires mutual care and consideration and some degree of patience. It is not to be regarded lightly or frivolously. The earlier chapters of this book, if read thoughtfully and with discernment, may prove to be helpful, especially in their emphasis on complete unselfishness. But they should be supplemented by a quiet confidential talk with some wise and kind married adviser, who can delicately indicate the simplest and wisest ways of meeting the first difficulties of all. When these are over, the experience of the next few weeks should be especially happy, as the

joy of the married relationship unfolds itself increasingly.

The period of pregnancy leads on to new questions and perhaps problems. All the faculties distinctive of womanhood are then devoted to the care of the child who is in due course to be born. It is very important to tell the doctor at once of any puzzling or unexpected symptoms, as a word of advice from him may save an immense amount of trouble and disappointment. The most intimate part of the marriage relationship now requires a long period of abstinence on the part of the husband. Some people, I know, regard this as a hard saying; but even if all seems to be well, there is still good reason why a strict sense of self-denial should be encouraged. Physically it saves a good deal of anxiety; and psychologically the strongest arguments are in favour of it. The instinct of motherhood is at least as strong as the instinct of wifehood; and it is not wise to place these two instincts into conflict. Before pregnancy begins, the two instincts are operating in the same direction; but when conception has taken place, the instinct of wifehood naturally becomes subordinated to the motherhood instinct. It is not unreasonable to suggest that a man, on his part, may develop without much trouble an instinct of fatherhood sufficient to overcome his

physical inclinations as a husband. If he loves his wife unselfishly, he will enter into her mind as a would-be mother; and he may resemble her in beginning to love the children unselfishly and effectively long before they are born. For the sake of the coming child, it is far better to err on the side of too great self-denial than on the side of such self-indulgence as may prejudice the child's best welfare. If any reader thinks that this is the notion of a theorist who knows very little about the subject, I can only say that my own children have had whatever advantage this theory may possess for them.

The husband's more difficult problem psychologically is some months after the child is born. For a time he shares fully in the joy and excitement of proud parenthood; and after receiving numerous congratulations he is content to stand aside and see the mother and child become the centre of thought and attraction, as they are certainly the centre of all that is beautiful and romantic and holy. Then the care of the infant absorbs the mind and the time of the mother, and the maternal instinct is seen expressing itself in amazing feats of patience and self-sacrifice. This continues to be so to the utmost degree for at least as long after the child's birth as was the period of care and watchfulness during the

months before. Meanwhile the full instincts of wifehood are found to be in abeyance, unless they are deliberately aroused—as no doubt they may be. But the wiser course is to allow the mother-instinct to have its full term of predominance. For the mother this is undoubtedly psychologically right.

But the father is, of course, differently constituted. There will be times when he is restless and ill at ease. I do not suggest that he should be entirely neglected except as the convenient agent for defraying expenses. A wise mother will somehow contrive to devote some small share of her attentions to the man who a few months before was the very centre of her earthly existence. However successfully he conceals his feelings, she will not assume that he has none. But, this being granted, it still remains that the man must be prepared to take upon his own shoulders the responsibility of governing his own nature, so as to make of this experience a fine opportunity for the testing of his noblest and best qualities of character. The latter part of Chapter VI. was written with these facts in view, and may be read again in this connection. And here I may add another quotation from Joubert: "Those who love always have no leisure to pity themselves or to be unhappy "

As the months pass after child-birth, and the mother on her part becomes aware once more of the mating instinct, then even the most unselfish husband has to face the much-discussed problem of so-called "birth control." Control of some kind there certainly must be. This book could not have been written from the standpoint of carelessness as to the consequences of mating. The notion that children may follow each other as rapidly as is physically possible is an idea that the twentieth century has quite rightly decided to reject. There were days when it was considered a mark of fine character to be responsible for the birth of eight or nine children within twelve or fourteen years, even though several of them died and the mother also died before the eldest had time to grow up. It is even related with pride that a second wife then undertook the noble task of extending the heroic father's family to still larger dimensions. A clergyman who spends some time waiting for funerals has ample opportunity for studying tomb-stones, and these tell their own tale. Tender and loving memory is very well, but tenderness and love during life-time might have expressed itself much more considerately. Even now, when infant welfare and maternal welfare receive far more attention and skill, the question remains whether a woman is

called upon to spend practically her whole adult life in an uninterrupted course of pregnancy and suckling. The feminist movement of this century may yield little practical benefit through Parliamentary franchise; but it has certainly asserted one of our Lord's outstanding principles—the recognition of the full personality of each human being, in the case of women no less than in that of men. Motherhood still remains one of the very highest of woman's functions, giving to her personality some of its richest expressions. But the *whole* personality includes faculties which cannot have scope if all control of motherhood is to remain in the hands of her husband.

Control of some kind there must be; and in spite of all that has been said and written on this subject in recent years, there is no control of parenthood which does not involve as its chief factor the exercise of self-control. The husband who is indifferent to the consequences of his actions is simply selfish and mean, and far below the standard which this book is striving to uphold—a standard which may at least in some measure profess and call itself Christian. There is no such thing as marital rights. The phrase is simply a mis-spelling of *marital rites*, which, of course, means another thing. The relationship between married lovers must be mutual, or it is

sheer prostitution. No man has any right to call a child into existence against the highest and best instincts of the child's mother.

But if the power of choice is to rest with the wife, she must be trusted not to exercise it for selfish ends. To refuse the sacred privilege of motherhood merely in order to follow pleasure and ease, or to spare herself the pain and trouble of maternity, is to be false to her womanhood. It may be well in these days to remind both men and women that the bringing up of children, to say the very least of it, is far more interesting and delightful than to keep cats, rabbits, pigeons, poultry, poodles, greyhounds, race-horses, or a motor-bicycle and side-car, or any other inferior substitute for the responsibilities of family life. The woman who loves tennis or dancing or entertaining or motoring or her own independence more than she would love a baby if she had one, is definitely abnormal, which means, in plain language, a freak, and much to be pitied. In saying this, we must be careful not to judge those whose inner history we do not know; for there are many who are without children, or without as many as they would wish to have, on account of some disability of health or of nature which they themselves lament exceedingly. So this is not a matter in which we can appeal with perfect fair-

ness to the bar of public opinion. But we do appeal to the individual conscience. God has given us our several places in a world-wide society; and when we ask what is right and what is wrong we must not think of ourselves only. One of the plainest truths about life in a community is that it cannot go on unless its rules tend towards its continuation by the birth and education of children and by the handing on of the best principles that experience has taught us to the generation coming after us. Therefore we must think of the children. For their sake married life must centre in the home, and the relationship between men and women must be governed by the claims of parenthood in the life of the commonwealth. When you think of the children and their needs, you see the disastrous tendency of all theories which would undermine the stability of marriage; for nowhere can a child find its true home life unless father and mother are wedded in a lifelong union.

To maintain this principle in the face of the whole world involves sacrifice and even hardship in many individual cases. But we did not argue about "hard cases" and the unfairness towards individuals when we allowed our youth to go forth in millions to the trenches. Now, if ever, we have to rebuild; and there can be no firm

foundation for society on a basis of self-pleasing. It is to a high sense of public duty that the appeal is to be made; that men and women should not ask what is easiest or most pleasant or most comfortable individually, but what is the highest individual contribution that each can make towards the well-being of the whole.

In some cases the hardship is continuous over a long period of years. Even the heroism of a Captain Scott is perhaps less difficult of achievement than the daily heroism of endurance without praise or applause, unknown to anyone but God. When I am asked what motive is to sustain a man or a woman who is constantly tempted to break bounds, I answer that this question is in itself a clear proof that we cannot do away with religion. I do not know any other ground of appeal which adequately meets all the problems. But so long as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is still preached, it is possible to ask, solemnly, tenderly, sympathetically, sincerely: Can we ever completely cut out Gethsemane and Calvary from our view of life in this world? Some of the best men and women I know, and the happiest and brightest, are those who in one way or another are taking up a cross daily in the Name of Jesus. The man who lost a leg many months ago, who at this moment is back in hospital for further

treatment, was brave and splendid when I saw him yesterday. His wife and children are the same. It is not from such as these that we hear complaints of incompatibility and the harshness of their fate; but from quite different folk, generally rich in outward blessings, with much to make life easy, who, for want of any experience of the real heroisms and the real occasions for heroism, spend the days in self-pity. Life is given us for something nobler than that. It is possible to turn even heavy trials into monuments of spiritual victory. Patience, unselfishness, and a great love for all humanity, have power to redeem life from sordidness and to rescue the spirit from disappointment and despair

“ So may the gentle current of our days
Make music even from the stones of care
And murmur with an undersong of praise ”

VIII

EPILOGUE.

THE Book of Common Prayer, in the Form of Solemnisation of Matrimony, begins by stating three causes for which Matrimony was ordained. First, it is for the sake of the children. This, I trust, I have emphasised. Secondly, it is to hallow and direct aright the natural faculties of manhood and womanhood. This, I believe, we have clearly recognised. But whenever I read this opening exhortation aloud in the church at a wedding, I invariably notice that it is the third part of the statement which at once sets everyone at ease and conveys to all present a sense of the delightful happiness of the occasion: "Thirdly, it was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity."

"Mutual society, help, *and comfort*"—there is a fine ring about that word "comfort." It implies encouragement and cheer and consolation and tenderness and comradeship and help.

This is expected to be mutual. It is not a satisfactory arrangement for one partner in marriage to dominate the other, who is content merely to say, "Yes, love," to everything. Or

the whole, it is better if the wife is still sometimes coy enough to appreciate a compliment; or to be pleasantly surprised by the recitation of a love-poem, such as :

“ O my Luvè's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luvè's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune

“ As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luvè am I
And I will luvè thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry,

“ Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun,
I will luvè thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run ”

It is almost worth while to learn Scotch so as to be able to say that with just the right accent. And it is worth while to be an exile from home occasionally, for the joy of the welcome back.

“ And fare thee weel, my only Luvè,
And fare thee weel awhile;
And I will come again, my Luvè,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile ”

And unless the task of writing is an uncommon pain and trouble, you should certainly write to each other every day of absence. Then, during

the days at home, there are many things that may occur to a lover's mind which would give comfort to his beloved; but I will not make further suggestions, because I hope she will read this book, and I do not want her to think that he only thought of such little attentions because I reminded him. I hope she will receive his efforts kindly. One man went home one day with a new resolution to be affectionate; so he sprang to his wife and embraced her as he had not done for years. "Ah, John," she said, "drunk again?" Perhaps he was not quite tactful and too boisterous. But these little demonstrations are better if they are mutual; so we trust the lady will not be discouraging. Look often into each other's eyes, and may this be without shame or self-reproach.

So you may be sweethearts to the end. Life goes on, and we do not grow younger; but love is deepened. Here is a little epilogue, remembering that "jo" means "sweetheart":

"John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquaint,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is bald, John,
Your locks are like the snow,
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo.

" John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And mony a canty dav, John,
We've had wi' ane anuther .
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo "

And now good-night to you, my dears, all of
you; and God bless you.